

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ALVEY REEL.

Around 1920, when the Alvey Reel was first produced, Australian anglers were using ragoon and split cane rods, unpolished gut and cord lines, and an assortment of gear which would not be acceptable to the fisherman of today.

The trend toward lighter tackle has become more and more evident over the years with the advent of light tubular glass rods, very fine yet strong nylon monofilament lines, and the acceptance by anglers of the lightly weighted moving bait, as being the most productive method when fishing.

Over the years, Alveys have retained the principles of ungeared simple reels with a minimum of wearing parts, easy maintenance, ample line capacity and solid construction. Without interference to these basics, it has been necessary to introduce several modifications to match the reels with modern times.

The reel backing plates were originally of cast brass, which added a lot of weight to the unit. These parts were superseded with backplates of nickel plated sheet brass, and over recent years high grade stainless steel has given the necessary strength and appearance to this component, and helped to maintain a lightly weighted reel for gear balance.

The first spools off the production line were made almost entirely from wood. Rose mahogany, silky oak, camphor laurel and red cedar was stored to season and then hand turned and finished by craftsmen to yield a most attractive article.

By 1938 a phenolic moulding powder had been introduced for plastic spool manufacture. These spools were lighter than wood, hard and strong, and retained their finish and resistance to weathering for the lifetime of the unit.

The spool of today however, is undoubtedly compression moulded fibreglass. It is more resistant to damage than bakelite, yet has all its best features. It does not shrink or swell in the manner of timber, it retains its smooth finish and casting

surface, and being produced in a true mould is always perfectly balanced. These spools are interchangeable with the plastic and now discontinued timber spools.

An outstanding improvement to the Alvey reel has been in the star drag friction clutch. Originally the "B" pattern drag, the most simple of all, was the only option available. It operated by sandwiching the handle plate between two large cork and fibre washers. This allowed the handle and spool to slip independantly of each other once the adjustable pre-set tension was reached.

Today the "C" type non-reversing drag action with its incorporated friction tube and multiplate washer system gives one of the smoothest drags available. Because the spool is large and ungeared, no variation of tension is experienced as a fish is played. The star drag adjusting nut is so positioned that adjustment can be made, if necessary, even while the fish is on the line.

A more recent introduction, the "E" type drag, combines the same washer system as the "C" type, with the positive wind of the "A" type plain reel. While this style of drag does not offer the same line protection as the "C", it ensures that the reel is always under control when giving line, and offers the direct powerful rewind so essential in rock angling where fish have to be lifted. If you liked the plain reel, you would certainly like the "E" pattern reel.

The drag systems on most of the reels of today have the added feature of a quick action lever, which allows the drag to be applied or released by light finger action. The first turntable designed (to allow the spool to be turned for casting) was the "gem" patent, which operated by lifting the line guide against a heavy coil spring. By locating a tongue into V slots in the turntable the spool was positioned either for casting or retrieve. Many years ago this was replaced by the Ferguson patent turntable, which pivoted around a centre base bolt to key against a flat base lock spring attached to the reel backing

plate. This type of turntable has proved to be the most successful from angles of wear and subsequent adjustment, and although other designs have been tried, it won right through till the present day, where it can be seen in modified form on current stock models. The only addition has been a release lever added to the turntable to make the disengagement a little easier.

Alterations have also come about over the years to the ratchet system which tells the angler of the interest of a fish to an unattended rod. The present ratchet system was given exhaustive testing before it was introduced, and has proved to give much longer troublefree service.

While many endusers may think that the Alvey Reel has not changed a great deal over the years, small modifications are introduced that often go unnoticed. It may be change of handle shape, an increase in metal gauge on a part, or just a heavier bolt or nut. Every component is subjected to continual critical examination, to give the ultimate in long life wear and performance, and to ensure customer satisfaction.

Over recent years there has been a huge upsurge in boating and ocean fishing, which has called for fishing reels with enormous capacity for heavy lines. No casting is necessary in this type of fishing as the line is fed out by the movement of the trolling vessel, or simply dropped down by the weight of the rig when fishing at anchor.

To meet this demand Alveys produce a large range of deep sea trolling reels. Because the reel does not have to provide sidecast action, the spool is fashioned with a U shape line well, giving remarkable line capacity. Sizes range from four inch to nine inch for combining with various weights of boat rods, and allow the angler to select the recovery rate of his choice. Also produced are impressive twelve inch deck winches which give the ultimate in line capacity, recovery power and deep sea efficiency. These units have caused a complete revolution in

ocean fishing, and are now used by every progressive professional, are standard equipment on most charter vessels, and are eagerly sought by all keen amateurs.

Alveys have never diversified their production, being content to specialise in making good fishing reels. Since the inception a principle has been adopted that "if you want a thing done to your satisfaction, it is better to do it yourself". Consequently the factory is fully equipped to make, treat and finish all components right up to the completed reel, which is subject to strict quality control before being boxed.

The same principle is applied even to advertising where our own sales staff design all advertising copy, plan and set up a free instructional catalogue and have edited and produced a small library of fishing films, which are in great demand.

Similarly all office procedures and stock control are handled by a mini computer in our office so it never becomes necessary in any phase of the business to pass work out to subcontractors. Everything happens and is controlled on our own premises, which are constantly being upgraded with the most efficient machinery available. Every effort is centered on marketing a product that gives entire satisfaction in the field, without the scourge of after sale problems and breakdowns. It comes right back to the founders original concept -

"A reliable and efficient reel built to last a fishing lifetime".