



Farlow Folding Brass Silk Fly Line Drier, Line Winder

Charles Farlow

£190



REF: 31903

Height: 32 cm (12.6")

Width: 35 cm (13.8")

Depth: 10 cm (3.9")

Description

C. Farlow & Co. Ltd. Wilson-Wetherall Pattern Folding Brass Silk Fly Line Drier.

An excellent and increasingly scarce classic C. Farlow & Co. Ltd. folding brass Wilson-Wetherall pattern line winder, retaining its original wooden paddle base, expanding pantograph X-frame, horn winding handle, adjustable reel fittings and Farlow's registered Holdfast trademark. Designed for drying and transferring silk fly lines, these ingenious accessories were an essential part of every serious fly angler's equipment during the late Victorian and Edwardian periods. This is a beautifully engineered accessory, a fine example of the practical ingenuity that characterised the golden age of British fly fishing.

The collapsible brass framework is clearly stamped "C. Farlow & Co. Ltd., London", together with Farlow's registered Holdfast trademark. Designed with portability in mind, the drying winder folds into a remarkably compact unit with no loose parts to misplace, making it ideal for transport and suitable for use with virtually any size of fishing reel. It is quick to assemble, with each revolution of the winding handle taking approximately 65 cm of line.

Mounted on its original paddle-shaped wooden base, the metal standard supports an expanding brass X-frame with adjustable reel fittings, while the underside is finished with protective green baize. When not in use, the sprung brass arms are simply pressed inward to collapse the frame, the upright released from its socket, and the entire mechanism folds neatly onto the wooden base for convenient storage.

At first glance, this elegant piece appears to be little more than a folding brass frame, yet it was designed to solve one of the most important problems faced by anglers before the arrival of modern synthetic fly lines. For well over a century, fly fishermen relied on braided silk lines that absorbed water during use. Although treated with oils and waterproof dressings, silk inevitably retained moisture and, if wound straight back onto the reel, could mildew, weaken, rot internally or develop cracks in its protective coating. As a quality silk fly line represented a considerable investment, drying it thoroughly after every day's fishing was an essential part of tackle maintenance.

Earlier methods were often cumbersome. Anglers stretched their lines around chairs, door handles or rows of pegs fixed to drying boards, occupying an entire room and leaving the line prone to tangles and unnecessary wear. The Wilson-Wetherall pattern offered a far more elegant solution.

At the heart of the design is an ingenious expanding pantograph, or lazy-tongs, mechanism. When opened, the four brass arms form a generous drying frame onto which the wet line is wound. This keeps each loop neatly separated, allowing air to circulate freely around almost the entire length of the line while preventing moisture from becoming trapped between successive coils.

The large winding diameter was another significant advantage. Unlike the tight coils formed on a fishing reel, the broader loops placed far less strain on the silk, helping preserve both the braided fibres and their protective dressing while extending the life of an expensive fly line.

A spring-loaded central pivot keeps t...