

## ***The story of ABU and me...***

By

*Coenraad van den Heever (PhD)*

*(Part 4)*

In Part 3 of my story, I mentioned that I had to stop international online buying due to the demise of my countries postal service. However, I was not ready to stop collecting my favourite fishing reel from Sweden. Far from it! I started scrutinising local online adverts like Gumtree, Junkmail and OLX to look for ABU reels on sale. These classifieds, list different items for sale including fishing tackle. Unfortunately, the tackle on offer and the condition thereof varies greatly. More specifically, ABU items is not often listed and sometimes way overprized when looking at the reels condition. A fine example that I obtained is this glorious ABU Ambassadeur 6000 four screw on Gumtree during 2016. Interestingly, the original owner won this reel during a fishing competition in the 1960's and has never used it! Now it is gracing my collection, still never to be used...



South Africa also has its own version of “eBay” in the form of “Bid or Buy” which works on similar principles as the former online platform. As mentioned previously, I also collect other

vintage fishing reels on a small scale (Mitchell, Penn and DAM Quick), but ABU is my main interest and will always be. I managed to buy a couple of ABU items on Bid or Buy, but also this rare Mitchell Big Game trolling reel in its wooden display box that was only available in the 1970's for a very short while. Nice find indeed!



As discussed in Part 1, I also service and repair fishing reels as a second leg of my hobby to feed my obsession. Sometimes the clients want to see my collection and after drooling over my display, they offer me an ABU item which is "laying around in their garage". In the beginning of this year I obtained, as a gift, a 1950's Sportex River spinning reel from Germany to add to my collection! Although it is not marked ABU Record, it is still exactly the same reel as the ones that were outsourced by ABU many years ago. Talk about being at the right place at the right time...



During January 2019 something special happened to me that was going to change my collecting experience for good. I was following Wayne Real's site since 2009, but never made contact with him. When I saw his request to add any old ABU advertising, I decided to seize the opportunity. After introducing myself I received an email from him shortly afterwards. He was delighted to hear from a South African collector who shares a similar obsession or as he calls it "kindred ABU spirits". I scanned a few ABU ads and he posted it. A friendship started to develop and as time went by we were almost speaking daily. Out of the blue he offered to further my collection by adding ABU Tight Lines which I did not have, and even a belt buckle was included in the package! Thank you so much mate, I wear it with pride! This gesture was a mind blowing experience for me...

As you may recall, I received a Sportex reel from one of my clients earlier this year. However, I did not mention that he gave me not one, but two of these old beauties! One grey and one gold, but otherwise exactly the same reel. I decided to give the gold one, in its original box, to Wayne as a token of our friendship. He was delighted by this gesture and I was glad to give something of value to him. I hope you enjoy it mate! Hopefully, someday I will meet this "larger than life ambassador" personally...

Collecting these exquisite reels takes my mind of a highly stressful job working with trauma and suicide within the law enforcement sector. As Simon Shimomura stated in his book *The Ambassadeur and I* Final chapter: “ *One of the readers... told me that he gets relaxed and feels most peaceful when touching the classic Ambassadeur reels in his collection*”. The original ABU have touched my life in so many ways since the late 1980's.... and Simon sums this up nicely: “*Fishing has given me beautiful dreams and peaceful memories during my entire life. Ambassadeur reels have always been there with me*”.

Here is to the next decade of collecting ABU reels of Sweden!

Part 4 now concludes ***The Story of ABU and me.***