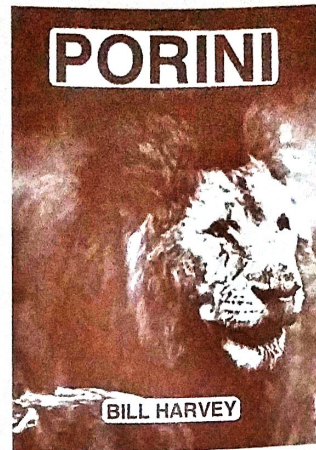


**PORINI -
The Life of
a Game
Ranger in
East Africa**

By Bill Harvey



There is absolutely no reason whatsoever that I should be reviewing this book for a modern magazine. Well, maybe there is. The fact is, it is a privately printed volume, more for Bill Harvey's family than anything else. There are precisely three copies in existence, period - so you won't be rushing out to the local bookshop to buy one. But on the other hand, there are some things best not forgotten. Bill Harvey's life story is probably one of them.

One of the first contributions I ever made to the *African Hunter* was an unsolicited review of a book about an old hobo by the name of Aloysius Smith who went door to door in South Africa selling gridirons and toasting forks in the sunset years of his life. He chanced up the path of novelist Ethelreda Lewis one day, and by chance they clicked. She wrote his story, changing his name after the quaint fashion of the early 20th century, and so was born *Trader Horn*. Very few people today probably believe that *Trader Horn* was a real person, but he was. But the real question here is how many swashbuckling 19th century adventurers led even more colourful lives than Aloysius Smith, but ended their days in the obscurity of a doss house, without ever finding a novelist to chronicle their lives?

Bill Harvey was born in the Vumba mountains of what was then Southern Rhodesia. He grew up immersed in nature and the outdoors, and it was almost inevitable that he would find his vocation there. He fought in the First World War in what was then Tanganyika, and was mentioned in dispatches.

For ten years, between 1928 and 1938 Bill Harvey served as a Game Warden in Tanganyika, before the British Colonial Service transferred him to Kuala Lumpur, where he served as Chief Game Warden until Malaya fell to the Japanese and he was taken prisoner. He managed to survive the hardships of the prison camps - no mean feat in itself - and when he was released he returned to Rhodesia where he lived out the remainder of his life on his farm near the Pungwe river in the Nyanga district.

But as interesting as Bill Harvey's life ultimately was, so were his acquaintances. Perhaps his two most kindred spirits were Frederick Courtney Selous, and C J P Ionides. Selous should need no introduction to anyone reading a hunting magazine about Africa, but Ionides is not so well known today. He was also an esteemed hunter, but gained fame by being to early African herpetology and reptile collecting what Elvis was to rock and roll. His own biography, *Snake Man*, is a classic that I would also love to review one day had I not been foolish enough to loan it to someone many years ago!

Moral of the story? Don't wait for the latest e-mail from Safari Press - wander around the antiquarian section of any decent book store - there's no telling what you might find that's all the better to have just because no one else is going to find one!