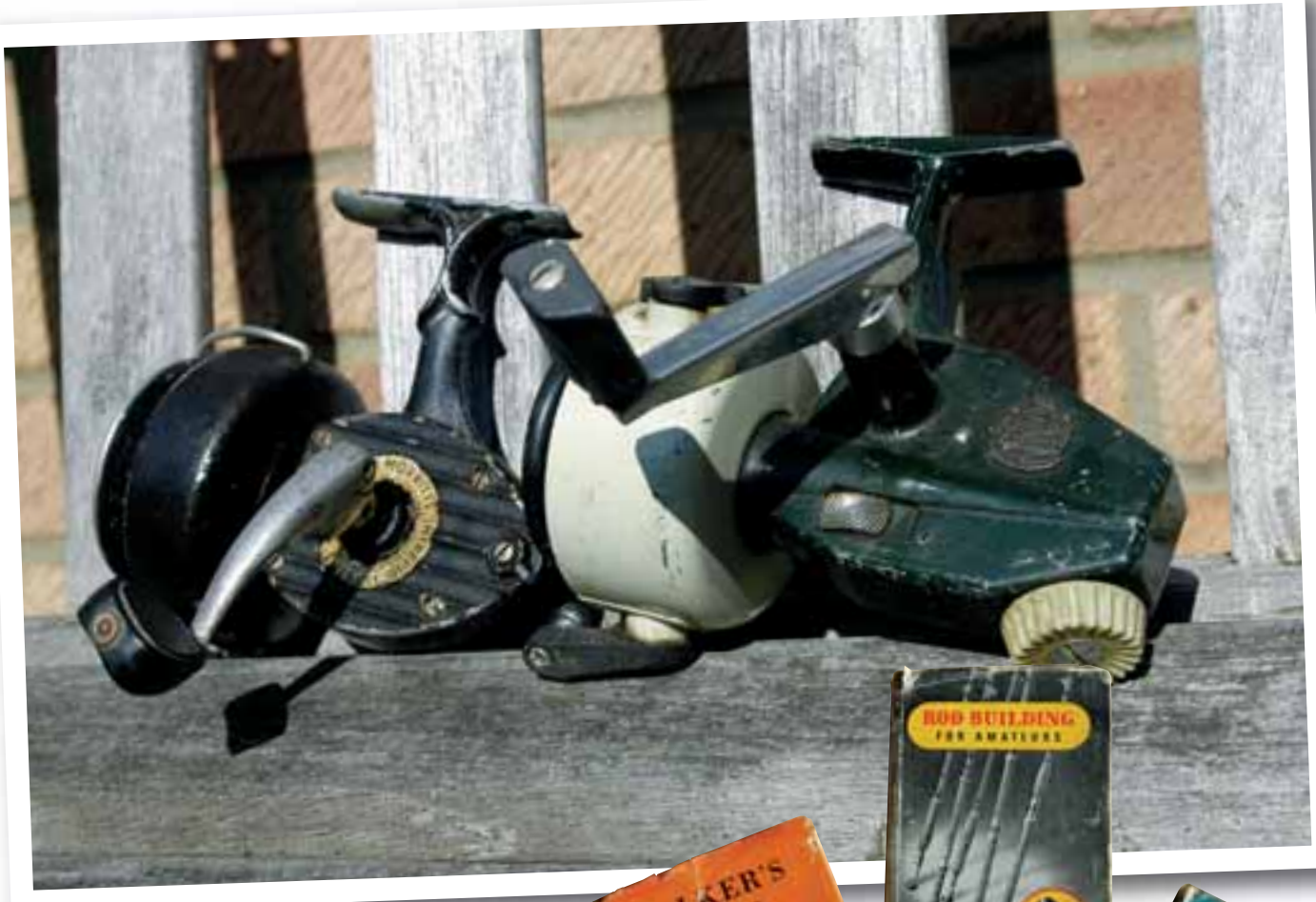


By now I expect the majority will have learned of the sad, sad news of the legendary Fred J. Taylor's recent passing, four months after receiving the MBE, and just one year short of his 90th birthday. Even during the early years of my angling career Fred J. was an inspiration, a legend

Collecting

With Fred J. Taylor



even then, but whom for certainly in excess of twenty-years I was privileged to call a close and dear friend. Here I do not intend to get over-sentimental or maudlin; Fred wouldn't have cared for that at all. Nor will I attempt to list all of Fred J's virtues, as there are plenty more qualified to do that job. In this piece I'll limit myself to relating how Fred J. indulged my passion for collecting, what I consider, special angling memorabilia.

It has been well documented how Fred J and I first met outside Frames' tackle shop in Hendon, northwest London, in the mid-1970's, yet it was at

NASA's London Region meets, sometimes attending individually but more often together, where our friendship blossomed. At one such meet, together with Kevin Clifford we shared the stage to present a tribute to Richard Walker soon after his death, and then shortly thereafter, by extreme good fortune, Kevin and I accompanied Fred J on his first trip back to Redmire Pool for around a quarter of a century.

From this time onward Fred and I met regularly. We went back to Redmire several more times, we went tench fishing together,

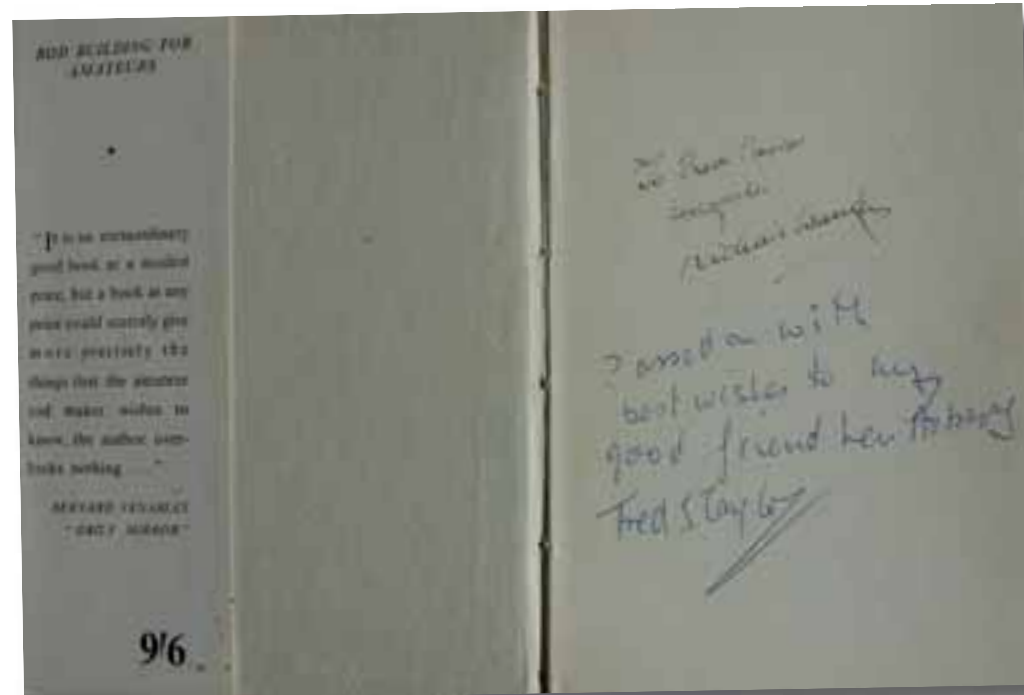
and Fred even gave me my first-ever fly casting lessons, and we met socially too. At one particular meeting at my home he first indulged my passion for collecting angling memorabilia, especially those previously owned by famous anglers of the past, when he presented me with

two of his own fixed spool reels, one being an Intrepid Supreme the other an ABU Cardinal 66. Being both in 'well used' condition other collectors may well have had these reels restored to full working order, but I've kept them just as Fred gave them to me, complete with original

old line, accumulated dirt and all! I love them just as they are: just as Fred J used them for the final time.

Although Fred J didn't care too much for material possessions, he didn't ridicule or belittle those that did, moreover, he actually encouraged collectors such as me. When once in the loft of his little Cheddington cottage, among all the homemade wine making paraphernalia, and his outdoor cooking stuff, large dutch-ovens and all, Fred showed me the first ever Hardy fibreglass 'Trotter' rod bearing his name, at the merest hint of a prod from me, a deal was struck, and that rod is within arm's reach as I write.

Another precious item came my way in much sadder circumstances. When Fred J's brother Ken died, Fred J knowing my passion for cased fish asked me if I'd be interested in purchasing



he learned of a title missing from my shelves he'd put me in touch with the vendor, and he signed the books he authored in my library too, around twenty volumes in all. Finally, there are

two further books Fred J provided for my collection that I'd like to tell you about.

The first being a hardback copy, complete with dust wrapper, of 'Rod Building for Amateurs,' by Richard Walker, a rare and very desirable book, which is consequently much sought after, and quite valuable of course. This copy is even

more special, unique even. For this is the actual copy presented to Fred J by Richard Walker. On the flyleaf, in Dick Walker's own neat handwriting is the legend:

*To Fred Taylor
best wishes
Richard Walker*

To which is added:

*Passed on with best wishes
to my good friend Len
Arbery
Fred J Taylor*

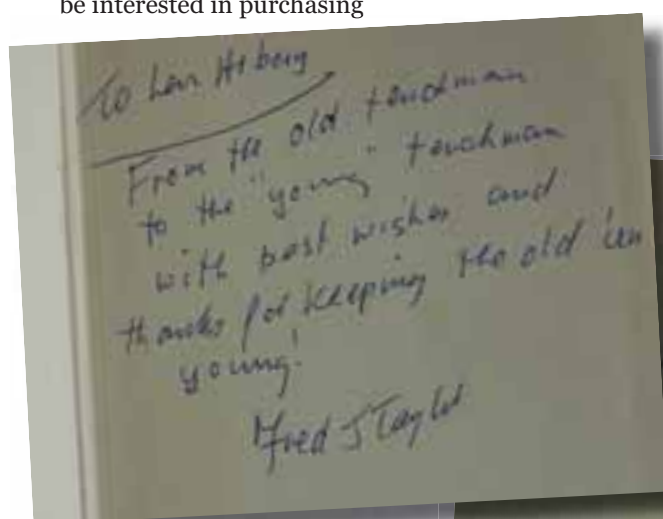
Provenance doesn't get much better than that!

The second book is a first edition of Dick Walker's 'Walker's Pitch,' this, too, being hardback and complete with dust wrapper. And, again, this actual copy was passed on to Fred J by Dick Walker himself, but the original flyleaf inscription, once more in Richard Walker's hand, posed a bit of a mystery. This reads:

*To Pop with best wishes
Dick*

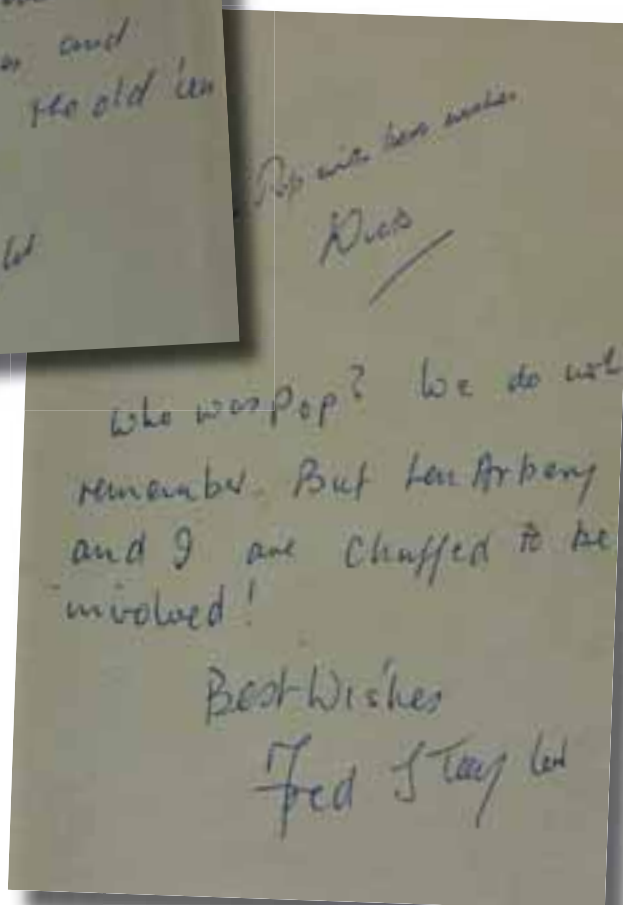
After my query, who is or was 'Pop'? Fred J has added:

*Who was Pop? We do not
remember.*



the case containing a 21lb pike Ken caught during the filming of a BBC program. Although it's true the fish wasn't set-up by one of the master taxidermists, such as Cooper or Homer for instance, I jumped at the opportunity, and that pike continues to gaze out balefully, and maybe somewhat reproachfully, from the wall behind my desk.

Fred J also helped me with my passion for collecting fishing books. If





*But Len Arbery and I are
Chuffed
To be involved!
Fred J Taylor*

Subsequently the mystery
was solved with the

publication of Barrie
Rickard's work, 'Richard
Walker. Biography of an
Angling Legend.' From the
chapter, 'Richard Walker by
his son, Simon Walker', from
the information given on


page 297 it can be deduced
that in fact 'Pop' was the
father of Richard Walker's
first wife, Ruth (nee Burdett-
Holcroft.)

Yes, the sad news indeed
is that Fred J Taylor is

no more but he'll never
be forgotten by countless
legions of anglers, and
certainly not by me.

May you rest in eternal
peace, old friend.

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