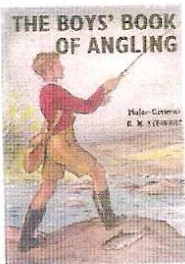


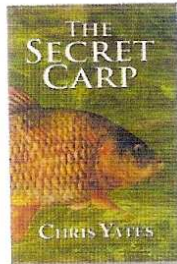
Six Books

Each month, well known fly fishermen select the half dozen books that inspired or moulded their approach. **This month:** Robert MacDougall-Davis' selection



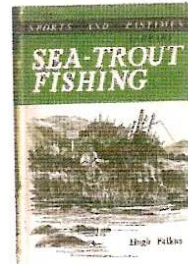
1 The Boys Book of Angling, by Major General RN Stewart.

I was just ten-years-old when, to celebrate the dramatic capture of my first salmon, friend and gillie Alistair McLeod handed me this book. I spent many days poring over the pages of this wonderful little book that describes, with zeal, the fishing adventures of John and his brother, Ronald, on Scottish lochs and mighty Icelandic rivers. Quite apart from containing many useful fishing tips, this little gem of literature encapsulates the overwhelming excitement, anticipation and thrill of going fishing. It was while turning these pages I discovered that a good fishing book was an excellent second best to actually being on the water. A sense of hope and optimism radiates from this story and optimism is something I take with me every time I cast a fly. Just like John and Ronald, I can never resist 'one last cast' and I have caught many a fine fish doing so.



2 The Secret Carp, by Chris Yates.

Although, in my younger years I always had a special affinity for fly fishing I was an avid coarse fisher, too, and not surprisingly some of the coarse fishing titles I read have influenced my approach to fly fishing. One book that stands out for me is this one. Yates wields his wonderfully descriptive powers to reveal a world of mysterious fish and awe inspiring serenity: "As I am facing west it seems, at the moment, as if the tree line opposite is about to ignite. The fog-rinsed colours are almost pulsing with the light and yet the sun has still not quite risen." The Secret Carp, touches the spirit of why we go fishing and it fuelled my appreciation of the natural world.



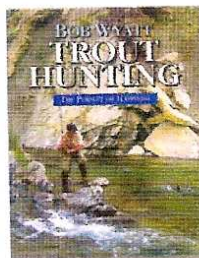
3 Sea Trout Fishing, by Hugh Falkus.

As time went by and my casting improved I gravitated more and more towards fly fishing. Coarse fishing, like a drifting stick float, sunk slowly out of sight. At some point during this divergence in my angling taste, I discovered *Sea Trout Fishing* by Hugh Falkus. Falkus' remarkable dissemination of a lifetime's worth of knowledge illuminated to me how much there was to learn, not just about sea trout fishing, but about fly fishing in general. Reading this book inspired me to find out more about the fish I pursued on my home waters and it encouraged me to delve deeper into the world of fly fishing than I ever had before.



4 The Compleat Angler by Izaak Walton.

In this all time angling classic Walton manages to capture the very essence of angling with heart-warming and humorous prose and apt descriptions that seem to so often hit the nail on the head. It has been reprinted more times than any other book in the English language bar the Bible and Shakespeare's historic works. Far beyond techniques, this book has influenced my spiritual approach to fly fishing. One delightful quote that springs to mind is Walton's assertion that angling "... is an art worthy the knowledge and patience of a wise man."



5 Trout Hunting by Bob Wyatt.

This is the book which has most directly influenced my technical approach to fly fishing. Wyatt's thoughtful, intelligent and entertaining exploration of trout fishing really got my mind wandering down all sorts of piscatorial avenues, from the principals of successful fly design and thoughts on 'selective' trout to the extreme importance of the conservation of our fisheries.



6 Fly Fishing by Viscount Grey of Fallodon.

Finally, this is one of my favourite pieces of angling literature and one that has influenced my entire outlook on fly fishing. This book overflows with beautiful descriptions and anecdotes. The following passage always reminds me how, for the lucky angler, fishing can go from being just a hobby to a way of life: "The time must come for all of us, who live long, when memory is more than prospect. An Angler who has reached this stage and reviews the pleasure of life will be grateful and glad that he has been an angler, for he will look back upon days radiant with happiness, and peaks of enjoyment that are not less bright because they are lit in memory by the light of a setting sun."