

# Armchair fishing

MAGNUS ANGUS is gripped by two new DVDs, one on the history of Hardy Bros and the other on Sutherland

**The Lost World of Mr Hardy** by Andy Heathcote and Heike Bachelier  
(Tel. 01323 811977,  
[www.trufflepigfilms.com](http://www.trufflepigfilms.com); £25.00).

When *The Lost World of Mr Hardy* arrived I sat down to grab a few minutes viewing over a cup of coffee. Ninety-three minutes later I watched the last frame.

We can get the film quality out of the way quite quickly: superb image quality, first-class editing, excellent sound, pleasing original music ... a good start then, but that's not what makes a good documentary.

*The Lost World* is built around the history of the company we know now as Hardy Greys; from the foundation of Hardy Bros, and the days of House of Hardy to the present. The history builds through anecdotes and stories from retired Hardy staff, collectors, auctioneers and anglers.

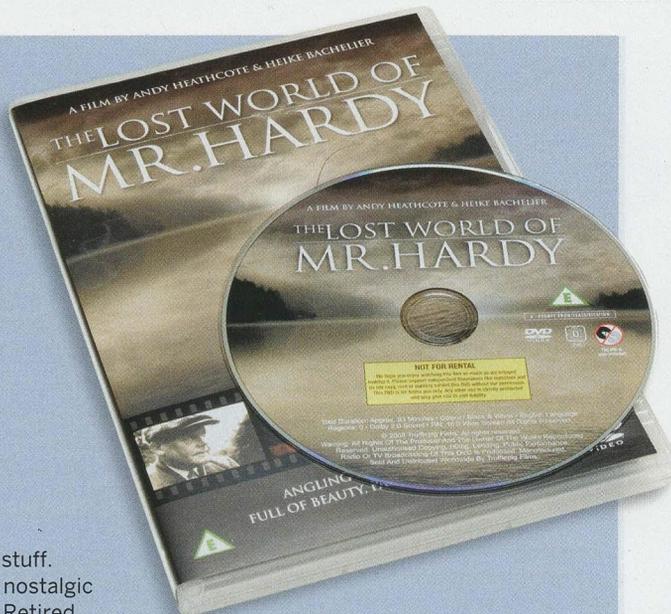
Photographs of the first shops and original factory bring old workplaces to life; vintage film brings fishing and tackle to life. The archive film in particular includes some tantalising gems, the earliest fishing film I've seen, casting from the Casting Club of France, and a brief glimpse of demonstration or tournament casting from the 1930s; a caster double-hauling from an

open stance – cutting edge stuff.

*The Lost World* builds a nostalgic picture of company values. Retired workers and managers who spent their working lives in Hardy workshops take visible pride in the quality and innovation of rods, reels and flies they made 50 or 60 years ago. Modern tackle collectors remind us that reels and rods made more than 100 years ago are still desirable, reels like Swiss watches and the Rolls Royce of rods, and that quality is palpable.

However, *The Lost World* is not simply a nostalgic appreciation; this is also about a business. Jim Hardy gives an honest account of financial problems leading to take-over, of a company stumbling, resisting change as glass fibre appeared on the scene, of Dick Walker's mistake that led to Hardy having a worthless patent on carbon-fibre fishing rods.

Jon Ward-Allen gives an acute account of both the business fortunes of British business through the 1970s and 80s and the reputation, the cache of the Hardy name. Richard Sanderson, the current MD of Hardy Greys, completes



the business picture by sketching the strategic decisions which shaped Hardy Greys and turned an ailing manufacturing led business into a successful modern sales-led business.

Ultimately, *The Lost World of Mr Hardy* is about our attitudes to craft, skill, manufacturing and business. Listening to modern craftsmen like Edward Barder and Chris Lythe, the reaction to their bespoke rods and reels make it clear that there is a desire and appreciative market for fine fishing tackle made in labour intensive ways by individual craftsmen dealing with individual clients. Older businesses and workshop style factories, like Hardy of old, created and catered to that demand, however, the history of that company makes it clear they cannot survive serving that market, producing in that way.

An exceptionally well made, hugely entertaining and thought-provoking documentary – I can't recommend it highly enough!