

 NOT ONE BUT TWO FISHY STORIES

Fishy story no: 1

Any ancient angler will have no difficulty in picturing what a salmon fishing rod would look like prior to the introduction of modern manufacturing material. For non anglers let me explain that salmon rods used to be made of at least six sections measuring up to 15ft of casting length with brass ringlets, couplings and fittings to take a reel that was nearly the size of a pram wheel. Modern ones are made of carbon fibre and are less than half the weight.

My parents asked a friend who was due to come out to the Sudan if he would buy a “fishing rod” from Hardy’s in London for a ten year old boy who very much enjoyed going after large Nile Perch. The friend duly arrived as did the rod which measured over three times the height of the ardent young angler!

However I was not daunted and eventually learnt how to use it in a very clumsy manner until one never to be forgotten day, I felt a large tug on the line, struck hard, missed and all the tackle came flying back over my shoulder to land on the river bank behind me. Desperate to get everything back in the water after the big one that I was sure that had been on the end of my line, I heaved on this huge rod to recast but instead I felt myself being pulled backwards! An extremely large Nile water rat had taken the bait and did not want to let this tasty bonus of piece of fresh cheese go to waste without a prolonged fight.

Consequently Mother persuaded me to write a letter to The Field Magazine about this incident and they did publish it but it was not syndicated nor were there any offers to make a film of the event.

Fishy Story no: 2

I was once again spending a lot of my holiday time fishing. This time my location was Kitchener’s Gun Boat which was permanently moored near the junction of the Blue and White Nile. It was serving as the club House for the Blue Nile Sailing Club. Somewhat undignified for the boat that arrived in Khartoum just too late to save General Gordon.

I felt a sluggish tug on the line and landed a large slimy Nile Cat Fish on the deck. Stupidly I decided that I would give it the “Coup de Grace” as it would boil up well for food ironically for two African Civet cats that we had as pets.

My method of despatch was to stamp on it. Stupid boy!! I was wearing sandals and at the last moment the fish raised its’ very sharp barbed dorsal fin which went with consummate ease, through my sandal and some way into my instep. Ouch!. None of the crew on the boat were able to extract the fish from my shoe or my foot and finally the head steward put me on the crossbar of his push bike and took me home with the fish still dangling from my foot.

I eventually ended up in the Army Hospital where the separation was successfully undertaken and I was returned home . I expect the fish ended up in the cooking pot of some local chap.

Richard Lowe August 2020