

# Celtic Salmon Casts

ORIGINS AND  
HISTORY

## *The Spey Cast and Welsh Throw*

By Steven Pugh

World Fly Casting Champion

## Title: Celtic Salmon Casts: Origins and History

### Introduction

Early Celtic Salmon Casts History: The Origins of the Spey and Welsh throw. There are two primary categories of D loop casts: the double and the single motion. In the case of the single motion, a redirected D loop is formed with a singular movement, as seen in the (upstream wind) single Spey, for instance. This technique originated on the rivers of Scotland. On the other hand, the double motion cast, which involves, for example, a 45-degree change in direction, is achieved through a double motion cast (downstream wind) like the snake-roll. This double motion cast finds its origins in Wales. It's important to note that the Welsh throw has no connection to the river Spey or the Spey cast; these are distinct styles from the early 1800s. Refer to 'Wikipedia' for more on Celtic Salmon Casts.

After reading numerous books on fly fishing and the fly cast from the mid-1800s, it is evident that the writing style of that era targeted experienced fly fishers. Beginners, or as they were called back then, 'fishing freshmen,' might struggle to understand the techniques described in these early texts. Therefore, it is crucial to approach the instructions given in these mid-1800s books with caution. For example, an author might describe the initial part of a cast, assuming that their readers have the requisite experience to complete the forward casting stroke to their liking.

In 'The Book of the Salmon,' page 20, it is confessed, "I find very great difficulty in showing by writing how a line should be best cast in fly fishing for salmon. By the river side, with rod in hand, the thing could be easily taught. I should fear failure in the attempt I am now about to make, did I not take it for granted that the majority of my readers are already more or less practically versed in fly fishing for trout. I beg it to be borne in mind that I am not now writing for the instruction of mere piscatorial tyros; I am not composing a book solely for freshmen but rather for the finishing study of halieutic graduates. Encouraged by the conviction that the fly-fisher for trout will understand me, though perhaps, I shall write too minutely to be very clear. I shall proceed to lay down new rules for throwing the salmon line and then have recourse to what I have written before, and what a few other, whom I consider citable authorities, have written on the subject." - Edward Fitzgibbon, 1850.

It wasn't until a decade later that authors began addressing beginners more comprehensively. Authors like Francis Francis, in 'A Book on Angling' 1867, provided detailed descriptions and illustrations that would have greatly assisted newcomers.

As a passionate salmon angler, I, like most fly fishers, have a deep interest in all aspects of salmon. The history of the Celtic double handed casts has always held a particular fascination for me. My journey began in the late 1970s while standing knee-deep on a

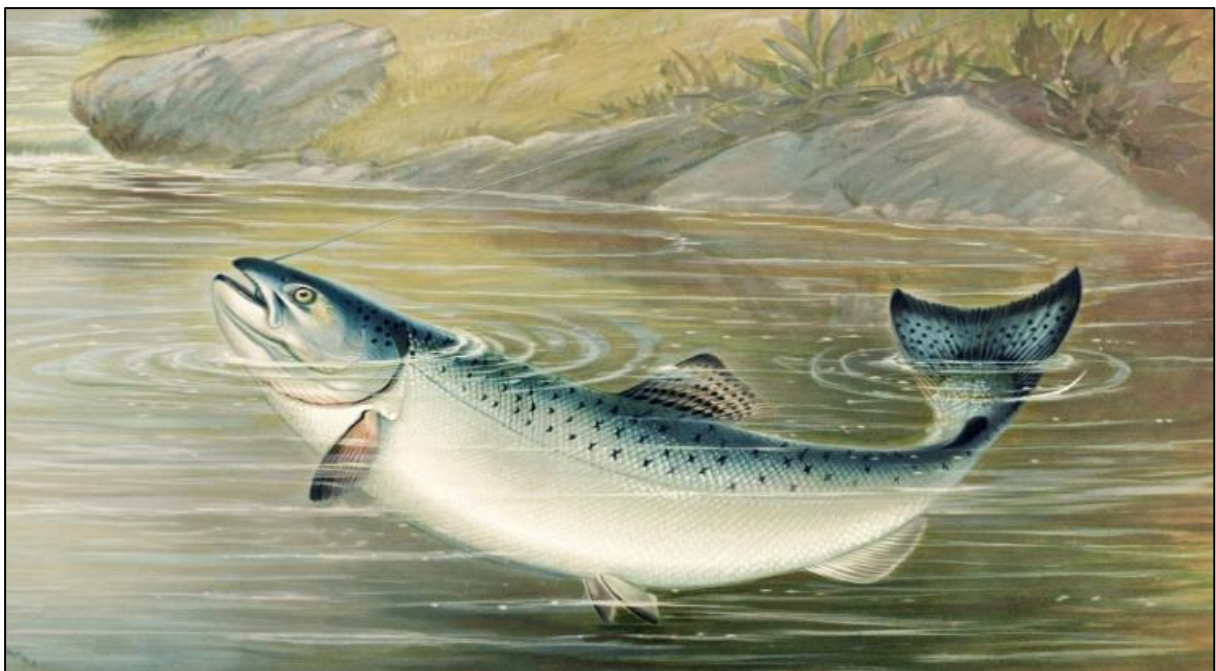
salmon and sea-trout river in North Wales, practising the roll cast. A man appeared on the bank. I can still vividly remember his face. He stopped to watch me for a while without saying a single word. Then, in a broad Scottish accent, he offered me some advice, mentioning that Spey casting first originated in Scotland. I thanked him kindly for helping with my roll cast, and he went on his way. I shared the story with the fishing family I was staying with, including the part about the Spey cast originating in Scotland. However, I was stopped in mid-speech when I heard the words 'Welsh throw' (I learned the cast thereafter) originated in Wales dating back to the early 1800s. This ignited my passion for the history of Spey casting and the Welsh throw.

Many years later, I stumbled upon a book titled 'Spey Cast or Welsh Throw: History in Great Britain, Roots in British Columbia, and Popularity in North America' by Art Lingren. While the book starts with the history of the Celtic salmon casts from 1850, it primarily focuses on British Columbia and North America, with little mention of the Welsh throw after page 4.

My journey to research the history of Celtic double handed casts has taken me to various sources, including revisiting 'The Book of the Salmon' from 1850, with two references dating back to 1849.

Acknowledgement:

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Nigel Pugh for his invaluable support and guidance in the process of writing this book.



## Edward Fitzgibbon (1803–1857)

Fitzgibbon's passion for angling was ignited during his formative years in Ireland, where the abundance of rivers provided the perfect backdrop for him to develop his skills as an angler. His move to England at the age of 14 marked a significant chapter in his life, bringing new challenges and opportunities.

In his late 20s, Fitzgibbon found his calling as an angling writer, contributing to the renowned publication 'Bell's Life in London.' His writings not only reflected his expertise in the craft but also revealed a deep appreciation for the art and science of angling. Fitzgibbon's ability to blend practical advice with a lyrical prose style set his works apart and contributed to the growing popularity of angling literature during the Victorian era.

One of Fitzgibbon's most enduring legacies is his authorship of the 'Handbook of Angling,' published in 1847. This comprehensive guide served as a valuable resource for both novice and seasoned anglers, offering insights into techniques, equipment, and the nuances of different fishing environments. Following the success of this publication, Fitzgibbon further solidified his reputation with 'The Book of the Salmon' in 1850.

The rich tradition of Celtic two-handed casting as a long history in Ireland's cultural and sporting heritage, with a particular emphasis on the Spey cast. This ancient technique has become an integral part of Ireland's fly-fishing legacy. Anglers in Ireland have perfected this technique over generations, adapting it to suit the unique challenges posed by the country's diverse rivers and streams.



## Chapter 1: Origins Double Handed Cast 1849-1850

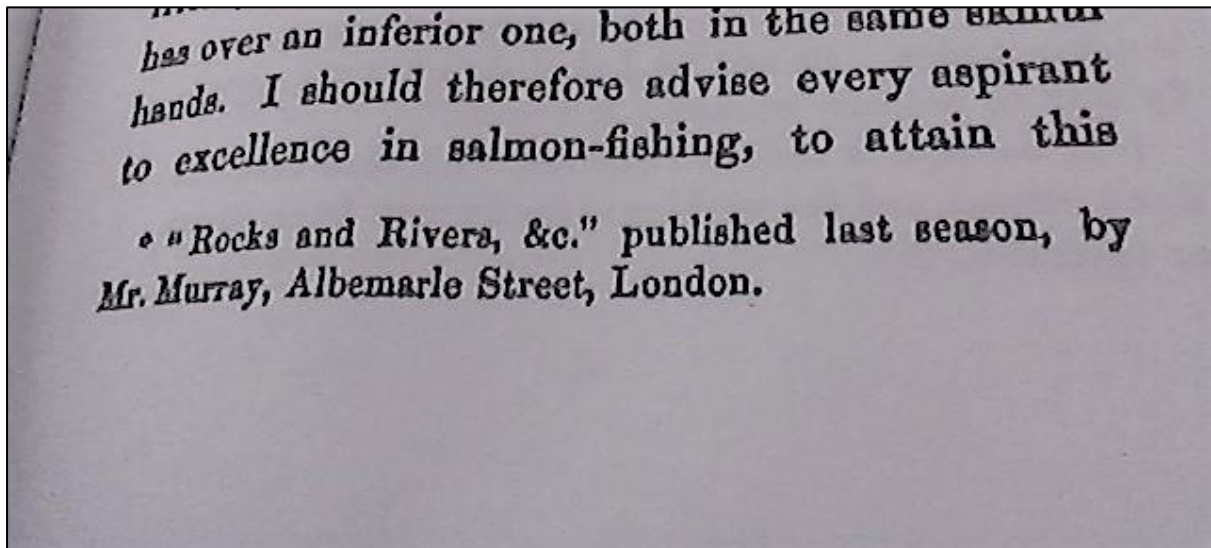
Many of us are familiar with the term 'Spey casting,' but very few have ever heard of 'The Welsh throw.' While Scotland developed the single motion D-loop cast, a distinct casting technique was employed exclusively in Wales, known simply as the 'Welsh throw.'

It is commonly believed that references to Celtic double handed casts can be traced back to 'The Book of the Salmon' by Edward Fitzgibbon in 1850. However, this book actually references earlier writings from two different authors, both of whom were well-recognized authorities on fly casting for salmon in the mid-1800s.

There are three pivotal books that provide the earliest detailed accounts of the D-loop casts in history:

1. John Colquhoun's "Rocks and River" in 1849 introduced the underhand cast.
2. Hewett Wheatley's "The Rod and Line" in 1849, described the unique 'Welsh throw.'
3. Edward Fitzgibbon's "The Book of The Salmon" in 1850, which further contributed to our understanding of these casting techniques.

"The Underhand Cast":



Quote from page 31 of "The Book of the Salmon."

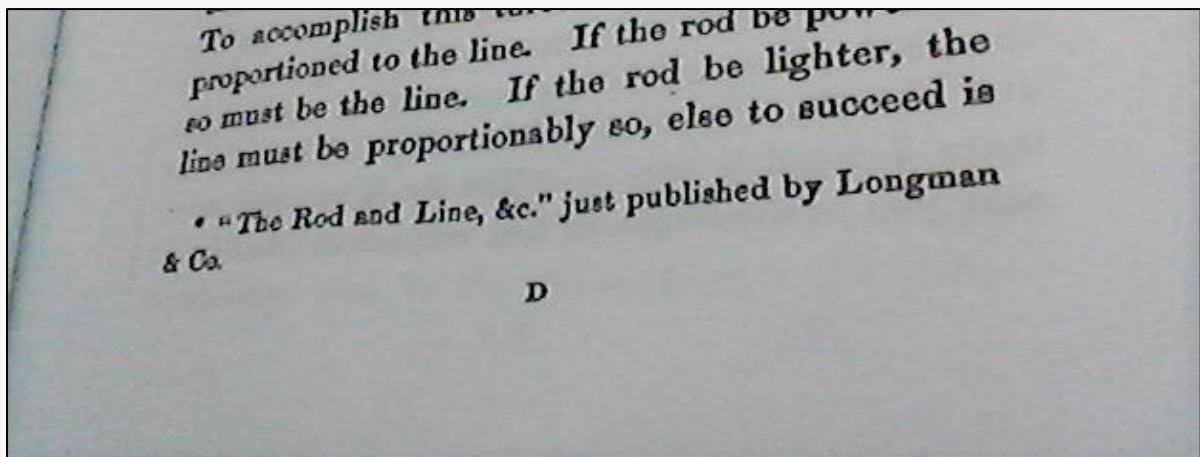
Of the two quotes mentioned in Fitzgibbon's book, the first one pertains to the underhand cast, a casting technique used on Scottish rivers in the early 1800s. The book "Rocks and Rivers" by John Colquhoun, published in 1849

by Mr. Murray, Albemarle Street, London. Colquhoun can be credited as the first to describe the underhand cast, also commonly known today as the "singles Spey cast."

John Colquhoun, the son of James Colquhoun, the third Baron of Dunbartonshire, was a notable figure in the world of sports and sports writing in Scotland. He was born in Edinburgh in 1805 and possessed a deep appreciation for nature, as evidenced by his keen observations and writings. In addition to his work on fishing, Colquhoun authored other noteworthy books, including 'The Moor and the Loch' in 1840 and 'Salmon Casts and Stray Shots' in 1858.

### "The Welsh Throw"

The second reference is from Hewett Wheatley's 'The Rod and Line' (1849). Mr. Wheatley wrote the first offering that mentioned the 'Welsh throw' in 1849.



Quote on page 33 from 'The Book of the Salmon' (1850).

Hewett Wheatley - Little is known about Wheatley himself. His book, 'The Rod and Line: Open Practical Hints and Devices for the Sure Taking of Trout, Grayling, etc.,' was published by Longman and Brown, London, in 1849. Reviews in the footnote of Wheatley's book describe it as "characterized by a mixture of caustic humour and sound practical knowledge." Westwood and Satchell call Wheatley's work "one of the most original books in the bibliography of angling." Wheatley was the first to fish upstream with both fly and minnow, the first person to use the expression "fancy flies," and the first to write about a fly minnow. Above all else, he was the first to recommend eyed hooks for trout flies. He fished many of his artificial flies, including the imitation

of various insects. When the flies were meant to sink, he left no doubt and unlead the shank of the hook, surely another first for this remarkable innovator.

Back in the mid-1800s, demand for knowledge was rapidly growing. Salmon fishing was becoming increasingly popular as trout anglers turned their hand to throwing a salmon fly. The thirst for knowledge induced experienced anglers to put pen to paper and write educational books on the subject. They covered all aspects of fishing, including rods, lines, flies, where to fish, and how to fish. This led to an explosion of literature available to would-be anglers. This included the first written text about Celtic salmon casting techniques and the rods and lines used to accomplish the throw, as it was called back in those days. During the mid-1800s, attempts to describe the early Celtic casts in books were unfortunately limited to text alone. Many books covered the subject of early Celtic salmon casts, especially the Spey cast during the late 1800s and early 1900s. They presented techniques through illustrations and also written text. Some of these books include:

- Francis Francis' 'A Book on Salmon' (1867).
- Eric Taverner's 'Of Salmon Fishing' (1895).
- George Kelso's 'The Salmon Fly' (1895).
- Jock Scott's 'Fine & Far Off' (1952).

There are many common myths in the history of Celtic-style casts. But, first, let's take a closer look at the first written text about Celtic salmon casts. We now know that "The Book of the Salmon 1850" was not the first book to describe Celtic casts. Fitzgibbon's reference at the bottom of pages 31 and 33 to 'The Book of the Salmon' actually refers to earlier publications by Wheatley and Colquhoun.

Reading through the pages of these remarkably old books gives you a sense of elation, thinking about the men who wrote these books and the fact that they lived and breathed approximately 172 years ago (at the time of writing this book). They wrote about their passion and love for the sport of fly fishing, sharing their experiences with state-of-the-art fishing and casting techniques known to them at the time, leaving behind their valuable contribution to the history of Celtic salmon casts, which serves as a starting point for understanding their origins.

To suggest that the "underhand cast" was practiced on rivers other than the river Spey itself in the early 1800s, Fitzgibbon, in his book on page 32, states, "There is an underhanded throw much in use on the Spey, which prevents the line from circling behind." Therefore, this suggests that Spey fishers were indeed modifying a cast that was used on other rivers in Scotland. Unfortunately, there are no clues left by the early writers to indicate on which river or rivers the underhand cast originated.

## Chapter 2: The Under-Hand Cast

The under-handed cast finds its origins in the salmon rivers of Scotland. Although the initial description provides basic information, there is still enough substance to form a mental image of the cast being discussed. It is not as complex as some people may suggest, although it does require some analysis. A profound understanding of various Celtic-style casts undoubtedly aided in deciphering the concise early descriptions. To delve deeper into our research, we must revisit the page repeatedly to gain a clear grasp of the underhand cast. Additionally, it might be a significant misconception to consider these casts as straightforward or less technical compared to the Celtic salmon casts that are prevalent in our practice today.

Let me quote a passage from "The Book of the Salmon 1850," specifically from pages 31 and 32, which provides insights into the under-handed cast.

*I should therefore advise any aspirant to excellence in Salmon fishing have, to attain this knack (the throwing of the line) in the greatest possible perfection. Some anglers who throw the longest line make it "swirl" out upon the water, The Hook appearing to align last. others cause the fly to hover for a moment and touch the water before any part of the line. These last appear the neatest fisher, but the others command more water. In fishing a salmon cast, throw a point downstream bring in your hook gradually around, but always keep it 2 points against the stream I never bring it in so straight towards you as in trout fishing. In deep water when a very long cast you made it through straight out bringing the fly round by keeping the point of the rod up instead of downstream. There is an under-handed cast much in use on the Spey, which prevents the fly line from circling behind. Of course, this is a great advantage amongst trees and other obstacles. It is generally practiced upstream, on the line with its "swish" up on the water goes over the fish before they see the fly which appears to me a great objection. These Spey fishers can through this underhanded cast as far as an expert hand in the ordinary way. A peculiar rod is necessary, which must be very stiff. Indeed, a common salmon rod would be apt to break in the hands of these fishers. The cast is easily learnt but must be seen to be thoroughly".*

*"Fitzgibbon"*

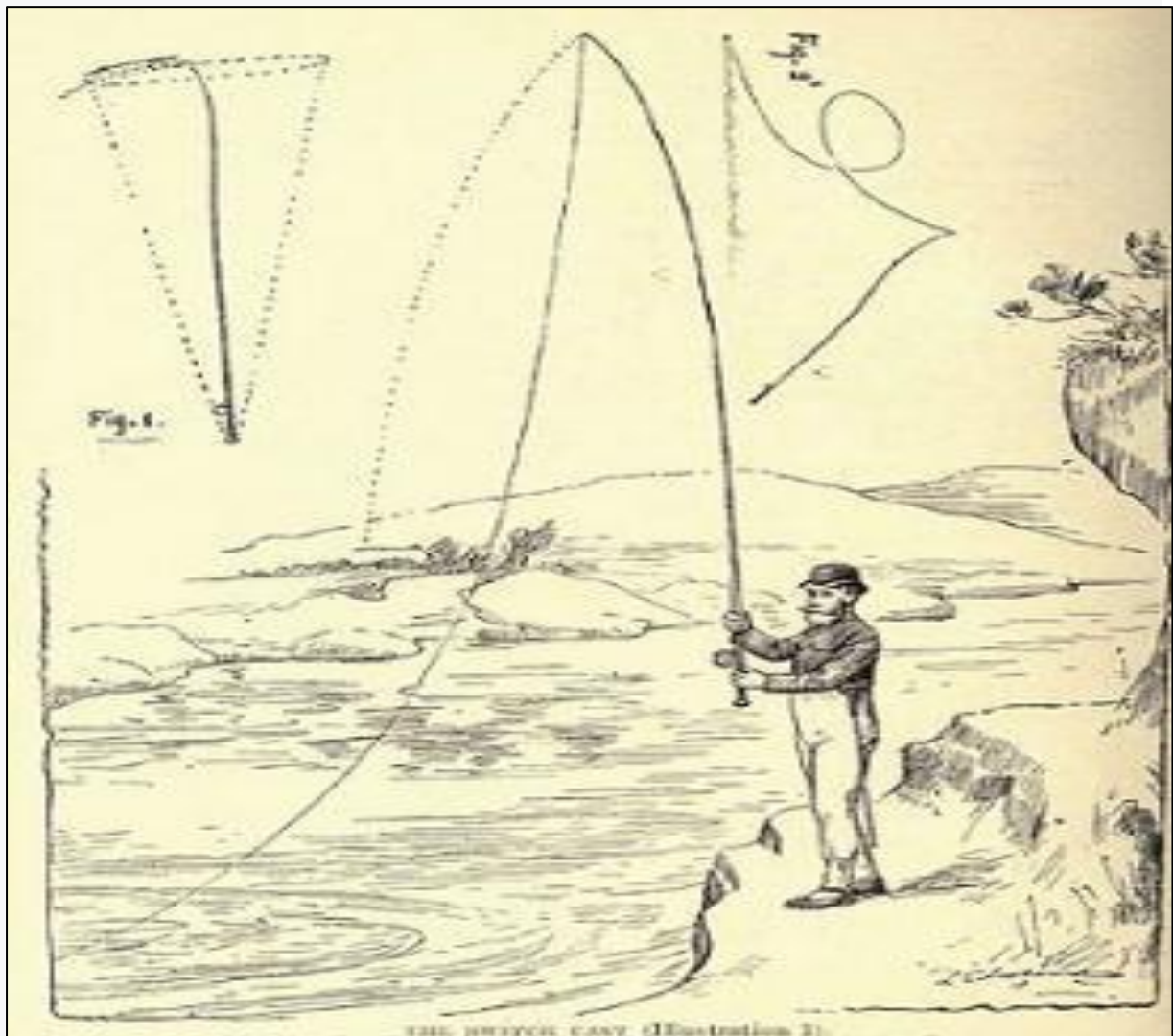
Indeed, based on the brief description available in Fitzgibbon's book, it is possible to learn the mechanics of the cast. The first sentence on page 32 states, "the throwing of the line in the greatest possible perfection." This statement is particularly noteworthy when considering the Victorian era of Queen Victoria, an age marked by significant inventions, including the steam engine, telephone, electric light bulb, and the internal



combustion engine, to name just a few. The Victorians were undeniably clever and innovative in their nature.

So, should we take the sentence "in the greatest possible perfection" literally? Consider this sentence: "Some anglers who throw the longest line make it 'swirl' out upon the water, the hook appearing to align last" (page 32, *The Book of the Salmon*). What can we make of such a sentence? The term "swirl" suggests a movement in a twisting or spiralling pattern. It seems to describe the motion of the line, possibly around an object, with the caster being that likely object.

Apart from the single Spey, it's probable that there were many upstream wind Spey-type casts invented and used during the Victorian period. The figure 8 Spey cast certainly involved a spiral or swirling motion of the line during the redirection of the cast.



### Chapter 3: The Welsh Throw

The "Welsh throw" cast has its roots in the rivers of Wales. This unique casting technique originated during the early 1800s and was primarily utilized on rivers like the Wye, Towy, and the Welsh Dee. Surprisingly, various forms of this cast continue to be employed in angling practices today. The "Welsh throw" holds a notable place in the history of Celtic salmon casts, even though the precise origins of the technique remain shrouded in mystery. It cannot be definitively linked to a single river or individual. Nevertheless, if we were to venture a guess, the river Wye would be a likely contender. What we do know for certain is that this casting method had its beginnings on the rivers of Wales in the early 1800s. It is important to note that the "Welsh throw" has no historical connection to the river Spey or the Spey cast.

Hewett Wheatley, a successful author and Welsh salmon angler, is known for the "Welsh throw" technique. In his book "The Rod & Line" from 1849, there is a quote included in Fitzgibbon's "The Book of the Salmon" from 1850:

*"The second of the two authorities I have just referred to writes: - 'We' (I fancy the author means Salmon-anglers of Wales, the Wye, and rivers contiguous), 'have a mode of sending out the fly in quest for Salmon, I believe, by the name of the "Welsh throw." The fly is brought as near you as the length of the line will admit, by drawing the rod almost perpendicularly or inclining a trifle behind you, either on the right hand or the left, immediately delivering the line before, while the fly and several yards of line remain on the water, and the fly reaches the surface last. To accomplish the throw, the rod must be well proportioned to the line. If the rod is lighter, the line must be proportionably so; else to succeed is impossible, and without the line made for the exact purpose, no man can accomplish the throw. The line must increase in thickness from the point for about twenty-five yards; nearly the last of those 25 yards being very heavy. The object of this is that the weight of the upper part shall be such as to force forward the lighter end, with the gut and fly. The greatest weight of the line being at the point of the rod sends out the lighter part with much less exertion to the angler than is required for the usual overhead throw. It possesses another materialistic advantage: you can fish these casts from the bank, which you could not command unless in a boat, for, as the line will never be brought behind you, no rock, tree, or bank impels the throw. The fly, too, can be pitched much further by this than any other means. The economy of manual exertion, the being enabled to fish in any cramped place, and sending out a greater length of line, surely form a triad well worthy of the salmon-fisher's notice."*

Book reviews from 1849 for "The Rod and Line" by Hewett Wheatley, Esq., Senior Angler, include:

- "Mr. Whitley does not attempt to teach the tyro but only to furnish hints and directions to the advanced angler. These ends are original, unrelated to the various arts and what in the trade are called 'secrets' by which the finny tribe may be tricked onto the hook." – SPECTATOR
- "We have pursued carefully Mr. Wheatley's book and have great satisfaction in declaring it to be a most valuable instruction and guide to the fisherman who pursues the noblest and liveliest inhabitants of the stream." – MORNING POST
- "Besides smart, pungent, and practically profound dissertation on rod and line, this very clever volume teems with particular hints... The book is pleasantly written, and beneath a semblance of levity will be found enunciated a of sterling information." – BELL'S LIFE IN LONDON

Wheatley's work provides valuable information about the tackle used in the execution of the Welsh throw, where the line is brought as near to you as the length of the line will allow by drawing the rod almost perpendicularly or inclining a trifle behind you on either the right or left. The key element is that the line sweeps along the water.

Francis Francis, "A Book on Angling," 1867. Francis, the angling editor for *The Field* for more than a quarter of a century. He was born at Seaton, Devon, UK. The son of Captain Morgan.

In Francis Francis's "A Book on Angling" he describes the Welsh throw and the Spey cast as follows:

*"It is a species of cast that is made when there are high banks or rocks at the angler's back, so that he cannot send his line behind him. And it is one that requires some practice to make from the right shoulder and a good deal more to accomplish neatly from the left. In switching, if the angler can contrive to wade in a yard or two, he will be able to switch with far less danger to his fly and more ease to himself than when standing on the shore, as the objective is to deposit the fly on the water before casting. If the fisher brings his fly home only a yard further than it ought to come, he either smashes it or hooks some obstruction. Having got a certain length of line out, somehow or anyhow, and being desirous of making a new cast, he raises his hands well up and carries the rod up to his shoulder pretty smartly, but he does not send the fly back over the shoulder. Instead, he fetches it in towards his feet, making sure it does not come too high above the surface of the water. About two or three yards above him to his right hand, and a little in front of him, the fly must touch the water, but must go*

*no farther. This action brings the line into the form of a great bow or arc, to which the rod is the chord. The instant the fly touches the water, a sharp downward turn and cut are made, not toward the spot you wish the line to go to, but to establish a sort of centrifugal action, and the line flies toward the required point. In fact, the cast is the result of the laws of centrifugal force, the line forming the tangent to an arc of a circle described sharply with the rod point, and the angle at which the tangent flies off is controlled by the practice and experience of the angler. It is not an easy cast to make and requires a good deal of practice. It is hardly possible to describe it and must be seen and studied to be understood clearly."*

Mr Francis believed that the Welsh throw and the underhand cast are the same in their nature. In subsequent, these two casting styles are described as a switch cast having the same mechanics but different names depending on the river or country where the cast was practiced. According to the first written text on Celtic salmon casting by authors Wheatley and Colquhoun, the two styles revolve around forming a D-loop.



## Chapter 4: The Metropolitan Straight Cast

The metropolitan straight trout casting style is indeed ancient, with its first mention occurring just one year later than the Celtic salmon casts of the Welsh and Scottish. It was initially recorded in 'The Book of the Salmon' by Fitzgibbon in 1850. Although the description of the cast itself is rather brief, spanning only half a page, Fitzgibbon did, in my opinion, an admirable job of summarizing it. In this chapter, we will delve into the intricacies of the metropolitan straight cast and explore its historical significance in the world of fishing.

*The cast (Welsh throw) I have been just commenting on is practiced, but somewhat differently, by London fly fishers for trout. They do not— I mean those who have learned the style recently in fashion on the metropolitan counties' rivers— bring the rod and line over either shoulder but straight backward over the right clavicle (collarbone). By balancing them over it with two or three bold movements of the rod and line backward and forward, they finally fling it straight ahead. Though the winch line touches the water first, the casting line is driven forward to a very considerable distance. I do not think this method should be condemned. By its means, fish rising far from one can be reached, but it labour's under a disadvantage, namely, that it cannot be well practiced unless from the right shoulder, and obstructions in the rear of the angler are fatal to it. Fitzgibbon 1850.*

I find this sentence quite interesting: "Bring the rod and line over either shoulder but straight backward over the right clavicle and balance them over it with two or three bold movements." The movement described by Fitzgibbon appears to be a top-handed fulcrum-type motion, utilizing the D loop to add slack to the main fly line sitting on the water through short forward and backward movements of the rod.

Let's assume that the metropolitan cast was executed using a single-handed trout rod. In the case of a single-handed rod, when a long cast, as described by Fitzgibbon, was required, two or even three sharp downward forward movements would be necessary to generate an energized D loop successfully. When casting a shorter line, it's conceivable that the cast involved only one or two beats to set up the forward cast in its new direction across the stream. In scenarios where a very short line was in use, the cast would likely require only one sharp, short forward and backward movement of the line. In the context of the mid-1800s,. With the short forward/back movement to create slack in the main fly line sitting on the water during the formation of the D loop in the metropolitan straight cast, the cast itself would appear to be a multi motion cast.

## Chapter 5: Reworks of Mr. Wheatley and Mr. Colquhoun

Edward Fitzgibbon takes a significant stride in his work, "The Book of the Salmon," as he revisits and reevaluates the original descriptions by Wheatley and Colquhoun.

*"Fitzgibbon, An Alleged Obscurity Cleared Up of the Welsh Throw. Hewett Wheatley's work, "I think one sentence in the above passage" (meaning the original description of Wheatley's work in Chapter 3 of this book) is, on the whole, a very useful one, somewhat obscure, and therefore requiring elucidation. The sentence's meaning is this: the fly is brought as close as the length of the line will allow. That is, in my interpretation, you should draw in the water towards your feet as closely as the length of line out from the tip will allow. You could draw it quite close if the length out did not exceed the length of the rod. By drawing almost perpendicularly or inclining a trifle behind you, either on the right hand or the left hand, immediately delivering the line before you, while the fly and several yards of line remain on the water. The line, in this case, sweeps along the water, and the fly reaches the surface last. The words in italics contain chiefly the obscurity I complain of. To my comprehension, the author means that while the fly and some of the line are not yet lifted from the water and brought in an upward direction towards you, but not behind. When they are sharply driven forward, the winch line touches the water first, and the instant it touches it, the casting line is shot out straight before it. This is the straightest from the shoulder. - Edward Fitzgibbon (page 35/36), "*

## AN ALLEGED OBSCURITY CLEARED UP. 35

in my interpretation, drawn in the water towards your feet as closely as the length of line out from the top of the rod will allow—you could draw it quite close if the length of the line out did not exceed the length of the rod], by drawing the rod, almost perpendicularly or inclining a trifle, behind you, either on the right hand or the left, immediately delivering the line before you, *while the fly and several yards of line remain on the water. The line in this case sweeps along the water, and the fly reaches the surface last.*” The words in italics contain chiefly the obscurity I complain of. To my comprehension the author means that whilst the fly and some of the line are not as yet lifted from the water, the rod is moved back and then propelled sharply forwards. Now, by this double motion, the fly and line must be lifted from the water and brought in an upward direction towards you, but not behind you, else you could not force them forwards. When they are sharply driven forwards, the winch-line touches the water first, and the instant it touches it, the casting-line is shot on straight before it. This cast is the straightest from the shoulder of all; but unless it can be made in an oblique direction down stream, it is far more useful to the trout-fisher than to the salmon-angler, for this

Re-slate of Mr. Colquhoun's work. Under-hand Cast Described.

*'Next to the cast already described, from either shoulder, right or left, by bringing the rod and line semi-circularly round the point of the shoulder, and when the line has fully developed its length rearwards, propelling it forward so that the casting line shall fall first on the surface of the water. I like best underhanded casts from the left or right side. In performing these, the rod is held forward horizontally, with the hand and the arms projecting in a line with the termination of the ribs. If the right hand is first, the rod is brought in a horizontal sweep to that side and then urged sharply in an opposite direction, by which means the fly and line are pitched far to the left side, the latter touching the water first, the former aligning on at last. Pitching the rod, line, and fly in this way is done by a motion not unlike the way a cricket ball is pitched by a round, over-handed throw, or not very unlike the way a stone is "skewed" on the surface of the water to make what boys call "duck and drakes." The winch line first on the water makes it duck, and the casting line and fly falling further off make the drake. In casting underhanded, with the left hand grasping the rod above the winch, the rod and line brought backward horizontally to the left side, and then propelled downstream to the right. I strongly recommend the practice of casting underhand. It is the best substitute for overhand, or any sort of casting from the shoulder; and an adept at it will be rarely nonplussed by natural or artificial obstructions obtruding themselves in any way or on any side. A short or a long line can be well thrown by these side casts, and it is not always necessary to develop fully, in the backward direction, the line in making them. The line need only be brought partly back, and then turned over by a turn of the rod; simultaneously with the turn, shot forward over, and onto, the water. I am afraid I have been tediously minute in this chapter. Should I be considered so, my defensive plea must be "the love I bear for salmon fishing is at fault." That love renders the faintest features of the art interesting in my eyes, and so I cannot refrain from elaborating them usque ad unquem. Edward Fitzgibbon, page 38.*



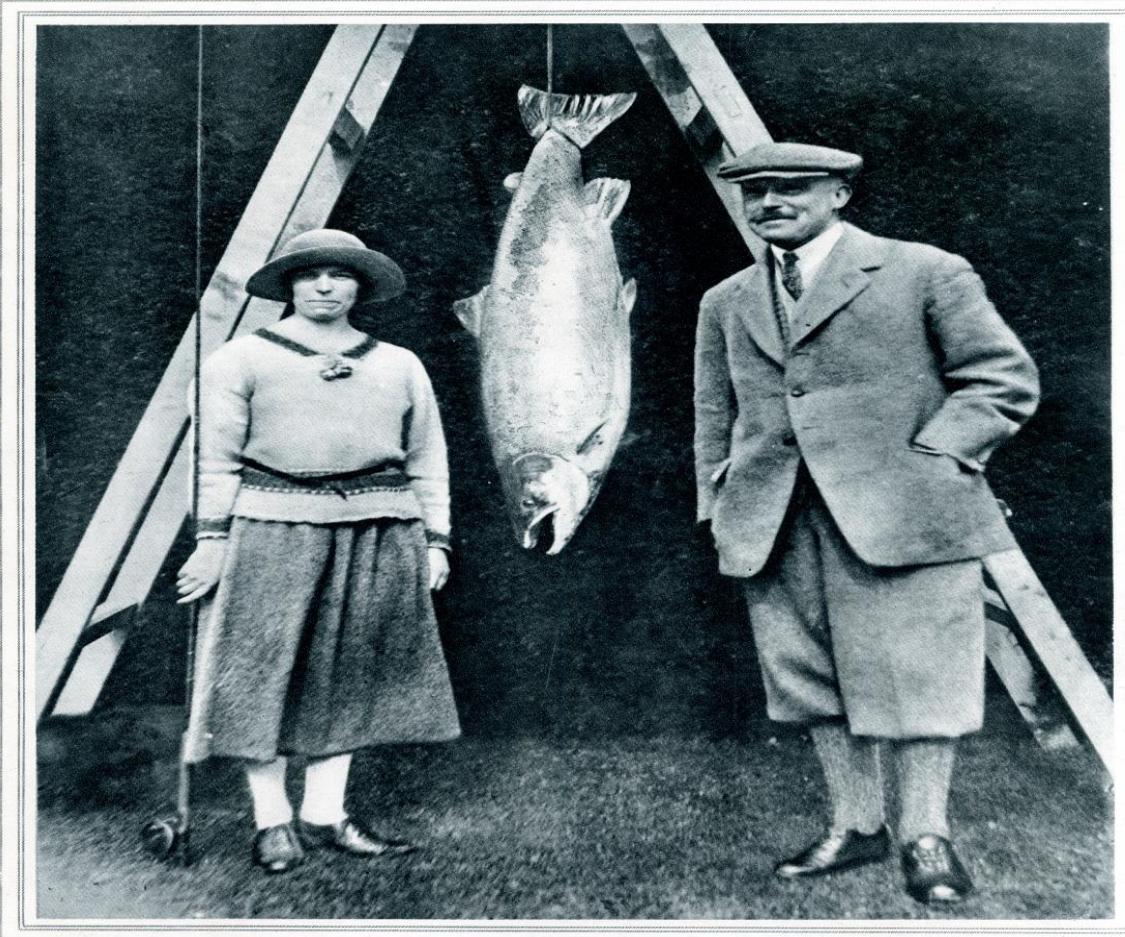
Chapter 6: The Interwoven Heritage 1800s

The Pritchard's

The Pritchard's played a pivotal role in the history of Celtic salmon casting during the late 1800s. Harry Pritchard, estimated to have been born in 1824, hailed from the town of Builth Wells, Wales, in Great Britain. Builth Wells is a quaint market town nestled along the banks of the river Wye, renowned for its large salmon catches. (In 1923, Miss Doreen Davey famously landed a salmon weighing 59.5 pounds.) Builth Wells resides in Powys County, mid-Wales, and has a history dating back to pre-Roman times.

**A WOMAN BREAKS THE RECORD FOR WYE SALMON: A 59½-POUNDER.**

PHOTOGRAPH BY HEREFORD PHOTO AGENCY.



WITH HER GIANT SALMON LANDED AFTER A TWO HOURS' STRUGGLE: MISS DOREEN DAVEY, AND HER FATHER, MAJOR G. W. DAVEY, WHO HELPED HER DURING THE LATER STAGES.

Some of the finest catches of salmon have of late been made by women. In our issue of October 21 last we illustrated a 64-pounder caught in the Tay (a rod-and-line record for that river) by Miss Georgina Ballantine. The above photograph illustrates an equally notable performance by a young Herefordshire sportswoman, Miss Doreen Davey, daughter of Major G. W. Davey, of Kinnersley Castle. Her salmon, which is easily the rod-and-line record for the Wye, was caught in the lower Winforton Waters (her father's property), about 15 miles from Hereford, on March 13. "Using an aluminium minnow," writes our correspondent, "Miss Davey hooked her fish at about 5.50 p.m., at a picturesque spot known as Cow

Found. At that time she was only accompanied by her chauffeur, who also acts as gaffer, but later on her father arrived to relieve her when her arms began to tire. The fish put up a tremendous struggle, and it was not until a few minutes before eight o'clock that it was eventually landed. It was a cock salmon of beautiful proportions, weighing 59½ lb. and measuring 52½ in. in length and 29 in. in girth. Its age was estimated at about six years. The record was previously held by Mr. J. Wyndham Smith, of Aramatone, Ross, who on one day in 1914 killed two big salmon, the heavier of which was 51 lb. A 62½-lb. fish was caught in a net at Chepstow in 1895."

The river Wye originates in Plynlimon, mid-Wales, and stretches for 134 miles (215 kilometres) before reaching the Severn estuary. It ranks as the fifth-longest river in the UK and often forms the border between England and Wales for a significant portion of its course.

Harry Pritchard grew up in a family of fly fishers. His father, Mr. Stephen Pritchard, was a passionate angler and a manufacturer of high-quality handmade fishing equipment. The Pritchard family operated a fishing tackle workshop and resided on Broad Street in Builth Wells during the early 1800s. Later in Harry's life, the experience and knowledge he gained from working in the family business would prove to be crucial in the development of Celtic casting in America during the latter part of the 1800s. Notably, Izaak Walton's "The Complete Angler," edited by Edward Jesse in 1856, featured a piece about the river Wye and Mr. Stephen Pritchard on page 475.

### *The Wye*

*The Wye is famous for its excellent fishing opportunities. It yields fine salmon, and in the counties of Brecknock and Radnor, it offers exceptional trout and grayling fishing. The Swan Hotel in Hay and the Lion Hotel in Builth are recommended places for accommodation. The Wellfield Hotel in Builth allows guests to fish five miles of the best part of the Wye, including several salmon pools. The season for fly-fishing commences earlier in the Wye than in the neighbourhood of London.*

*Whilst the snow was falling here, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1838, the following advertisement appeared in Times newspaper: "Good news for Anglers, so very plentiful is fish in the Wye, in the neighbourhood of Builth, that Stephen Pritchard, the fishing-tackle maker there, caught on Tuesday last, in the course of four hours, no less than 143 grayling, trout, and salmon-pink; and in five hours, on the following day, 225 fish of the same description."*

### **Pritchard's Migration**

Mr Thomas Pritchard immigrated from Wales to Brooklyn, New York, in 1840. Harry joined Thomas five years later. The New York, arriving passengers and immigration list 1820-1850. A Henry Pritchard (possibly Harry Pritchard) arrived on May 8, 1845, New York, departure port Liverpool. The Pritchard's opened a fishing tackle store on Fulton Street, New York City 1848. The store operated for 40 years and during this time they built rods for fly fishing as well as boat and casting. The Pritchard's held patents for a reel seat clamp and a durable rubber and ribbed fore-grip. Occasionally, you can find

rods marked with their respective patent numbers, and sometimes, one might bear the mark 'Pritchard.'

The partners were renowned for their high-quality fly rods, which they sold directly from their store. The shop itself traded for four decades. However, for reasons unknown, they decided to cease trading through the store and explore other avenues to distribute their rods to the market.

Between 1887 and 1888, the partners reached an agreement to sell their patents, which included reel seats and rod guides, to a retailing company, Abby & Imbrie of New York. The Pritchard's subsequently supplied Abby & Imbrie with their excellently crafted rods.

### The Pritchard's and Celtic Casting Success

Harry Pritchard began his competitive casting career in 1881, participating in an event at Brighton Beach, Coney Island, New York. During this competition, Harry exhibited remarkable casting prowess, securing 3rd, 2nd, and 1st place with distances of 91 feet, 71 feet, and 76 feet. It was on that memorable day at Coney Island when a significant mark was undoubtedly made in Celtic casting history in America, considering the Pritchard's Welsh origins.

As revealed in Hewett Wheatley's book, "The River Wye Fishers," practitioners of the Celtic cast, known as 'The Welsh throw,' was already in practise by 1850. Therefore, it is highly probable that the Pritchard family possessed substantial proficiency in the art of Celtic D loop casting even before they ventured into the competition at Brighton Beach. Harry was undoubtedly on the path to becoming a legendary caster, and both partners displayed expertise in this skill.

In 1882, at Harlem Mere in Central Park, New York, Harry chose to employ the Celtic cast in the championship open distance fly event, emerging victorious with an astounding distance of 91 feet. Following this success, event organizers decided to alter the competition format, introducing a dedicated D loop cast class in 1883. In this new category, Harry delivered a cast of 90+ feet using his personally favoured rod. He further elevated his status by achieving a remarkable 113-foot cast using his salmon fly rod. Harry's exceptional talent with a Spey rod firmly established him as one of the finest Celtic D loop casting tournament casters globally. In recognition of his outstanding casting achievements, the casting community named after him, christening it the 'Pritchard cast.'

"Mr. Harry Pritchard has proven himself to be the champion 'distance' fly caster of the world, having made a cast of 91 ft with a Leonard rod, 10 and a half feet long, and weighing 8 1/4 ounces. Mr. Pritchard is about 50 years of age, well, how reserved, a jovial champion slightly nervous, and a most excellent rod maker. He is a member of the Washington Rod and Gun Club of Brooklyn. We heard dissenting opinions as to the style of his casting. It's certainly not graceful, nor does it seem to be an effective method for the stream. Yet, we are assured by such sterling anglers as Dr. Ferber and others qualified to speak, that Pritchard generally scores above his angling companions when on an outing. An old gentleman, evidently one of the craft, asserted broadly at the tournament that the roll off the line on the water, with its splashy splashing, attracted the fish. There is evidently merit in this underhand or 'rolling' cast when used at short distances; at long ones, we fear that it is 'off colour' and 'off scoring.'" The Fishing Guardian.

#### Championship Class 1882 (Results)

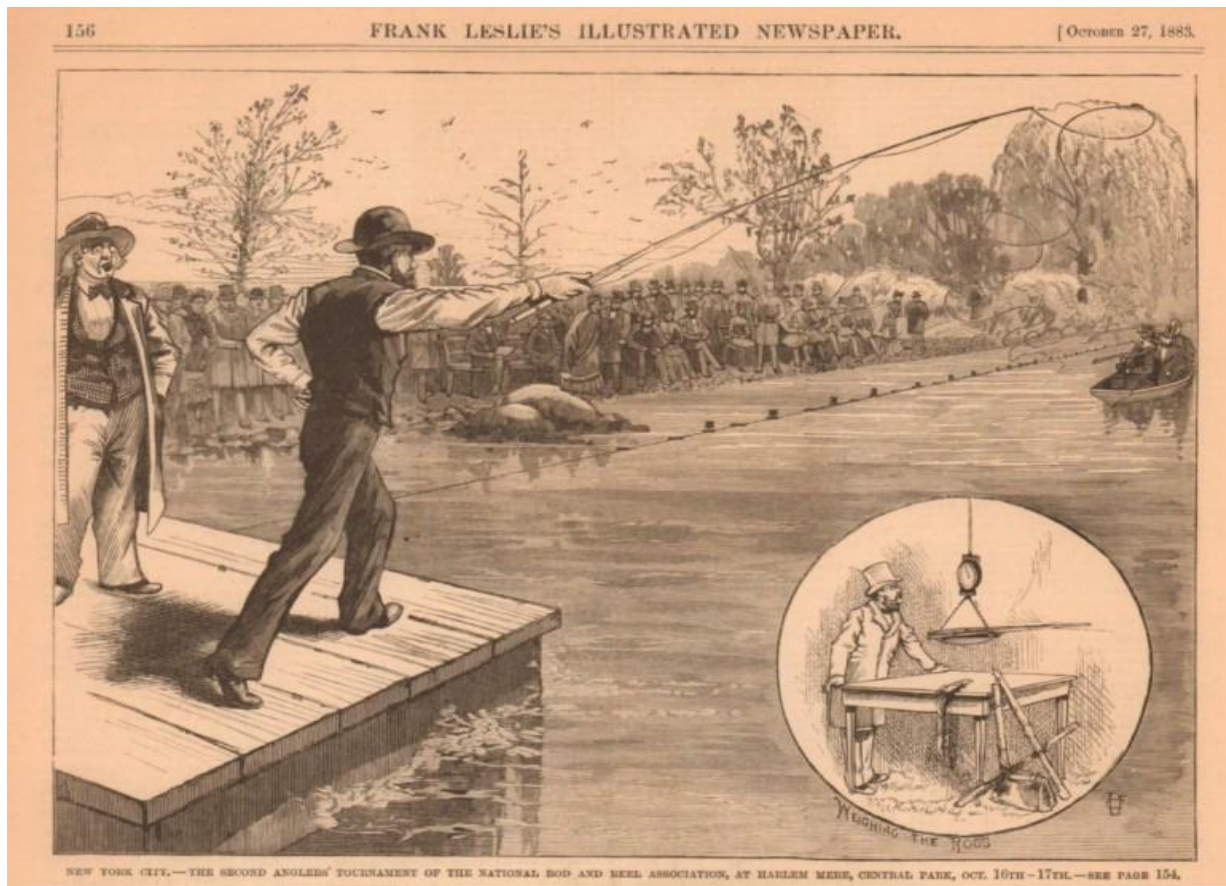
	Length of Rod Ff In	weight of rod Oz	longest cast in feet.
H. Pritchard	10 4	8	91
R.C. Leonard	11 6	8.7	90
H.W. Hawes	11 6	8.7	85

Mr. Pritchard, of the Washington Gun Club in Brookland, made his remarkable cast of 91 feet using a peculiar rolling throw. This has been variously called a "water cast," an "underhand cast," and a "hoop-snake cast." The line lies on the water at perhaps 60 feet, and by reeling off more line, it is sent out with a rolling motion until the flies leap out beyond. There are various opinions on the merits of this method, which is new here but is said to be used in England. Some contend that it is impossible to catch a fish in this manner due to the commotion in the water near the caster. The other contestants retrieved their lines and cast in the usual manner, making many good casts. Mr. Pritchard exceeded 85 feet only once, but as this contest was for distance alone, he was awarded first prize." "The Fishing Guardian, 1882"

Mr. Pritchard certainly made remarkably long casts in relation to the length of the rod he used. The question here is whether such a casting distance could have been achieved without shooting line? To put Mr. Pritchard's cast into context, during the same year, the International Fly and Bait Casting Tournament was held on the river Thames in London. Competitors gathered from all over Great Britain, to compete in this event. In terms of recorded scores, just over 90 feet were achieved by professional fly casters using an 18-foot rod and executing a switch cast.

As we know in the mid-1800s, South of England trout anglers possessed a distinctive D loop cast. London's English trout fishers were familiar with the Welsh throw during this period. English anglers infused their own creativity into the Welsh throw, resulting in a modified cast with a unique twist. It involved extending the line into the D loop through two or three backward and forward motion before releasing the cast across the river. The collaboration between the Welsh and English anglers undoubtedly brought an exciting innovation to the casting technique.

The metropolitan straight cast undeniably causes significant disturbance on the water's surface around the angler when performing the cast. Furthermore, this casting technique enables the angler to achieve long casts. When examining the Pritchard's and their D loop casting approach in New York, it seems strikingly similar to the metropolitan straight cast. Contemporary newspaper reporters express their perspectives on Harry Pritchard's casting style. Statements such as, 'some argue that catching a fish in this manner is impractical due to the disturbance in the water caused by the caster's splashy movements,' reflect varying opinions on the effectiveness of this method, which, although new here but said to be employed in England.



Fly Casting Tournament New York 1883

## Chapter 7: Celtic D loop Casting Competitions

Casting competitions offer invaluable insights into Celtic casting techniques. Often, the competition rules provide essential details, such as the equipment used – specifically the length and type of rods employed during that era. Understanding the rod's length that served as the basis for a particular casting style is crucial, as it serves as a benchmark for comprehending the modern Spey-type cast.

Moreover, competitive casting results yield additional noteworthy information, particularly in terms of the achieved distances. As a competitive Celtic fly caster, myself, I am naturally drawn to these findings. However, delving deeper into historical records to uncover the distances that these competitors achieved in the late 1800s and early 1900s is nothing short of enthralling.

Early fishing literature often described the casting techniques of their time in great detail. Yet, regrettably, the information on the rod lengths used for these casts was frequently omitted by these early authors. This omission likely occurred because they assumed that their readers were already well-versed in the knowledge of fishing rod specifications.

The harmonization of information from these early authors and competitive fly-casting rules helps rectify this historical oversight from both sides. By merging these two valuable resources, we gain a more comprehensive understanding of the history of Celtic casts. Fly-casting competitions in the late 1800s were often grand affairs, staged in large cities in both the South and North of Britain, including London, Edinburgh, and across the Atlantic in New York. It may surprise many to learn that during the 1880s and 1890s, the fly-casting competition scene was in full swing. The most notable of these events was the International Bait and Fly-Casting Tournament held on the river Thames in London at the famous Welsh Harp in Hendon, with the first competition taking place in 1881. Sponsored by the Gazette newspaper and held in aid of the Angler Benevolent Society, this tournament drew competitors from all over the United Kingdom, Europe, and America, making it a prestigious event that attracted both professional and amateur casters.

The fly-casting competitions featured various categories, including single-handed trout distance, trout accuracy, trout switch two-handed, salmon accuracy, salmon overhead, and salmon switch cast double-handed. The scoring system involved the three longest casts made by each competitor during their allotted five minutes, which would then be combined to calculate their distance score. Additionally, casters had to demonstrate accuracy by casting the fly into rings, earning them points. As an example, a score might look like this: 108ft, 103ft, 108ft, and 35 accuracy points, resulting in a total score of 354.

Competitors would take their turns on the casting platform secured on the river Thames, where both amateurs and professionals battled for prestigious titles. The amateur and professional casters were divided into separate groups, preventing, for instance, an amateur from competing in the professional class and vice versa. The top three casters in each class would receive cash prizes. These prizes were quite substantial for the time, with a total prize pool of £150. In today's currency, this would be approximately £19,000.

In the Victorian era, it is commonly known that anglers used long fly rods, sometimes extending up to 24 feet in length, for the purpose of catching salmon on large rivers. It was also a fashionable choice for trout anglers to employ double-handed fly rods for overhead, switch, and Spey casting techniques, as opposed to the more frequently utilized single-handed rods.

Reference to the double-handed trout rods. The Gazette, 1882.

*SIR, - Having fished the portion of the river Test with you, Mr. Editor, lately described, I beg to inform "York's" that, although some of the members use double-handed rods, others, again, have only single-handed rods. Some even have a big rod carried by the attendant, who also carries a net and a basket. I, owing to a weak right arm, use a double-handed rod, as the weight is distributed on both arms. I find it much less tiresome than a single-handed trout rod, however light it may be. Does "York" mean by the word "managed" that although the cast is made, it is so long that the angler cannot strike a rise properly? I find that I can throw only 16 yards with an 11-foot single-handed rod, but with a double-handed rod, 20 yards is not too difficult. Again, in dry fly fishing, a long rod enables the line to avoid the ripples and swirls of the water which are in mid-stream and towards your own bank, on which the line sags, causing your fly to drag in an unnatural manner. As to carrying one's own net, this is usually done when alone in Hampshire by means of a patent lock-over fastening, which I believe John Hammond of Winchester introduced some years ago. It is somewhat similar to the landing net, of which an illustration is given in Doctor Foster's "Scientific Angler." This fastening causes the net portion of the landing handle to hang down by the angler's side. It is usually attached to the strap of the bag or basket by means of a hook or catch of some sort. A few years ago, in the month of July, during a week's fishing, I landed on the Test, in bright sunny weather, 13 Grayling, weighing about 20 lbs. Using a double-handed rod, two lower joints bamboo, under top greenheart or lancewood, made by the late James Ogden of Cheltenham, and similar to one described by Mr. Francis in his excellent book on angling. As far as my memory serves me, I only lost one Grayling after hooking it, and this was in a sharpish stream when I was alone, though I landed all but one or two at the outside by myself. Seven or eight were taken between the Hut, just above Sheepbridge, and below, say, 300 yards. You, Mr. Editor, will doubtless remember that the stream was rather fast at the above-mentioned spot. The flies*

*used were small ones, about No. 14 to 16 Limerick, with turned-out points, except for the last fish, which was my best one, weighing 2.5 lbs. by my steelyard. It took a large fly with woodcock wings, a rough body, and red ribbing up the body and whisks of the same colour. J.B. Hull.*

International Fly and Bait Casting Tournament: Sporting Life. Under the management of the representative committee, composed of anglers drawn from the principal London and provincial societies, the seventh fly and bait casting tournament were held on Saturday in the beautiful grounds of Orleans House, Twickenham, kindly lent for the occasion by W. Cunard, Esq. These tournaments have not only assisted in popularizing scientific angling in all its branches but have another aim in view, namely, to augment the funds of the 'Thames Anglers' Preservation Society. A body deserving of the utmost support, especially by those fishermen who ply their craft in the lower and tidal waters of the river Thames. The first five tournaments were held at the Welsh Harp, Hendon; the sixth took place at Twickenham in 1886, and after skipping a year, the affair was again held for the seventh time. In order to offer more attraction to the angling world and the public, an exhibition of tackle was included in the arrangements, besides a couple of punting races for amateurs and professionals, and by the courtesy of Lieutenant Colonel Talbot Coko and officers, the band of the King's Own Scottish Borderers was in attendance. As caterers, Messrs. Spiers and Pond gave great satisfaction. When the showery weather is considered, with rain falling very heavily at intervals from the early morning, the attendance of spectators was good. Although given a fine day, a much greater pecuniary success must have been achieved. The acting officials were as follows: judges for fly casting. The prizes, which exceeded £150 in value, were gifts from various gentlemen and societies, with the winners being as follows: The rules of the international fly and bait tournament state that the maximum length of a fly rod to be used during the 1883 tournament. Competitors were allowed to use their own rod, line, and reel.

- Single-handed fly rod: 12 feet 6 inches.
- Double-handed fly rod: 16 feet.
- Salmon fly rod: 20 feet.

The rules make it very clear what the maximum allowed length is. However, the ultimate decision regarding the length of the rod was left to the fly competitor themselves, with the condition that it must not exceed the length of rod specified by the committee in the rules. In the printing of results, the length of the rod used by a particular competitor was sometimes marked alongside their casting distance. These fly-casting results date back to 1886.



**Salmon Overhead Amateur**

- Sir R. Roberts: 16ft 10in
  - Best Three Casts: 82ft, 78ft, 91ft
- G. M. Kelson: 17ft 8in
  - Best Three Casts: 101ft, 93ft, 87ft

**Salmon Overhead Professional**

- W. Bayes: 18ft
  - Best Three Casts: 72ft, 72ft, 71ft
- Henry Wilder: 18ft
  - Best Three Casts: 80ft, 79ft, 78ft
- Harry Wilder: 18ft
  - Best Three Casts: 80ft, 79ft, 78ft
- E. Andrews: 18ft
  - Best Three Casts: 84ft, 83ft, 82ft

**Fly-Casting, Trout, Doublehanded Rod**

- W. Bayes: 10ft
  - Best Three Casts: 77ft, 74ft, 57ft
- Henry Wilder: 10ft
  - Best Three Casts: 60ft, 58ft, 57ft
- Harry Wilder: 10ft
  - Best Three Casts: 56ft, 57ft, 58ft
- E. Andrews: 10ft
  - Best Three Casts: 62ft, 60ft, 68ft
- B. R. Bembridge: 10ft
  - Best Three Casts: 50ft, 48ft, 45ft

**Fly-Casting, Salmon (Switch)**

- G. M. Kelson: 17ft 8in
  - Best Three Casts: 92ft, 91ft, 85ft
- C. M. P. Burn: 18ft 0in
  - Best Three Casts: 73ft, 74ft, 76ft

Note: In opinion, some of the casting rules seemed rather strict. For instance, when fly-casting in the Salmon (switch), competitors were only allowed a maximum of 6 feet of space behind them for the rod or line to extend.

The International Fly and Bait Casting Tournament Committee of 1886 made a significant decision regarding casting lengths. For salmon casting, they decreed that the maximum length should not exceed 18 feet, a reduction from the previous limit of 20 feet. In single-handed trout casting, the maximum length was set at 12 feet, and in double-handed trout casting, it was 16 feet.

Under these new regulations, Mr. J. A. Rennie claimed first place in the salmon fly (switch cast) category, achieving a remarkable total of 275 feet with his three best casts: 92 feet, 92 feet, and 91 feet. Mr. Rennie also excelled in the same event, winning the double-handed trout (switch) competition with casts of 76 feet, 77 feet, and 78 feet, totalling 231 feet.

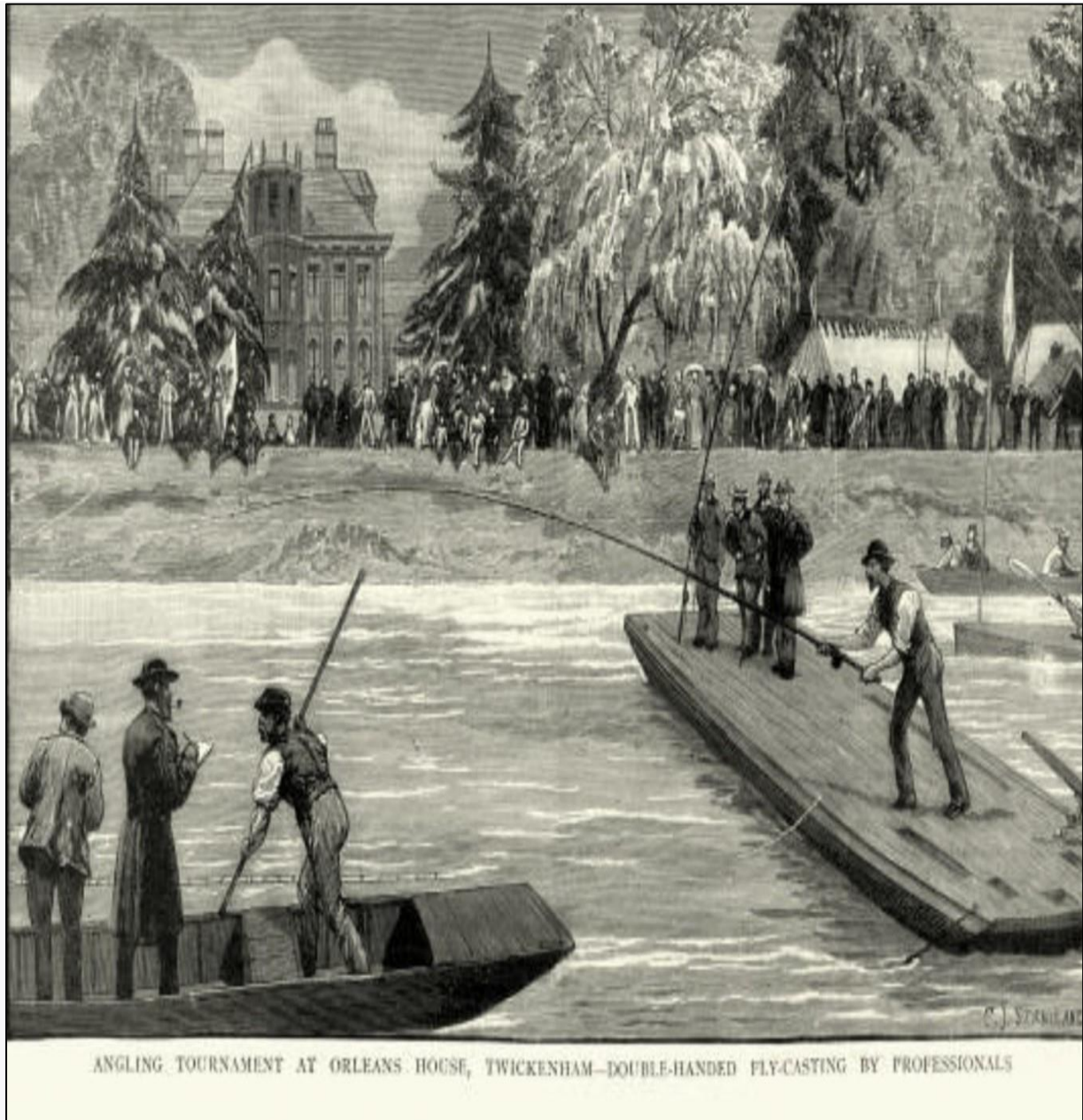
The longest recorded cast with a salmon rod, measuring an impressive 135 feet, was achieved by Major Traherne. This remarkable feat took place at the 1884 tournament and was executed with a 17-foot spliced Farlow rod.

For further information about Major Traherne, please refer to the corresponding page 28 of this book "Mr. Treherne, Spey or Switch."

During the years leading up to World War II, Spey casting competitions were held in Wales on the river Usk. Organized by The Usk Casting Club, the first of these competitions took place in 1928 and continued annually until the outbreak of the Second World War. The tradition was then resumed several years after the war had ended. The competition was hosted on the Glanusk estate in Crickhowell, Breconshire, South Wales, and was organized by Lord Glanusk, who was also known as Wilfred Bailey, the third Baron of Glanusk. The event took place on Lord Glanusk's fishing beat on the river Usk. During the course of this competition, numerous British and world records were shattered.

In 1933, during the competition, the highlight was the salmon distance open ladies' event, where the Hon. Mrs. A. Cooper, who happened to be Lord Glanusk's sister, set a world record by casting a remarkable distance of 39.5 yards. Mrs. Cooper continued to push the boundaries of her own record by achieving a cast of 41 yards, an extraordinary accomplishment that was attained at the British Casting Association's World Championship in 1937.

In 1936, another significant achievement was recorded when Gaffer Sparrow established a world record of 46 yards for salmon fly Spey casting at the Vale of Usk fly casting competition.



1929 results for the Salmon fly distance competition (Spey casting or switching with an obstacle behind), open to amateurs, with a rod not exceeding 17 ft:

1st Place: D. E. Campbell Muir - 33.5 yards

2nd Place: J. A. Rennie - 32 yards

3rd Place: Capt. G. Graham Clarke - 31 yards

The Vale of Usk Salmon and Trout Fly Casting Competition attracted the attention of competitors from overseas making the event truly international.

## Chapter 8: The Welsh Taper Weight Forward Head Fly Line

The origins and history of the tapered head fly line finds its origins on the salmon rivers of Wales in the early 1800s. It is difficult to attribute the invention of the tapered head double handed fly line to a specific person or river, but this line was exclusively used in Wales in the early 1800s. This line was produced in various weights and lengths to match casting conditions, the power of one's rod, and its length. Essentially, it functions as a weight forward casting head. This classification is based on the fact that the line's body weight or mass is retrieved back to the proximity of the rod tip before each cast and is linked to a thinner running line via a rear taper. The Welsh triangular profile weight forward fly line has a history of over 180 years and was the first purpose-built line for D loop casting. Considering that the available alternatives at this time were predominantly characterized as the Scottish level or extended level body line with a brief taper on either side. The Welsh weight forward casting head has no connection to the river Spey or the Spey cast; these are distinct line styles from the early 1800s.

However, it's important to note that the prevalent style of the time did not involve shooting line as fashionable, which would come later (see Chapter 9). The concept of the forward loop unfolding above the water and the shooting of the line, "cast and shoot," played a secondary role and was primarily used to cover shy pools. It appears that the most fashionable method of that era involved presenting a fly by rolling the line along the water's surface in combination with casting a fixed amount of line, "fix and cast,".

The Welsh tapered head fly line, whether made of silk and horsehair in its historical form or its modern plastic counterpart today, effectively transfers the energy transmitted from the rod with minimal exertion. For the understanding of the of the Welsh tapered fly line, I will defer to Mr. Wheatly, upon whom we rely entirely on.

*'To accomplish this throw the rod must be well proportioned to the line. If the rod be powerful, so must be the line. If the rod be lighter, the line must be proportionably so, else to succeed is impossible; and without a line made for the exact purpose, no man can accomplish the throw. The line must increase in thickness from the point of about 25 yards; Nearly the last half of these 25 yards being very heavy. The object of this is, that the weight of the upper part shall be so, as to force forward the lighter end, with the gut and fly. The greatest weight of the line being at the point of the rod, sends out the lighter part with much less exertion to the angler by than is required for the usual overhead throw. And it possesses another material advantage; that you can fish these catches or casts from the bank which you could not*

*command, unless in a boat; for, as the line is never brought behind you, no rock, tree, or bank impedes the throw. The fly, too, can be pitched very much further by this than any other method. The economy manual exertion. The bring enabled to fish in any cramps pace and the sending out a greater length of line surely from a triad Well worthy the salmon-fisher's notice." By Wheatly 'The Rod and Line' 1849.*

This early description by Mr. Wheatley of the Welsh triangular taper profile casting fly line outlines the elongated profile of the line that Alexander Grant used to set a casting record of 65 yards on the river Ness in Scotland in 1895. Unlike the favourable method of rolling the line along the water, which was still fashionable in Grant's time, along with the switch cast (with a change of direction) and the underhand cast, Grant broke free from the voguish method of rolling the line along the surface. Instead, he allowed his loop to unfold above the water, but still favoured the fix and cast method.

Alexander Grant achieved great things with his switch casting and had considerable success with his 1895 fly rod featuring the vibration rod. While it is commonly thought that Grant invented the triangular taper weight forward head fly line, there is no evidence to suggest that Alexander Grant himself claimed to have invented it. It is said that Alexander Grant visited Wales in 1876 for a drapery course but left Wales after a short time due to illness. It is likely that Grant learnt of the Welsh tapered casting head during his visit to Wales. Indeed, Grant was the first "noted" person outside of Wales to use the Welsh throw weight forward fly line. There is absolutely no doubt that Grant was a genius, well worthy of the title "the grandfather of Spey casting."

He set his record on the river Ness using a 21ft vibration greenheart rod. Grant made long casts without shooting the line, making him the true champion and master of casting the fix and cast switch-type throw. Although Grant's cast of 65 yards has been surpassed by a few very talented casters over the last 20 years, in distance over the ground.

After conversing with numerous Alexander Grant enthusiasts and experts over the years, it becomes evident that Grant's switch cast might be considered the original switch cast, devoid of influence from the Spey fishers. Grant had a distinct preference for ensuring that his fly and casting line did not contact the water during the execution of the D-loop. Instead of establishing a water anchor point, he opted for an aerial D-loop. For those of you who have attempted this Grant-style switch cast, you are undoubtedly aware that it is not an easy technique to master. I can only imagine that Grant himself was the sole individual who fully grasped the benefits of avoiding a water anchor, especially when dealing with up to 65 yards of line.

During the early 1960s in Scotland, debates were underway regarding the choice between doubled taper fly lines and the use of the Welsh tapered weight forward head profile. The majority of Spey casters, in agreement with each other, believed that a casting line with the thickest portion in the middle was the best profile for Spey casting.

Meanwhile, in the other camp, casters were starting to lean towards the Welsh weight forward tapered profile. Which is very different from the Scottish double taper or level line profile. By the way, the double taper had a significant advantage and one very useful attribute: when one end wore out, you could simply turn the line around on your reel, and you were good for another season. Very practical. As it turned out, time was on the side of the double taper, and it was here to stay, at least through to the mid-90s.

The mid-90s and early 2000s saw a growing demand for casting greater distances on large rivers with a two-handed rod. This shift in demand led to the transition from the double taper profile to out of the rod tip profiles. Furthermore, it marked the revival of the Welsh prolonged front tapered head profile.

The revival of the Welsh triangular tapered profile also gained momentum during the CLA (Country Landowners Association) game fair, which is held annually in England. The Spey casting championships at the CLA were initially introduced in 1997. In the first three years, competitors used a double taper profile line. However, by the year 2000, competitors began to use longer front tapered profile Welsh lines, with the heaviest part of the line positioned at the rod tip, in combination with a low-diameter shooting line. In the years that followed, the re-emergence of the Welsh prolonged front taper led to the shattering of all pre-2000 distance casting records, particularly in ground distance. Remarkably, world records and championships in both individual and team categories were accomplished utilizing a Welsh prolonged weight forward front tapered fly line, specifically in the 15 and 18-foot categories.

Fly line manufacturers acknowledged the benefits of creating triangular weight forward tapers instead of double tapered profile fly lines. This prompted numerous American companies to produce such lines in the 1990s and early 2000s. Moreover, some fly line manufacturers have adopted short head tapered profiles, crafting compact shooting head fly lines as detailed by Fitzgibbon on page 12 of the Welsh throw.

## Chapter 9: Aerial Loop & Shooting Line Spey Cast Evolution

Before the days of Celtic-style throws, the overhead and side casts were the only methods available to salmon fishers for presenting their flies to their chosen quarry. While these casts had advantages, such as the fly line unfolding above the water's surface and the ability to shoot line for longer casts, they were problematic when dealing with obstacles located behind the fisher.

The arrival of Celtic casts in the early to mid-1800s addressed the challenges posed by these overhead and side casts. However, it introduced a new aspect to casting, characterized by the rolling of the line along the water's surface. With this change, salmon fishers lost the ability to propel their fly line above the water's surface during the forward cast and also forfeited their capacity to shoot any running line.

In the next chapter of the development of the Spey-type cast, a significant breakthrough did not occur until the late 1800s. This was primarily due to substantial advancements in the materials used in crafting Spey rods, which enabled manufacturers to produce higher-quality rods. Additionally, conscientious salmon fishers, who occasionally needed to present their fly to the fish with minimal disturbance, began to explore the overhead cast as a solution to the limitations associated with Spey-type casts.

It's worth mentioning that during this late 1800s era, both the switch cast, and the underhand cast remained quite popular, as noted by George Kelso in his book "THE SALMON FLY" from 1895. Notably, the switch cast of that time bore a resemblance to the single Spey cast. Much like the Spey caster changing direction across the stream, the switch cast was employed to alter the direction of the cast in tight and confined fishing situations.

For those interested in delving deeper into the fundamental aspects of the Spey cast and the switch cast, a description by Major Thaherne is worth exploring.

### *MAJOR THAHERNE ON THE SPEY AND SWITCH CAST 1886*

*"I have much pleasure in according to a request that should give my opinion as to whether the Spey cast should be allowed at switch competition at the casting tournament held at Richmond on the 5th inst. Add to which it appears an objection was raised by one of the competitors. In order that it may be perfectly understood on what grounds my opinion is based, I propose to give a short description of each and also state the circumstances under which they are usually*

adopted in actual practice. In making a switch, the line is not lifted out of the water in the first instance, as it is when casting in the ordinary fashion, in which case the result would probably be that the fly would either get hung up in the trees or smashed on rocks. What an angler, therefore, has to do is to lift the line to the surface of the water by raising the point of the rod and then to drag it through the water in the direction he's standing, carrying the point of the rod behind him as far as such obstructions allow. Then, by a sudden downcast of the rod, the line, as yet having been allowed to rest on the water in front of him, is propelled with the force suggested by the length required. During this process, the fly has not been lifted out of the water until the very last inch of the line precedes it. While the line is propelled, it will thus be made to assume a sharp loop somewhat similar to that of a wheel, which diminishes in size as it rolls out and its track beats the surface of the water. The coil or loop, as it is commonly called, naturally vanishes at the point the fly has reached when the cast is complete. To make an extra-long Spey cast, the salmon fisher requires a rapid stream to work in, and which will, before making every cast, carry his fly downstream to the full extent of his line, straight and taut, the point of his rod being held as low as possible for that purpose. Then, by suddenly raising the rod very high, the line is lifted out of the water to the very end, and without a moment's pause, the rod is carried upstream to the right or left (as the case may be) by a rapid movement, but not so rapid as to send the fly too far upstream past the angler. The object being to let the fly strike the water just above where he is standing, at which moment the whole of the line is in reverse or up aside of him. Then, with a sweep peculiar to this particular cast, the line is propelled over (and not along) the surface of the water, after the fashion in ordinary casting. The forthcoming descriptions of the two methods may not be strictly accurate, but they will give the reader a fair idea of how each one is made. It will be seen that one is widely different from the other; the line and the fly in the case of the switch remain in the water until the switch is nearly complete, whereas the Spey cast, both must be lifted out of it before, it may be said to have commenced. When the Spey cast is mentioned in conversation, it always brings to my mind a man wading up to his waist in a rapid stream. It was doubtless, under like circumstances it had its origin, and if I may use the expression 'the stream and not the bank is its home,' it can be, and often is, made successfully from a

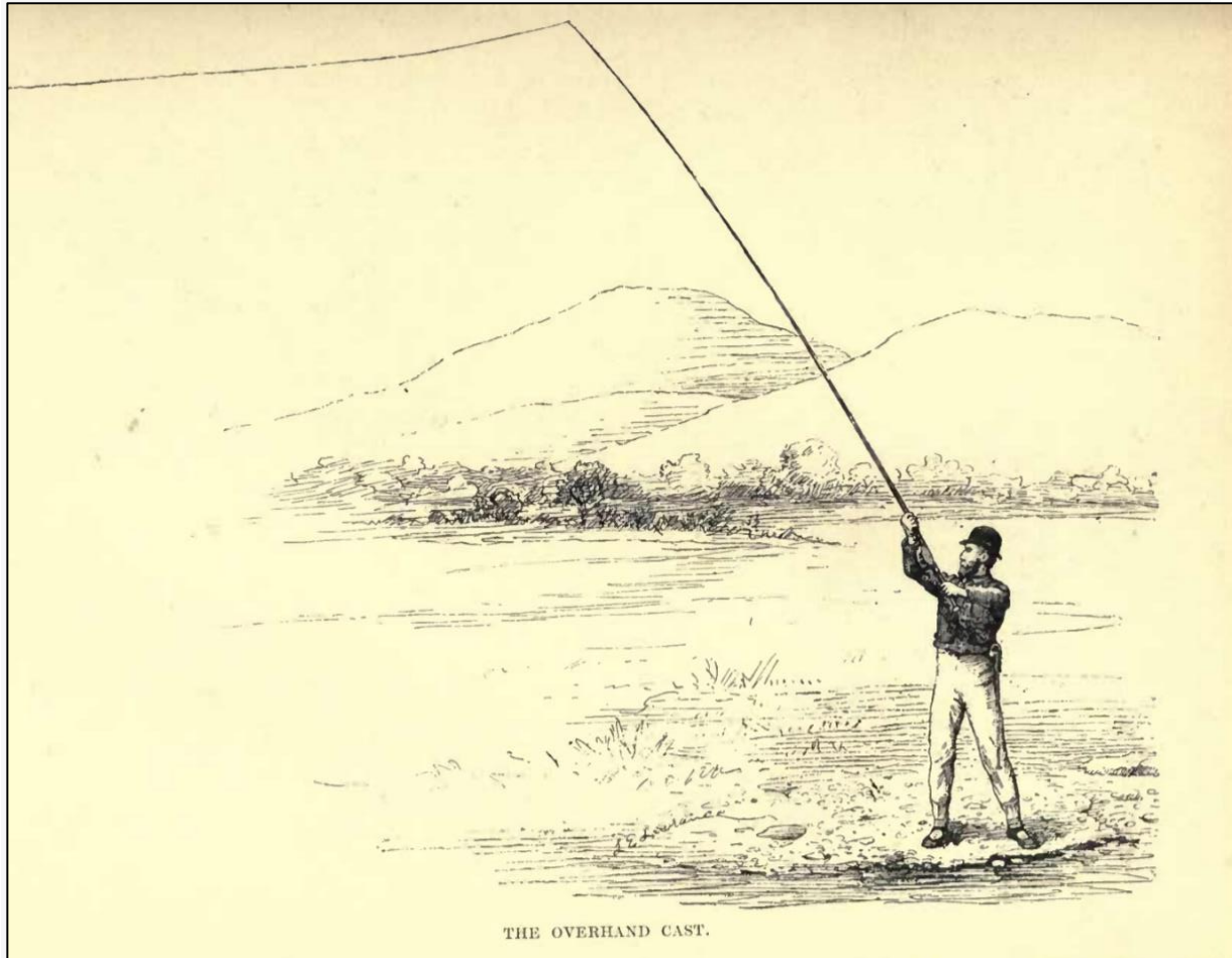


*bank when there is a strong current running closely alongside of it. Even should there be rocks or trees within two or three feet behind the man who is casting. But if these obstructions should overhang in such close proximity above him, that is to say, higher up the river, that his rod or any part of his line must necessarily come in contact with them when making a Spey cast, he will have to adopt some other method, and it is under such difficulties that the switch comes to his aid. A much longer line can be cast in the Spey fashion than by switching, and according to my ideas, the Spey cast is not a switch, partaking more of the character of an overhand cast. Bearing this in mind, and also that the committee of the casting tournament, in offering a prize for the best switch cast, evidently did not contemplate that any other than that particular method would be resorted to at the competition, I am of the opinion that the judges were right in disqualifying the Spey cast. The Fishing Gazette, June 17th, 1886. John P. Traherne."*

The shooting of the line with the use of a spey rod in the late 1800s. However, first, we must clear up a potential misunderstanding in regard to the old term 'switch cast.' If I were to participate in a fly-casting instructor exam today and explained in detail the switch cast from the 1800s with reference to a change of direction, I might possibly fail the exam. The reason for this is that the modern term 'switch cast,' among other names, also includes the 'jump roll,' which involves no change of direction.

Moving on to the next stage in the evolution of Spey casting - the shooting of the line and the unfolding of the forward cast above the water. In this next stage, we can refer to George Kelso's work in 'The Salmon Fly' from 1895. Kelso dedicates many pages to various casts used by salmon anglers of that era. Regarding the shooting of the line with the Spey rod, in Kelso's book, there is a description of a high stop in the forward cast during the shooting of the line in the overhead cast.

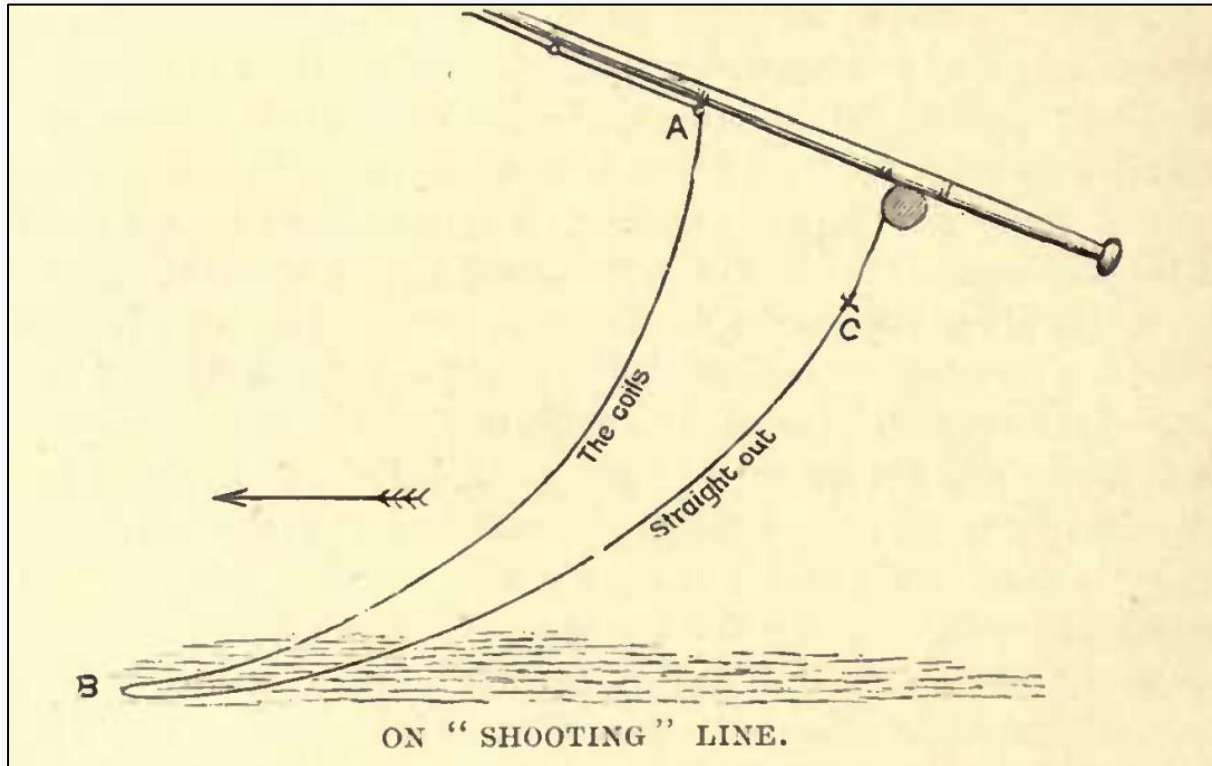
'The Salmon Fly,' published in 1895."



"Whatever you do, don't forget to check your rod early enough in the thrust-down. It should not be allowed to reach beyond an angle of 55 degrees.

It remains for me to describe how the length of a cast may be increased by, "shooting" line, and I have a word or two say on the different matter. the subject of shooting line has been referred to another chapter; (in the overhead chapter) but little practise is needed to master the method.

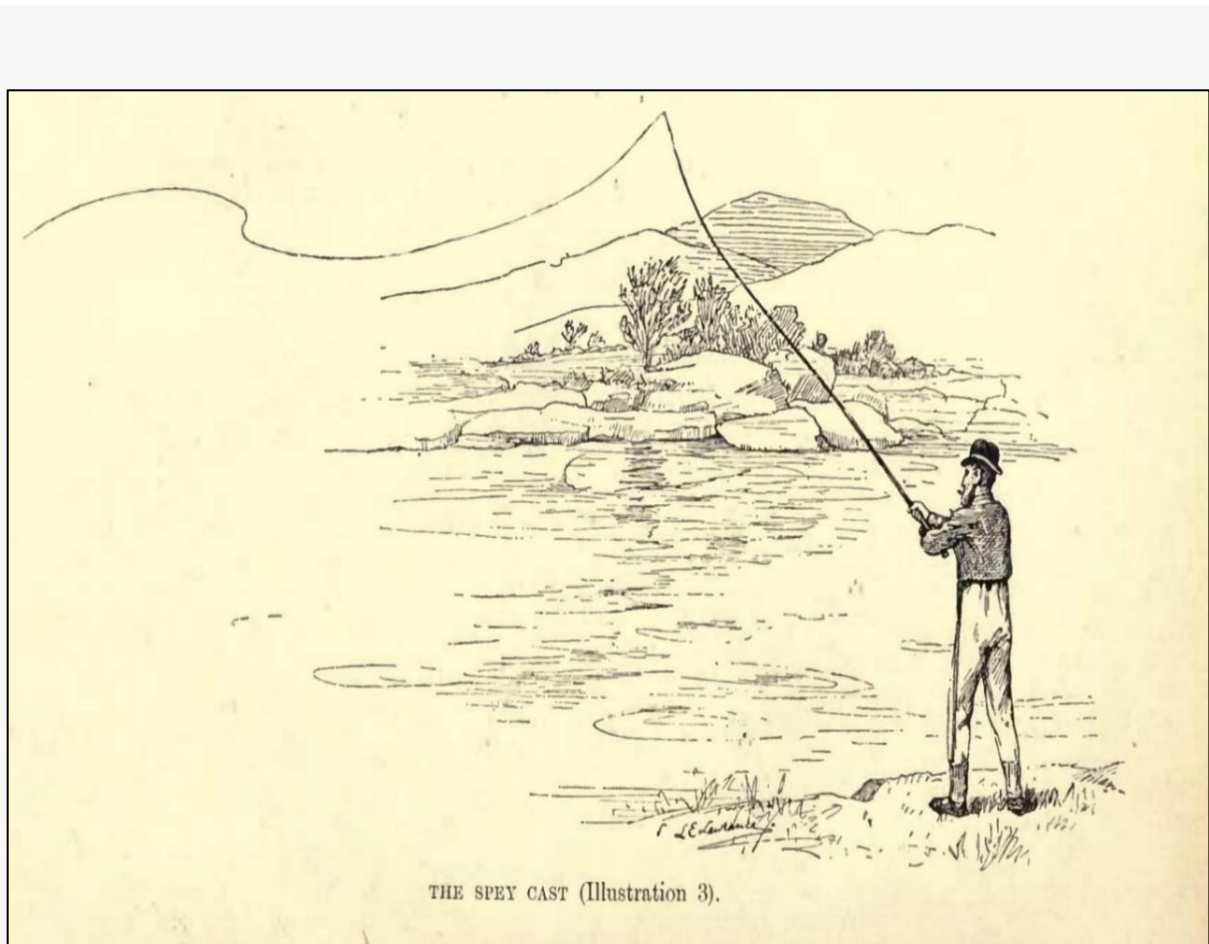
The feat consists first in the angler drawing from the winch the length of line required and, while so doing, making and placing coils of it, one by one, between the point of the forefinger and thumb of the upper hand. These coils, of about a yard in length from end to end, hang down in front of the winch under slightly held there until the point of tension in the thrash-down is reached. If at that instant they are dropped they will be dragged out by the rest of the line, but if dropped too soon,



the middle part of the running line will belly down towards the water, and the "slack" will not be taken out at all. In making, say, a thirty-yard cast, a four-yard length should be shot; a thirty-four-yard cast a six-yard length, and so on in proportion. To shoot ten yards with upright revolving rings is no great feat provided the line is smooth, properly dressed and of the right size and weight, but in wading, when the coils fall from hand, the current takes them out of position as shown in the accompanying diagram, thus forming an acute angle in the line at point A as well as at point B. The force of the water at the lower part B prevents the feat of shooting being accomplished. This is easily remedied by the anglers seizing the winch end of the dropped coils at the point C and giving with his lower hand so placed a good snatch so as to bring the whole of the slack part back under the bottom ring of the rod, when it will all shoot out as readily as on land. Thus, it will be understood how much the action of the rod can be preserved, and, by this cast, how much more water can be covered. Page 324.

At the very beginning of the cast, I would repeat that the rod is raised. this makes the line belly downwards, as shown, and brings that "tug" into existence. Without pause the rod still ascends and then slightly descends outwards, circles round, as it comes upwards towards the angler right rear, and pursues its course of the thrush-down to the point where if the line is to be propelled above the water, as in number 3 illustration, a better plan done allowing it to run its course along the surface of the water in the customary way, rod is to be checked as set forth in details of the "overhead". the explanation here is simple will not detain us long. casting the line

above the water is a justifiable measure where fish are shy, for the very splash of the line disturbs them to such an extent that I have seen it result in driving salmon from the pool altogether. For this reason, the departure from the old custom, at times and in places, cannot be insisted upon too strongly. In more than one direction the improved and creditable method affords great pleasure to the artist engaged. For, if while fishing a shy pool over again, he reaps new benefit by reason for his former



fish in water comparatively undisturbed. We ought all to hold the opinion that this is no trifling satisfaction to veterans ever mindful of the interest of others. There is yet another practical advantage derived from when propelled above the water, the line carries are coils drawn from the winch. The purpose of "shooting". perhaps the chance for the novice using a Spey rod of coming to grief in this respect are somewhat numerous, for has it happens the most diligent enthusiastic would not pledge himself to manage more than half the length accomplished with ease and success by that overhand method with our style of rod, still a yard is a yard and must help to preserve the rods action. George Kelso, *The Salmon Fly* 1895.

Salmon fishers used the fixed line method for a specific purpose. I don't think it was a fault, as described by many authors, but rather a fishing style or trend, much like shooting line is a fashionable trend today. Like my forefathers before me, I personally still use the fixed line style when fishing in big salmon rivers for its convenience. Casting in this manner provides the greatest pleasure and requires great skill to handle such long lines, sometimes up to 35 meters when used with a 15-foot Spey rod. I believe salmon fishermen of the day also found great pleasure in this fixed line style. I'm certain that, like myself, they considered it more of an art than simply retrieving and shooting line.

Alexander Grant demonstrated that very long lines could indeed be lifted and cast across the river, setting benchmarks for us to follow and highlighting that fixed line casting was not necessary, but rather showcased one's skill in the art of handling a salmon rod. There are, of course, other material advantages to fixed line fishing, such as no time wasted online retrieval and the fly spending more time actively fishing.



## Chapter 10: Welsh Throw vs Spey Cast: Casting Techniques Unveiled

In this chapter, we will closely examine chapters three and four, starting with the works of Hewett Wheatley and then Edward Fitzgibbon. The question that arises is whether there is anything genuinely novel in the realm of D loop casting. Some authors argue that many casts are not new; they tend to cycle in and out of fashion. It's understandable that such casts are often reinvented repeatedly. Many authors who have written on the subject of D loop type casts in the past have expressed that understanding the mechanics from early texts is a challenging task, if not nearly impossible. However, we shall discover that these texts are quite clear in their objective to educate their readers. It is widely accepted that D loop casts have their origins in the early 1800s. The single Spey cast, better known in its day as the 'underhanded cast,' is of primary significance. Surprisingly, very little research has been undertaken to break down the mechanics of 'The Welsh throw.' Thus, the question remains: what kind of cast is 'the Welsh throw'? This cast has yet to be explored in its full entirety, but it plays a significant role in the origins and history of Celtic double handed casts.

Once again, it's essential to bear in mind that we are conducting our research based on the first-ever written texts on Celtic salmon casts from 1849-1850.

"We're standing on the right bank of a river with our right hand uppermost on the rod. Mr. Wheatley describes, '**The line is brought as near to you as a length of line will admit.**' The first move of the downstream cast, the lift, explains how the line arrives at the top of the initial lift. **By drawing the rod, almost perpendicular or inclining a trifle behind you, either on the right hand or the left.** Inclining a trifle suggests the rod tip on the initial lift is slightly behind the caster. At the next stage of the cast, let's look at the double motion described by Fitzgibbon. One of the major differences between a Welsh throw cast and a single Spey cast is a double motion. Fitzgibbon, in the second part of the double motion, 'immediately delivers the line before you, while the fly and several yards of line remain on the water.'"



The author executing a double motion action cast.

The rod is moved back, then propelled sharply forward. This double motion lifts the fly and line from the water, bringing them in an upward direction toward you, not behind you. Otherwise, you would not be able to force them forward (Fitzgibbon).

After the initial upward motion during the execution of the Welsh roll, the rod travels slightly backward, followed by a sharp forward motion, redirecting the line (as seen in the picture above). In the final step of this double motion, the rod sweeps back to the key position before being driven sharply forward to complete the cast. The description of the Welsh throw is divided into two parts, and in order to provide a full description of the cast, we need to combine these two parts. The first part is from Mr. Wheatley's 'The Rod and Line 1849,' as quoted in 'The Book of the Salmon,' and the second part is Fitzgibbon's re-slate of Mr. Wheatley's description of the Welsh throw, also found in 'The Book of the Salmon' on pages 33 and 35.

means salmon-anglers of Wales, the Wye, and rivers contiguous,) “have a mode of sending out the fly in quest of salmon, known, I believe, by the name of the ‘Welsh throw.’ (The fly is brought as near you as the length of line will admit, by drawing the rod, almost perpendicularly or inclining a trifle, behind you, either on the right hand or the left, immediately delivering the line before, while the fly and several yards of line remain on the water.) The line in this case sweeps along the water, and the fly reaches the surface *last*. To accomplish this throw the rod must be well

of. To my comprehension the author means that whilst the fly and some of the line are not as yet lifted from the water (the rod is moved back and then propelled sharply forwards. Now, by this double motion, the fly and line must be lifted from the water and brought in an upward direction towards you, but not behind you, else you could not force them forwards. When they are sharply driven forwards, the winch-line touches the water first, and the instant it touches it, the casting-line is shot on straight before it.) This cast is the straightest from the shoulder of all; but unless it can be made in an oblique direc-

Wheatley is describing a different cast to that of the underhand cast. In the case of the underhand cast, during the initial phase, the line breaks free of the water's surface and sweeps upstream of the caster. On the other hand, Welsh throw doesn't involve a sweep upstream; instead, the line remains downstream throughout the entire cast. Unlike its Scottish counterpart, the underhand method, the Welsh throw doesn't have the lift and sweep component. In the initial stage of the Welsh throw, the rod is lifted upward and backward, followed by a forward rolling motion. At this point, several yards of line still remain anchored on the water. For easier readability, we'll combine part one and part two.



*The fly is brought as near you as the length of line will admit, by drawing the rod, almost perpendicularly or in Inclining a trifle, behind you, either on the right hand or the left, immediately delivering the line before, while the fly and several yard of line remained on the water, the rod is moved back and then propel sharply forward. Now, by this double motion, the fly and line must be lifted from the water and brought in an upward direction towards you, but not behind you, else you could not force them forward. When they are sharply driven forward, the winch-line touches the water first, and the instant it touches it, the casting line is shot on straight before it.*

"Another commonly known characteristic of the Welsh throw and, for that matter, the snake-roll type cast, its ability to change large casting angles with great ease, well beyond 90 degrees upstream. Fitzgibbon, states in his book on page 34, describing the Welsh throw. "The fly, too, can be pitched much further by this than by any other means." I fancy the author means it's a very powerful cast. He goes on to say the Welsh throw has a fault, in relation to fishing with the old vintage style salmon fly.

#### The Book of The Salmon 1850

*"This cast is the straightest from the shoulder of all, but in less it can be made in the oblique direction downstream, it is far more useful to the trout-fisher than to the salmon-angler, for this reason that the trout-fisher, having thrown across the water fairly opposite to him can work his flies down with the current, whilst the Salmon-fly cannot be so worked. If the attempt were made, the Salmon-fly either roll over as it went with the current, or it would float down irregularly on its side.*

*At any rate, it's feathers and fibers would be sometimes all of the heap, and sometimes separating and sprawling in the water, terrifying rather than attracting fish." Fritzgibbon.*

It appears that the Welsh throw, a technique employed by salmon-fishers in the 1800s, may have been ahead of its time. Upon closer examination of early texts, the Welsh throw and its mechanics bear a striking resemblance to the snake-roll type cast. This similarity serves as potential evidence that in the realm of fly fishing, very little is genuinely novel, with innovation largely stemming from the creativity of anglers.

## Chapter 11: Reviving the Art of the Spey Cast

During the late 1940s and into the early 1960s, the Spey cast fell out of favour in the UK, making way for the growing popularity of the overhead cast and the advent of nylon monofilament. Consequently, many anglers turned to spinning.

The revival of Spey-type casts in the 1960s can be attributed, in part, to the efforts of Arthur Oglesby and Hugh Falkus, who collaborated with Bruce and Walker Limited. As Spey casting made its return to prominence, it underwent a change in format. The terms used to describe such casts in the past, like the underhand cast, and switch cast, were simply replaced with the now-familiar double Spey and single Spey. It's worth noting that the Welsh continuous taper weight forward head also went out of fashion during this period, giving way to the Scottish double taper profile fly line.

Eric Taverner mentioned the double Spey in his book "Salmon Fishing" in 1931. While Taverner was one of the first to mention the double Spey cast, the exact origins of this casting technique remain somewhat unclear. Eric Taverner was a co-founder and member of the Fly-Fishing Club of London, a gentlemen's club with past members such as Hugh Falkus, Frances Frances, and Sir Edward Grey (1st Viscount Grey of Fallodon). The club's patron is Charles III, the King of the United Kingdom.

Arthur Oglesby (1923-2000) was a multi-talented individual hailing from Scarborough, Yorkshire, England, known for his significant contributions as a writer, filmmaker, broadcaster, and fisherman. His life's work and passion for fishing, particularly in the realm of salmon and sea trout, made him a prominent figure in the angling community.

Oglesby's journey into the world of fishing, and more specifically, Spey casting, began in 1957 when he made his first visit to the picturesque Spey at Grant Town-on-Spey. During this time, he was fortunate to secure employment as an assistant instructor under the guidance of T.L. Edwards, who was pioneering some of the first-ever Spey casting courses to be conducted on the Spey river. This experience marked the inception of Arthur's lifelong dedication to the art and sport of fly fishing.

Tragedy struck in 1968 with the passing of Mr. Edwards, but Arthur Oglesby was well-prepared to carry on his legacy. He assumed the responsibility of overseeing and conducting the Spey casting courses at Speyside, taking them to new heights. Through his tutelage and passionate dedication, Arthur played a pivotal role in educating and training a new generation of anglers, instilling in them the essential skills and techniques required for successful salmon and sea trout fishing.

Arthur Oglesby's influence extended beyond the riverbanks, as he was instrumental in establishing the Association of Professional Game Angling Instructors (APGAI). This association became a prominent organization for those who aspired to become proficient angling instructors, thereby furthering the art of fishing in a professional capacity. Through his active involvement, Oglesby ensured that the art of fly fishing continued to thrive and evolve.

Oglesby was not only a skilled angler and instructor but also a prolific writer. His literary contributions to the world of fishing were invaluable. His most famous work, "Fly Fishing for Salmon and Sea Trout," published in 1986, served as a comprehensive guide for anglers, imparting his knowledge, experience, and techniques for a successful catch. This seminal work continues to be a reference point for those seeking expertise in the field.

In addition to his books, Arthur Oglesby penned numerous articles for various esteemed fishing and outdoor magazines, including "The Field," "Shooting Times," "Field and Stream," and "Trout and Salmon." His writings not only served to educate and entertain, but also helped foster a sense of community and shared passion among fellow fishing enthusiasts.

Arthur Oglesby's legacy as a writer, filmmaker, broadcaster, and fisherman endures, and his impact on the world of angling remains immeasurable. His dedication to teaching, writing, and promoting the art of fishing, particularly Spey casting and salmon fishing, has left an indelible mark, ensuring that his name will forever be associated with the rich and rewarding pursuit of these time-honoured traditions.

Hugh Falkus, born in 1917 in Cheam, Surrey, England, and passing away in 1997 at Cragg Cottage, Ravenglass, Cumbria, was a multifaceted individual who left an indelible mark on the world of angling, literature, and filmmaking. He is best remembered for his contributions to the world of game angling and is hailed as one of the greatest angling writers of the modern era.

Falkus's writing career was punctuated with numerous successes. Some of his most notable works include "Salmon Fishing" in 1984, "Sea Trout Fishing" in 1965, and "Spey Casting: A New Technique" in 1994. These books became bestsellers and have since remained invaluable resources for anglers seeking to improve their skills and knowledge. Falkus's ability to convey his passion and expertise in angling through the written word made him a respected figure in the angling community.

In addition to his writing, Falkus was a skilled filmmaker and television presenter. His classic works such as "Salmo the Leaper" and "Falkus on Spey Casting" contributed

significantly to the world of angling documentaries and educational materials. His films not only showcased his prowess as an angler but also offered viewers a glimpse into the art and science of angling.

One of Hugh Falkus's notable achievements was the establishment of a Spey casting school at Knott End, Birkby, Eskdale, near his Cumbria residence, Cragg Cottage. This school served as a hub for anglers seeking to master the intricate techniques of Spey casting. Falkus's dedication to teaching and sharing his knowledge further solidified his status as a prominent figure in the angling world.

During the 1960s through the 1980s, Castle Grant on the river Spey became a focal point for the revival of Spey casting. This location attracted numerous visitors, including renowned individuals such as Ken Walker, Arthur Oglesby and, of course, Hugh Falkus. George Smith and Eric Robb, the ghillies on Castle Grant Beat 3 during this time, played a pivotal role in the resurgence of Spey casting. It was George who first imparted the art of Spey casting to Ken Walker, a frequent visitor along with his daughter Kay Walker and a key figure in the angling industry.

The relationship between George Smith and Ken Walker spanned many decades and was marked by mutual respect and a shared passion for Spey casting. George Smith's prowess as a ghillie and his proficiency in Spey casting further contributed to the revival and popularity of this angling technique during that era.

In summary, Hugh Falkus was a prolific angling writer, filmmaker, and angler who significantly influenced the world of angling. His contributions through his books, films, and Spey casting school continue to inspire and educate anglers to this day. His association with sea-trout and salmon played a pivotal role in the resurgence of Spey casting, making his legacy enduring in the world of angling.

Hugh Falkus collaborated with Bruce and Walker to develop a weight forward salmon line. The line's specifications include a length of 105 feet, with a long 65-foot belly, and it's white in colour, constructed from plastic. It is ideal for executing long casts using a cast and shoot technique.

During the revival of Spey casting, there was a significant shift towards plastic fly lines. These plastic lines were initially developed in the United States during the 1940s and 1950s but gained substantial popularity in the 1960s and 1970s due to their low maintenance requirements and a wide range of sink rates. At that time, nylon long front tapered lines had limited availability and were primarily found in a double taper profile.

Due to this lack of availability for prolonged front tapered lines. Salmon anglers took it on themselves in the 1990s. Salmon anglers like on my local river, the Welsh Dee,

favoured a scissor approach to modify their salmon casting lines. This involved adding a 5#/6# or even a 7# weight trout line of approximately 20 feet or longer to their 10/11 weight double tapered lines to elongate the forward taper. Additionally, I recently learnt about a group of salmon anglers in Scotland who were cutting lines in the 1990s to create a continuous tapered fly line for the fix and cast style, which eliminates the need to retrieve the line between casts. This experimentation led to the creation of the XLT line by Scientific Angler.

The Celtic salmon cast, which originated in Scotland and Wales, is now widely embraced across the world, marking a significant departure from its humble beginnings. Similarly, the continuous or long front tapered line had its origins in Wales in the early 1800s. This widespread adoption and the development of a global Celtic D loop casting community have laid the foundation and secured the future of this beautiful casting technique.



## Chapter 12: A Journey Through the Epochs of History

To illustrate the history of Celtic salmon casts, I have employed a river system as a chronological framework. In this framework, the source or beginning of the river symbolizes the origins of the Spey and Welsh throw casts.

The aim of this chapter is to provide a concise and easily understandable account of the remarkable journey and development of Celtic salmon casting over the last 173 years or so. It was Hewett Wheatly, John Colquhoun, and Edward Fitzgibbon who committed their thoughts to paper and gifted us with written records of the origins of the Celtic salmon casts. These gentlemen provided us with a valuable window to the past and the roots of these casting techniques.

The subsequent 170 years of history are of great significance to the future of the Celtic D loop salmon and trout casts, particularly for the upcoming generations. Therefore, it is crucial to accurately document the origins and history of this art form. We have a responsibility to safeguard and protect the legacy and future of fly fishing and fly-casting. To do so, we must examine the past and understand what has evolved and resurfaced over the years.

Before delving into the historical aspects, it's important to dispel a common myth: the belief that there was only one style of D loop cast in the United Kingdom during the mid-1800s. The Welsh throw and the Scottish Spey throw are often mistaken for the same cast, but they are distinct from each other. According to various writers, the Spey cast was given different names depending on the river where it was practiced. The Welsh throw cast originated in the rivers of Wales and has no connection to the river Spey or the origins of the Spey cast. These are two different casting styles, both with their roots in the early 1800s.

All these casts share a common goal: efficiently delivering the fly to the fish while navigating obstacles behind the angler with minimal effort, reaching the target with pinpoint accuracy. The angler, his rod, and line engage in a seamless dance, ensuring the fly effortlessly glides through the air out to the waiting fish. A setting that has experienced minimal alteration in nearly two centuries.

