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Volume 10 Number 4 Winter 2011 £3.00 / €5.00

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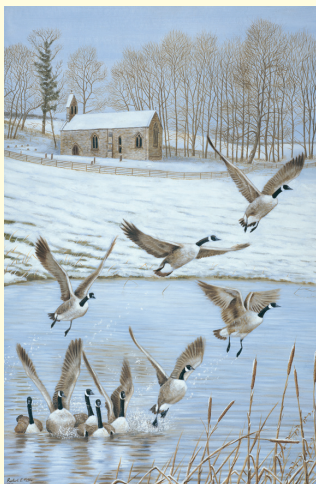
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Cover: 'The Givendale Geese' from a painting by Robert Fuller

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Printed by W.&G.Baird Distributed by Easons (Dublin), E M Distribution Also Available by Subscription ISSN No. 1476-8240

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Published in association with Ireland's country sports and country living web portal <http://www.countrysportsandcountrylife.com>

Country Sports and Country Life

Rol Comment

New Season, New Problems?

Unfortunately, it seems as if some problems never go away despite our best efforts and hopes but we are used to having to 'fight our corner' and I trust will continue to do so.

The Politicians

There are suspicions that the Government in the Republic of Ireland are not going to keep their word regarding undoing the damage done to the country way of life by their predecessors and that will, no doubt, affect the Ward Union Stag Hounds, among others. It would be wise if they looked back at how effective the RISE campaign was regarding the demise of the six Green Party TDs who formed part of the late coalition even if they don't have to face an election for some time. Excuses that there are more important issues, especially economic ones, to be dealt with will not satisfy those of us who watched our sports and our very way of life come under threat. Life is more than money and fieldsports also add to the economy in rural Ireland. We all drew hope and strength from the RISE campaign when we saw that we could really influence the actions of politicians if we worked together and supported all our fieldsports. I believe that many of us realised, perhaps for the first time, that everything including angling, shooting and even pest control are seen as targets just as much as stag or fox hunting or coursing by those who neither understand nor have any empathy with our way of life and certainly have no empathy with our traditional fieldsports. Without an election in the offing it may not seem so easy to wake up either individual politicians or their parties but there will be local authority elections before the next general election and we will have an opportunity to make our voice heard. It is certainly not the time to shrug our shoulders or, ostrich like, stick our heads in the sand. Every fieldsport which is restricted or curtailed by the authorities is another piece nibbled off the overall pattern of the long traditions of the Irish countryside. This attitude shown by the last government also affected agriculture and many rural



businesses and as fellow users of the countryside we should all work together. I recently listened to the Minister for Agriculture telling us how he supported rural life and traditions including fieldsports and I hope that he will remember those words when we raise the question of why they are reneging on promises made. Admittedly, I also remember the then Minister for Finance, Brian Cowan, making similar remarks at the opening of the Irish Game and Country Fair some years before he led a coalition government who did untold damage to fieldsports as well as the economy – perhaps we shouldn't ever trust any politician regardless of party, background or how genuine their promises seem. We certainly need to be very careful if we are to retain our hard won freedoms and rights.

The Dreaded Mink

It would seem that even the dreaded mink has fallen foul of more than those who have been doing their best to control this alien predator unaided, and often under pressure from well meaning but misinformed do-gooders! It is about time that a proper scheme was organised to eradicate this voracious predator of both native aquatic and mammalian life and it will require more than a miserly bounty to get the job done. Over the last thirty years I have watched mink decimate fish stocks and game birds and even hares, especially leverets. Anywhere that water flows from a mighty river to a reasonably damp drain; the mink has spread throughout this island and brought destruction with it. Anyone who has tried to improve the environment for fish or fowl and hasn't effectively controlled this alien has discovered that they can eat their way through your best efforts faster than you can replace them. Perhaps it is now time for some realism in Ireland about all aspects of the countryside and those who really care for it.

It is not ours to use, abuse, waste or neglect as we like – it is a solemn trust which we must carry out as custodians for future generations.

Philip Lawton
ROI Editor

Country Sports and Country Life

Comment

Here we are, the season almost half over and the shooting getting better and better. But here is a funny thing: my local shoot has had stunning birds right from their first shoot around mid-October, birds that would be of a quality that might be expected to be flying like rockets in December or January. But the thing is they have done that from Day 1. True the shoot is blest with one of the best Keepers in the country (the beaters and pickers up aren't bad either as they keep on reminding me) who invariably puts on top quality shoots - but this year they are in a totally different league.

Now, I know that the shoot got poults which were of a slightly different strain and they held them back a little before the first day, but the fact is that they started brilliantly and just got higher, faster and well.. you get the picture. The result has been some really pleased Guns and a Keeper that is well, er, not his usual 'grumpy keeper' self (well 'grumpy' is part of a Keeper's job description isn't it?).

And here is the strange bit. I was on some other shoots in Northern Ireland and they are also showing better birds than ever before. Is something happening here? Is Northern Ireland in the running for the high bird crown of Devon and Cornwall? Time will tell, but I shall certainly want to hear from any others that are experiencing this.

Talking of special days, young John Smyth's evocative account in this issue of a fishing trip with his Dad - 'The best day of my life....so far' set everyone in the ICS&CL office thinking back to similar times when we had our own 'best days' at the start of our own love affair with countrysports.

Muddy faces, thorns, the thrill of the first catch, the first pigeon, the time Dad fell in or got stuck in a quaking bog, birds overhead, pigeons decoyed, lamping



at a time when all the other children were in bed, the memories drifted back like they had only been yesterday.

Then someone had a brainwave: why not give our younger readers a space to tell us about their own special days shooting, fishing or hunting. And that is exactly what we are doing. So come on you young writers, put fingers to keyboard and become the next to see your story published in Ireland's leading countrysports magazine - and beamed around the world via the Internet. There are details of what you need to do to get us your stories shown at the foot of John's

article, so please get writing!

And now for something a little different, as in this issue we are bringing you two very different interviews: One is with a mover and shaker in the countrysports world, none other than the recently appointed Chairman of Countryside Alliance Ireland, Peter Bacon. Peter is clearly someone at home in the driving seat and we wish him well as CAI addresses many of the challenges facing our traditional pastimes. We look forward also to chatting again to him in a year or so to hear of the challenges and successes for him and for CAI.

The other interview is with a top Irish terrier enthusiast, Neil Cooney, which you can read in our new 'Terrier Talk' feature pages entitled 'A Lifetime With Terriers.' Personally I love terriers - I have the smallest Lucas terrier in the world with the heart of a lion - and I have great respect for the people who work them. All too often the terrier and lurcher folk seem to be forgotten. Certainly at some country fairs other than the the Great Game Fairs of Ireland at Ballywalter, Shanes Castle and Birr they seem located, some might think, as far away as possible from the main fair action. I would like to think that Terrier Talk will become a regular feature and look forward to your contributions and ideas. Yes, folks, Irish Country Sports & Country Life is your magazine and we value your opinions and of course your articles and photographs, so please keep them coming.

Paul Pringle
Northern Editor

Irish Fly Fair 2011



The second Irish Fly Fair 2011 staged at the Galway Bay Hotel was another great success with number of visitors and exhibitors up on 2010.

Visitors were delighted with the quality of Fly Tyers, Fly Casters and Exhibitors that attended the show and the buzz was maintained throughout the two days.

World casting Champions Scott McKenzie, Hans-Ruedi Hebeisen, Hywel Morgan and Glenda Powell where all great draws and the new junior fly tying competition was a great success, which was judged by APGAI- Ireland, with a quality being commented on by the senior Pro Fly dressers.

Every room was packed with fly tyers, exhibitors and the

seminars. Dates for the Irish Fly Fair 2012, have been set for November 10th & 11th November.

Hugh Bonner, from Mara Media, who headed up the fair for the past two years said :

"The exhibition has grown to be a top class event and Mara Media have been delighted to work closely with Stevie Munn in the set up and running of the first two Irish Fly Fair's. Stevie Munn as proprietor of the show title will take over the organisation and selling of the next Irish Fly Fair in 2012 and Mara Media will act as consultants. We wish Stevie the best of luck and Mara Media will be helping him in every way possible to build on the solid foundations put in place."

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Give Christmas 'the Bird' with a 5 Bird Roast



Mark Walker, Head Chef at Cambridge University's Madingley Hall says it's a mouth watering cacophony of taste

Break with tradition for your Christmas dinner this year and present your family and friends with the most Royal of Roasts, a multi bird roast; five in fact all stuffed inside each other, a magnificent spectacle bursting with flavour! A bird roast is nothing new; they have certainly been around since the reign of Henry VIII, and perhaps even earlier. Henry VIII favoured a technique known as 'gilding.' This is where saffron butter is spread over the bird for the last 30 minutes of cooking. It makes the finished roast golden in colour. Occasionally real gold leaf was used instead of saffron. Either method was overtly opulent and would have clearly demonstrated the host's wealth; it was an unmistakable sign of affluence.

Food historian Ivan Day reports that later, multi-bird feasts were cooked in pies, rather than roasted because with the real fires of the era, the outer meat would have become very dry and tough. He said: "There was one baked for the Earl of Lonsdale in 1753 after which, there must have been not a single bird singing for miles. It had dozens of things like yellowhammers in it and weighed 20 stone... These pies would have given Bill Oddie nightmares."

Today, a top quality bird roast made with the finest quality poultry and game is a different thing entirely, though there are of course, some good, and some not so good. Many of today's three bird roast, five bird roast and even nine bird roast products sadly have the bones left in, the legs still on, or the skin of the inner birds left intact. As a consumer, this means you end up paying gourmet prices for considerable amounts of waste and often layers of soft, inedible skin. Still others contain excessive stuffing – not something one would expect when paying top prices for the most royal of roasts for that all-important Christmas dinner, festive feast, or dinner party to impress. With that in mind, we asked Mark Walker, Head Chef at Cambridge University's Madingley Hall to prepare, cook and serve a top quality five bird roast for us.



This 5 bird roast is simply bursting with flavour.

Finest Quality

Mark says: "Serving 15 to 20 people, this five bird roast is of the very finest quality. It is a turkey, stuffed with a goose, stuffed with a chicken, stuffed with a duck, stuffed with a partridge and finished with a flourish of tasty sausage meat and herb stuffing. All the bones and legs are removed and the only skin is the turkey skin on the outside – where it should be. The result is approximately 5 kilos of gourmet poultry and game with absolutely no waste. It is a mouthwatering cacophony of taste; succulent, juicy and very, very moreish indeed. This five bird roast will add a real wow factor to any special occasion or Christmas dinner and will have your guests pleading for second helpings."

The birds are all prepared by hand to exacting standards and delivered direct to your door either fresh or frozen by Pelham and Talbot; high quality, online butchers whose history dates back to 1870. They specialise in supplying the finest quality gourmet foods to top restaurants, chefs and caterers and now also sell direct to the public via the internet. Amongst others, their clientele includes many of the colleges at the University of Cambridge and their product range includes prime beef reared on the Queen's estate at Sandringham in North Norfolk.

The five bird roast is available direct from their main website, pelhamandtalbot.co.uk for £134.95 or as a special offer for our readers at just £129.95 from www.birdroast.co.uk while stocks last. There is also a video of the five bird roast being prepared, cooked and served by Mark Anthony, Head Chef at Cambridge University's Madingley Hall on the website too.



The prize winners of the Novice Stake staged at Bernish View by the UGRC with UGRC officials: Joe Johnston (FT Sec), Eugene Mc Gregor (Vice Chairman), Albert Titterington (Club President and joint Trial Sponsor with Feedwell); Judges: Damiam Newman, Ashley Donnan, Thomas Brady and Michael Shannon.

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UGL All Aged Spaniel Stakes

On Saturday 10 September 2011 the Ulster Gundog League held an All Aged Stake for 16 A.V. Spaniels on the Copeland Islands, by kind permission of Mr. J Agnew.



Pictured left to right are William Megaughin (Judge) Jim McConnell (4th with Chewky Fruit Gum of MacMather) William Thompson (1st with Clanicker Oliver Hardy) and Bob Fettes Memorial trophy, Jimmy Crookshanks (CoM with Evansaura Star of Brackentwist) Aidan Patterson (2nd with BuccleuchDawn by Freecrow&3rd Regal Quest) Victor McDevitt (Judge)

On Wednesday 19 October 2011 the Ulster Gundog League held an ALL AGED STAKE FOR 16 A.V. SPANIELS at Mountstewart Estate, by kind permission of the Mountstewart syndicate.



Pictured left to right are Danny O'Neill (Judge), Tommy McCann (2nd with Salamere Finn), Wayne Balfour (Judge), Hugh Huston (Judge), Louis Rice (1st with Sliabh Treasure and the Lismoyne cup) and Aidan Patterson (Judge)

Mount Falcon's end of season Report for 2011

The 2011 season ended with a total catch of 603 fish landed from our 2 miles of water. August proved to be the most productive month with 270 fish caught during the month. September was again very good producing 220 fish and with a rod average of 2.17 per angler, those fishing enjoyed great sport. The Mount Falcon salmon fishery five year catch average now stands at 719. We would once again like to thank our anglers for the commitment to conservation shown by the return of 266 salmon, 44% of the total catch.

Catch Statistics for 2011

First Fish Caught 1st May,
Total Fish Caught 603,
Returned Fish 266,
Largest Fish 12lb 12oz,
Best Month August – 270 salmon
Upper Beat Total 385 salmon
Wall Pool 111 salmon
Wall Pool Straight 44 salmon
Connors Gap 67 salmon

Sandy Bank 52 salmon
High Bank 42 salmon
Ditches 41 salmon
Apple Garden 28 salmon
Lower Beat Total 218 salmon
Cunningham's 136 salmon
Boat Hole 32 salmon
Stumps 28 salmon
Dugout 12 salmon
Ledges 10 salmon

For more information visit: www.mountfalcon.com or call Stuart Price (Fishery Manager) Mobile: + 353 (0)872831776 or Tel: + 353 (0)96 74472 Fax: + 353 (0)96 74473

The I.K.C. Championship Stake for Retrievers 2011

John T. Malone, Vice-Chairman, IKC Championship Committee for Retrievers writes that the 2011 Irish Kennel Club Retriever Championship will be held at Ballinacor Estate, Greenane, Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow on Thursday 29th and Friday 30th December 2011 by kind permission of Sir Robert and Lady Goff. The Championship Committee is very grateful to our generous hosts for facilitating the Irish Retriever Championship at this majestic venue. Ballinacor Estate is highly regarded among sportsmen for its excellent birds and professional management. It is a magnificent venue not only from the scenery aspect of the Estate but also the challenging ground and cover which will test the best retrieving dogs in Ireland over the two days. This will be the 44th running of the Irish Retriever Championship and will be the sixth occasion on which Ballinacor Estate has graciously hosted the event.

Sponsorship

Once again, Massbrook Pet Foods, Cashel, Foxford Co. Mayo are generously sponsoring the Retriever Championship. We are grateful to Massbrook Pet Foods for this generous financial support and to Richard and John Binley who have always been generous patrons to the field trial fraternity. We wish to extend our grateful thanks to Massbrook Pet Foods for this continued sponsorship and we hope that all gundog owners will support them in return by purchasing their nutritious products.

We are also grateful to Albert Titterington and the Irish Country Sports and Country Life magazine for their continued support of the championship. This year Albert Titterington will sponsor the trophy to be retained by the winner of the championship and a year's free subscription for the first four placed dogs, as well as a free subscription for the four Judges and the Host.

Judges

The Judges for this years Championship will be Mr. Jimmy Black (Co. Meath), Mr. Martin Fitzgerald (Co. Clare), Mr. Stephen Hartley (Co. Kilkenny) and Mr. Martin Rush (Co. Down).

Special accommodation rates available

The HQ will be the Amber Springs Hotel & Health Spa, Gorey, Co. Wexford and competitors and spectators can avail of special rates for the duration of the event. Two nights B&B & one evening meal is available for €149 pp sharing while two nights B & B & two evening meals is available for €169 pp sharing. There will be a single supplement of €15 per night which has also been reduced from €25. Please call Amber Springs Hotel & Health Spa at 053 - 9484000 to make your booking quoting the above rates and booking reference 63167 agreed for the Irish Retriever Championship. It is advisable to book early to ensure your reservation at the Amber Springs Hotel to avoid disappointment. The Hotel is easily accessible from Exit 22 on the motorway.

For further information or if you wish to advertise in the Championship Programme please contact the John T. Malone at 087 6672325 or 059 8633718 after 7 p.m.

NI FORESTS SHOOTING LETS

The Forest Service will be advertising their areas for letting in the Belfast Telegraph, The Irish News and The News Letter in the weeks commencing 16th and 23rd January 2012.

Further information can be found on the Forest Service website from January 2012 at www.dardni.gov.uk/forests-service

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€10,000 Raised at Clones Retriever Club's Charity Event



Preliminary Test Winner Joe McGivern receives his award from Host Rory Campbell.

On Sunday 21st August Clones Retriever Club held a Charity Working Test for AV Retriever and I.W.S. on the grounds of Mr James Campbell and family. Without the help and cooperation of the Campbell family it would not have been possible to stage this event.

It was the perfect location to cater for all nationally and had everything that was needed, large fields with some nice woodland, a river and most importantly ample car parking although very central also very private. James, Rita, Seamus and Rory could not have been more helpful and went to great lengths to accommodate us. As with any event it would not have been possible without the dedicated help and hard work of all involved especially Tom & Helen Fox, Anthony & Mary Reilly, Gavin & Laura Haughey, Michael & Rita Corr.

The Club's Charity Fund Committee received substantial donations from businesses, friends and associates throughout the country. They also received a number of very valuable items which were auctioned on the day and brought in additional monies. The financial support received from retriever clubs, gun clubs and retriever handlers many of who were unable to attend was fantastic.

The monies raised will go towards the purchase of essential equipment to support patient comfort care in the Mater Hospital Oncology Day Unit, Dublin led by Professor John

McCaffrey, Consultant Oncologist, Mater Hospital.

The Judges were Mr Ronnie Farrelly, Mr Dermott Donnelly, Mr Willie Berry, Mr Johnny Rea, Mr Stephen Hartley, Mr Keith Matthews and Mr Michael Hoey.

Thanks to our sponsors who contributed fabulous prizes

The tests included events for Preliminary, Novice and Advanced.

1st place in each event received a 16" plasma screen TV sponsored by Edward Whelan, Governor Mountjoy Prison and dog food sponsored by Massbrook Pet Food, plus dog training aids sponsored by Sporting Saint's Irish agent Mr Jon Binley.

2nd place in each event received a beautiful wristwatch sponsored by Mr & Mrs Peter

McDowell, Happy Ring House, Dublin, Massbrook Pet Food, dog training aids sponsored by Sporting Saint's Irish agent Mr Jon Binley.

3rd place in each event received a Silk Tie sponsored by Mr Harry Gillanders and a bag of Massbrook dog food.

4th place in each event received a pair of Konus Shooting Glasses sponsored by Niall & Tom Kirwin, Lakelands Shooting and a bag of Massbrook dog food.



Jon Binley, Massbrook Foods looks on as Nigel Carville receives the 1st Place Award in the Advanced Team category.

5th place in each event received a year's subscription from Albert Titterington's Irish Country Sports and Country Life Magazine and a bag of Massbrook dog food.

In addition the Winner of the Advanced Test received a Beautiful Trophy, hand crafted by Mr Martin Drohan, Waterford. It was also possible to enter a team of three in each category and the Winning Team received a fleece sponsored by Edward Whelan, Mountjoy Prison and training aid by Sporting Saint's Irish agent Mr Jon Binley and prizes of Massbrook dog food.

The Winner of the Scurry received a hamper of shooting and training accessories valued at €375.00 and kindly sponsored by Sean Gilliland of Mourne Shooting Grounds. 1st Place Paul Toal, 2nd Place Ricky Johnston & 3rd Place Charlie Toal.

Other prizes for the events included Driven Shooting donated by Mr Jim Mackin & Rupert Pollock, Mountainstown; Salmon Fishing donated by Philip Maher; Dubarry Boots donated by Michael Walsh Managing Director, Dubarry Ireland; Training Aids donated by Quest UK; Gift from Mr Rory Campbell; and DVDs of the IKC retriever championship by Mr Keith Matthews.

Results

Preliminary: 1st J McGivern, 2nd T McMinn, 3rd L Hynes Jnr, 4th S McFadden, 5th P Clarke. 1st Team - T Hughes, R Johnson & T O'Hare, 2nd Team - N Cahill, K McNamara, S Burns.

Novice: 1st S Diamond, 2nd K Coyne, 3rd J McGivern, 4th L Hynes 5th J Black. 1st Team - K Coyne, L Hynes, J Gaffney, 2nd Team - J McGivern, N Carville, S Diamond.

Advanced: 1st H Gillanders, 2nd R Johnson, 3rd N Carville, 4th D Kelly, 5th J Black. 1st Team - N Carville, N Carville, N Carville, 2nd Team - H Gillanders, D Behan, J Behan.



Runners Up in the Advanced Team event were Harry Gillanders, John Behan, and Rory Campbell pictured again with Jon Binley, Massbrook Foods.

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Clones Retriever Club Hold Novice and Open Trials

Clones Retriever Club held Novice & Open Trials for AV Retriever and I.W.S under I.K.C. Rules and Licence on the 25th September & 2nd October 2011 respectively sponsored by Massbrook Pet Foods

Novice Trial 25th September 2011 at Finea, Co Westmeath

Judges: Mr Ronnie Farrelly & Mr Declan Boyle

Results: 1st Laurence Hennessy, 2nd Harry Gillanders, 3rd Keith Hayes.

Open Trial 2nd October 2011 at Finea, Co Westmeath.

Judges: Mr Tommy Hughes & Mr Keith Matthews.

Results: 1st Alan Rountree GB FtCH Waterford Galahad of Tasco, 2nd Danny Behan Quarry Pool Ainey, 3rd Michael O'Connor Watergreen Freeway,



Winners and Judges at Clones Retriever Club's Novice and Open Trials at Finea

yeswehunt.eu
CONNECTING EUROPE'S HUNTERS

The Internet Portal That Unites Europe's Hunters

Frank Brophy Brophy has drawn our attention to yeswehunt.eu - the first independent multilingual internet portal that offers hunters across Europe and beyond a free contact and discussion platform to share experiences, exchange hunting opportunities, upload photos and much more. Your number one practical guide on an array of topics, yeswehunt.eu offers everything from information about hunting tours, firearms legislation and wildlife data to advice on quality products and services for the contemporary hunter.

Europe's leading website for shooting/hunting enthusiasts has opened a vast new vista of hunting opportunities for Irish members. The yeswehunt.eu site is designed specifically for Europe's hunting community with all the usual contents that one would expect to find: hunters' blogs, current photographs, interesting news items, events calendar, product display etc.

An exciting and innovative feature is the opportunity for hunters to swap hunts/locations with colleagues in other countries. Many of the site's members have already done this and numerous blogs

have been published highlighting these visits abroad, new hunting opportunities and most importantly the international friendships that have been created. This method of swapping hunts is an inexpensive way for members to access hunting abroad that they might never have had the opportunity to enjoy otherwise. [Yeswehunt.eu](http://yeswehunt.eu) also carries advertising from Europe's brand leaders in all things important to hunters: sporting guns, 'scopes and binoculars, accessories, clothing, boots etc.

New frontiers are opened daily with contributions from all over the globe to various forums and topics. Experiences and opinions that are as varied as the membership are voiced, both entertaining and enlightening. Regular features invariably centre on rifle or shotgun performance, likewise with bullets or shot; reloading information and the frequent cleaning of guns or otherwise. The list of topics under discussion is endless and varied.

Joining Europe's most enthusiastic site for hunting enthusiasts couldn't be easier and it's free - just log on to yeswehunt.eu to register your details and off you go.

STOP PRESS

LEAD SHOT CONSULTATION IN ROI

A consultation on banning the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands is presently open for responses. Mr Jimmy Deenihan T.D., Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, is inviting submissions on a process to end the use of lead shot for hunting in wetlands, to be in line with Ireland's international obligations. The closing date for submissions is Wednesday 21st December 2011.

Many EU states, Northern Ireland and Britain have already banned lead shot in wetlands. Some of the key issues under consideration are:

- A suggested date of September 2013 to implement the change;
- Alternatives to lead shot;
- The problem of confining the ban to wetlands on which hunting

takes place given that large areas in Ireland are temporary wetlands only. Alternative approaches being considered are to end the use of lead shot for shooting waterbirds (this is the practice in some other European countries), or to introduce a general ban on the use of lead shot on a State wide basis regardless of species or habitats.

Countryside Alliance Ireland will submit a response to the relevant bodies. To ensure our response is as comprehensive as possible we are asking our members to offer their views on this matter. Please email jenny@caireland.org with your feedback by Wednesday 30th November.

For more information on this matter please visit the CAI website; www.caireland.org

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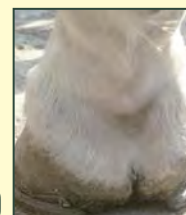


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NORTHERN IRELAND WILDLIFE HELPS OUR ECONOMY SAYS RSPB REPORT

A report launched by the RSPB further confirms the importance of conservation and its related activities to the local and national economy. It was also revealed that in a related report, conservation and wildlife related activities on Rathlin Island accounted for 9.3 full time equivalent jobs. Titled *Natural Foundations: Conservation and Local Employment in the UK*, highlights of findings from the report include the confirmation that modern conservation is also big business. In addition to directly delivering wellbeing benefits through ecosystem services, preserving the natural environment provides significant benefits to income and employment at local and national levels, it says conservation work stimulates activity within a variety of economic sectors such as agriculture, construction and tourism, as well as providing a diverse range of direct employment opportunities. The report also states that spending by visitors on trips to nature reserves and green spaces is worth billions of pounds each year to local and national economies each year.

This type of economic stimulus can be of particular benefit to those areas (e.g. rural or coastal) with an often otherwise narrow

scope for employment opportunities. Nature tourism is also going from strength to strength in the UK, with increases in visits to RSPB reserves and the natural environment far out-performing current trends in general tourism.

Rathlin Island

Examining the RSPB Seabird Centre on Rathlin Island, the report says that while the direct conservation work itself provided nearly three full time equivalent jobs, visitors to the reserve generated a significant proportion of the island's summer spend. These include:

- Total spend by visitors to the reserve was around £920,000.
- ¼ Total spend attributable directly to the reserve was around £260,000.
- ¼ Local spend attributable directly to the reserve was around £230,000.
- 5.27 FTE jobs supported in local area by tourism to the reserve.
- ¼ £113,704 of local income supported by visitor spend.

The conclusion of the report based on the effect of the reserve on the island was that in 2009, the reserve brought £230,000 of

visitor spend to the Island, supporting 5.3 FTE jobs in tourism related businesses, 3.3 of which were specifically due to the presence of seabirds.

Gregory Woulahan, RSPB's Reserve Manager, added: "All our work is directed to ensure that we safeguard the future of our wildlife, however it is also extremely gratifying to have what we have always known confirmed; namely that the work on our Rathlin reserve also contributes greatly to ensuring a sustainable population on Northern Ireland's only inhabited island. According to a report drawn up by an economist in July 2010 that looked at all the income generated by the RSPB Reserve and the RSPB Seabird Centre, both provided 9.3 full time equivalent jobs. This demonstrates the need to continue to protect the seas and wildlife that relies on coastal waters around Rathlin, as well as to continue working hard to ensure that the land is in excellent condition for birds like chough, corncrake, lapwing and curlew."

For a full copy of the RSPB report *Natural Foundations: Conservation and Local Employment in the UK (2011)* go to www.rspb.org.uk/localeconomies.



The British Shooting Show on 25th and 26th February 2012 at the Newark Showground, Newark, Notts, NG24 2NY is set for another fantastic success

With over 245 exhibitors already confirmed, the show will eventually host over 270 exhibitors in three huge Gunmakers Halls, a dedicated Rifle Focus Hall, Airgun City Arena, BASC Gamekeeping Hall, Gundog Hall and Arms Heritage display areas. Other specialist themed areas including Target Sport Information, English Gun making Heritage, the BASC 'Go Shooting' information area, Taste of Game demonstrations, the Knife Block, Gundog Demonstrations, scurries and clinic and of course the extensive clay coaching and competition area.

Everything for every shooting discipline - a shooters paradise with a vast array of trade

stands and shooting exhibits including leading manufacturers and retailers of fieldsports and competition shotguns; hunting, target and tactical rifles; custom builders and gunsmiths; specialist actioners, barrel makers and stockers and much more along with 'show only' offers.

English Gun making Heritage - see a number of master craftsmen demonstrating their skills.

Rifle Focus Hall - a comprehensive selection of specialist rifle manufacturers and retailers, custom builders, ammunition specialists, clubs & associations, special target shooting information area.

Airgun City - it's a great opportunity to handle rifles from the world's leading manufacturers

Clay shooting & Competitions - there's a

50 bird sporting competition with a big prize fund, pool shoot, MLAGB "Have a go" stand and Browning Rabbit Mania.

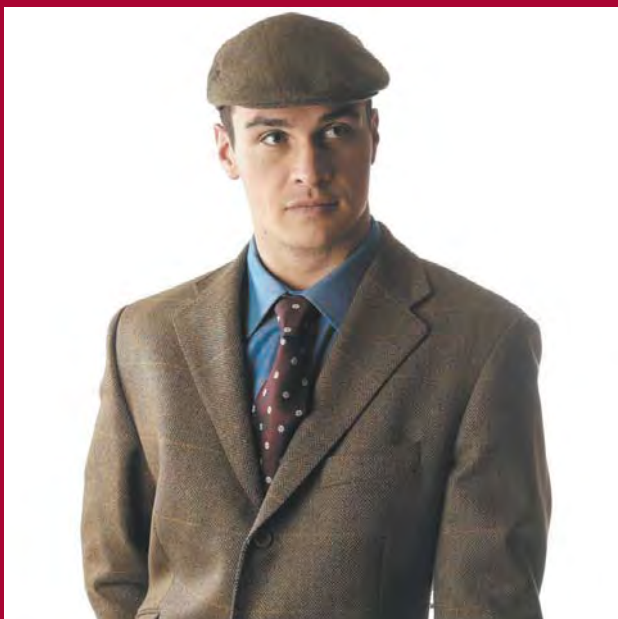
Antique & Classic Military & Sporting Arms - provides an extensive selection of everything from classic English pairs or singles shotguns right through to the very best examples in hunting rifles.

The BASC Gamekeeping Hall - a specialist area for the gamekeeping professional and shoot partners or owners and The BASC Pavilion is a brand new feature for 2012,

All this along with fantastic displays and trade stands of practical field cutlery and collectables; gundogs and scurries plus expert training demonstrations. Opening hours are 8.30am to 4.30pm on both days. For further information please visit the show website at www.theshootingshow.co.uk or Tel: + 44 (0) 1472 241439.



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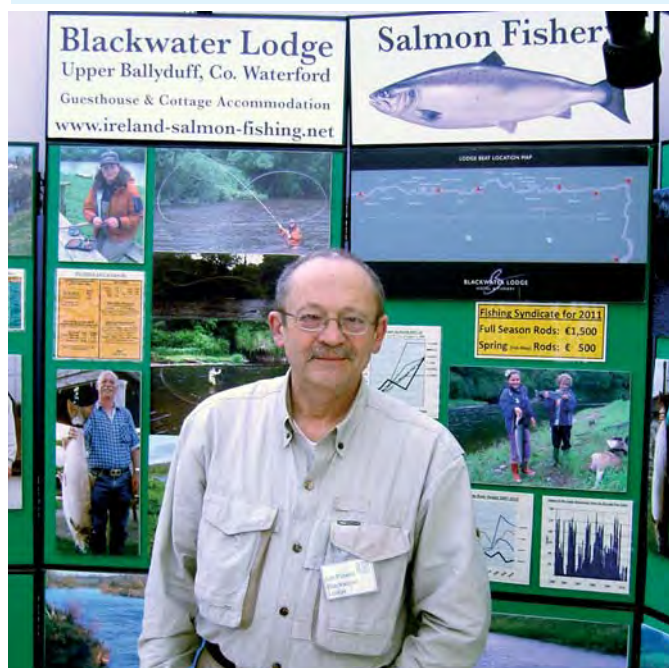
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Cork Blackwater Salmon Season Extension for 2012



Blackwater Lodge proprietor Ian Powell

Ian Powell writes to say that all Irish salmon anglers are aware that runs of fish seem to be coming into the rivers later and later each year: "Here on the Blackwater, we have been campaigning for some time to have an extension to the salmon angling season as we have very fresh fish running into the river much later than the current closing date of September 30. Whilst fish counter figures are not readily available, historically they have shown that anywhere up to 80% of the total run of salmon come into the river from the beginning of September to Christmas. This is also borne out by the catch statistics for the Lodge fishery."

YEAR	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Total
2001	2	Closed F&M		31	160	118	208	254	773
2002	2	4	6	9	132	137	197	282	769
2003	2	13	9	49	80	162	94	143	553
2004	14	8	22	23	49	86	353	524	1,079
2005	5	6	6	29	70	114	108	309	647
2006	1	17	38	39	50	61	47	407	660
2007	1	5	12	8	44	115	273	330	788
2008	5	4	14	22	21	117	422	421	1,025
2009	1	5	11	53	51	87	197	208	613
2010	-	4	2	11	24	169	106	336	652
2011	3	6	3	45	61	71	93	249	529

In the three year from 2007 to 2009, we had wet summers and good levels of water which brought autumn fish in comparatively early. However, in the last two years have seen our backend fishing marred by drought conditions and - especially this year 2011 - further frustrated by a good flood right at the end of September.

We all know just how good the autumn run of salmon should be, & now it looks as if we are finally coming to a successful conclusion on this.

New proposal - a further 12 days fishing into October 2012

In a Press Release from the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources on

8 November, regarding the Public Consultation on the Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme and Conservation Measures the Minister for the Marine has proposed: "The salmon angling season on the River Blackwater in Co. Waterford and Co. Cork will be extended on a catch and release basis until 12 October 2012." The proposal for the extension is subject to the 30 day Public Consultation period and should be confirmed by the Minister around 8 December. This is a pilot scheme which will apply only to the Blackwater and we will be cooperating with Inland Fisheries Ireland to assess the performance of the fishery during these 2 weeks in order to assist them in determining the prospects for extending the season in other such rivers in future seasons. To learn more about the salmon fishing on the Blackwater, contact Ian Powell on info@ireland-salmon-fishing.net or visit the Blackwater Lodge website at www.ireland-salmon-fishing.net

Agriculture Minister condemns attacks on Loughs Agency Staff

In November, Agriculture and Rural Development Minister, Michelle O'Neill, visited the Loughs Agency Headquarters in Londonderry to view the work of the Agency in the Foyle and Carlingford areas. During the visit the Minister met with Loughs Agency staff, toured the premises and listened to a presentation of the work carried out by the Agency.

The Minister said: "Today's visit to the Loughs Agency has allowed me see at first hand the work of this important north/south body which works to promote the commercial and recreational development of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough, and the development of fisheries and aquaculture, conservation and protection of inland fisheries and sustainable development of marine tourism for this area. The Agency does considerable work to prevent poaching and protect fish stocks in the areas for which it has responsibility and I saw today for myself the substantial amount of equipment that Agency staff have seized from poachers in the course of their duties."

During the visit the Minister visited the Lough Agency's interpretative centre Riverwatch and said: "Riverwatch is an example of how Loughs

Agency use their resources to inform the public of the social, environmental and economic resources of the loughs and their tributaries. Riverwatch was a very popular attraction even before the introduction of new tanks and interactive displays last year, and has welcomed over 100,000 visitors since its opening in 2003. I encourage people to consider using this education resource which Loughs Agency make available to schools, communities and business organisations all over Ireland."

Minister O'Neill also addressed the issue of Loughs Agency staff coming under attack while undertaking the work of the Agency. Minister O'Neill said: "I condemn these attacks and I am determined to do everything I can to make sure that these attacks stop. I intend to meet with the Justice Minister and the Chief constable to discuss a united approach and to explore ways of ensuring that Loughs Agency staff are able to carry out their duties without fear of being attacked. I am impressed by the perseverance and dedication of the Loughs Agency staff who do valuable work for our Loughs."



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You can take the majesty and beauty of the Cork Blackwater for granted. You can take the numbers of glistening salmon as read. You can take the 16 private beats of the Blackwater Lodge as some of the best on the river. But on top of all that there's the comfort of the Blackwater Lodge itself. Now concentrating on the prime months, we're open for residential (Guesthouse B&B) bookings from July 16th, but our self-catering accommodation and waters are open all season. Flick through your 2011 diary and mark a few days on the Cork Blackwater. Contact Ian Powell for info and bookings. Where in the evenings you can put the 'port' back into 'sport'.



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Sporting Season comes to a spectacular close at this year's Midland Game Fair

Weston Park on 17th and 18th September welcomed people in their droves as they enjoyed some superb championship finals, fantastic family features and what was the last installment in Countryman Fairs' five countryside attractions for this year. With over 90,000 people believed to have attended across the two-day event, the 29th Midland Game Fair proved as popular as ever with both seasoned game-farers and first-time newbies arriving through the gates to experience a true taste of the countryside. Whilst wet weather had been forecast, the weekend remained mostly dry with even some sunny intervals arriving over the Shropshire countryside on both days – perfect game fair weather!

The Midland Game Fair once again welcomed a host of country sports and championship finals, allowing everybody to enjoy what was in store. Whether it was the finals in the Mitsubishi Motors World Series Clay Shooting and Gundog Championships, the Countryman's Weekly Terrier and Lurcher Champion of Champions, the European Field Target Championships or the the ATEO Junior Airgun Championships, talented individuals from across a spectrum of disciplines were finally awarded those illusive winning titles.

Reporting on the weekend's proceedings, Countryman Fairs' Chief Executive Ian Harford said: "This year's Midland Game Fair has once again received a fantastic reception. It's a pleasure to see so many people from up and down the country enjoying the best of our countryside and getting involved in a variety of rural traditions and country sports. From individuals and families to those competing in our championship events, from all the team at Countryman Fairs we do hope you took away memorable experiences and we look forward to seeing you again for the 2012 season!"

Terrier and Lurchers

Attracting a host of dedicated handlers and their dogs at this year's Midland Game Fair, the Terrier and Lurcher Village proved as popular as ever with some outstanding displays from the UK's finest earth and running dogs. Organised by the Coursing Crew, the Terrier and Lurcher events welcomed qualifiers from all previous rounds to see who could walk away victorious this 2011 season. Chris Weaver, organiser of the Terrier and Lurcher showcases expresses her delight at another fantastic season and a great end to a busy year. "This year's competitions have been as popular as ever with winners earning their rightful positions, and devoted handlers and their dogs producing some superb championship displays. Welcoming back old faces as well as newbies, the championship continues to remain at a very high level. A great weekend to end a superb season!"

John Humphries scores Championship Win with Simi

Local interest was rewarded in the lurcher racing by John Humphries who achieved a superb under 23" second with China, and a third place in the Over 23" with Rebel. If that was not enough the next day he scored a Simo Championship win with Hemi.

Well done John!



Ivan Bell R L S presents £212 (€255) to Robin Cardwell LOM Portruth, which was donated to the Irish Angler stand at The Great Game Fairs of Ireland held at Shanes Castle and Birr Castle in 2011. And with the Lough Neagh Rescue raising over £2,500, also at the Irish Game Fair at Shanes Castle, for the second year in a row, the Great game Fairs of Ireland can justly claim to have done their best for the safety of anglers on Ireland's waterways.

Draft Welfare of Animals (Dog Breeding Establishments) Regulations

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) is consulting on the Welfare of Animals (Dog Breeding Establishments) Regulations under Section 12 of the Welfare of Animals Act 2011 from 19 October 2011 to 10 January 2012.

A copy of the covering letter, the Dog Breeding Establishments consultation paper, the draft Regulations, the consultee list, the Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment, the Equality and Human Rights Screening document and the draft guidance for Enforcement Officers can be accessed via the links below. Full details on how to respond to this consultation are included in the covering letter.

Please note that responses to the consultation should arrive with DARD by Tuesday 10 January 2012 at the latest.

These documents are available from:

Billy Montgomery
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Ballymiscaw
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By e-mailing: billy.montgomery@dardni.gov.uk
By faxing: 028 9052 4982

Or by visiting www.dardni.gov.uk/index/consultations/active-consultations/draft_welfare_of_animals_dog_breeding_establishments_regulations.htm

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Providing a valuable service throughout Ireland!

As all of our members know, Countryside Alliance Ireland (CAI) campaigns for the countryside, country sports and the rural way of life. We do this for our members, and supporters, throughout the 32 counties of Ireland. As an all Ireland membership organisation, CAI provides clear and comprehensive insurance cover to our members whilst they legally partake in their recognised activities. The terms and conditions of the insurance provision are available for all to view on our website, www.caireland.org. CAI provides extensive benefits for group members, including the opportunity to invite guests; we will provide day cover for guests free of charge to enable them to participate in the 'recognised activities.' In recent months, many new groups have expressed interest and subsequently joined the Countryside Alliance Ireland. We welcome all new members and enjoy providing excellent care for new and old members alike.

For several years now, we have endeavoured to keep our membership costs to a minimum. Our fees have not risen in recent times, and we remain the best value fieldsport organisation around. To maintain these low fees for our members, we strive to keep our organisational costs down. CAI has offices at Larchfield Estate, Lisburn and Courtlough Shooting Grounds, Balbriggan which serve our members throughout the country. We, here at the CAI, like to promote actively our members' events. You will often see us supporting members' latest ventures on our website and social network pages. We feel this is an integral part of an all Ireland membership organisation.

One of the most important aspects of our work is politics and we regularly liaise with politicians both north and south, to ensure they are in no doubt as to the strength of feeling of the country sports community. CAI strives to influence legislation for the benefit of country sports and the rural lifestyle in Ireland. We were the main driving force in the defeat of the NI Hunting Bill, and worked strenuously to fight the

COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE IRELAND

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Green Party's ideas for the Ward Union. We were a large contributor to and supporter of the RISE campaign and remain vigilant in the work of both Dáil Éireann and Stormont.

Countryside Alliance Ireland is an organisation with a Board comprising elected and co-opted members, and we base decisions on what is best for our members throughout Ireland. The Chief Executive, Board, and indeed the organisation as a whole, are committed to achieving real results for our members and will continue to strive for these long into the future. An interview with our newly elected Chairman, Peter Bacon, features later in this magazine.

For more information on Countryside Alliance Ireland membership, visit our website or contact one of the CAI team on (R of I) 01690 3610 or (NI) 028 9263 9911.

Irish Red Grouse Association Conference

The Irish Red Grouse Association (IRGA) Conference, held in County Westmeath on Saturday 29 October, was an overwhelming success. Opened by Marian Harkin MEP, delegates attended from all over Ireland and the keynote speakers were instrumental in helping to further the Association's aim of working for the future of red grouse in Ireland.

The IRGA was established in November 2010 and aims to promote active moorland management with an overall objective to increase the numbers of Irish red grouse. Since its inception, the Association has grown in terms of both numbers and capacity and the interest shown at the Conference should see this trend continue. 'Conservation and Growth' as seen on the IRGA logo, sums up what the Association are striving to achieve for red grouse in Ireland. The IRGA has enormous potential going forward to reverse the directive from Europe and to remove grouse from the red list of endangered species. By achieving their objectives, the IRGA will benefit not only red grouse; but other ground nesting red listed species who share the same habitat as the red grouse.

The Conference is a very significant and positive move for the IRGA, the Committee and indeed the country sports community, because it sends out a strong and positive message about the conservation and environmental benefits of country sports. It's great to get some positive coverage for a change and this should not be overlooked. (We have a special report on the Conference elsewhere in this issue: Editor) The IRGA wanted to appoint two representatives, one north & one south, to become Patrons of the Association. As such, Dan Kinney and PJ O'Hare accepted the Association's invitation to become Lifetime Patrons. This is in recognition of the work and commitment both men have made to grouse over their lifetimes to date and indeed for their continued efforts. After the Conference, Vincent Flannelly, Chairman, IRGA said: "It has taken a European directive to spur on Government (and indeed concerned individuals and groups such as the IRGA and Countryside Alliance Ireland) to take up the challenge of trying to save the red grouse. We must act now to try to save this species for the generations to come and we are delighted with the interest and support shown here today." Any group or individual interested in or involved with grouse conservation throughout Ireland, who would like further information or the assistance of the IRGA, please do not



PJ O'Hare (left) accepted the Association's invitation to become a Lifetime Patron with IRGA Chairman Vincent Flannelly

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hesitate to contact Vincent Flannelly on + 353 (0) 87 612 2568 or email nessa.od@hotmail.com



Chief Executive Lyall Plant, pictured with UUP Leader Tom Elliott, ensures that members' interests are heard at the heart of political decision making

Northern Ireland Party Conferences

CAI was the only country sports organisation in attendance at the UUP, SDLP and DUP party conferences held during October and November. As a rural campaigning organisation, we ensure our members interests are well represented on the political stage and the party conferences are an excellent forum to allow us to do just that. We welcome the opportunity to meet the political representatives and their members face to face and to highlight the many benefits that country sports bring to the rural way of life. As we have said many times before, we must not become complacent and Countryside Alliance Ireland will continue to strive to ensure our members' interests are heard at the very heart of political decision making.

CAI Prize Recipients at Belle Isle

The winners of CAI's summer draws availed of their prizes at the magnificent Belle Isle Estate and Cookery School in County Fermanagh on 29 October. Steven Mullen from County Tyrone and John Nugent from County Meath were the lucky recipients who each won the opportunity to attend this unique Shoot, Pluck, Cook event. The craic was mighty and the guests had a superb time at the cookery school under the expert guidance of Liz Moore. For more information on Belle Isle Estate and the Cookery School go to www.belle-isle.com



Belle Isle Winners (L/R) Liz Moore, John Nugent, Steven Mullen and Shauna Mullen

Mid Ulster Gundog Association AV Novice Trial



Winner Mr S McKee receives his prizes from one of the Guns, Mrs Susan Wright. Looking on is Chief Steward, Mr Thomas Brady.

Thomas Brady sent us the results of the Mid Ulster Gundog Association's 12 Dog AV Retriever Novice Stake held on 20 October 2011 at Castle Dobbs Estate, by kind permission of Lady Dobbs and Mr Nigel Dobbs.

Results: 1st Mr S McKee's labrador bitch Shangarrilyn Topnotch of Drumilt. 2nd Mr S Nolan's labrador dog Tweedshot Trimble of Lettergreen.



Mr S Nolan accepts the award for Runner Up.



The Guns agreed that it had been a superb event which had taken place in ideal surroundings.

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This is undoubtedly the best value for money quality neoprene welly on the market at this time, it combines a multitude of features to create a very comfortable, durable and practical field boot. There is a rubber outsole which has been bonded to a blown rubber sponge sole to create a sole unit which is lightweight, durable and 'cushy' underfoot, the firm rubber outer which is extended up the leg of the boot is reinforced in key areas to maintain utmost flexibility and also to provide support for the ankle and fore foot as well as protecting the neoprene inner of the boot from damage caused by the most unforgiving briar bushes and barbed wire. There is a breathable mesh liner in the boot to allow airflow around the foot thus minimising perspiration and in turn maintaining the comfort or the foot of the wearer. Sizes 4-12 Colour Green Price £75/€90



Spey

These 100% waterproof products are made with Breathable Airmesh™ lining and CR-grade foam for additional comfort. The Spey has the same style, fit and sole as the Tay, but features the realtree™ camouflage pattern. The standard 5mm neoprene lining has an additional soft fleece lining throughout, while the toe area has extra Thermo-foam™ for added warmth. CR flex-foam bootie (5mm) with four-way stretch nylon, snag-resistant cover is 100% waterproof, lightweight, flexible, buoyant, and will form to virtually any calf girth. Stretch-fit topline binding snugs calf to keep warmth in and cold out. Additional achilles reinforcement for added protection. Seamless quick-clean rubber overlay. Breathable Airmesh™ lining. Comfort range of 85°F to sub-freezing conditions.



Esk

A state-of "the-art working boot, the Esk has a high rubber covering on the leg and a superb sole tread. Other features include: a highly reinforced toe cap and instep; a removable 'Nitrocel' footbed for additional insulation and cushioning; an anti-shock heel made from MuckBoot's own 'Absorb' open cell polymer; a kick-rim to allow boots to be kicked off without damage; and a rubber Achilles protector to shield the wearer from blows to the back of the ankle. The Esk also has MuckBoots' own 'air-mesh' technology. Thousands of tiny vertical fibres allow air to circulate throughout the internal lining of the boot. When combined with the CR-Foam bootie, it provides an unmatched comfort range of +85°F to -85°F. Colour: Green Size: 4 - 13 Price £75/€90



Trent

A premium but lightweight general-purpose welly with a 5mm cleated field sole for a good all-round grip. Excellent for gardening, the Trent features a special 'Spade Contour' sole to protect the foot when digging. As well as a reinforced toe cap and instep the Trent has a rubber achilles protector, an Absorb (TM) anti-shock heel, a kick rim and a removable Nitrocell (TM) footbed. The leg is covered with a 4-way stretch nylon, snag resistant cover and the boot has an Air Mesh lining for optimal temperature/moisture control and comfort.

Colours: Moss Size: 4 to 12 Price £75/€90



Derwent

The Derwent from Muck boot, it has a high leg waterproof neoprene outer with protective rubber foot and ankle cover, lightweight sponge sole and can only be described as very comfortable footwear that functions as a wellington but fits like a boot. The materials are all very flexible and offer the utmost in comfort to the wearer whilst protecting from the worst of the weather providing a warm and dry environment for the feet. Available in sizes 4-12 Price £60/€70



10 Main Street, Toome, Co. Antrim BT41 3SA

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www.charliekeen.com

Ireland Angling Show 2012 – John Wilson to headline show

Mara Media are delighted to unveil a very exciting line up for this years' Ireland Angling show, which take space at the National Show Centre in Swords, Co Dublin on the 11th and 12th of February 2012.

The Ireland Angling Show 2012 will cover all aspects of Sea Angling, Game and Coarse fishing with activities and demonstrations to suit both expert and novice anglers alike.

Special Guest John Wilson

New for 2012 is the special guest, John Wilson, lives in Norfolk beside a Lakeland setting [one of the lakes he created himself] and is naturally a lifetime angler. He has fished in over 60 countries and filmed for television in over 30 of them. Making a total of 150 half hour angling programmes, including no less than 17 consecutive yearly series for Anglia Television. Many of these are regularly shown on the Discovery 'SHED' channel. John has been writing for over 40 years and has contributed to nearly 90 books on angling, 38 of these being entirely his own works. For 25 years he ran his own tackle shop in Norwich.



Two years ago he was awarded an MBE for his broadcasting and writing by Prince Charles. In 2010 John was inducted by the IGFA based in Florida USA, into their Hall of Fame. A rare occurrence for a British angler.

With an emphasis on attracting a younger generation to angling...

We are delighted to welcome Yasmin Morgan aged 13 is the UK Open Salmon Distance Champion and Welsh National Pairs Champion.

Yasmin first stepped onto a demonstration platform at the tender age of 2 years and since that day she has been



demonstrating with her father all over the UK in Game and Country Fairs. Having been his assistant for a few years, she has stepped out of his shadow and has competed in casting competitions to gain the title of 'UK Casting Champion'. She is excited to be coming over to Ireland and can't wait to share her skills and enthusiasm with everybody.

Fishing for families

A designated area hosted by the Dublin Angling Initiative aimed at encouraging youngsters to pick up a rod.

Again for 2012 French firm SCATRI will be on hand with their fishing simulators.

A selection of top fly tying experts from Ireland and the UK will showcase their skills.

Familiar angling personalities such as Hywel Morgan & Stevie Munn, Brian Cooke (Sea Angling), Cathal Hughes (Coarse), Neil Smith (Coarse), Mary Gavin Hughes (Sea Angling), Jim Clohessy (Sea Angling) and a host of other experts from the angling fraternity will run casting demonstrations and present workshops over the two days of the show

New for 2012, will be a "Meet & Greet" section close by the theatre where visitors can seek advice and chat with their favourite celebrities.

A huge selection of tackle and trade stands will offer products to suit every budget.

Visitors can also avail of the special offer from Bewley's Airport Hotel, which has rooms from €59 (room only) per night and stay with large contingent of exhibitors, angling celebrities which adds to a great weekend's craic after closing hours. A courtesy bus will run from Bewley's to the exhibition free of charge.

Mara Media would like to thank the angling community for their support throughout 2011 and their continued support in 2012, we are eager to give visitors a value for money, fun filled experience with entertainment and attractions for the whole family.

For more information: www.irelandanglingexpo.ie

Call Or Email

Grace (074) 9548936 grace@maramedia.ie

Hugh (074) 9548935 hugh@maramedia.ie

Ireland²⁰¹² Angling



Stevie Munn



Glenda Powell



Charles Jardin



Mary Gavin Hughes



Hywel Morgan

11th-12th February 2012
National Show Centre, Swords, Dublin



Family Friendly



John Wilson

- Celebrity Meet & Greet Area
- Huge Range of Tackle & Trade Stands
- Scatri Sport Simulator • Fly Tyers Row
- Fishing For Families (getting started)
- Casting Demonstrations • Lure Demo Tank

Please visit www.irelandanglingexpo.ie
for more information on the show

Christmas Presents for the country sports man or woman in your life....

Every year we like to suggest the sort of presents we would like to find in our stockings or on our Christmas table.

Barbour's Winter Warmers

This winter, it's all about ultra warm down jackets to keep out the cold. Barbour's mens Down Wax jacket and ladies Storm Down wax jacket are both made from luxurious duck down and feathers. Not only are they weatherproof, but they also give an extra layer of warmth and comfort on chilly winter days. The men's Baltic jacket, a versatile outdoor parka comes with a detachable down inner gilet or try the multi-pocketed Goodshaw or Bolingbroke jackets with their on trend faux fur hoods.

For ladies, the Bowfell Down Parka or Esk Polarquilt Parka offer thermal protection against foul weather. Both come with faux fur hoods and large pockets – perfect for dog walking or shopping.

For the first time, GORE-TEX® features in the collection in the men's Souter, Sevenstones and Spurn jackets. Offering comfort and guaranteed waterproof protection, these jackets are light, easy travel wear for the country and beyond. In quilts, the Drigg and Milton are afforded extra protection with GORE-TEX® linings. For ladies the Helvellyn Parka in GORE-TEX® with its faux fur hood is a functional jacket, thermal lined for colder days.

For men, the Pendennis jacket and Yarmouth quilt



Some of the Barbour Range

come to life with linings reflecting the items that the Barbour customer services team has found in pockets over the years from jackets returning home for repairs or rewaxing. From string to sheep's tails, cash to cartridges and keys including those to St James' Palace in London, the lining is colourful and fun and guaranteed to be a topic of conversation.

Layers are strong in colour, with a wide range of knitwear, gilets, shirts and trousers that co-ordinate crisply and cleanly. Knitwear features chunky knits to smart cardigans which slip easily over a choice of shirts. Men's Fair Isle sweaters with their bold patterns add contrast while ladies can choose from a beautiful range of Liberty shirts.

With gloves, hats and scarves to match, Barbour has everything you need to keep you warm this winter.

For stockists and further information, please call 0191 427 4210 or visit www.barbour.com

A Christmas Collection to make your Wishes come true!

Christmas is getting nearer and what will you do for shopping?

This winter, at McKillens of Church Street, Ballymena, boots are very much in demand with long leg boots very much to the fore. Casual boots are very popular especially snow boots which are a must. Fashions are all about warmth and fabric and many of the collections offer great value for money and if its slippers you want McKillens have a massive selection to suit all.

For the men there are new styles in shoes from all the major fashion brands and in the Christmas Gift Shop on the first floor, there is a wonderful variety to help you chose the right present. On the ground floor the Handbag Shop is full of temptation for all ages.

McKillens of Ballymena has always been famous for quality and service and this winter is no exception. Why not visit McKillens of Ballymena and treat yourself for Christmas!

Adding Some Style to the Man in your life...

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and off the peg suits to two fold cotton shirts, luxurious silk woven ties, tweed jackets and trousering, and a wide range of accessories to compliment any look whether it be for the office or the weekend. Offering excellent gift ideas such as socks, pyjamas, dressing gowns and small leather goods, leather wallets, belts and stud boxes.



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Tel: 028 9066 8228 sales@clarkeanddawe.com
www.clarkeanddawe.com

Kevin & Howlin – 75 years in business and the perfect place for Irish Tweeds

In 1936 Jim Kevin along with his partner Michael Howlin founded the Tailors and Outfitters known as, Kevin & Howlin Ltd, at 39 Nassau Street in Dublin, providing top quality clothing and tailoring while specializing in handwoven tweeds. The tweeds are Handwoven in Donegal especially for Kevin & Howlin

In 1973 due to the redevelopment of the premises – Jim's son, Noel, who had taken over the family firm, o. 31 Nassau Street and decided to concentrate exclusively on Tweed becoming one of the premier purveyors of tweeds in Ireland. Contact: Kevin & Howlin 31 Nassau Street, Dublin 2, Ireland Tel: +353-1-6334576 www.kevinandhowlin.com

Guaranteed Waterproof from Climb8

Climb 8 Limited is an Irish company, designing and producing own brand guaranteed waterproof outdoorwear since 1996. For the past five years they have specialised in designing top quality anglingwear for the Irish/UK markets at extremely competitive prices.

June Pilkington, proprietor of Climb 8, has been in the outdoorwear trade since 1986. Having been on the international competitive side of long distant, sprint and slalom canoeing she understands very well what "waterproof" means! "Guaranteed" is also a very important word when used for any watersports!

Irish, British Open and Asian Open Championships didn't come easily to

June but the competitive spirit required has greatly

helped in the design and production of top quality anglingwear at extremely reasonable prices.

As she says: "Climb8 is big enough to deliver but small enough to care."



CLIMB 8 ANGLINGWEAR "does the trick" year after year! Stephen Browne of Knockmore wins the Connaught Cup in 2009 and again in 2010 wearing Climb 8's Lough Conn Suit to keep warm and dry all day long.

All Climb 8 products are available on-line at www.climb8.ie and delivery is free anywhere in Ireland. Triple layer jackets retail at around €170/£150 with overtrousers costing around €135/£120. Wading jackets and waders retail at similar prices.

A list of stockists is available on-line for those wishing to purchase locally.

Give Your Older Garments a New Winter Proofing

Is there such a thing as 100% waterproof clothing? The answer is yes, most good quality outdoor clothing is many times beyond what is classed as waterproof, yet after time the clothing can develop a condition called "wetting out", where the garment loses the ability to hold water droplets and gives the material the appearance of soaking in water. This actually is quite natural, and with the correct cleaning products and the correct application of them, it is possible to return a garment to its original waterproof condition.

At The Great Outdoors in Ballymena they have a dedicated laundry room where they specialize in cleaning, treating and reproofing all types of outdoor clothing. Products like Gortex, Gore, Polartec, Down, Wax cotton, and all the "tec" materials that promise breathability along with waterproof properties, all need to be cleaned in a precise way. You can leave your clothing in for expert cleaning and reproofing, then browse around the main shop to see the latest outdoor products and the newest outdoor clothing ranges.

Since moving premises a year ago, The Great Outdoors have expanded their rental business, offering Kayaks, Wetsuits, Ski clothing, Tents, Marquees,

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from 5pm in The Fern Room

Dinner during late night opening:
details instore

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Camping equipment and surfboards. They have also opened an Airsoft shooting range in part of their building, which offers the experience of shooting at various targets and which has been a great success for birthday parties and office outings. In the shop they offer a full range of fishing tackle, and carry a full range of outdoor clothing and camping equipment, and in the winter months offer a range of ski clothing and accessories.

The Great Outdoors, 128 Broughshane Street, Ballymena, has been referred to as the most diverse outdoor store in Northern Ireland, and with the addition of the laundry service it has become a one stop shop for anyone with an interest in outdoor pursuits. The Great Outdoors, 128 Broughshane Street, Ballymena, BT43 6EE Tel: 028 2564 7187 info@thegreat-outdoors.co.uk

The Sherwood Forest Range of Country Clothing – perfect Christmas Gifts

2011 has proved to be a very successful time for country clothing manufacturer Sherwood Forest new items in the range including the mens and ladies Kirton waterproof country jackets and the new improved Dalton boot have been key pieces in the range. The more casual collections of the mens and ladies Thorndale quilted jackets and new collection of shirts have also been very successful and make excellent Christmas gifts.



Kirton Jackets

Sherwood Forest acquisition of the class and iconic brand Puffa country sports this year has also proved very popular with a range of classic styles that looks back to its heritage days. Next year will see a new range of casual polo's and gilets that are causing a stir on the retail market.



Puffa Waistcoats

To see the whole Sherwood Range visit www.sherwoodforest-uk.com

Perilla – for style and comfort



Country Socks from Perilla who doesn't like fabulous socks for Christmas? www.perilla.co.uk or call: 01886 853 615

Online alpaca specialist Perilla offer an amazing range of country socks in a rich palette of colours; sedge green, heather and mulberry for the mud trudging field sports enthusiast sit alongside brighter colours of purple and raspberry. Alpaca has higher insulating properties than other wools, is as soft as cashmere to wear but incredibly hardwearing. Alpaca fibre repels odour and bacteria so socks can be worn for ages and stay soft and fresh without the necessity to wash them – welcome to long life socks! Great gift box options available –


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Available in a range of colours – we have just taken delivery of a pair in Black/cochineal but they are available in a range of country colours. Technically they are eVent durably waterproof with an ultra breathable membrane lining. They have a Frameflex(TM) midsole support and Phylon midsole for cushioning and a Vibram® outsole for durable grip. But put quite simply they are the most comfortable walking boots we have ever seen or tried.

For further information contact:

www.karrimor.com/catalog/footwear_ranges

One or two stop shopping in Toome...

One of the best selections of hunting, shooting and fishing presents for the sports man or woman can be found in two of the best stocked country stores in Ireland in the little village of Toome.

McCloy's Guns Unlimited has not only a fantastic range of guns to suit all pockets but a massive range of quality shooting clothing and accessories. With some justification Mc Cloy's claim to be Ireland's largest gun & clothing store and certainly the shop stocks a wide range of brands including of Browning, Bettinsoli, Laporte, Laksen, Le Chateau, Toggi, Hunter, Gamebore and many more too numerous to mention.

The shop is well worth a visit but for those who wish to shop from the comfort of their own home you can do so at www.mcloys.com

Charlie Keenan Countrywear is also based in Toome and is a virtual emporium of all types of outdoor clothing, protective wear and quality army surplus.

The range of clothing includes the value for money Sherwood and Big Bill ranges and with the current wet weather an absolutely essential range of footwear including extensive stocks of possibly the most comfortable and convenient to wear Wellington on the market the Muckboot.

One of the classics of this range is The Derwent. It has a high leg waterproof neoprene outer with protective rubber foot and ankle cover, lightweight sponge sole and can only be described as very comfortable footwear that functions as a wellington but fits like a boot.

The materials are all very flexible making them easy to put on and take off, and offer the utmost in comfort to the wearer whilst protecting from the worst of the weather providing a warm and dry environment for the feet. They are available in sizes 4-12 at a Price of £60/ €70

To see some of Charlie's other products visit
www.charliekeen.com

Country Casuals from McBride's of Temple

McBride Fashions is family run business which has been selling high quality clothing to its customers for over 39 years. Based at the Temple Shopping Centre, Carryduff Road, McBrides has built an enviable reputation for supplying high quality garments at highly competitive prices.

One of Northern Ireland's largest leather and sheepskin retailers, Mc Bride Fashions also stock a wide range of country casuals for all countryside enthusiasts. Their experience in researching and working with leather and other fabrics and listening very carefully to customers views and needs, Mc Brides is able to offer customers a totally unique standard of service.

For all kinds of outdoor country fashion see
www.mcbridesfashions.com.

Some Very Topical Gifts for the Family from www.sled.ie

Ice Cleats - anti-slip shoe spikes of cutting edge design, providing truly effective traction for flat shoes on ice and packed snow. Compact and lightweight, they can be stored in a pocket, handbag or glove box for instant use by simply stretching them over the shoe. They are ideal for emergencies, walking to work, exercising, shopping, walking the dog, working outdoors, hiking , etc.

The Hot Sheet is the most durable sledge of its kind and a great favourite in the ski resorts. Small and portable, it is the perfect stocking filler. The Hot Sheet is suitable for open terrain, where there is no particular need for steering.

The Snow Race combines all the most important features of a perfect sledge. It is durable, very safe, easy to transport (even for kids), and sports a lovable design that small children will adore. With its movable handles, the Snow Racer enables efficient braking and steering.

The UFO is perfect for both adults and children. Featuring a very cool circular design, it is a slide board and a sledge all in one. The UFO provides an unforgettable experience, because as well as sledding down the hill; a rotating action can also be utilised, turning the UFO into a real winter merry-go-round.

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The Zeiss frame is **comfortable and durable**, in a sleek black finish. What makes this frame special though is the **adjustable bridge**, which allows the nose pads to be set at **3 different heights** – thus allowing the frame to be adjusted vertically. Perfect for clay, target or rough shooting.



Our **standard, hi-spec polarised lenses** reduce glare for superb definition. They come in a choice of tints to suit your requirements – and are available in a range of lens types.

Our premier lenses, the **Ultra 2000 (Drivewear®)** **polarised range**, offer a major advancement in variable tint technology. Ultra 2000 (Drivewear®) lenses react in all lighting conditions to provide perfect, glare-free vision – not only bright sunlight but challenging low-light too – where other, less advanced lenses struggle.

All lenses are 100% U.V. protective, and are scratch resistant and water repellent.

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(Price includes frames and single vision prescription lenses – other lens types also available)

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And a Suggestion for Kitting yourself out with expert protection throughout the year- Lifesystems First Aid Kits....

With over 25 years of trading under its belt, Lifesystems remains committed to ensuring that its iconic, red First Aid Kits continue to combine the latest innovations with the highest possible quality. Now sourcing over 60% of its components straight from the UK, all Lifesystems kits are assembled by an expert UK team for guaranteed quality and performance.

The original travel healthcare brand; all Lifesystems products combine exceptional quality with unwavering functionality. Designed and manufactured by people who know what they are talking about, the Lifesystems team are passionate about the outdoors and adventure travel. If an accident does take place, every kit features the Quick Find System to help guide you to the right product for the situation. Developed together with some of the world's leading mountain and emergency medical teams, the Quick Find System will help you to deal with a situation quickly.

Lifesystems extensive range includes first aid kits, blister packs and refills, each designed to fit with your activity. Whether camping, trekking or setting off on a worldwide gap year, the travel healthcare expert offers a First Aid Kit specifically created for that purpose.

For more information visit www.lifesystems.co.uk



Mark Irvine of Plastic Promotions introduces Paul Pringle's Cocker Spaniel Bee to her new travel box.

A Christmas present that is literally 'going to the dogs!'

Changing an ancient Volvo Estate to a (relatively) newer car was an opportunity for our Northern Editor Paul Pringle to purchase one of Plastic Promotion's latest dog boxes for his picking up team, just in time for Christmas.

Which to choose was a no-brainer really: "The last box I had from Plastic Promotions was still every bit as good as the day I got it years ago despite the ravages of labradors and cockers but I needed a different size for the new car and more dogs.

With the top class service that Gilbert Irvine and his son Mark had provided in the past, helping fit the box exactly to the boot space, delivery, value for money and so on, they were first on my list to discuss requirements."

And in no time at all Paul picked the new one up at their premises in Portadown, even bringing his Cocker Spaniel Bee to 'try it out.' You can see from the photo that it's just the job.

"It fits like a glove, is silent in transit and light to lift in and out of the car. Proper attention has been paid to air vents and a fully fitted rubber mat completes the outfit. But the rest of the dogs have not yet been told about their Christmas Present so don't mention anything to them if you see me picking up before Christmas Eve - it would only spoil the surprise from Santa! Happy Christmas to gundogs everywhere and their handlers too."

For more information on the full range of products visit <http://www.plasticpromotions.co.uk> tel: +44 (0)28 3835 6600 or Email gilbert@plasticpromotions.co.uk

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Donal McCloy Guns Unlimited

The background image shows the interior of a store specializing in outdoor and hunting gear. In the foreground, a wooden display stand holds several pairs of socks. Behind it, various jackets and outdoor clothing are hanging on the walls. A television screen is visible in the background, and a mounted animal head is on the wall to the right.

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Art and Antiques

What can one make of the art scene at the present? Paintings which made record shattering prices six to ten years ago are now coming under the hammer sometimes at half that value and on other occasions not selling at all. Then along comes a Jack Yeats masterpiece which hasn't been seen for over sixty years and it makes one million euros. Titled 'A Fair Day, Mayo,' it carried a pre-sale estimate of €500,000 to €800,000 and its sale makes it the most expensive painting at auction in Ireland this year. This significant oil painting which came to sell at ADAM'S in Dublin in September was originally sold for IR£250 to J P Reihill, Snr. in 1944 by Leo Smith and had remained in the Reihill family ever since. It certainly brought back the atmosphere of the heady days in Irish art sales when it was presented at ADAM'S Irish Art evening sale. With a number of telephone lines booked in advance of the sale and bidders also present in the room the picture eventually sold on the telephone to an anonymous bidder via Adam's director Stuart Cole.

And it was not a two horse race to the finishing line, I'm told. There were no less than nine bidders in the race, many of them staying until bidding had reached €900,000. The good news is the painting will stay in Ireland and it has a nice bit of history to go with it. After it was painted the artist lent the picture to the leader of the new Fianna Fail party, Eamon de Valera who displayed it in his offices at Suffolk Place. The painting which depicts a bustling country fair, which in itself represents Irish rural life, probably appealed to de Valera's vision of Ireland.

James O'Halloran, Adam's Managing Director, said: "This picture was one of the largest and most valuable works by Yeats to appear on the market for many years



Jack B. Yeats "A Fair Day" from Adam's Irish art sale made an eye watering €1 million.

and this sales result now proves the market for Irish art is clearly here in Dublin with Adams. The 24"x36" work had never been on the market before yet had been seen in a number of very prestigious exhibitions including 'Images in Yeats,' which was held in Monte Carlo in 1990 and more recently 'The Moderns' at IMMA earlier this year." A second painting by Jack Yeats also featured in the sale. Titled 'The dawn,' it fetched €80,000.

A time to sell

Ian Whyte, Chairman of Dublin based Whyte & Sons auctions poses the question, "Is it a time to sell or a time to buy orboth. "There have been, and there will be, better times," he states, "however if you have a need to raise money from art within the next five to seven years now is as good a time as any, as the proceeds you get now will be the same, if not more than you'll get in the next foreseeable period. Of course if you can afford to wait for seven to ten years then hold on for a market improvement.

"Are you thinking of buying art? The next five to seven years will see no dramatic changes in prices and will continue to allow collectors to acquire works at realistic prices. If history is anything to go by, we would expect prices to rise in seven to ten years time. Meanwhile, enjoy the pleasure of collecting and possessing beautiful art at prices which suit you."

He says the auction house's October sale went well: "We had a 70% sale rate including after-sales (65% on the night), totalling €740,000 gross. The top price was €110,000 for lot 32, Jack Yeats' Rescue Men. Other notable results were €60,000 for Paul Henry's Connemara Landscape, €37,000 for Dan O'Neill's Ruth, and a total of over €20,000 for Michael Hanrahan's Royal Visit to Ireland series. Turnover is still about 25% of what it was in 2006-2007 and prices are on average 50% down on the

This Chinese dish from Adam's country house collections sale at Slane Castle went on to sell for €310,000.





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Rescue Men by Jack Butler Yeats in Whyte's Irish & British Art auction sold for €110,000.

peak but at least there is some business to be done with more collectors seeking, and getting, great value."

ADAMS sale at Slane this autumn certainly brought a surprise in the shape of a Chinese plate. It carried a pre-estimate of €2,000-4000 but went on to sell for €310,000.

Other Chinese pieces well exceeded their estimates in that sale so really that is the story of Slane," adds David Britton of Adams. He adds: "The fantastic price paid for 'A Fair Day' shows that when good quality pieces come fresh to the market there are bidders out there looking for such lots. We had eight active bidders on this lot and three of them went to above €900,000. That must tell you something.

"We are looking forward to next year and we have a fine Charles Lamb exhibition opening in the AVA Gallery, Clondeboyne, Co Down on 25 January and running until 25 February. It is a loan exhibition rather than a selling one and comes to us from Galway City Museum and should be of great interest to the art loving public."



RUTH by Daniel O'Neill sold for €37,000 in Whyte's Irish & British Art auction.



Connemara Landscape by Paul Henry sold by Whyte's for €60,000.

Clarke's View

Daniel Clarke of ROSS's always keeps a weather eye on the scene and he stresses markets at present are healthy and will continue to remain so, particularly where Irish art is concerned, as long as people recognise the market has had to realign in recent months: "On the general sales scene we are doing quite well but we do have to recognise that a slow down in the housing market has meant there is a reduction in what was formerly coming into the sales rooms. Then again gold and silver are still riding high but supplies of furniture have been curtailed."

He adds: "In so far as Irish art is concerned we find that provided we continue to recognise where the market is at things will continue to be quite healthy. In our sales we are selling between 70-80% of what is coming on offer and that has to be healthy in the present climate. As well as our quarterly art sales, we introduced

on-line sales, now in their fourth session, and they are going very well with the last sale achieving 82%. There are people out there wanting paintings at a price and we believe the on-line sales are giving them what they are looking for."

Top of the list at ROSS's June sale was a William Conor, wax crayon on paper, 'Hauling in the boat' which made £11,500 followed by a Stephen McKeown bronze sculpture of an Irish wolfhound which found a new home for £11,000. John B Vallely's 'The Flute Player' went at £4,600 while a Colin Middleton oil, 'Trees,

Carnalea,' sold at £4,200 followed by a Hans Iten still life of rose at £3,300.

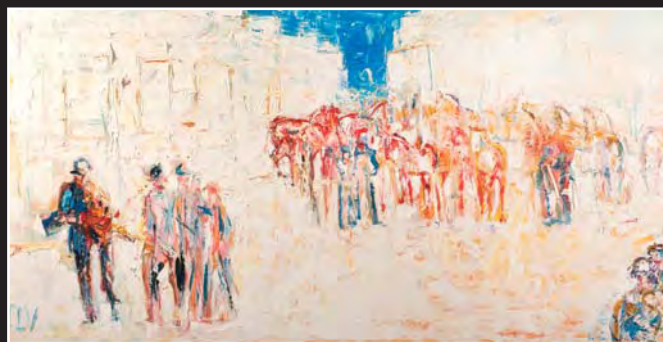
Other top lots included: Frank Egginton, oil, £3,100; Gladys Maccabe, £2,900; Colin Davidson, £2,800; Markey Robinson, £2,500; Charles McAuley, £2,400; John Turner oil, £2,100; Graham Knuttel, £2,000; William Percy French, £1,900; Kenneth Webb, £1,900; Julian Friers, £1,900; Gerard Dillon, £1,700; George K Gillespie, £1,500; Brian Ballard, £1,300; Ivan Sutton, £1,200.

ROSS'S October sale saw a Basil Blackshaw oil on board, 'Little Tramp' selling for £6,000 while £5,500 was paid for another of his works, entitled 'Head of Jude.' Co Armagh artist John B Vallely's 'Fiddle & Flute' realised £5,400 while a Geo Campbell Spanish oil and a Patrick Swift still life made £5,000 each. A Markey Robinson, 'Shawlies' in oil sold for £4,500 while a Graham Knuttel oil made a similar amount and a James Humbert Craig oil realised £3,500.

Among other lots were: James Humbert Craig, £3,000; Maurice C Wilks, £3,000; Ken Hamilton, £2,800; Terry Bradley, £280; William Percy French £2,400; Charles McAuley, £1,900; Terence P Flanagan, £1,800 and James S Sleator, £1,800.



Basil Blackshaw's oil on board, 'Little Tramp' sold for £6,000 at ROSS's.



John B Vallely's 'Fiddle & Flute' realised £5,400 at ROSS's.



This Spanish oil by Geo Campbell sold for £5,000 at Ross's.



£5,500 was paid at ROSS's for another by Basil Blackshaw entitled 'Head of Jude.'

A Snapshot of the Dublin Gun Trade

The first contemporary Dublin trade directory which detailed gunsmiths was published in 1752, when Michael Rainsford was the sole entry as a gunsmith. However, an earlier 1738 directory which was compiled in the year 2000 from papers found in Dublin, has subsequently been published and also lists Michael Rainsford. Invariably these early directories mention 'smiths' but not 'gunsmiths.'

However, by 1794 some twenty gunmakers /gunsmiths were listed as can be seen below. If we peruse this list, we can start to build a more detailed picture of the growth of gunmaking in the capital during this period. It must also be remembered that not all artisans paid for the privilege of being included in a trade directory, which was at this time, a new form of advertising.

The Merchant and Trades Directory of Gunsmith / Gunmakers 1794

Clarke, Nicholas, 43 Capel Street
Devereux, Michael, 3 Blackall Row
Devine, Thomas, 194 Abbey Street
Dobson, John, 66 Grafton Street
Eames, James, 1 Duke Street
Edwards, William, 1 Palace Street
Finn, Edward, 27 Nassau Street
Guinness, Richard, 107 James' Street
Hutchinson, Michael, 8 Dame Street
Kinder, Matthew, 81 Camden Street
marshal, Thomas, 4 Barrack Street
Meredith & Cox, 45 Fishamble Street
Muley, Daniel, 28 Parliament Street
Powell, Benjamin, 159 Abbey Street
Rigby, John, 19 Suffolk Street
Tomlinson, Robert, 123 Capel Street
Truelock, Thomas, 22 Suffolk Street
Truelock, Thomas, 26 Barrack Street
Wallace, Samuel, 22 Eustace Street

Below, we have a trade label for Nicholas Clarke while he was trading from 35 Capel Street from 1795 -1811.



Trade label for Nicholas Clarke circa 1800.

The 1794 directory states him trading at No 43 from 1789 -1794. This may have been a door number change rather than move, as the City of Dublin expanded. However, Clarke commenced business in 1787 and is listed in the 1788 directory as trading from Swifts Row.



A Flintlock Dueller by Clarke. 12" Barrel.

Clarke was a maker of good quality duellers. The trade label is quite a common pattern as other Irish gunmakers used this format substituting their names and addresses to the centre section and the engraver also adding the makers name to the oval cartouche on the breech block, John Silk and Thomas Fowler both later Dublin Gunmakers.

James Eames traded from South King Street from 1788 to 1792, whereafter he could be found at 1 Duke Street until his death in 1796. His wife Elizabeth Eames continued the business until 1803. Many of their pistols are silver mounted and utilising light weight walnut stocks. As can be seen from the illustrations below, Meredith and Cox had started a gun making partnership prior to September 1793, yet although having dissolved their partnership, the compilers of the Directory of 1794 were working with old information and still entered them as in trade under 'Meredith and Cox Desolved (sic) Partnership 25th September 1793.'



Advertisement Dublin Chronicle 1st October 1793.

A transcript of the advert, shown above, placed by Charles Meredith had been quite clear on the matter as can be seen if we transcribe the rather elderly cutting from the newspaper.

Partnership Dissolved.

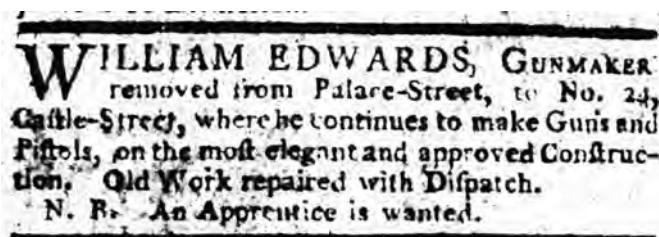
The firm or partnership between Charles Meredith and Walter Cox, gunmakers, 45 Fishamble Street; Dublin, is by mutual consent dissolved, September 25th 1793 and it is requested that such persons as are indebted to that firm will pay Charles Meredith, as he is lawfully qualified to receive the same:-

Meredith begs leave to return his sincere thanks to the nobility, gentry, and the public, for their liberal support since commencement in business, respectfully informs them; that he continues his business at 45 Fishamble Street, where he solicits a continuance of that patronage, which he has so amply experienced.

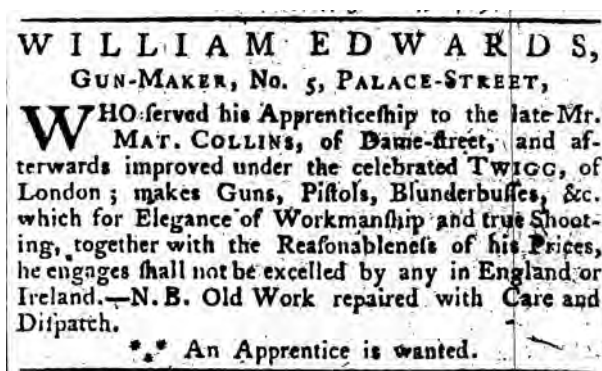
Charles Meredith appears to have commenced business in 1793 with Walter Cox and following the breakup of this partnership in 1793, Meredith went on to trade at 45 Fishamble Street from 1793 - 1799 and 16 Fishamble Street from 1800 - 1806. He made his final move to 5 Smock Alley where he remained from 1806-1814. Walter Cox, although not listed in any directories for this period, traded from 1793-1797.

William Edwards had by this time been trading for

17 years (Est: 1777) and an advert placed in the Dublin Evening Post of January 5th 1779 states that he was apprenticed to Matthew Collins and went on to trade under the celebrated Twigg in London. At this time Edwards was trading at 5 Palace Street and was advertising for an apprentice. Figs 6 & 7. His final year of trading was 1798.



William Edwards Advertisement in the Dublin Evening Post of August 1780.



William Edwards Advertisement placed in the Dublin Evening Post January 1779.

Michael Hutchinson is also recorded as having been apprenticed to Matthew Collins and following Collins death in 1770, he went into partnership with his Father-in-Law, Francis Lord. Michael Hutchinson was the successor to Francis Lord's business and traded in his own name until 1811. However, Hutchinson appears listed alone at 40 Dame St until 1784 and thereafter at No 8 Dame Street.



Hutchinson Dueller Lockplate.

Daniel Muley is first listed in 1787 at 44 Great Ship Street where he traded until 1793. Thereafter at 28

Parliament Street 1793-1811 and finally at 32 Townsend St. 1827 being his final trading date. A fine maker of Blunderbusses and Duellers. Interestingly although the history of the Rigby family has been well documented by D.H.L Back (Rigby Gunmakers) It was nice to find contemporary adverts detailing their changes of address and in addition a sample of Rigby's, earliest known trade label for 19 Suffolk Street.



John Rigby's earliest known trade label. Circa 1790.

John Rigby moved from 14 College Green to 19 Suffolk Street in 1784 and remained there until his death in 1818. His sons, William and John finally moved to 24 Suffolk Street in 1830. (fig 10) It is just possible that a trade label does exist for the College Green address but to date not encountered.

RIGBY, GUN-MAKER,
Removed from No. 14, College-green, Dublin,
RETURNS his sincere thanks to the public, his friends, for the distinguished preference shewn him since his commencement in business, and begs leave to inform them, that he has removed to No. 19, Suffolk-street, within four doors of Grafton-street, where his friends will be supplied, as usual, with all manner of FIRE-ARMS, (of real Irish Manufacture) whether plain, rifle, machine, or magazine Guns or Pistols; double or organ-barrelled Guns or Pistols, containing what number of barrels any gentleman may chuse.

RIGBY thinks it entirely unnecessary to attempt to puff off his work, either by challenges or otherwise, as he finishes his best work himself, and the acknowledged superiority of his abilities as a workman, by the most eminent masters in Dublin (who employed him for upwards of ten years) and some of the most honourable testimonials which he can produce) of his care in executing the orders he has been honoured with, has established his reputation beyond the aid of a puff.

(16)

Advertisement from the Dublin Morning Post notifying of John Rigby's move to 19 Suffolk Street. Dated 25th September 1784.

that Parents and Guardians will be particular in forwarding the young Gentlemen to School, as the Classes shall be formed forthwith for the ensuing half year's duties.
 Tallamore, July 27th, 1830.

GUN MANUFACTURERS.

WILLIAM and JOHN RIGBY respectfully inform the Nobility, Gentry, and their Friends in general, that they have removed their Establishment from No. 19, to 24, SUFFOLK-STREET, where, from the extent of their premises, they are enabled to carry on their business with a completeness never before attempted in this country, and they cannot let this opportunity pass without expressing their heartfelt thanks for the liberal encouragement given their Establishment for upwards of FORTY-SIX YEARS.

To their numerous English customers they consider particular acknowledgments due, for their liberal encouragement of their manufacture, and they beg to assure their friends that every branch of the Gun, is manufactured under their own eyes, and their Gun-barrel factory being attached to their present premises enables them to give ocular proof to every Gentleman who wishes it.

An extensive assortment of Gun Equipments with every description of Patent Shot, Gunpowder, Copper Caps, (English and French) Patent Wadding, Game Bags, Dram Flasks, &c. &c. purchased for Cash, enables them to sell at the lowest rates, according to the quality of the article.

A Shooting Gallery sixty feet long attached to the premises, open from Ten o'clock in the Morning until Nine at Night.

August 6, 1830.

Advertisement informing of William and John Rigby's move to 24 Suffolk Street. August 6th 1830.

Rigbys were one of the most prolific suppliers of duelling pistols in Ireland at this time and later Farrel Mc Dermott and George Turner names would be emblazoned on dueller lockplates and barrels. The English gunmakers such as Wogdon, H.W Mortimer and Griffin & Tow were also well represented and their weapons found their way into Ireland via the honour maintaining officers of the British Army. However, pressure was being exerted to stop this "Anti Christian" practice and comments and notices were appearing in the press.

ton-street, Messrs. Grant, Bolton, and Co., Messrs. Curry, and Co. Sackville-street, at the Hall of the Rotunda, at Mr. Cutler's, 56; Stephen's-street, or at the Tailors' Hall, Back-lane, any day previous to the meeting, between the hours of eleven and five o'clock.

ANTI-DUELLING ASSOCIATION.—A General Meeting of the Members and Friends of this Society will be held in the Lecture-room of the Dublin Institution, 15, Upper Sackville-street, on THURSDAY, the 10th of JUNE next, to receive the Report of the Provisional Committee, which had been directed to conduct the preliminary measures of the Society; and also to confer upon further proceedings in accordance with the principles of the Institution, namely, "To promote by every practicable and legitimate means, the abolition of the Anti-Christian practice of Duelling."

Office of the Society, No. 7, Lower Abbey-street, Dublin, May 26th, 1830.

REGATTA.—The Commissioners of the Royal

Anti-Duelling Association advertisement from May 26th 1830

Finally, we look at a name synonymous with high quality duellers, that of Samuel Wallace. He is listed in the directory of 1785 as trading from 2 William Street and by 1789 at 22 Eustace Street, the rebellion year of 1798 being his last entry date. The fine pair of his duellers overleaf shows his skills in this area.



A Pair of Silver Mounted Duelling Pistols by Samuel Wallace Hall Marked for 1788. Private Collection.

This pair of silver-mounted flintlock duelling pistols have browned twist sighted octagonal 11 inch barrels of 22 bore signed in gold on top flats, Wallace - Dublin, with engraved tangs and breeches, gold vents, crowned P & V proof marks and makers SW mark. The stepped locks are engraved at the tail and signed Wallace, fitted with set triggers and sliding safeties, swan necked cocks and semi-waterproof pans. The full length walnut stocks are mounted in silver with full Irish hallmarks for 1788 and the maker's mark of Thomas Jones. These comprise trigger guards with acorn finials and applied

spurs, butt caps with engraved decoration en-suite, urn shaped Adam style side-plates and barrel bolt escutcheons, plain ramrod pipes and oval thumb pieces engraved with a crest comprising a flaming torch or brazier and the initial "T". The pistols are fitted with whalebone ramrods with ivory thimbles and worms. These pistols bear a strong resemblance to the pair by Rigby shown in John Atkinson's book 'Duelling Pistols.' The mounts are by the same maker, Thomas Jones, and are date marked for the same year.

I should like to add to this snapshot at a later date by considering some of the other gunmakers listed in this 1794 Directory. Meanwhile, I would like to thank all those who gave photographs and information. I am always pleased to hear from anyone with snippets of information on any Irish Gunmaker and especially samples of Irish Gunmakers Trade labels and you can contact at Ramrodantiques.co.uk or by telephoning 07818 470123, or Emailing davejwstroud@hotmail.com. For further reading regarding gun making in Ireland please refer to Irish Gunmakers by Richard Garrett and copies are available from Ramrod Antiques.

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Weatherby Vanguard Syn..243	€799
Remington 700 Sless 25/06.....	€899
Cz 550 Deluxe 30/06	€895
Weatherby Vanguard Wood.308...€899	
Sako 75 Varmint (Blue) .243	€1000
Triebel.375+30 Mm Rings.....	€2495
Tikka T3 Tactical.223 (20")	€1695
Steyr Pro-Hunter .223.....	€999

Shotguns-New/Secondhand

Silma M80 Sporter	€899
Yildiz Tse O/U Game	€399
Miroku M70 Game	€1079
Miroku M38 Trap	€1189
Webley Sporter	€749
Webley Game O/U	€699
Finnclassic Sporter	€1000
Lumar Scirocco 20g Game.....	€499
Zabala D/B 410g Game	€449
Fausti SI Game(Side-Plate)	€1299
Aya No.2 20g Sidelock R/A.....	€3999

Binoculars/Spotting Scopes

Bushnell Powerview 8x42	€99
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Nikon Sporter Ex 8x42.....	€199
Minox Bv 8x42	€199
Swarovski Ctc 30x75	€699

Hunter Wellies

Balmoral Classic	€99
Balmoral Neoprene	€139
Balmoral Neoprene Zip	€179



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European Hunter's Day at Kinnitty Castle November 4th



Irish Countrysports and Country Life magazine and the Great Game Fairs of Ireland were well represented at the celebrations in Kinnitty Castle by Fair Director and ROI Editor Philip Lawton and several of the contributors to the magazine. We thank them and NARGC PRO for their various reports and photographs. Philip was delighted to be able to arrange for Shane McEntee, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture to present Des with a gift of the St Hubert Folio commissioned by the magazine from Ingrid Houwers. Ingrid wished to thank Des for his help with a ROI taxidermy licence and produced a special personalised copy.

A Press Perspective

Derek Fanning, Deputy Editor of the Midland Tribune and a regular contributor was present and he sent us the following report:

A large gathering of hunting enthusiasts from all over Ireland came together on Friday 4th of November last in Kinnitty Castle, County Offaly to mark European Hunters' Day.

The enthusiastic gathering included the local Ormond Hunt and the Irish Hawking Club. The Ormond Hunt displayed their horses and hounds and the Hawking Club displayed their birds of prey. The event also included a gun-dog display and a parade of all the hounds.

The day coincided with the feast day of hunting's patron saint St Hubert and hundreds of representatives from all Irish hunting backgrounds, along with local fishing clubs, were present at the event. The celebrations were attended by a variety of public figures including Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Shane McEntee TD (Meath East) and Angus Middleton, CEO of the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (FACE) which represents over seven million European hunters, Ses Doris, Chairman of the NARGC and Oliver Russell, Chairman of FACE Ireland. Deputy McEntee was very outspoken last year in his opposition to the banning of the Ward Union Stag

Hunt. A light game lunch was provided to attendees with tea / coffee and mulled wine.

A spokesperson for the NARGC (National Association of Regional Game Councils) said they hope to mark European Hunters' Day again next year and they plan to attract more people to the event by contacting local groups and advertising it.

The NARGC is based in Ferbane Business & Technology Park in Offaly and Des Crofton, national director of the organisation, told those at the Kinnitty Castle event that hunting lobby groups would now be pressing the government to lift the stag hunting ban.

RISE (Rural Ireland Says Enough) relaunched its campaign on 4th of November as well and Mr Crofton pointed out that Fine Gael had made a deal under which fieldsports people would vote for its candidates in exchange for reversing the ban on the Ward Union Stag Hunt.

'We delivered our end of the bargain,' he said, 'and Fine Gael must deliver its end now. Because no definitive action has been taken by the party to deliver on its promise, I have to announce that the fieldsports organisations have now relaunched the RISE campaign, but this time with Fine Gael in its sights.'

RISE pointed out that rural dwellers have endured many setbacks: falling incomes, closure of schools, closure of post offices and Garda stations, closure of council offices, poor planning, lack of broadband, and lack of proper rural transport. RISE said that in hunting it was promoting 'a distinctive form of recreation and sport that is enjoyed in rural Ireland by people from both rural and urban backgrounds'.

Mr Crofton said European Hunters' Day 'is an informal and joyous celebration of a way of life for millions of people throughout Europe.' He pointed out that in recent years studies have shown that Irish hunters create a range of ecological benefits in rural Ireland through habitat management and predator control and economic benefits through annual spending in rural areas of over €100 million.' In Ireland some 300,000 people are involved in hunting, one of the highest

participation rates per capita in the European Union.

He said a meeting of the chiefs of all the RISE organisations would be convened in Dublin to which the Taoiseach and several of his Ministers would be invited to address the issues of concern, which included reversing the Ward Union ban and sorting out firearms licensing issues.

Saint Hubert is the patron saint of hunters, mathematicians, opticians and metalworkers and he lived from about 656 / 658 until May 727. He was probably born in Toulouse. According to legend, Hubert was hunting a stag when the animal turned and Hubert was astonished to see there was a crucifix between its antlers. He heard a voice say, 'Hubert, unless thou turnest to the Lord, and leadest an holy life, thou shalt quickly go down into hell.' Hubert got off his horse, prostrated himself and asked, 'Lord, what wouldst Thou have me do?' The answer he was given was, 'Go and seek Lambert, and he will instruct you.'

St Hubert's Day is traditionally celebrated across Europe where thousands of people attend special masses and celebrations to honour the saint. During these festivities, special blessings are said for the safety and success of hunters and the health of their animals. The epicentre of these celebrations takes place in the town of St Hubert, Belgium, where the annual colourful festivities draw crowds of 10,000 or more.

An organisers's perspective

Des Crofton gives his personal perspective on the success of the day below:

European Hunters' Day, the first of which was celebrated in 2010, is a celebration of a way of life for millions of people throughout Europe which goes back hundreds of years. In Ireland, some 300,000 people

Philip Lawton, Des Crofton, Sean Doris, Chairman NARGC, Shane McEntee, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture and Angus Midleton, CEO of FACE in Brussels.

participate in some form of hunting, one of the highest per capita in the EU. In celebration of this very important way of life for many Irish people, the National Association of Regional Game Councils (NARGC), in partnership with FACE Ireland and the Hunting Association of Ireland (HAI), was delighted to host European Hunters' Day on November 4th 2011. The venue was the very atmospheric Kinnitty Castle Hotel, Kinnitty, Co Offaly. All Irish fieldsports were represented.

There were plenty of shooting folk in attendance and the place was awash with hunting dogs and hounds of all breeds - gun dogs, foot packs and mounted packs. The local Ormond Hunt put on a very entertaining display with the horses and hounds; while the beagle footpack simply mingled socially with the crowd. Ivan Thor from the Irish Hawking Club was there with his beautiful Harris Hawk, a truly magnificent bird. NARGC's Tom O'Connor from Kerry brought along a few of his Springers and put on a gun dog display which was most entertaining. A venison stew and a mixed game stew were served for lunch with tea/coffee and mulled wine and everyone agreed it was delicious. I was particularly pleased to have the attendance of the new NARGC Chairman, Sean Doris together with former Chair Tom O'Donnell. Completing the special guest list was Oliver Russell, Chairman of FACE Ireland, Angus Midleton, CEO of FACE Europe who travelled especially from Brussels for the Event and Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture and Food, Shane McEntee TD who assured the crowd of the Government's commitment to repeal the legislation which effectively banned the Ward Union Stag Hounds. Next year's event will be held in Stradbally Hall, Stradbally, Co Laois.





Andrew Lambert (General Manager Kinnitty Castle Hotel), Kate Finnegan (Marketing Manager Kinnitty Castle Hotel), Des Crofton, Sean Doris, Angus Middleton and Shane McEntee.



The Ormonde Hunt (photo Joe Murphy).



Liam McGarry IDS, David Scanlon NARGC, Damien Hannigan WDAI (photo Joe Murphy).



Ivan Thor of the Irish Hawking Club with his Harris Hawk at European Hunters' Day celebrations in Kinnitty Castle Hotel.
(Photo George Kelly)



Jimmy Christie from Cloghan, Co Offaly with his sporting dogs at European Hunters' Day celebrations in Kinnitty Castle Hotel (Photo George Kelly).

(Below) Foot Pack (photo Joe Murphy).



(Below) Show Stealers (photo Joe Murphy).



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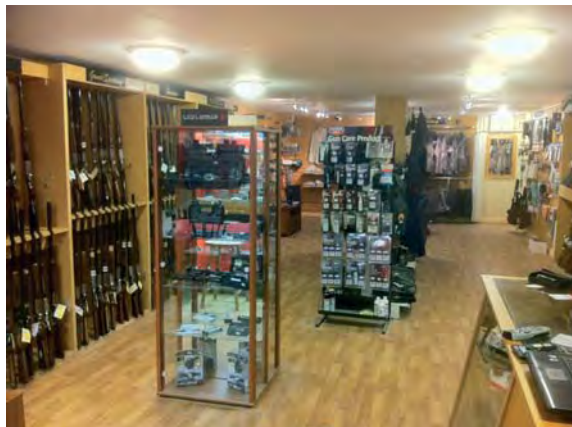
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St. Hubert - The making of the modern folio

St. Hubertus, or St. Hubert as we more commonly know him, is the patron saint of hunters, mathematicians, opticians and metalworkers. Born, likely in Toulouse, around 656-658 he died in the year 727, at the age of around 70 in Tervuren near Brussels in Belgium. In his youth, Hubert was sent to the Neustrian court of Theuderic III at Paris, where he soon found place amongst the nobles as an equal and like many nobles of the time, Hubert became addicted to the chase.

Around this time (682) Hubert married Floribanne, daughter of the Count of Leuven. Sadly, his wife died giving birth to their son, upon which Hubert withdrew into the forests of the Ardennes, and gave himself up entirely to hunting. Nothing was safe from Hubert, until one Good Friday morning, while most people were at church, Hubert was pursuing a magnificent stag. As the animal stopped and turned Hubert was astounded at perceiving a crucifix standing between its antlers, and suddenly he heard a voice saying: "Hubert, unless thou turnest to the Lord, and ledest a holy life, thou shalt quickly go down into hell". Hubert dismounted and asked, "Lord, what wouldst Thou have me do?" He received the answer, "Go and seek Lambert, and he will instruct you."

The imagery of St. Hubert's stag or hart has always been a symbol of respect and temperance when it comes



The St Hubertus Folio

to the hunt. It is an oft portrayed image in the history of early medieval illumination. In those days all the focus was on the visual emphasis of important phrases to try and draw the attention; the visual impact was far more important than the actual text as few people in those days could read. Most places of worship had their own scriptorium, which was a place where a number of monks



Initial Inkwork

would copy individual pages from a working stock of gospels and other important scriptures too important to be used during service.

The early days of the art

Illuminated manuscripts were usually made from treated calf skin, also known as vellum. Vellum was the favourable medium for these important documents because of its durability in comparison to early papers, keeping in mind that most of the pigments used for the decorating were highly toxic and aggressive. The skins were soaked in a solution of lime or urine to remove the hairs and treat the skin, after which they would be stretched on a frame to be worked further. Once the drying had set in the skin would be scraped smooth, wetted once more and left to dry completely. The drying process causes the skin to shrink and stretch to a perfectly flat surface. Individual pages, or folios as they are called, were then cut to size and stored away until they were needed.

Described by many as 'the work of angels' it must have been a sight to see in those days, and even to this day such famous examples such as the Book of Kells continue to inspire us. The finesse and detail of the work almost look beyond human skill, but they were not done without a little help. Wax tablets were used as practice runs. These wooden boards had a hollow filled with a small layer of wax upon which the monk would prick guidelines using compass, rulers and templates. From these simple guides the monks would probably draw the final details by hand. When working on the actual piece all care was taken not to damage the vellum with these guides, as they should not be noticeable on the final folio pages.

Once the base ink work made out of crushed oak-apples, soot or lampblack was laid out the illustration 'magic' would begin. Bright colours would be used to bring the designs to life, but with at a hefty price. The colour yellow, which often came from Italy or Hungary,

was made from the arsenic sulphite 'orpiment', which presented its own problems. It is extremely toxic and incompatible with other common pigments like lead and copper-based substances such as verdigris and azurite. Verdigris, producing a vibrant green, came from the application of acetic acid on copper, is highly unstable and over the time eats through the vellum. White lead, often used as a base because it doesn't crack and enhances the vibrancy of other colours, came from roasting lead over vinegar. But by far the most impressive feat of these pigments is the story of their travels. The one pigment that remained the most expensive up to the 18th century was Lapis Lazuli. This

fairly rare semi-precious stone was found only in Afghanistan, and it often took years to get enough of the pigment back to Ireland to finish a single page!

Oskar von Riesenthal

Born on the 18th September 1830 Oskar was a famous German forester, ornithologist, hunter and writer from Breslau, in what was then Prussia. He studied at the Forestry Academy in Neustadt-Eberswalde, becoming a "Revierförster" (district forest ranger) in the Tuchola Forest, where he began studying ornithology. In 1871 he became "Oberförster" (chief forester) in Altenkirchen where he also wrote his first book; 'Die Raubvögel Deutschlands und des angrenzenden Mitteleuropas' (Birds of Prey of Germany and adjoining Central Europe). The famous illustrations in that book closely resemble the styling of an earlier and equally famous ornithologist John James Audubon, which may have been an inspiration to Riesenthal during his studies. He later became Royal Forester for the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Domains in Charlottenburg, where he stayed until his death in 1898.

The St. Hubertus Folio

A lot of care and research went into the creating of this folio page, trying to best harmonise the old with the new. Instead of actual vellum, handmade paper was treated to resemble the vellum look and the rest of the pigments were picked to closely resemble the historical colours best. The rest of the attention went into the message of the folio; respect, honour and temperance.

The key area or crown of the page carries St. Hubert's stag, with the cross between its antlers. Visually, with the help of the gold-leaf aureole, the design pulls the readers eyes downwards from there, directing focus on the central part. In harmony with St. Hubert's vision the image of the stag is framed with a 'tree of life' pattern featuring the rich blue pigments. This symbolises the ever continuing cycle of life which is ever expanding.

The blue pigments used here are there to highlight the importance of the 'life and living' aspects of this folio.

The top frame, just below the main-crown features two dogs/hounds pointing and flushing out pheasants. This imagery repeats itself in the main side borders, but they also feature two hounds retrieving pheasants in the central position. The half-circles on each side feature falcons with rabbits in their talons, and the bottom border holds two fishing figures (one female, one male) with their catch knotted together. The base corner stands are a reflection of the personality they portray; the ferrets which are almost dancing with their prey.

And last but not least, Oskar von Riesenthal's poem "Waidmannsheil" ("Huntsman's Salute") features in the central position. In careful calligraphy his message is passed along in its original German version, along with a translation into English by its side that preserves the original rhyme and metre.

Huntsman's Salute

This is the hunter's badge of glory,
That he protect and tend his quarry,
Hunt with honour, as is due,
And through the beast to God is true.

Weapons of war are by hate run,
yet love for game fires our gun.
Therefor ponder, your daily bread;
Did your game not suffer dread?

Guard game from man and beast alike,
Make brief its death and sure your strike!
Be outside rough, yet mild inside,
And badge of glory pure abide.

And the original in German;

Waidmannsheil - Oskar von Riesenthal

Das ist des Jägers Ehrenschild,
Daß er beschützt und hegt sein Wild,
Waidmännisch jagt, wie sich's gehört,
Den Schöpfer im Geschöpfe ehrt!

Das Kriegsgeschoß der Haß regiert, -
Die Lieb' zum Wild den Stützen führt:
Drum denk' bei Deinem täglich Brot
Ob auch Dein Wild nicht leidet Noth?

Behüt's vor Mensch und Thier zumal!
Verkürze ihm die Todesqual!
Sei außen rauh, doch innen mild, -
Dann bleibt blank Dein Ehrenschild!

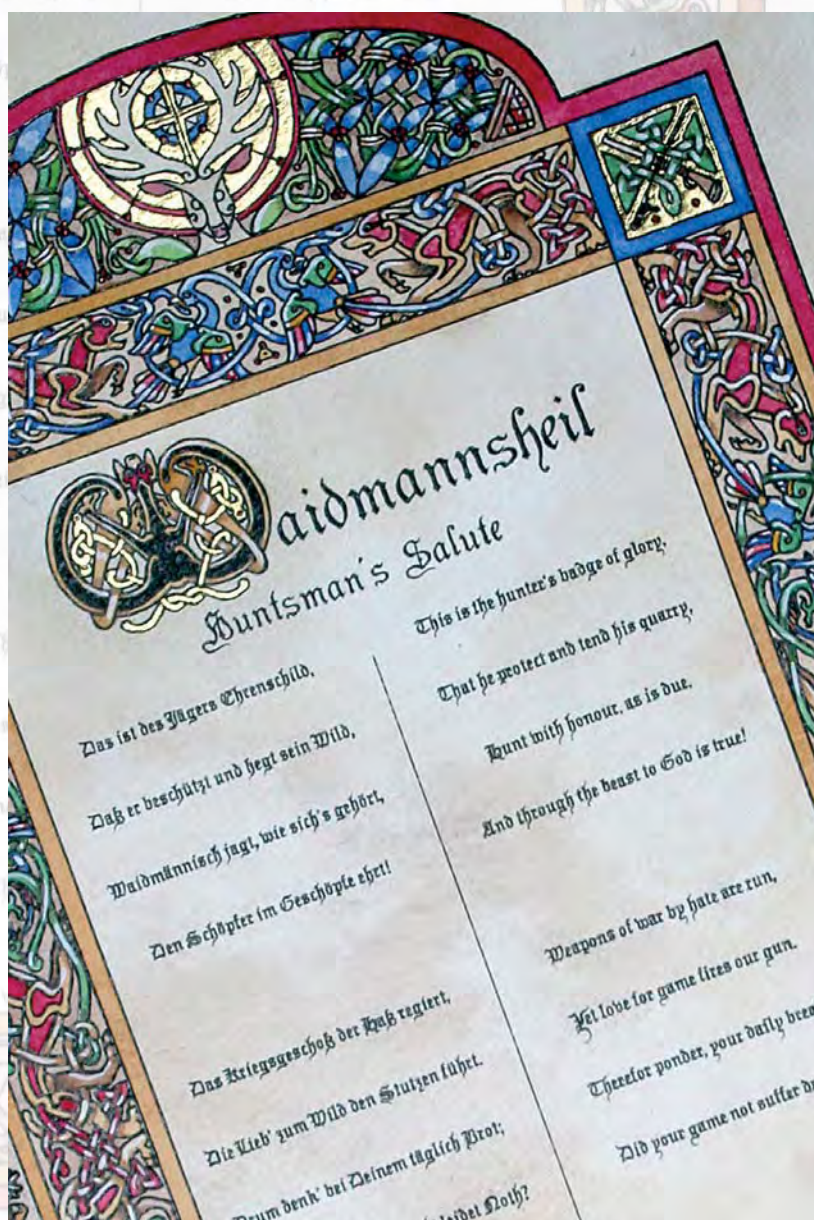
Publishers Note: Most visitors to the Great Game Fairs of Ireland will know of Ingrid's talent as a taxidermist but Ingrid is also very skilled in many other artistic areas including jewellery making and illustrations. When I was looking for design for some presentation scrolls I suggested to Ingrid that she might like to incorporate some St Hubert and Book of Kells imagery into what has now become what I consider will be regarded as a modern classic – St Hubertus Folio.

Ingrid has now produced this in a limited edition format and this is available in the following formats:

A3 prints, limited edition of 150. Price £15 - Signed and numbered, printed on heavy aquarel paper. A3 facsimile with 22kt gold gilding, limited edition of 50, Price £75 - Signed and numbered on heavy aquarel paper. Matting and framing available on request.

Please contact (the artist) via email;

Ingrid@ImbasCreations.com

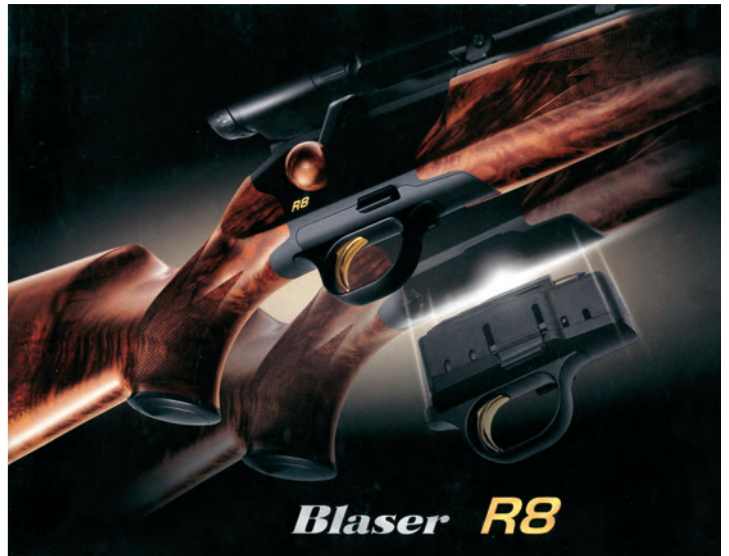


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Hunting Roundup



Mr Lee Beverland, sole judge, deep in thought at the Mid Antrim Hunt's Show at Ballymena.

Late Season Puppy Shows

Mid Antrim Hunt

Mr Lee Beverland of the Sunnyland Beagles was the sole judge at the Mid Antrim Hunt's Ballymena kennels as huntsman Hugh Cochrane brought forward 2 1/2 couple of doghounds and 1 1/2 couple of bitches for his consideration. A large appreciative crowd, happily including a great number of children and young people, took a keen interest as Mr Beverland made the following decisions:

Results: Doghounds 1st Butler Bitches 1st Dreamy.

Butler was then announced as Champion Puppy with Dreamy as Reserve Champion which was the prelude to

a warm family occasion beginning with Hugh Cochrane bringing in the main pack, all looking well in their coats, to great applause.

I had been rather disconcerted earlier on, when the Tynan and Armagh huntsman

Keith McClean arrived with a bitch whelp which he presented to Hugh Cochrane.

Thinking that this was a variation on a "bring a bottle" theme I was relieved to learn that this was a public form of drafting hounds and was another example of the burgeoning relationship between these Hunts. The weather remained very kind to us enabling the Mid Antrim hospitality to be enjoyed to the full.

North Down Foxhounds

At the Comber kennels of the North Down Foxhounds two visiting huntsmen, Kevin

Donohue (Ballymacad Foxhounds) and Chris Francis (Kildare Foxhounds), had 5 1/2 couple of doghounds and 2 couple of bitches for their consideration.

Huntsman Tom Haddock produced the new entry with not a shy one among them and the judges relayed the following decisions via Mr Raymond Mitchell MFH.

Results: Doghounds 1st Barman Curre and Llangibby Boycott 04 their Banish 07 2nd Shogun Ballymacad Sabbath 06 Packet 08

Bitches 1st Satin, Sister of Shogun 2nd Solo Sister of Shogun

Barman was then announced as Champion Puppy with Satin as Reserve Champion and, as Mr Mitchell invited everyone to tea in the nearby marquee, the rain started ensuring that room in the marquee was now at a premium.

NI Masters of Hounds Association present £1,000 to the NI Hospice.

The Team Chase at the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society's annual show at Balmoral,

Belfast, organised by the NIMHA and sponsored by Wilson's Auctions, resulted in the presentation of a cheque in the amount of £1,000 to the NI Hospice.

A total of sixteen teams from both sides of the border competed with the following places being decided:



Tom Haddock (2nd left) Huntsman to the North Down Foxhounds shows the new entry to judges Kevin Donohue and Chris Francis at the Hunt Puppy Show.

Results: 1st Ward Union Staghounds A 2nd Fingal Harriers Jt 3rd Kildare Foxhounds/Killinick Harriers

Best turned out prize Mid Antrim Hunt

The Tynan and Armagh Hounds, under huntsman Keith McClean, paraded here for the first time in their history. Craig Caven MFH (East Down Foxhounds) said that he was particularly indebted to sponsor Ian Wilson, course designer Noel Fitzpatrick, marshals Bob Wilson MFH (Iveagh Hounds) and Linda Graham, starter and judge John Rowley and to the RUAS for allowing the Team Chase to close their annual show in its usual exciting way.

Death of Des McCheane

The sad news of the death of hunting photographer Des McCheane came as a great shock to a great number of people in equestrian and hunting circles throughout Ireland and beyond. Des had amassed a huge collection of photographs throughout his life and was widely acknowledged as the doyen of the genre with a long list of publications, such as the Irish Field and Baily's Hunting Directory making regular use of his excellent

work. Away from the photography Des had a marvellous fox sense, a quiet gentlemanly demeanour and a charming way with everyone with whom he came in contact.

With parents who were deeply involved in hunting in Co Kilkenny Des was literally born to the sport and, from those beginnings at Freshford, Des went on to keep cattle and Connemara ponies on his farm, to have business interests in publishing and to leave an indelible mark on Irish hunting.

Des's sense of humour was probably most famously illustrated, literally, by the cover of his second book, *An Irish Hunting Scrapbook*, co-edited with Cyril Smyth, another noted photographer. The cover depicts a terrier and a fox apparently 'in flagrante delicto!'

The death of Des McCheane has robbed Irish hunting of a most marvellous chronicler of our sport, a gentlemanly presence at so many hunting occasions and a very wise and knowledgeable friend. Every sympathy is extended to Des's wife Bina, his daughter Maven, his son Brendan and to the wider family circle.

Rommel's old French HQ in La Roche Guyon

France is a virtual treasure trove for anyone interested in the events of WW2. The Normandy landing beaches and numerous battlefields have been major tourist attractions for decades. Being a committed student of all things relative to that conflict, I have walked most of France's battlefields, looked at the museums, filmed the beaches and met many of the veterans who survived the conflict. Last September, I visited La Roche Guyon, a sleepy little village on the banks of the Seine 57 kilometres north of Paris, intending to view yet another historic site. Just a few minutes drive from Monet's house and gardens at Giverny, the village is worth exploring because a chateau there contains Rommel's offices and map rooms, more or less intact since 1944. Rommel - the 'Desert Fox' was the German General charged with repelling the not-unexpected Allied invasion.

This was my third visit to La Roche Guyon, not having achieved the object of the exercise, a tour of the WW2 site, at two previous attempts. Simply put, the Chateau was closed on both occasions, so I covered this eventuality this year - or so I thought! Rommel's headquarters remains intact in the chateau set at the foot of a limestone cliff, into which bombproof tunnels were bored during the 1940s. It was to here that he dashed from his wife's birthday party in Germany when news of the Allied invasion along the Normandy coast on 6th June 1944 began to break. While we are all familiar with the outcome of this momentous occasion, it tends to overshadow other goings-on within the German High Command. Perhaps the most publicised event that followed the invasion was an attempt by senior generals to assassinate Adolph Hitler - the Bomb Plot. It's a matter of record that Rommel's deputy, Hans Speidel, was involved in this plot and, while nothing was ever conclusively proven against Rommel, it's highly unlikely that he could have remained unaware. It's an issue that historians have mulled over for half a century.

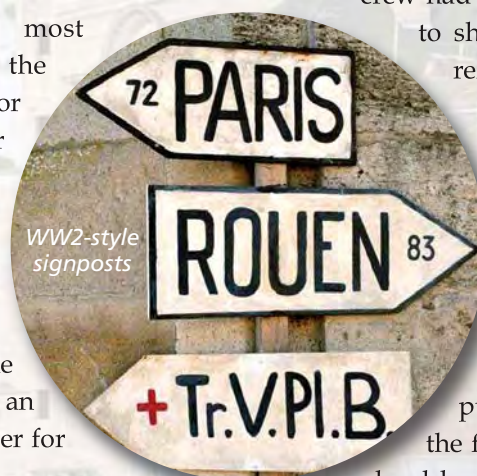
La Roche Guyon



At some point in late June 1944 two high ranking German Officers - Field Marshal Gerd von Runstead and General Heinz Guderian, arrived in La Roche Guyon to investigate if Rommel had any involvement in the assassination attempt. Guderian had written a book in the 1930s on lightning warfare with massed tanks - Blitzkrieg - the system used with devastating effect in the early war years.

Sandbags, cannon and Kubelwagens

Now fast forward to September 2011 - a German film crew had descended on the little French village to shoot scenes relevant to the 1944 visit referred to above, for a movie about Rommel's life. I arrived a few days later - luckily we had booked the only hotel some months in advance, and that's when the wheels came off my third attempt to visit and photograph Rommel's map room: the film people had taken over the entire chateau and it was closed to the public. The village was reminiscent of the filming of Saving Private Ryan on our local beach back in the 1990s, equipment and





German actors Hans Zischler (left) as von Runstead and Klaus J. Behrendt as his grandfather, General Heinz Guderian

sandbags all over the place, a multi-barrelled cannon at the chateau's entrance, road signs a la 1940s style, traffic restrictions and fellows strolling around in WW2 German uniforms. Opel trucks, BMW motorcycles with sidecars, Kubelwagens and two beautiful old Horch touring cars frequently drove around the streets.

Constant road closures to facilitate filming irritated some of the locals and the disdain for German uniforms was palatable, despite the fact that the people wearing them had been born decades after the war and many of the film crew were actually French nationals. One elderly lady walking her poodle became quite annoyed at the delays and informed anyone who would listen that they had kicked the Germans out in 1944 and she didn't see why she had to tolerate all this. Discretion being the better part of valour prevented my suggesting that it wasn't actually the French that had wielded the boot. Other villagers were clearly amused by events and availed of the opportunity to take photographs.

Having ascertained that one particular member of the crew staying in the hotel seemed to be in a position of importance, I approached him to make a case for a short visit to the chateau. He spoke perfect English and clearly understood my predicament but was unable to do much about it. The best that was available was an invitation to meet him outside the Chateau's gate at 10am the following morning and he would facilitate my taking some photographs. During our conversation he explained the film's purpose and the sequences being shot in La Roche Guyon. Initially I assumed that he was a Director or Producer until he mentioned that he was an actor and was playing the part of General Heinz Guderian. The conversation became more interesting when he eventually told me that he was actually Guderian's grandson.

Dark days and 'Operation Green'

By coincidence I had recently picked up a brand new paperback in a bookshop in Dublin, a biography published in 1958 about Guderian. Where it had lain



Stepping back in time - a WW2 BMW motorcycle with sidecar.

since the 1950s is anyone's guess, possibly buried beneath other volumes in a book repository somewhere. Being armed with this recently acquired knowledge about his grandfather's early days was a useful addition to the conversation that followed. Early the next morning I met 'General Guderian and Field Marshal von Runstead' (see photos) in full uniform including Iron Crosses, at the chateau gate. Another fascinating conversation about the events of 1944 ensued. Initially I thought that they were being coy, but it transpired that their information about the period was indeed scant. We discussed the Allied invasion and the initial lack of German response; incredibly, I was able to fill in many gaps in their understanding of those dark days. Even more interesting was the discussion about Ireland's position on the periphery of Europe and Operation Green, the planned German invasion of this island. They were aware of its existence and the manual that had been compiled to facilitate its implementation. Even more interesting was their reaction to the fact that the German photographer who filmed possible landing sites and beaches in Ireland in 1938 escaped from Berlin in 1945 and ended up living in a flat in Dublin's Leeson Street in the early 1950s. I remember him and his wife because I played with their children and visited the flat many times. Those children, now adults, are still around so 'no names no pack-drill.'

Rommel's career came to an end from injuries suffered when his car was strafed by RAF Typhoons on a long straight road outside Vimoutiers. Even then he was still a suspect in the bomb plot and when in hospital was given the option of a public trial with ensuing disgrace and execution, or the option of taking poison and a hero's funeral. He chose the latter. Was he involved in the bomb plot? No one really knows. The new movie about Rommel's life will be transmitted by the German TV station ARD either in spring or autumn 2012. I Emailed a photograph of Guderian's grandson Klaus J Behrendt to a friend in Germany asking if he knew him and back came the reply that two out of every three Germans would recognise him instantly.

Irish Red Grouse Association Conference 2011

The Association ventured onto new grounds when it hosted a Conference on Grouse and their Conservation at the Grand Hotel in Moate, Co. Westmeath on the last Saturday in October. The invited audience was limited to persons from areas where there are already Grouse Projects in being and to those who have expressed a keen interest in seeking our assistance in beginning such programmes. Some other Groups which had expressed an interest in working with us towards our aims also attended. Despite this limitation, ninety eight signed in (many late arrivals did not) from many parts of the country and from diverse walks of life who are keenly interested in grouse conservation.

Introducing the Conference, Lyall Plant, Chief Executive Countryside Alliance Ireland said: "It is hard to believe the Association has only been going for a year because in that time it really is quite remarkable what has been achieved. From the inaugural meeting last November, the Association has grown in terms of both numbers and capability and of course, we wish to see this trend continue. As we know, the Red Grouse species in Ireland is under severe threat. Their range has declined by more than 50% in the last 40 years and as a result of this, a group of like minded individuals decided to take action and the Irish Red Grouse Association was founded in November 2010. Quite simply, the aim of the IRGA is to work with everyone (individuals, club, bodies and agencies) to promote active moor-land management, through proactive regeneration projects with an overall objective to increase red grouse numbers and their habitat in Ireland.

"We must act now to try to save this species for the generations to come and we welcome the support we have received here today. Conservation and growth, as seen on the I.R.G.A.'s logo, sums up what the Association is striving to achieve for red grouse in Ireland. It has enormous potential and by achieving its objectives, the I.R.G.A. will benefit not only red grouse, but other ground-nesting species who share the same habitat."

The Conference was launched by Ms. Marian Harkin, Independent M.E.P. for the North/West Constituency, who presented Lifetime



Pictured are Jim Fitzharris, P. J. O Hare, Denis Strong, Vincent Flannelly in front of one of the Association's impressive backdrops.



Dr. Judit Kelemen, Regional Manager, spoke on National Parks & Wildlife Projects.

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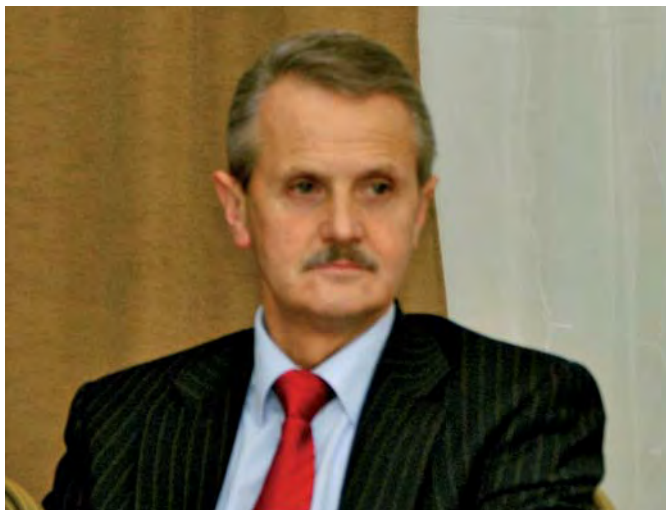
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Jim Sheridan, Chairman of the I.K.C.'s Championship Committee for Pointers and Setters spoke about the vital importance of grouse.

Achievement Awards to both of our Patrons: Mr. P.J. O'Hare and Mr. Dan Kinney. Dan was unable to travel and the Award was accepted on his behalf by Lyall Plant, but it was heart-warming to see the reaction of P.J. O'Hare. This sprightly 89-year-old has produced definitive works on grouse at Glenamoy in Co. Mayo and although later transferred on promotion to become the Director of the Agricultural Institute at Oakpark, Carlow still retained a keen interest in grouse and their conservation over the years and has always willing been to speak, advise, but always to encourage the propagation of grouse. Both have dedicated many years, largely unsung, to the conservation of grouse.

Marian went on to announce the commencement of the Most Successful Grouse Project Award which will be awarded annually to the Project that has achieved most progress in the previous year. This Award will be accompanied by a Perpetual Trophy and by a grant of €500 which will go some way towards the Project's costs.

Ms. Harkin then outlined her work in the European Parliament and went on to deal with the forthcoming



Angela Wallace of Coillte gave a short power-point presentation on the work Coillte is presently engaged in to restore cleared forestry areas on 17 areas of blanket bog,

changes in grants which will have a substantial conservation aspect. She was delighted with the work of the Association to date and pledged all possible assistance and greatly appreciated the voluntary work being done for conservation in general, but for Red Grouse in particular.

Grouse historically and the Grouse Project on the Knockmealdowns

Jim Fitzharris of Countryside IFA as Chairman of the morning session introduced Dr. Douglas Butler who presented a scientific and in-depth paper on grouse historically and gave a brief resume on the Grouse Project on the Knockmealdowns. After many years experience both as a zoologist and a hunter, the matter came to the question - do you restore grouse or improve habitat and he was certain that if the proper habitat were restored, then the rest would follow. Historically, he outlined the changes that had occurred since the 1950s with peat harvesting, afforestation and intensive sheep farming the main causes of moor loss and degeneration.



Walter Phelan, Jim Fitzharris and Vincent Flannelly.

Despite this the grouse tenaciously held on and are in nearly all counties of Ireland and the population has remained stable for the past 20 years. In the second section of the paper he dealt with the aspect of increasing grouse numbers, the key being heather management. Burning is best in February when there are a few days that the heather is dry and the underlying peat too damp to ignite. Predator control is a year round essential while the provision of grit is not necessary in most areas. Medicated grit was not necessary at present due to low grouse densities,

but there is ample evidence that heather fertilisation is well worth the effort.

In summation he said: there are more grouse in Ireland than surveys suggest; there is nothing wrong with the genetic make-up of the Irish grouse population; the population can be greatly increased if we are prepared for the long haul; money is not a major problem; groups should rely in the main on their own resources; should funding become available, it should be directed in its entirety to the all-important work of habitat improvement; lastly in a perfect world, the grouse-loving equivalents of Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter should form a network of self-help groups across the entire country. This is what the Irish Red Grouse Association is all about.

National Parks & Wildlife Projects

Dr. Judit Kelemen, Regional Manager, spoke on National Parks & Wildlife Projects. She outlined some of the work currently being undertaken. There are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and National Heritage Areas (NHAs). Within these areas there are protected species, but it was possible that the outer areas could possibly be managed. She outlined areas such as Boleybrack, Slieve Anierin, Slieve Beagh, Ballydangan in which the N.P. & W. are working with local gun clubs and a new area at Ballycroy, Co. Mayo. She concluded that what was most important for now was to: maintain and expand existing populations; continue local projects; start new projects; build bridges-learn from each other.

Angela Wallace of Coillte gave a short power-point presentation on the work Coillte is presently engaged in to restore cleared forestry areas on 17 areas of blanket bog, mostly in the midlands. This project can be accessed on line at www.raisedbogrestoration.ie

A question and answer session followed on the papers presented and Keith Woolridge, former Head Keeper at Ballincor, raised the curtailment of the burning season which must now finish by end of February, asking if a licence could not be granted for March. Pat Warner, Regional Manager of N.P. & W. agreed to have the matter looked into and there were contributions from the floor

IFA and IFA Countryside

After lunch, under new Session Chairman, Douglas Butler introduced Mr. Eddie Downey, Deputy Chairman of I.F.A. and Chairman of Countryside I.F.A. He comes from Slane, Co. Meath and farms near the World Heritage Site at New Grange. With 85,000 members, the IFA and IFA Countryside is in a perfect position to address issues of concern to rural dwellers and people who follow rural pursuits. While food production gets priority over all other issues the IFA is



Douglas Butler presented a scientific and in-depth paper on grouse historically and gave a brief resume on the Grouse Project on the Knockmealdowns.



P.J. O'Hare, a Patron of the Association, received a Lifetime Achievement Award along with Dan Kinney (unable to attend).

currently addressing the major changes to the E.U. CAP. These reforms include: the 'Greening' of CAP which will see up to 25% of the CAP budget directed at such issues at Carbon footprint, biodiversity; heritage protection - the landscape we enjoy is part of our heritage and has been shaped and managed by our farming forefathers over the past 5000 years; Moorland Management, including grazing rights. This is an issue for farmers in that there was an overreaction to overgrazing in previous EU regimes which led to under grazing. 350,000 HA on moorland are farmed in one form or another and there needs to be a balanced approach to a grazing regime which is recognised as an intricate part of good heather management. This was demonstrated by the Burren Habitat control initiatives; and Rural Environmental Schemes such as the REPS and its successor AEOS schemes. These schemes have recognised the vital role that farming plays in the rural environment and incentivised farmers to protect and enhance the rural landscape. Farmers have responded very positively to these schemes and this must be recognised in any future EU driven initiatives.

He stated that the Commonage Framework Plan recognises the role of the various stakeholders in flora and fauna protection initiatives such as SACs, SPAs and NHAs. As major stakeholders farmers have the same interests as NPWS, Coillte, Bord Na Mona, and the Game

Hunting Clubs and all their co-operation is vital in meeting the Biodiversity initiatives and targets. Eddie closed by stating that the IFA fully supports on an ongoing basis the Irish Red Grouse Association in its approach to Grouse Conservation and complimented them on organising this conference.

Grouse moor management

The next speaker was Dr. Marc Ruddock who is current Director of Avian Ecology. Marc gave a detailed power-point presentation on grouse moor management, the methods and importance of grouse counts. He outlined practical ways of carrying out these counts and measuring change.

Jim Fitzharris made a presentation to Eamonn Mahony on behalf of Countryside Alliance in appreciation of his long time work in breeding grouse in the Mountbellew area of Galway. Eamonn has been doing Trojan work, quietly and unsung for many years with grouse and had a live Grouse Display on show. A lover of Irish red setters, he has bred a winner of the Irish Championship.

Field Trials and the vital importance of grouse

Jim Sheridan who is current Chairman of the I.K.C.s Championship Committee for Pointers and Setters spoke with great earnestness and obvious passion on Field Trials and the vital importance of grouse. Indeed, while coming to this event, he had had a negative outlook from previous experience of such Conferences, but after what he had seen and heard so far on this occasion, he now had good reason to change his mind. Clearly the I.R.G.A. had brought many important stakeholders together and an early bias towards action is a positive indicator of intent. He regarded the red grouse as a very important part of our natural and sporting heritage and of huge benefit to Pointer and Setter Trials. He believed that everything about our rural and environmental heritage is connected and interdependent.

He detailed all the locations where Trials are held on N.P.&W.S. grounds - a good means of counting stocks and the many areas that no longer do so through lack of grouse or habitat change. The first Field Trial was held in Ireland in 1886 and they have been continued and expanded over the decades, apart from war years. These Trials are one important part of our heritage and tradition. Both our Irish breeds, the Irish Red & White Setter and the Irish Red Setter have evolved to search for grouse on rugged terrain with pace and wide - ranging search, using the wind, their instincts and intelligence to locate grouse. They are air-scenting dogs that have been selectively bred over hundreds of years primarily to



Dr. Marc Ruddock, Director of Avian Ecology, gave a detailed power-point presentation on grouse moor management.

hunt grouse and thus changes in this habitat would have led to a negative impact on our native setting dogs.

Jim has campaigned in Trials for years and has been one of the main driving forces behind the revival of the Irish Red & White Setter here. He has produced six Field Trial Champions and has bred many more. This success, he says, is directly linked to Grouse Trials as the standard to achieve excellent dogs: "The fact is, many of our natural and sporting heritage are connected with and will benefit from appropriate management and preservation of our uplands and bog lands."

Spurring on Government

Closing the Conference, Association Chairman Vincent Flannelly said: "It has taken a European directive to spur on Government (and indeed concerned individuals and groups such as the IRGA and Countryside Alliance Ireland) to take up the challenge of trying to save the red grouse. We must act now to try to save this species for the generations to come and we are delighted with the interest and support shown here today."

'No side' was called at 4.15 pm and most of the crowd lingered which is always a good indicator, discussing points raised and seeking clarification on some matters which were promptly provided. Opinions on the content of the Conference varied from "brilliant" to a more conservative 'quite interesting,' but the overall view was that the aim of the Conference to encourage greater conservation of this unique species was well and truly achieved. The Association will now push on with projects in two new areas in the immediate future while several more are waiting. With a little patience, all of these will be up and running in the spring. Contact us by email: nessa.od@hotmail.com; gooddogs@eircom.net

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Exclusive Interview With

New Countryside Alliance Ireland Chairman - Peter Bacon

Irish Country Sports & Country Life's series of hard hitting interviews with people of influence in country sports turns the spotlight on Peter Bacon, the recently elected chairman of Countryside Alliance Ireland.

When did you become involved in country sports and what are your particular interests?

PB. As a young boy I was brought by my father fishing on the River Tolka and River Nanny. However, I became more interested in the birds I was seeing than the fishing and I drifted to bird watching, which still holds a fascination. My interest in shooting and conservation, which started as a teenager arose from that and it has remained with me to date. However, I also spent a decade riding to hounds and in recent years I have returned to fishing, principally on West of Ireland Rivers.

What are your interests outside of country sports?

PB. Country sports represent my total recreational interests. I don't follow football and I'm not a golfer!

When did you become involved with CAI and what would you say has been your major contribution to the organisation to date?

PB. I've been a member for years but became involved at Board level when I was nominated for election within the past three years. CAI is very much a team organisation with collective goals and ambitions. It's not a place for individuals with personal agendas so there isn't a particular contribution that I would point to apart from contributing to the organisational team at board level

What particular experience and skills do you bring to the position of CAI Chairman?

PB. In my professional career as an economic advisor and consultant I have gained some experience in the area of policy formulation and analysis of complex issues. I would hope that this might be of some relevance to the Board's future work. I have also learnt that 'two heads are usually better than one' provided they are not banging into one another! So I think bringing along a diversity of opinions and perspectives to a consensus which is sensible is something to which I may be able to contribute.

Country sports are seen by many as 'under attack' - are they and what are the threats that you see currently and in the longer term and how do you see CAI addressing them?

PB. Yes, unfortunately they are. The nub of the problem arises from the increasing disparity of views with respect to countryside matters as between urban and rural dwellers. A lot of the difference can be put down to misunderstanding about the nature and skills required of

country sports but some is down to prejudice. The issue is a very important one for CAI. Possibly, the concern of everyone with food traceability and the move towards locally produced and seasonal produce may provide a good channel for addressing the issue to the extent that they are due to misunderstandings. Country sports result in locally produced and seasonal food, which is usually organic and healthy. Yet it is not seen for this! The Rural Awards Scheme (the so called country Oscars) which has been introduced this year by CAI and which has been underway under CA in Great Britain for a number of years now, is one response, which can have a role to play in addressing this complex question. By emphasising pride, quality presentation and by encouraging excellence, as for example the best local butcher shop award does, a contribution can be made to presenting rural life as something which is attractive and can deliver to the objectives and concerns which urban dwellers have in their lives.

Where the issue is down to prejudice it is more difficult and long term. Here I think the education system especially the curriculum of early aged children can play a vital role.

I can say that this is a very big and important issue. I'm sure you will appreciate that any answer I can provide here in an interview that seeks to cover many topics can only scratch the surface.

How independent of CA is CAI can you explain and define the relationship?

PB. Countryside Alliance Ireland is a semi devolved region of Countryside Alliance. CAI is responsible for all activities of Countryside Alliance within the island of Ireland and for shaping its policies in that arena. So, in that respect it is fully independent. The Board of elected representatives sets the aims and objectives of the organisation and empowers the Chief Executive to deliver those objectives.

The CAI Board is also responsible for the financial viability of CAI. It sets the budget for each year and the executive implements it. The Board has to ensure when making decisions on financial matters that it remains within the agreed budget.

Countryside Alliance Ireland pays CA UK for its membership insurance. CAI has the facility to call on the resources of CA UK when required. CAI also avails of the CA UK IT structure to maintain its network and to host its website.



How relevant is CAI to the country sports scene today?

PB. In the arena of providing commercial services the insurance benefits which members enjoy are extremely important. As you're well aware many country sports carry an element of risk. It is important that underwriters understand the nature of these and assess them properly and fairly. Without a comprehensive suite of insurance services country sports would not be able to thrive, it's as simple as that.

Of course it's in the area of representation and articulation of problems confronting country sports and outward policies to develop them that the main public service benefits are made. In dealing with other questions you have raised I have emphasised the broad nature of the CAI remit encompassing all country sports and the rural way of life. I have also referred to the multi-jurisdictional aspect of CAI, dealing with practices, regulations and laws in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and I have

referred to CAI's ability to draw on the much deeper resources of CA, when required to strengthen and build our arguments and positions. Because of the combination of all of these factors I feel CAI can be of unique relevance to country sports and preserving the rural way of life - including broad social and economic diversity

CAI is one of a number of country sports bodies in Ireland - how will you ensure a cohesive and coherent approach is taken by the Board to threats and opportunities to country sports?

PB. The Board structure, whereby it is possible for CAI to co-opt members from organisations with more specialised interests or which have recognised expertise in a particular area and which has availed widely of this feature in its business to-date offers very good potential for ensuring coherence, although I freely admit this hasn't always been a feature of country sports organisations.

Have you plans for greater cooperation with the other bodies?

PB. As I have said, there is certainly scope for improvement under this heading and it is something that I would be concerned to contribute towards positively.

We believe that effective political lobbying is vital – we have applauded CAI's greater activity in this area over the last eighteen months but is there scope for a greater focus on this aspect by CAI?

Effective lobbying is vital and CAI was a proud recipient of the ICS&CL 'Lifetime Achievement Award' which acknowledges the work being done by Lyall the Chief Executive and our team.

CAI constantly monitors the political situation in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland as it relates to field sports and attends all the major party conferences to ensure that country sports are represented at the highest level of government and to ensure we are fully aware of any issues that are on the horizon. We also communicate with all relevant politicians making them aware of our aims and objectives, offering our help and advice when needed. We have received many letters of encouragement for our rural way of life and have achieved cross party support on a number of important and relevant issues.

How are the following appointed:

(a) The President and Vice President

PB. The positions of President and Vice President are filled at the invitation of the Board of Countryside Alliance Ireland.

(b) the Chairman of CAI

PB. The Chairman of CAI is elected by the Board of CAI in the normal way that applies to this position in most organisations. He or she must be a member of CAI.

(c) the CAI Board

PB. The Board is comprised of elected members and co-opted members so as to ensure that the organisation can have the benefit of a full range of fieldsports' expertise and experience at this level. Each year a maximum of three positions become available, our membership are notified in our December newsletter and a call for nominations for election is made. Once nominations are received, if there are more candidates than vacancies, a postal vote is carried out where each member (over the age of 17) has the opportunity to cast their vote. The postal returns are sent to an appointed independent scrutineer for counting.

The Board may appoint members from other walks of life such as the Hunting Association of Northern Ireland, FISSTA, IGPA and the Ulster Angling Federation to assist us in delivering our objectives across all country sports and the rural way of life.

(d) CAI staff and to whom are they responsible?

PB. As in most organisations the Chief Executive is selected and appointed by the CAI Board and is responsible to the Board of Countryside Alliance Ireland.

The other members of staff are selected by the Chief Executive and their appointment is approved by the Board of CAI. All staff are responsible to the Chief Executive.

Unlike other major Irish country sports bodies such as the NARGC and FISSTA, CAI does not hold AGMs - why is this? Without them, how does CAI hear and debate directly members' views, not only on matters affecting country sports, but on the focus, performance and direction of CAI itself. Have you plans to change what some see as an undemocratic situation?

PB. It is most certainly not an undemocratic organisation. As previously stated, CAI is semi devolved from Countryside Alliance; however from a financial point of view CAI's annual accounts are audited and included with the Alliance end of year financial report because it is a Company Limited by Guarantee.

The Alliance calls an annual AGM on behalf of all regions and each fully paid up voting member and group leaders receive a full copy of the audited accounts and an invitation to attend the annual AGM of the Alliance.

CAI communicates directly with its members in a variety of ways; aside from the newsletter, we are readily contactable by telephone, email and website and many of our members use these means to communicate regularly and frequently with the organisation.

Also, CAI attends all the country sports fairs in Ireland. The figures produced by the organisers of these show that they are attended by many thousands of people; indeed, they are a main event in the annual calendar of country sports people in Ireland.

Our high profile at these fairs and the free and extensive advertising we give to these events advises our members in advance that we will be exhibiting. This gives our membership the opportunity to visit our marquee and discuss with our team any issues that are of concern or relevance to them.

In addition, as previously stated, we have a number of co-opted members on our board who bring a wide range of expertise and shared issues of common ground that enables us to work together for the benefit of country sports and matters affecting the wider rural community.

As the new Chairman you will have personal goals for (a) countrysports and (b) for CAI - what are they how do you plan to see them achieved?

PB. I think the first goal will be to leave personal goals to one side beyond what I indicated to you above about what I consider to be the main threat to our sports and way of life, namely misunderstanding and in some case prejudice against these!

My aim will be to facilitate the Board in representing the growing membership of our organisation on the island of Ireland to the best of my ability, to assist with coming to sound judgements and policies and to working with those organisations which share a similar vision and passion for the countryside we love dearly.

Have you anything else that you would like to say to our readers?

PB. I think I've said enough for now! Thank you for the opportunity you have provided and the interest you have shown in my appointment. Fair and balance treatment of countryside matters by the press especially the countryside press is something that is very important to the future of what we hold dear.



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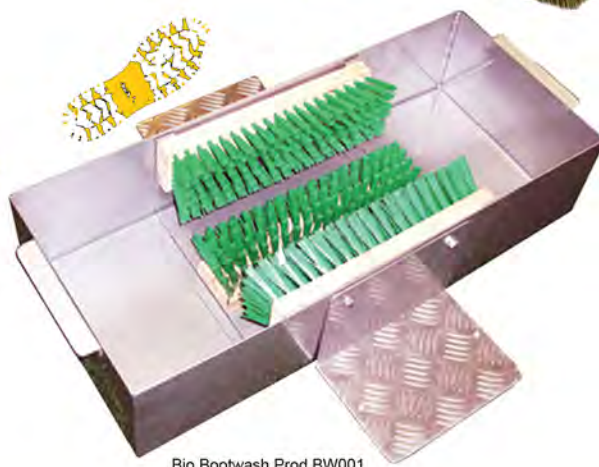
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Country Chat

It's all go for Billy with diary updates, new canine arrivals and bird counts, not to mention a bit of goose shooting.



*On a high:
Everyone was
delighted to be on
the moor for the
Glorious Twelfth.*

I have always regretted not having kept a shooting diary over the years. As I started shooting in the late 60s it is more than probable that there would have been quite a pile up of diaries by now, but what interesting snippets would have been scribbled within their pages? Of course, a good shooting diary should contain all the relevant information that would not only aid one's memory to the past but should also help to future sporting adventures. This season for example, I have already stepped up my outings with dogs and gun, especially with the dogs, for without them, it is very much a nonstarter in the field.

I ended the shooting season last year January by spending a few days with Nigel McMullan and his son Amos at Montrose Scotland. Two evenings goose shooting under a full moon with a brilliant day's walked-up at the pheasants in between. Amos wasn't exactly 'over the moon' about me shooting geese with a twenty bore, especially when I completely missed the first single which came straight in as big as a jumbo jet,

wings set and undercarriage down for landing. I never was that brilliant at shooting geese anyhow; I console myself with the excuse that I don't have many opportunities shooting fowl. Then again, nor do my shooting companions but most of them are pretty good at shooting both game and fowl. Between us we managed to bag seventeen, seven of which I laid out on my right as proof to myself that I had shot them. This was a crop protection exercise, hence the number shot, decoying pinks over winter cereal. The local landowner wasn't 'over the moon' either with the damage they had done to his newly sown wheat. There were droppings everywhere with the green shoots grazed right down to the soil, although Amos told me that it grows back surprisingly well. At one stage, Amos borrowed my twenty bore and shot a cracker, high and far out, which fell with a loud thump in the next field. "See I told you that it's not the gun to blame," I said, with a smidgeon of pride. Normally I would be using my ten bore but, with the birds coming straight to the decoys, my little twenty bore armed with 3inch shells was more than adequate and if I missed, which was fairly often mind you, then thankfully I missed them clean.

The next morning I swapped cammo for tweeds for walked-up shooting and there was four of us out, young Amos, myself and two other guests, a helicopter pilot from the oil rigs and his navigator, a fellow Irish lad. It was solely my bunch of dogs who did the hunting and the flushing, three HPRs and the wee cocker, hunting cover and open ground. The four of us relied on the four of them to find, flush and retrieve, and I was delighted when the two guests complimented me at the end of the day on how well they had performed.

Incidentally I hunted the HPRs like spaniels, no point holding point in dense cover, no one is going to see them and no one will be waiting for them, although at one stage Heidi suddenly turned and adopted a solid point as the four of us were walking along chatting. As she stood rigid, transfixed to a clump of grass at the bottom of a wire fence, I told the two guests to be ready, I commanded her to 'get on' but when a hen pheasant flushed, the two guests were too slow to react, so Amos shot it as it flew across the next field.

No shortage of game

This was about the second week in January and there was no shortage of game to shoot at, I even came across open hoppers crammed full with wheat, more associated with poults in a release pen than spread about the shoot. Little wonder there were pheasants where there were hoppers and at the end of the day we had accounted for twenty-seven, as well as a few pigeon and a woodcock. It was a pleasant days' sport, with dogs, gun and great company.

That evening we were back waiting for the geese, this time in a different field. Unfortunately, because the moon was slow to lift, the geese did not flight until after midnight, and because this took us into a Sunday we called a halt. Ironically I booked the weekend having elevenes coffee whilst browsing through this very magazine. I phoned Nigel there and then, was on the afternoon ferry and the following evening was shooting geese under a full moon. (No hanging about with Billy Lewis! Editor) I felt a bit like Indiana Jones when I reached for my cammo grip bag and started to throw the usual bits and pieces into it.

Running into the last week in March, I took the whole team back to Scotland, this time to pair count grouse on the Invercauld estate which meant two days travelling and three days dog work. Liam, the headkeeper on the estate, was pleased with our findings. Apparently they keep books that date back to the early 1900s on each



Seven previous homes and now this canine orphan is in the Lewis household for good.

year's pair and covey counts, each beat with its own unique and detailed findings relating to the counts for that year. I am also aware that they obtain and confirm such information through others and do not wait with bated breath on the big Irish lad who comes over to train his dogs under the guise of counting.

At the tail end of April, I made room for yet another canine orphan who unbelievably has had seven homes and he is not yet two years old. Of course this was before they announced a substantial increase on dog licences, which we are supposed to meekly accept. Twice he was taken back to the Assisi animal shelter outside Bangor and it would have been a third time if I hadn't stepped in to become his seventh owner. He is a loveable wee rascal, his mum a springer spaniel and his dad a Chesapeake bay retriever, both traits which I hope to exploit this season.

I spent about three months doing obedience and retrieving exercises with him, on his first day out at the pigeons he retrieved the cartridge wads before he twigged that it's the pigeon that he should bring back and not the wads. I took him with me to Scotland for the covey counts in the last week of July and yes, he chased after grouse, hares, red and roe deer and on one occasion round and around a huge boulder until the beast had enough and ran off. Jack continued running around the boulder. I am looking forward to his company for years to come, he has found his seventh and final home.

The Dell Estate on the Glorious Twelfth

Tia the Vizsla and Heidi the GSP went back with me on the 11th August to hunt on the Dell estate outside Fort Augustus on the opening day of the grouse season for the keeper Colin Barclay and his boss, the owner of the estate Mr Jeremy Finnis. Both dogs worked well,

especially Heidi, Tia the Vizsla ran in a couple of times after the flush, which unfortunately prevented Mr Finnis from shooting as she was in direct line of the low flying bird. Being a true gentleman he never uttered a word - but I filled in the spaces for him. It was a fantastic feeling to be out on a keepered grouse moor on the glorious twelfth and we had only walked a short distance from the jeeps when the two HPRs went on point, a pair was produced and Mr Finnis was presented with a crossing left to right hen, which he shot admirably. I sat Tia the Vizsla down and sent Heidi and the first grouse of the day was in the bag a few minutes after ten o'clock. We ended the day with one and a half brace, Mr Finnis was delighted to be out on the opening day and to have the opportunity to shoot over pointers, something which I believe he has never experienced before. I too enjoyed the day and can only hope I get the same opportunity next year.

The next day was a Saturday and, accompanied by Colin's son Scott, we had a lovely relaxing day. The two dogs worked well and I ended the day having shot a respectable two brace. I was back out with Colin on the Monday when I spent most of the time allowing the dogs to find, flush and drop to flush without actually shooting. Colin kept a record of what we had seen and coming off the moor at the end of the day, he was

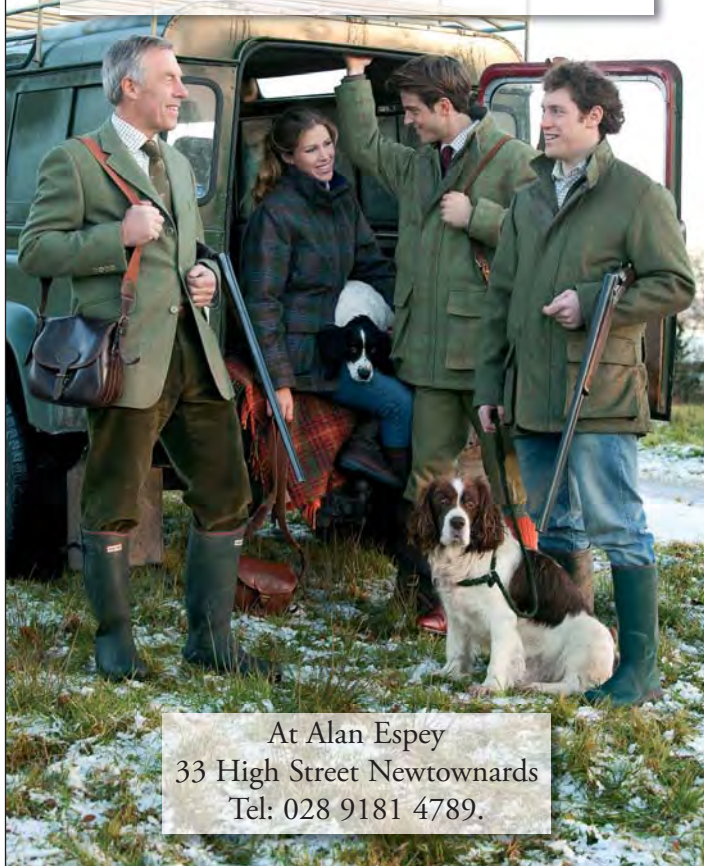
delighted with the numbers on the moor. The dogs certainly enjoyed the day and worked well and I finished up yet again with two brace.

Back home, I filled in the days by shooting pigeons, which were fighting between fields and woods, taking all the dogs with me leaving none of them behind. As I hid myself behind a young beech tree, they in turn wandered about, rolled in the grass, chased each other, shared the retrieves, 'ran in' nibbled my cartridge bag and the pigeons, but for myself and them, it was all a bit of lighthearted fun and, as an added bonus I enjoyed quite a few pigeon dinners thereafter.

As I scribble this piece in October, the season will just be starting properly. I don't bother much with September duck as I have a wee soft spot for them, and besides they are still too young and immature in September. Later this month, a friend and myself will join up with five other lads for two days grouse shooting in Scotland, which should be a great outing and good craic.

So, all in all, whether January 2012 is seen as the end of one season or the beginning of another, I still have the German Pointer trials, shooting invites and club outings yet to come for the duration of this season, or should that be for the 2012 diary! Anyway Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all and a big thank you for your kind words and support.

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Northern Ireland's Red Kite Project

Majestic: a Red Kite soars overhead. (photo: Kendrew Colhoun)

A majestic bird, the red kite was once a common sight across the British Isles. During the eighteenth century though, their numbers crashed, mostly as a direct result of human persecution, until only a small number remained in the valleys of mid-Wales. Since 1989, a number of reintroductions projects have begun to restore the red kite to its former range across the UK and these projects have successfully led to the re-establishment of breeding populations in these areas. During this time the Welsh population recovered naturally and in 2009 it was estimated at around 900 pairs. The successes and lessons learned from the projects in England and Scotland allowed the stage to be set for a large-scale species recovery project to be rolled out into Ireland in 2007, as it was unlikely that red kites would naturally re-colonise this island in the near future.

In partnership with the Welsh Kite Trust and National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Golden Eagle Trust began a five-year red kite reintroduction programme in County Wicklow in 2007 and a year later the RSPB began a similar scheme in County Down. It is the Northern Ireland project which I will be discussing here. Travelling to Wales, staff from both projects helped collect young kites from nests at around 5-6 weeks old. Under licence, these young birds were transferred via road and ferry to specially designed aviaries in Wicklow and Down, where they were held until they were old enough to fend for themselves. To reduce the risk of the birds become habituated and associating food with humans, they had minimal human interaction and during their time in the holding cages. A tasty diet of

grey squirrel and rabbit burgers was provided daily through a flap in the wall of the aviary. It is also worth noting that only birds from nests with two or more chicks were removed. Any single chicks were studied, ringed and placed back in the nest. Over a three-year period birds were brought back and released in Castlewellan Forest Park and the final release of twenty-seven birds in 2010 brought an end to the initial phase of the project and the total number of red kites reintroduced to Northern Ireland to eighty.

Red kites normally take 2-3 years before they are mature enough to breed and in 2010, the first successful red kite nests in Northern Ireland for over 200 years were recorded, when five chicks fledged from four nests. This was fantastic news for the project and a great boost for the fledgling NI population.

Following this success we were confident that the number of breeding pairs would increase in 2011 and in early spring, nests were identified at nine sites across south County Down. Unfortunately, the unseasonal stormy conditions which swept the country in May caused four of the nests to fail at the incubation stage. All was not lost and throughout the rest of the spring and into early summer the five remaining pairs were closely monitored by staff and volunteers and were, thankfully, all successful.

New additions to the population

Three nests produced single chicks; another held two chicks and the last had three, totalling eight new additions to the Northern Irish population. The brood of three was particularly pleasing, not only because this was the first record of red kite triplets here, but also because the paternal bird was only two years old and this was his first breeding attempt. As they say, 'the boy done good' and hopefully he will be as successful in



Watching me watching you. (Photo: Kevin Mawhinney)

2012. All the red kites in Northern Ireland, which we are aware of, have been fitted with coloured wing-tags, indicating where the bird is from and the year it was born. They also have a letter or number printed on them, allowing us to track movements of individual birds and monitor nesting pairs. They also allow us to record non-Northern Irish kites which may happen to turn up here.



Red Kite triplets (Photo: Claire Ferry)

At the start of September I got a phone call from a birdwatcher who told me he had seen a red kite on a shooting estate in Co. Antrim where he had been granted access by the gamekeeper. Better news was that the gamey was happy to take me to see the bird. Despite raised hopes, caused by the odd passing buzzard, we were unfortunate and didn't see the bird when I visited. Thankfully though, we were able to identify the bird



The consequences of illegal poisoning.

using photographs the birdwatcher had taken by zooming in on the wing-tags. It turned out to be a bird which had been released in north Dublin at the end of July as part of the final year of the Irish red kite project by the Golden Eagle Trust. Pale blue/white B7 stayed around the estate for several weeks before disappearing, only for me to re-sight it in a recently reseeded field near Castlewellan, feeding on worms along with a buzzard and a Northern Irish kite. Information like this is vital to our understanding of these wonderful birds and monitoring is a major part of my job.

We do not believe that red kites were targets of poisoned carcasses

Despite these successes, unfortunately, it hasn't all been good news for red kites here. Since the project began in Northern Ireland in 2008, we have suffered several losses due to misuse of pesticides in the countryside. Due to their scavenging nature and lack of threat to livestock or game, we do not believe that red kites were the intended targets of poisoned carcasses, however this highlights how misuse of banned poisons can have devastating consequences. Using poison bait in this indiscriminate manner is of course illegal and ignorance is no excuse for breaking the law.

Since taking over from Robert Straughan as Red Kite Officer back in the summer, the response from the local community and people across the country has been extremely positive. It is both encouraging and inspiring speaking to the many local people who have taken the birds under their wing, excuse the pun, and enjoy watching and talking about them. I have also been extremely pleased with the response from many landowners, farmers and gamekeepers who have had red kites on their land, and I am indebted to those who have passed on sightings, granted access to follow up on reports and permission to reach nest sites. If anyone would like any more information on Northern Ireland Red Kites, or has any sightings, I can be contacted at adam.mcclure@rspb.org.uk or through the RSPB office in Belfast on (028)90491547.

A fine Red Kite waits in the holding pen. (Photo: RS)



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Sandra Carson - An Extraordinarily Talented Flower Painter



Sandra Carson puts the final touches to her latest work.

The walls of Sandra Carson's home in Ballymena show right away that her artistic interests are focussed on nature. Game birds, highland scenes, and wildlife paintings are evident. Even before you are drawn to the fine art on display, you will have noticed the gardens outside bursting with displays of flowers and shrubs. I have come to interview Sandra and already I can see that the countryside, its flora and fauna are important to the Co Antrim artist and I am eager to learn more about her art and what inspires her work.

Sandra is a retired teacher of art and design and a graduate of the Constance Spry Flower School in London whose life has been devoted to teaching children and adults and encouraging their artistic achievement. As Senior

Teacher of the Woburn Abbey School of Flower Arranging (NI) she was appointed by the North Eastern Education and Library Board to train teachers in floral art. So it was no surprise when looking around her home I spotted many delightful floral arrangements, often containing interesting things like gourds and distinctive branches.

"Away from creative floral art, when I could find time to paint for myself, the subject was always flowers and foliage, berries that sort of thing. When I retired early in 1989 I decided to combine floral art, painting, interior design, even antiques, with 'days in the country' at locations not normally open to the public. And what fine locations they were including some of the country's grand houses such as Colebrooke Park, Benvarden, Greyabbey House and others such as Birr Castle and Castle Upton. The response was amazing."





Photograph courtesy of Houston Green Photography.



Photograph courtesy of Houston Green Photography.

If that was not enough after a lifetime teaching, Sandra then spent a period writing for the *Ulster Tatler*, touring the country writing about old Ulster families and their fine houses and grounds as well as 'Hostess of the Month.'

But her floral painting beckoned and Sandra, a Member of the Society of Flower Painters, returned again to doing what she loved best, working in oils, laying in colour with a palette knife, working on the general shapes of the flowers, and finally 'tweaking' it by putting in the details with a very, very fine brush. "I start with a blank canvas, definitely not white which I find off putting. The first thing to go down on canvass is whatever catches my eye initially. Only recently I spied striking pink and blue Lace Cap Hydrangeas, which I had not painted before and I thought that they would make a lovely composition with other flowers of similar hue. Colour has been a large part of my life and I couldn't live without it, but on this occasion it was the shape and texture that attracted me."

While Sandra made us both a cup of coffee I wandered round only to find that she had fewer examples of her finished work on view than I expected as fifteen of her paintings were currently being exhibited in East Sussex. "I have a love / hate relationship with what I do and friends and relatives are always urging me to leave a particular painting alone as they feel that it is fine as it is, whereas I want to make some improvement or other. Invariably unfinished canvasses go on shelves in my sunroom, waiting for the right flower or leaf or something minute to finish them off. And if that means waiting from spring to autumn to get what I want then that's what I will do, as I refuse to mix flowers from one season with another season's flowers on a canvass. Everything in its season, but sometimes I would include a late flowering specimen."

And then it was that I discovered something which, as a non artist, I thought interesting - she paints the backgrounds last. Now I always thought they were painted first but, hey, what did I know. As a perfectionist, Sandra invariably is dissatisfied with the backgrounds so that aspect means some additional time for the painting's completion. Everything was fitting into place as I learned how she operates, working on around six to eight paintings at one time, waiting for the right flower to bloom, bud to show, or leave to unfurl.

Sandra's canvasses are mostly 14" x 10" or 16" x 12" and can be larger. In every case, while the attention to detail is obvious, it is Sandra's interpretation of the natural flora that is unique, each separate flower head taking up to five hours to create.

I asked her the obvious question, regarding what it was that 'made' her paint. "It's the smell of the oil paint, it's the texture of what I work with apart from the



Photograph courtesy of Houston Green Photography.

obvious need to try to capture on canvas the essence of something beautiful and transient."

But what about the finished article, did she get a 'buzz' from that? A long pause and here again I could see that in many ways it was the process that provided her real enjoyment rather than what she invariably saw as 'work in progress.' There was even a Van Gogh moment some years ago, when husband Norman discovered the smoking remains of canvasses that were not.. well.. up to her satisfaction. Not that Sandra keeps adding and adding paint to clutter a canvas - she strongly believes that less is more, but the 'less' has to just right. "Finished, but not overdone," she explained.

Sandra laughed when she remembered an all too familiar situation: "Sometimes I despair of the impression I give when someone comes to the door when I am working and when I greet them covered in paint. They can see for themselves just how 'immersed' I get with the actual painting. Mind you it also acts as a deterrent to cold callers," she chuckled.

Sandra is equally happy painting in her studio or 'on location' but nowadays most specimens are brought in from her abundant gardens which comprise beautiful species of trees, shrubs and flowers. And her favourite subject? Well, there was a long pause before she said: "Spring flowers such as hyacinths, and hellebores, but everything seasonal. Blom's tulips are a delight as well. Fritillaries are a fine subject, but require detail that drives me mad," she adds. Then another chuckle. "But, when they arrive each year, well I just have to paint them!"

And somehow I could see exactly what she meant. Here was a uniquely talented artist who was at one with her subject and derived as much pleasure from creating her work as we get from viewing it.

For more information please visit <http://sandracarson.waveneyavenue.com> or telephone 0845 634 4533



Sandra's floral art adds grace and beauty in the truest sense.



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Raptors are wonderful birds of prey but do some consider them simply as 'money spinners?'

Are 'conservationists' helping to kill the countryside?

It is often at the darkest hour that we can see some light at the end of the tunnel. For years I have been pointing out in this magazine and elsewhere that, like the emperor of old, the organisations which are raking in millions of pounds every year, ostensibly to benefit the environment and its wildlife, have, in reality, no clothes. I can recall a time when our rivers, lakes and seas were teeming with fish and moors and coverts had literally thousands of game and songbirds. Brussels and kind old ladies were not handing out bucketfuls of cash to anyone at that time. But look what has happened over the past 60 odd years. The environment was never in a worse state and all that has prospered are raptors and predators, all red in tooth and claw.

Now, the wide boys have been hit with a two-barrelled salvo from which they might find hard to recover. Recently I got a copy of the annual report of the prestigious Heather Trust and it does not mince its words about what some might think was deceit by the RSPB. More of that later. Then, not to be outdone, the National Gamekeepers' Organisation said the RSPB

seemed to regard birds of prey as 'flying fund raisers.' I couldn't have put it better myself.

But the kicking that will hurt most came from former One Man and His Dog commentator, Robin Page, who let the RSPB and the National Trust have both barrels in an excellent article in the Daily Telegraph of November 5. In the article in his Country Diary headed 'Time to Prey on the Predators,' Robin asked: "What's going on? As the 'conservation industry' gets bigger and better - with more and more appeals, more money and more members - so the features that the conservationists are supposed to be conserving - British wildlife - diminishes by the hour. With each new survey and study, Britain's farmland, woodland and moorland birds become fewer. Even the poor old hedgehog is becoming a rarity. Conservationists have never owned more land. The National Trust, with its four million members, owns an astonishing 627,000 acres, 76 nature reserves and 709 miles of coastland. The RSPB, with more than a million members, has 355,680 acres on 209 reserves. The Woodland Trust has 1,272 sites covering 56,300 acres and the Wildlife Trust owns 23,000 reserves covering 46,930 acres."

What have these organisations done with all this land and all the money they rake in every year? Well, in my opinion the short answer would appear to be not a lot.

Playing the blame game on countrysports

A common ploy has been for them to blame farmers, shooters and anglers, for the decline in wildlife numbers. But anyone who knows the facts will realise that will not wash.

Robin writes: "According to the British Trust for Ornithology's garden bird survey, over the past 40 years, garden blue tits have decreased by 42 per cent, house sparrows by 70 per cent and song thrushes by 75 per cent. The truth is that at a time when much of our wildlife is disappearing, so the predators of garden birds, farmland birds and even hedgehogs are increasing. The numbers of foxes, badgers, mink, grey squirrels, crows, magpies, ravens, buzzards, sparrow hawks and herons are on the up. Between 1970 and 2007 the magpie population in Britain increased by 96 per cent, sparrow hawks, by 99 per cent, carrion crows by 81 percent and buzzards by an amazing 545 per cent."

No wonder that in the annual report of the Heather Trust, it stated that attempts are being made to change the law to allow control of buzzards and ravens. Indeed, one contributor, Douglas Mc Adam Chief Executive of Scottish Lands and Estates, accuses the RSPB of serious misrepresentation in a BBC programme. Douglas wrote

that the RSPB was fully represented at discussions (to consider amending the law to allow control of ravens and buzzards) as part of working groups that worked together to agree and sign off standards and guidelines. It is quite clear that the RSPB knows exactly the nature of the problem and what we are trying to achieve as they have been fully involved in the process: "I therefore find it incredibly frustrating that despite being involved in the process and agreeing the standards and guidelines that would provide licences to control ravens and buzzards, they continue to ignore this as the issue at hand and seek at all opportunities, including the BBC programme, to give the false impression we are seeking to kill birds of conservation concern like golden eagles. This muddying of the waters is unhelpful to say the least and is a blatant distortion of the truth."

Regarding the BBC wildlife programmes, I can honestly say I enjoy them much in the same way as one would enjoy a Hans Christian Andersen fairytale. But overall such programmes may do more harm than good to the environment and its wildlife. I can say, too, I enjoy the BBC weather forecasts.

Last word to Robin Page. He writes: "Sadly it seems that many 'conservationists' are helping to kill the countryside by ignoring what is actually going on there."



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What way did you begin in countrysports?

I've always had a love of animals and the countryside. At a young age I was known to play truant from school if my local hunts, the Ward Union staghounds or the Fingal harriers, were meeting close by. I always seemed to be down the fields and would borrow the neighbours' dogs as well as our own Jack Russells and with my bobbery pack would hunt just about anything.

How did you start with terriers?

My father worked terriers when he was young and I used to love listening to his tales. We always had Jack Russells and using them I used to hunt rats, rabbits and bolt the odd fox.

Your first dog / best dog / current dogs?

Like I say, we always had Jack Russells and they developed my love of terriers. When I was a teenager I started to see some serious terrier work being done and at 15 got my first Fell type. I've been lucky to have had some very good terriers. Spike was one terrier who was top class, as was his mother Pip. I had a red bitch called Penny who worked 'till she was 15 and once worked over 100 times in a season. She never got hurt and was of Park breeding. I have an old one in my yard now called Dixie and although she's now retired at 10

years of age she never let me down in eight seasons hard work.

My current terriers go back to Sam McCullough's breeding and Sam has had the same family of terriers now for 30 years. Although I'm 25 years working terriers I've had this line now for 18 years. There's five of us who keep the lines between us and litters bred are shared amongst ourselves with the odd one given to friends.

Which breed do you favour and why?

To me the black terriers known as the Patterdale is the type that is most consistent at producing good honest working terriers. They have the right temperament and constitution for hard work. Naturally, like all breeds there are good and bad but the family of black terriers we keep suits us and work well for us and to our standard. I also have a love for the proper working Jack Russell. To me a good Jack Russell is a very useful terrier indeed.

What do you hunt and what part of the country

I use my own terriers for foxing only. I'm the vermin officer for my local gun club in County Meath and get a lot of call outs from farmers and poultry keepers. Most of my permission is in Meath, Cavan and North County Dublin.

I follow foxhounds at least three days a week and try to get in a few coursing meets every Winter. In the Summer I try to get to Cork as often as possible to follow Minkhounds. Great countryside and great hunting down there with true hunting folk.

Do you show terriers?

I've only ever shown my terriers a handful of times.

Best result?

I won the Ballymacad Foxhounds terrier and lurcher show a few years with my dog Spike.

Where is terrier work today and is it in a healthy position?

The working terrier and terrier work is as popular now as at any time. I'm not sure if it's exactly healthy. Years ago folks just kept themselves to themselves and went about working their terriers nice and quietly. Nowadays a lot of lads like to boast and let the whole world know their business. The Internet definitely plays a big part in playing into the hands of those who'd like to see terrier work banned.

Any threats to the sport?

Like all fieldsports terrier work is under pressure. Sadly a lot of the damage is done from within. Nowadays, dog thieves and dealers selling bad terriers for big prices seem to get more good honest lads out of



Tanner is another reliable dog in the Cooney kennel.

the sport than all the antis and legislation put together. We need to keep our image clean and show the working terrier as a friend of the farmer, keeper, poultry owner and indeed the fox and not as part of a so called macho image that some people seem to feel they need.

But there will always be a place in vermin control for the terrier. In my opinion when worked with guns or hounds there isn't a more selective, humane method of fox control.

Where do you see it going?

There'll always be good folk keeping the breeding right and going about their terrier work in a professional manner. Sadly, it seems to be the cowboys who make the headlines.

When I first started in terriers the main concerns were legislation, thieves, dog dealers and shows. Now 25 years later they're still the main concerns and the working terrier is still going strong.

We need to ensure there's always someone fighting for our way of life and keep our noses clean to ensure there's a future for the working terrier.



Terrier men need to be good with the shovel and at tidying up afterwards!

Who are the 'greats' in terriers in Ireland and across the water?

In Ireland those that were well known for their terrier work were more locally known than widely known. Here you'd be more spoken of by the farming community than the hunting fraternity. To me the way Sam McCullough goes about his terrier work and treating his farmers, terriers and foxes makes him as good as anyone. There are many terrier men who are totally professional in how they go about their work.

Britain still has, in my opinion, some terrier-men who are as expert as any of the greats of yesteryear. But with today's current climate they won't be spoken of in the same way as the Bucks and Griptons of legend. They know who they are.

Who do you admire as a breeder?

The lines of Alan Cocker, John Park and Nick Stevens have most certainly stood the test of time at this stage. I also think that the breedings Brian Nuttall did years ago have contributed hugely to today's working terriers.

Down in Cork there are a few lads who didn't jump on the band wagon when the fell types came over and they stuck with their families of white terriers. Families that are still going strong today. On a personal note, I wouldn't be as happy with my own terriers if it wasn't for breedings done by Sam McCullough and Paul McKeown.

Who do you admire as a terrier worker?

I admire any man who works his terrier in a professional and humane manner with respect for terrier, quarry and landowners. Donal Weldon, Alan



Learning the trade: on the right is a pup called Magoo.

Dorgan, Bryan Long to name a few are lads who are out any chance they can, working their terriers to a high standard.

Your personal goals for the sport?

I'd be happy to always be able to work the family of terriers I keep legally and successfully. My daughter is 14 years old now and is horse, hound and terrier crazy. I'd like to think she could live a long life enjoying all the fieldsports that I love now. In the hunting field I see so many youngsters enjoying life and keeping out of trouble and I hope that will always be the way.

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Chudleys sponsor a unique Golden Retriever Test at Shanes Castle

This Year the Ulster Golden Retriever Club hosted the 2011 Breed Inter-club Test. The inter-club is a test that takes place every year between the 14 Golden Retriever Clubs across the UK. Each year the test is hosted in a different location by a different club, and 2011 was the turn of the Ulster Golden Retriever Club. The test was held at Shane's Castle in conjunction with the Irish Game Fair and Country Lifestyle Festival by kind permission of Lord and Lady O'Neill. A total of 9 teams participated in the test, each team consisting of four dogs – two Open dogs and two Novice dogs. There were a total of 16 retrieves set for each team which were divided into eight Novice Retrieves and eight Open Retrieves.

The judges for the day were Roy Rankin, Nigel Carville, Dermot Donnelly & Graham Cox. The retrieves were carefully thought out by the judges prior to the test



Competitors wait to hear the final result.

taking place. The first half of the test took part in the lower part of Shanes which comprised a mix of lane work, retrieves in heavy cover and into the woods, and then into and across the river which was fast flowing due to previous heavy rainfall. Dogs who lost the mark while crossing the fast flowing river found themselves in difficulty and having to be handled onto the retrieve. Another area which caught some of the dogs out was



Shauna McGroarty, Frank & Emma Archibald with sponsors Martin Lavery and Robert Harley (Chudleys) at the Stormont launch.



Lough Neagh and the River Maine provided some challenging water retrieves.

casting through the heavy cover to the blind retrieve that was set for the open dogs.

When this part of the test was completed the competing teams moved up in convoy to the Old Castle where everyone enjoyed a burger and a drink provided by the Game Fair organisers, while friendly banter pursued about how the day had been going for each team so far.

The second half of the day consisted of four more retrieves in full view of the gathering crowds in the main Gundog arena. The first was a seen retrieve for the Novice dogs and a blind retrieve for the Open dogs over fences. Generally the dogs went well but dogs got into difficulty if they did not mark the seen due to being distracted by the crowds of people at the top of the arena.

The next test was a walked up test along the front of the castle walls in the herb meadow. The whole team were in line, both Novice and Open dogs were given marked retrieves and on the way back a long blind for the Open dogs. On the blind, the dogs generally casted well and got to the area however if they were not cast off on the right side of the breeze they ran into difficulty and required a bit of handling to the retrieve.

The final retrieve of the day was into the choppy Lough Neagh, and unfortunately for some teams, this was their downfall as some dogs were not used to going out into an open expanse of choppy water. It was this final round which gave the Ulster Golden Retriever Team their competitive edge and ultimately Top Honours.

Once the tests were completed all the competitors were invited to an evening reception hosted by the Ulster Golden Retriever Club in the Old Railway Cafe on Shanes' ground. It was a great

evening's craic, the wine flowed for those who did not have to drive, and for some it flowed a bit more than others! Accompanied by great food and great company it was a nice treat for all who had participated in the day.

The Road to Victory

As a previous competitor for the North West of England on two occasions, it was not a first time inter-club experience for me, however it was for my fellow team mates and as an almost completely green team, we were a little apprehensive how the day would go. This was the first time the Ulster Golden Retriever Club had entered a team in 10 years and we wanted to be well prepared to take on the competition. In the run up to the test, Derek McGinley, was kind enough to assist us with training - setting up retrieves for us and brining us to various locations on many an early Sunday morning. This paid dividends for us and it was great to be competing on home ground, and being part of the winning home team while surrounded by the atmosphere of the Game Fair in the beautiful grounds of Shanes.

The icing on the cake for Ulster was when John Williamson was awarded Top Novice and overall Top Dog with his young Golden Nordenlights Cherokee. John's dog was one of the youngest in the competition. He consistently performed on each retrieve with precise marking and doing all that was asked of him.

The Top Open Dog was awarded to the Golden Retriever Club of Wales', Simon Fowler and his Golden Cainhoe Chapelsown.



Wilsons of Rathkenny sponsored the UGRC team.



Joe Johnston briefs the competitors.

A Positive end and looking to next year

The inter-club tests are renowned for their friendly atmosphere and are a great way for Golden Retriever people to meet up in what is normally a largely dominated Labrador world. Overall it was an enjoyable day that was made possible by the support of the competitors who made the long journey from various parts of the UK. The general feedback from the travelling competitors was that the Irish Hospitality was second to none and that everyone was made to feel very welcome by anyone they had spoken with. There was widespread agreement that it was great to see so many quality Golden Retrievers at Shanes, with many people admiring the Golden's and developing a greater appreciation of how they go about their work.

2012 will see the Yorkshire Golden Retriever Club host the event and the Ulster Golden Retriever Club will be sending a team over to participate in the competition. There are a few young Golden Retrievers coming up at the moment so it will be interesting to see what next year brings!

Necessary Support

Joe Johnston (Field Trial Secretary) along with the rest of the Ulster Golden Retriever Club Committee provided great support in the planning of the tests and ensuring the day ran smoothly. They are to be commended for a such a well run event. Thanks also to Albert Titterington for his support and allowing the

event to take place in conjunction with the Fair.

Thanks to the overall sponsors, Chudleys, and Wilsons of Rathkenny the sponsors of the Ulster Golden Retriever Club team which consisted of Shauna McGroarty (Open); Victor Currie (Open);

John Williamson (Novice) and Alan Cochrane (Novice).

Results:

1st Ulster Golden Retriever Club, 2nd Midland Golden Retriever Club, 3rd South West Golden Retriever Club, 4th The Golden Retriever Club.

Publishers Note:

I have competed in the inter-club event several times and the hospitality provided by the host clubs has always been something that I admired and savoured. I was delighted to be able to work with Joe Johnston (UGRC FT Sec), Eugene McGregor (Vice Chairman) and the whole FT sub committee; Frank Archibald (Secretary who provide excellent and exemplary administrative support); our Chairman Alexa Brown and Shauna, and of course our sponsors Chudleys, to deliver an event that ranked with the very best.

All the teams were extremely complimentary about the organisation of the event and many of the teams took a longer break to see the tourist attractions of Northern Ireland. Some enjoyed it so much that two teams – a Welsh and English team have planned to come back in 2012 representing their respective countries in the International team event.



Judges: Roy Rankin, Graham Cox, Dermot Donnelly and Nigel Carville discuss the final retrievers.



The winning URG team with the Chudleys representatives.

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A Promising Woodcock Season

I had been watching the temperatures in Finland, Poland and other Baltic regions in the run up to my first shoot on a new woodcock syndicate that I had been invited to join. As the first shoot date approached, so the temperatures in Europe dropped making the prospects for this new woodcock shoot increasingly hopeful.

The shooting is in an ancient sector of woodland in East Devon that hadn't been shot since the 1960s. The birch scrub and mixed woodland surrounded by cattle grazing is perfect for woodcock and so our hopes were high as the team of guns gathered in the turning bay on the forestry road. The snow and ice hadn't reached our shores yet, but the rest of Europe was held in an icy grip and the woodcock had to have migrated across the North Sea in search of some frost free ground on which to feed.

The shooting was to be very informal, on a walk one stand one basis. There were a handful of useful springers, a couple of hardy Labradors, a border terrier and my lurcher as the dog contingent. The guns were all keen woodcock shots, as you might imagine. It takes a special kind of masochism to enjoy woodcock shooting, especially the beating side of it. Fighting your way through a forest of birch scrub, intertwined with bramble, bracken and fallen boughs is more an exercise in endurance than a walk in the woods. This old



Lining out in the ancient woodland in East Devon that hadn't been shot since the 1960s.

woodland was so dense it was decided that those beating should hand their guns, in their slips, to the guns shooting the manoeuvre, to take with them to their stands, both for safety and sheer convenience.

The whole place felt 'wood-cocky'

For the first drive I was lucky enough to be a gun. It was only a short walk from the cars to my stand, just short of a natural funnel where the road turned a hairpin and formed a stop to the trees. I had a neighbour 60 or 70 yards to my right on the forest road, and my other neighbour was around the corner a little way, the other side of the tall sycamore trees with stunted birch and firs at their feet. A small stream ran through the bottom of the dell and under the hairpin bend. The whole place just felt very wood-cocky. Being the first stand of the day we were all fresh and keen and watching the skyline eagerly, looking for that brown, round winged bird flitting through the trees, or to come sailing over the tops of the tall trees.

As I stood there expectantly, watching for any movement through the trees or on the skyline, a brown shape came floating through on silent wings. It was too far from me for a shot, but close enough for the gun around the corner. Thankfully no shot rang out as he recognised the difference between a woodcock and a tawny owl, but it kept us on our toes. Soon afterwards the cackling



The ground was birch scrub, intertwined with bramble, bracken and fallen boughs.

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One was brought down by Nick, on my left, with a difficult shot at range.

started as a pair of jays were disturbed by the beaters and flitted from tree to tree towards us. I don't mind shooting jays, they are corvids and as bad as magpies when it comes to egg theft and chickicide. The danger of course, is that just as you take a shot at the jay a woodcock, or worse, a pair of woodcock, present themselves and you are pointing the wrong way with an empty chamber. When it comes to woodcock shooting it pays to remain focussed on the job in hand. Even so, I could see the beaters now and the dogs were already in the bottom in front of us, so when one of the jays flew across a gap, well up, in front of me I brought it down with a swift shot. Those blue bars will adorn a few flies next season.

The strangest thing happened next

As I reloaded a woodcock got up and flew through the trees from left to right, against the beat. It was too far out for me but was heading perfectly for Charles, to my right. I called the bird for him and he turned to swing onto it, then it did an extraordinary thing. Just before Charles fired the woodcock did a complete about turn and started to follow the road straight towards me, about 20 yards up. I lifted while it was still out in front, swung from tail to beak, blotted it out at about 30 yards range and fired. It was an absolute sitter, flying directly towards me in a straight line. How I missed with true cylinder and number 7s I will never for the life of me

understand. It flew over me and turned into the woods, and was brought down by Nick, on my left with a much more difficult shot at range. Woodcock have that ability to make fools of people!

It was my turn to beat the next stand. We lined up and dropped off the road into the thick, birch and fir mixture. The bottom was full of tussocks of tall, white grass with fallen branches, trees and brambles forming a dense web of undergrowth. The stream was clearer on this side of the road and ran along a sandy bed with a few rocks on its bank. The guns had walked round the block and were lined out on an old wall or hedge line that was long since lost, but the line of the boundary was still clearly defined.

The dogs quartered the ground ahead of us and we saw several woodcock jump up out of the cover, some went back, away from the guns but most went forward. Fly, my lurcher who comes woodcock shooting with me fairly regularly, found one tight under some fallen timber, it was a big, dark woodcock and obviously a migrant. Our home birds tend to be smaller and lighter I have found. It curled away through the trees, but in the general direction of the waiting guns. The shouts of 'woodcock forward' were echoed moments later by reports from the gun line. With any luck our labours had born fruit for the other team as we had seen about 10 woodcock get up from this parcel. When we broke out the other end, there had been just one woodcock shot from those that we put forward. You don't go woodcock shooting for large numbers in the bag!

The day finished after two more manoeuvres and although we saw more woodcock, they hadn't flown to permit a safe shot. The day had shown the potential of the place though, and that really was all it was for, that and for the guns to meet and get to know one another. The next shoot was planned for after the second full moon in November, the traditional timing of the main woodcock migration. With the cold weather pushing them west all the time, it was shaping up to be a good woodcock season.



An impossible dream for many Guns is the elusive 'right and left'.

Mountain Rescue - perhaps your only chance of survival



Fine weather now but everything could change swiftly.

“To qualify for mountain rescue work, you have to pass our test. The doctor holds a flashlight to your ear. If he can see light coming out the other one, you qualify.” These are the words of Willi Pfisterer, winner of the 2003 Summit of Excellence Award in mountaineering, who has made remarkable contributions to the mountain rescue community since he arrived in the Canadian Rockies more than four decades years ago. The Austrian native, who first came to Canada and the Laurentian Mountains in 1955 to teach skiing, helped establish the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides, the Canadian Avalanche Association, and the rescue dog programme in Canada. Although said jokingly, his comment reflects the limits that rescuers will go to, to find a casualty and bring them back to safety.

I think it would be fair to say that country folk, that is the folk who regularly pursue recreation in the countryside, would be better equipped to get themselves out of an unforeseen situation than, perhaps, a townie,

someone more used to urban life and less familiar with the hostile terrain of hills, mud and fog. The country mudlarkers are perhaps more aware of the clothing they need when outdoors, or more in tune with the unpredictability of the Irish weather, or maybe it is the experience they gather from years of being on the ground and being in touch with the power and pleasure of nature. Townies can of course learn these things but deep down in our country hearts we can easily imagine them becoming lost, or stuck in the mud, or simply getting disoriented in the vast expanse of the countryside we think we know so well!

However, have you ever considered how you would cope if you got lost, or got injured or simply just became too sick to carry on? Most of us could think of a friend to call on to come and get us, but what would happen if you couldn't make that call or were in such a position that your friend couldn't come to get to you? If an incident were to occur where no help is at hand, or is in such a hostile environment that time itself can rob you of the chance of survival, it must be reassuring to know that there are rescue services out there ready and trained to locate and assist people who get lost or get into difficulty, especially in mountainous and inaccessible terrain.

Earlier this year a call was put out to the North West Mountain Rescue Team to assist in the search for two grouse shooters who hadn't returned from a hunting trip. Their brief was that the family of one of the Guns had received a garbled phone call relating the story of how one of the men while trying for a shot slipped over sideways and twisted his knee, and accidentally discharged his shotgun and hit his friend in the lower legs. Neither man could walk, and they couldn't give any accurate details of their location. There was no further communication so the family immediately called the police who subsequently tasked the NWMRT to assist them.

Swinging into action

Within minutes every member of the Rescue Team received a text to establish their availability and response time. A well rehearsed procedure then swung into action and a number of Team members converged on a grid reference rendezvous point and quickly gathered together the various pieces of emergency equipment they needed from the Team vehicles. The

incident controller split the volunteers into search teams and outlines various sections of the hills to be searched, every team being designated grid reference points as boundaries and each team equipped with first aid equipment and communications.

A 'hasty' team was also dispatched, able to travel quickly as they don't carry heavy equipment, and they swept the area from the last known position of the casualties in the direction they were most likely to have headed.

Anybody who has travelled over hilly ground will be aware how difficult it can be at times, but when the light fades or the clouds come down or the rain intensifies, the journey takes on a much harder nature, and it is easier to miss a step or miss a turn and in no time at all the surroundings are strange and lonely. If you are also cold and hungry it is much easier to make mistakes, and if you get injured or sick your situation can quickly turn to despair.

Within twenty minutes the 'hasty' team spotted two bodies on the hillside. After making their approach they established the identity and health of the casualties and relayed the details back to the coordinator, who then mobilised the rest of the team to assist in the rescue. The unfortunate casualties were immediately treated for hypothermia and shock, and the team carried them down off the hill in a specially designed stretcher to the waiting ambulance.

The rescue was then assessed and the rescuers debriefed, but in this example, the entire operation was a test scenario, similar to the various exercises the team practice every two weeks and which are played out in every detail. Exercises like this are a valuable tool in keeping the team skills up to scratch. Last year they were tested for real to an incident in Glenveagh National Park in Donegal. An experienced outdoor walker pitched his tent and trekked across the hill for a spot of angling at a small lough. On his return he got disoriented and strayed well off his intended path. His situation quickly changed for the worse when a mist came down and his visibility was reduced to 20 meters. He was able to call his family and inform them of his predicament and they were able to contact the rescue services. After a very long night he was found, cold and hungry, and he was very

relieved to be walked off the hillside. This incident shows just how easy it is to be caught out, even for experienced outdoors people.

Survival requires a positive mental attitude

The North West Mountain Rescue Team is made up entirely of volunteers who lend their time and skills to helping people who get lost or unwell, especially on mountainous or inaccessible areas. Last year they were involved in 49 separate tasks, in which the team put in 3146 hours of their time and which resulted in well over 100 stranded people being returned to safety. They are also involved in an ever increasing range of tasks, like providing first aid cover for scouting organisations and rescue cover for the numerous charity and sporting events that are held in mountainous or difficult terrain. They have been involved in animal rescues, helicopter evacuations, locating missing vulnerable persons and body recoveries. Like every voluntary organisation they are constantly faced with the challenge of raising funds to keep the service running, and every year in the various street collections around the province, the public respond with great generosity. Nowadays, we are constantly bombarded with charities looking for money and support to the point where we can feel what Bob Geldof calls 'compassion fatigue.' That said, the public seems to have an empathy with someone who has become lost. Perhaps it is a deep memory of being lost themselves and knowing that feeling of despair that strikes a cord with people, but time and again when someone gets lost, a community will respond en masse and give their help and support until the lost sheep is returned to the fold. It doesn't matter if you are from a country background or if you're one that prefers the city lights, to be lost or injured in a hostile environment is a very lonely place to be. One of the most important things you need to help you survive in these situations is a positive mental attitude. The longer you can remain calm and maintain an optimistic outlook, the more chance you have of being found. If you ever find yourself in such a position, rest assured of one thing, sooner or later, a specialist rescue team like the NWMRT will be coming looking for you.





Plus Twos Remember, Remember!

It was probably the haze of smoke, Elixir and general bonhomie but it slipped under Plus Twos' radar and caused no great surprise when the phone in the study rang and I found my dear old Headmaster at the other end informing me that the school was to be close for a few weeks due to an outbreak of some dreadfully infectious disease that had struck suddenly and the twins were not to be returned after their weekend at home. Purdey went to tell the blighters the good news and brought them back with him to enjoy their new found freedom. I should have kept my ears open rather than listen to the wind as it wound its way around the

draughty nooks and crannies of Woodless and, as usual, it proved to be my downfall.

Purdey was telling Ivan and Sap that old rhyme, 'remember, remember the fifth of November, gunpowder, treason and plot,' which is not all that well known in the Irish Midlands and it only annoyed them to think what they might have missed in early November. Always one to cheer up the family, Purdey suggested that the actual date wasn't all that important, as the fun of it was an all year round treat if you liked that sort of thing. I hadn't suspected that even Purdey would resort to the lengths he did and thereby hangs a



tale of woe and weirdness. As you all know, Purdey is an enthusiastic fan of black powder, flints, percussion caps and all such forms of black arts, and was looking forward to making his own fireworks with the help of the twins.

Now it's hard enough to get away with a bit of black powder in the Republic even if you are in the wilds of Woodless Bog but fireworks! Now there is nothing so likely to get the average member of An Garda Síochána, never mind Sgt. Clancy, hopping mad as quickly as fireworks - even the humble tu'penny banger is enough. It was far from tu'penny bangers that Purdey was planning especially when egged on by Ivan who had ideas of using Sap as some sort of a rather foolish test engineer.

He had to keep the idea under wraps for fear of Tierney objecting on the grounds that it would frighten the horses but then Tierney thinks pretty well anything will frighten the horses. Dillon was game enough and he started collecting all types of discarded bits and pieces while Purdey built a grinder to refine his usual gauge of black powder to something more suitable for sparks and flashes than propelling lead shot. 'Lisbeth had become a great friend of Purdey so the mincer from the bowels of the Woodless kitchen found its way into his keeper's shed and anything else he wanted was not a problem. The twins were collecting the innards of toilet rolls and anything else that would make a suitable container for loads of combustible stuff. Combustible stuff is all very fine but what that crew got up to was combustion with a difference.

Esso was still organising some sort of soirée with her London friends and, thankfully, didn't even notice what the rest of the family was up to but the rest of the family didn't notice what she was up to either. Plus Twos isn't the sharpest at catching on to Esso's plans and never spotted that she seemed to be organising a rather large group of her 'girls' from London to descend on Woodless for a long weekend.

A wooden frame to hold various types of explosive device

The shooting season was rumbling along much as usual with a few birds gathered here and there. Most of them were coming from old Keane-Handy's preserves, which Purdey still insisted referring to as the Upper Woodless beats but as there were virtually no birds to be found on Woodless itself, perhaps he had a point. All those ideas of enticing paying punters to shoot Woodless had failed and it was usually a group of friends and locals who would tramp the fields on a shoot day which, at least, stopped the locals poaching the place. We had just returned from such a sortie when Purdey suggested

that we might like to have a look at some of his trials with the fireworks. I thought it better to have the good Superintendent Farlow safely off the premises before the display so he wouldn't find himself in an embarrassing position and he would also be able to give that blighter Clancy somewhere else to patrol rather than the environs around the stable yard. Purdey had rigged up a wooden frame to hold various types of explosive device for our inspection and he had even managed to keep it well away from the hay barn, the stables and Tierney's tack room so it all looked safe enough.

Ivan was standing by with a borrowed cigarette lighter on one side with Sap on the other awaiting the all clear from Purdey so it would all go well. Ivan touched off the first fuse at the bottom of the rig and after some harmless enough fizzing there was a nice shower of glittering sparks with a whizzing sound - nothing too dangerous there! The rest of the various inventions went off without causing the disaster I had expected so I gave Purdey and his accomplices the go-ahead for the big event they were planning. Back to the study for a bit of peace and quiet seemed a good idea but I had only got the Plus Twos' butt settled into the chair and the pipe lit when 'Lisbeth announced that I was needed urgently in the drawing room by Esso. She had the floor strewn with various sheets and lists and was obviously planning some extravaganza which would cost a small fortune. Her first question stumped me a little and it was obvious that Purdey was now in cahoots with Esso so I was really in trouble. It appeared that almost all of Esso's friends were to arrive next weekend and the fireworks were going to be part of the entertainments but what else was on the agenda?

It didn't take even me too long to discover that we were to be invaded by a pop group, various dancers and jugglers and even a magician. This was Esso's latest attempt to turn Woodless into a 'venue' as she put it. We were going to have a 'Modern Festival of Arts' - which sounded very civilised but I was more afraid that some of the arts might be of a darker shade verging on black. Once Esso gets her teeth into a project she's like a terrier with a rat and doesn't let go so I found myself tripping over all sorts and conditions of men, women and even children rehearsing and 'trying-out' and generally making Woodless a no-go-area for a chap that might enjoy a bit of peace and quiet.

It was all planned for a bank holiday weekend when there would be more time to recover from their exertions but that ruined my plans for a shooting weekend. I was surprised that Purdey was whinging about losing a couple of days in the coverts but then he seemed to be completely consumed in his fireworks plan.

I started to relax with an occasional nip of Elixir

The day finally arrived and with it the hordes from London with enough luggage to fill a sizeable hay barn and enough noise not to need the pop group. Needless to say, the twins were having the time of their lives with no school and plenty of hustle and bustle around the normally reserved halls of Woodless. Plus Twos was not so lucky and couldn't even sit in the estate office for more than a few minutes before he was driven out of his own bit of space by yet another 'organiser' claiming the use of his desk. Eventually I decided that evacuation was the only option and I gathered up my pipe and a reasonable supply of tobacco, Elixir and a good book. Avoiding Tierney was essential, unless I wanted to listen to another diatribe about either what new tack we needed or how all these posers, as he referred to Esso's friends and hangers-on, were disturbing the horses so I headed for an old shed at the back of Purdey's side of the yard where I found a comfortable seat on a couple of hay bales. Pipe lit and book opened I started to relax with an occasional nip of Elixir to keep out the cold and, while it wasn't exactly my comfortable study, it was at least free from the constant interruption of strangers who were determined to take the little bit of peace left to you.

Possibly the Elixir had some effect but I nodded off for a few seconds and dropped the pipe which unfortunately sent a few sparks towards the hay and by the time I awoke it was burning nicely. A couple of burning bales in an otherwise empty shed isn't the end of the world but I didn't look too carefully when I picked my spot. Purdey had hidden a large part of his stock of fireworks so that prying eyes would not see them and they were under a tarpaulin in the corner of the shed. They soon announced their presence with several loud bangs and whizzes and a cloud of choking smoke with a high sulphur content judging by the stench. I left the book and the Elixir and headed for the open air only to be met by a screaming Dillon and Purdey running across the yard shouting at me to get out. The bangs got worse and the various bangers and rockets chased me across the yard as I headed for the water trough which might just give me a bit of cover. Tierney was attracted by the noise and I had to put up with his whining as well as everything else. It seemed to last for ever but Purdey said it only took five minutes to destroy weeks of hard work. Certainly it was as well that these famous fireworks hadn't made their appearance in the middle of the 'Festival of Arts' but it would probably draw some attention from Clancy and his cohorts and we might even get a visit from Superintendent Farlow – but would he be able to keep us out of the clink this time?

Purdey suggested that we all clean ourselves up and

hide any clothes that looked singed and plead innocence – some chance. I had just made the safety of my study when Sgt. Clancy swung up the avenue in the high speed police car with Farlow just behind. I dived for cover and Dixon donned me out in some more respectable attire to meet the long arm of the law for what looked like being a rather delicate interview. It was just the thing Clancy would revel in as he arrived quoting the Offences against the State Act and sundry other ordinances referring to everything from illegal fireworks to acts of terrorism so he was out for the kill. Farlow was trying to soften his attitude without any success and it looked likely that Plus Twos, Purdey and others would be spending time in some place of detention in the very near future. Clancy was even threatening the twins with a spell in borstal and this started off 'Lisbeth into one of her moaning wails from her native land. Farlow tried to calm her and Esso opened up on Clancy with a veritable flood of invective which wasn't going to help the situation. As always, Dixon came to the rescue with a suggestion that we should all retire to the house for a little stimulant to calm the nerves and discuss things in a calmer atmosphere.

Even Clancy agreed and Dixon soon had him seated by the fire with a nice cup of tea or what Clancy thought was 'tea.' He had laced it with some Elixir and lots of sugar to cover the taste and it soon went to Clancy's head, he being a nondrinker. It was agreed that Farlow would look over the evidence and decide if further action needed to be taken. Farlow's next move was a stroke of genius as he helped a rather unsteady Clancy into the driving seat of the high speed police vehicle, allowed him to drive a few yards and then stopped him for drunken driving - now we had Clancy in as great a pickle as the rest of us.

Farlow is definitely a useful ally, but could he get me out of the rest of the dreaded 'Festival of Arts?'

**Plus Twos,
Woodless House,
Woodless Bog,
Co. Westmeath**

My Field Trial Trip To Ireland



This year, for the second time, I packed the van with dogs and my friend Katarina and left for Ireland. It is a long way, over 2000 kilometres, but we don't mind as it is always worth the journey for the experience that lies ahead! We drove through Denmark, Germany, Holland, Belgium and France down to Calais where we took the ferry to Dover, and then from Wales another ferry trip to Dublin. From Dublin we drove

straight to The Dog Guru, Keith Mathews of Copperbirch Kennels, where he had been kind enough to let us stay in the cottage next to his house for the five weeks we planned stay in Ireland. That meant we had our base in Armagh area and could easily go to trials in Ireland both south and north. In fact we were given many chances of a run during our stay - and at every trial I learned something new.



Michael Corr and Keith Mathews judging as Tom Hughes sends his dog, while Birgitta waits her turn.

Back home in Sweden my husband Janne and I breed Labradors under the prefix Meadowlark, and I am also an A panel judge. We are both keen shooting and trialling people and enjoy country sports and lifestyle to go with them - the muddy boots, the dirty cars and the muddy paw prints from our spaniels on every coat. The washing machine is constantly working overtime at the farm!

We have trained and shot over the dogs for thirty years. At the moment, we have twelve dogs all together which include English Springer Spaniels, Labradors and Border terriers. We shoot ducks, pheasants, woodcock, hare, rabbits and various sorts of other birds. Snipe are protected in Sweden however, so the Swedish dogs have no experience at all when it comes to picking up snipe in trials outside our own country. This meant that I knew I had to get my dogs in contact with snipe before the trials overseas, and some very nice friends arranged for a snipe day with the dogs, which was of great value for Katarina and me. It was a memorable day with excellent guns, great company and good dog work!

Field trials have only existed for the last ten years in Sweden, so it is a quite new retriever competition form for us. Before the field trials, all we had was cold game tests, and the only working title we had was achieved in these tests. Today, there are two working titles, one for cold game tests, SEJCH, and one for trials SEJ (a) CH. We struggled in our club, The Swedish Spaniel and Retriever Club, for a long time to get official Field trials in Sweden and finally we got it.

In Sweden you only pay membership in one club, and that's it. You can enter your dog in any field trial in the country; there is only one membership you need to pay for. The entry fee is 50 Euro.

So here in Ireland, requiring membership in all the different clubs in order to compete was therefore new to us, and it took us a long time to become a member in all

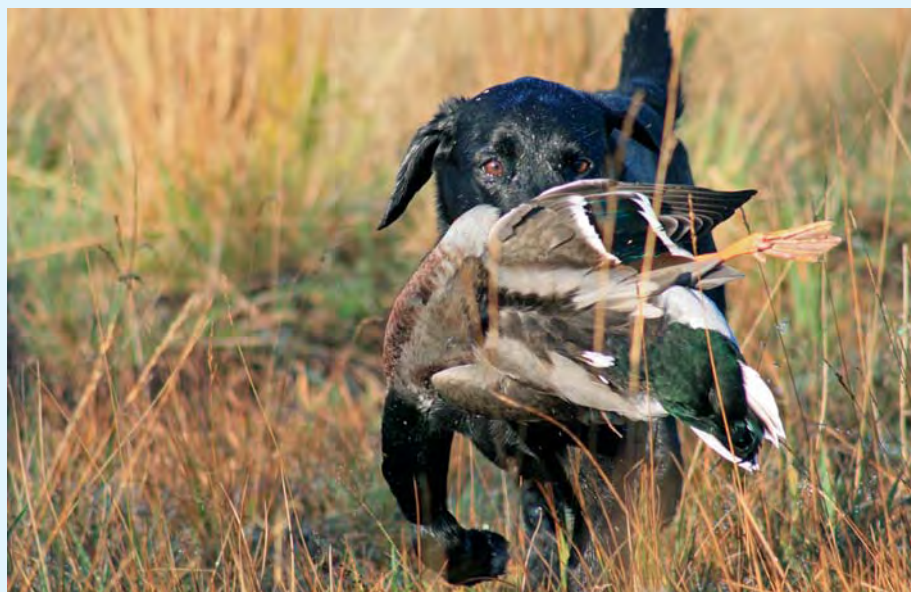
the clubs- not to mention just finding the clubs! But again, great help came along from Irish friends who found out addresses and gave us tips concerning what club to join!

While we have travelled to the UK many times, it was only last year I discovered the trial scene in Ireland. Now Ireland is in our hearts and we will certainly continue to come back! We immediately fell in love with the whole trail scene and the Irish people. I have never come across friendlier and kinder people, always willing to help, always with a smile and a nice word to go with it. Having experienced it before, I now go every autumn for at least a month. It is my vacation, and also a great opportunity to improve as a handler, judge and to look for new dogs for my breeding programme. But most importantly, I meet so many new friends in this wonderful hobby we share in the world of gundogs.

Keith has been kind enough to take us on picking up days and training days which have been both great fun and very helpful to us. In fact, throughout our stay, the generosity that has been shown to us is beyond description. One special occasion, a day picking up at Castle Dobbs, will stay in our memories as one of the best days during our stay. The enormous breakfast in the pickers up and beaters' kitchen, with all the friendly guys, the actual day picking up at the shoot, everything about that day makes a perfect memory for rainy days to come! (And I have it on the highest authority that both Swedish handlers were a real asset to the picking up team that day. Editor)

In Sweden female handlers are more common than men

During my stay in Ireland I have noticed that field trialling is a very masculine sport. I have been the only woman handler in the trials, except for the ones my friend Katarina ran in with me. In Sweden female



Mohill Open Stake, first retrieve coming in to hand.

handlers are more common than men handling dogs at trials. And many of the top handlers are women as a matter of fact!

The difference in the trials in Ireland compared to the Swedish are mostly about snipe, grounds and handling. The grounds are different to Sweden: We don't have as rough ground and thick cover back home. No bramble and bracken that size, but more open grounds. And no snipe trials. Sweden has a lot more water work and the Swedish dogs therefore have to work a lot in water in trials. Sweden is known for its many lakes, and water work is an important part in a typical picking up day or at a trial. In Ireland, my dogs really had to prove themselves in cover and show their game finding ability.

The system of judging is similar however; we judge the same way with the same principals as in Ireland. I was actually kindly invited by John Hartigan to judge an open trial in Golden Vale Gundog Club last year, which was a great experience for me, and I have been asked to come back to judge in Ireland again. We have a lot to learn though, since trials are so new in Sweden. I listen and learn as much as I can when I am here; I find that the more years I have been in the sport, the more things I find to learn. That's the fascination of the gundog sport. We need to improve holding the dogs in an area to hunt where it's told and not all over the place. Swedish dogs often take more ground, and the judging is quite lenient in that regard, a fact that becomes very clear when we have invited judges from Ireland and the UK to judge. The dogs are the same back home, as we import a lot of dogs and the bloodlines are the same, it is the handling that needs to improve.

Running my dogs over here is a fantastic experience, and the people we meet are genuinely friendly towards us and make us feel welcome in the group of trialers. While I have been here, it has been good to discuss retrieving, and I received good advice and handling tips.

Importantly, we laughed and enjoyed our days tremendously even if we have been put out early in the trial. Because that's trialling! Some days will end very quickly, some days last longer and some days will last to the end with a nice result!

Back for the Championship!

My dream before I came back this year was to qualify my champion dog for the Irish Championship in December. I actually was qualified last year, but had no possibility to attend. That's why I wanted to qualify again this year. And I did - at

Golden Vale Gundog Club open stake for twelve dogs I qualified my Labrador dog DKFTCH SWFTCH FTW Bierspool Blackbill of Lakedown by winning the trial. It was a trial on snipe and duck, a day that will stay in my mind for a long time! I went back home to Sweden in November, but I will certainly go back for the Championship - another great experience for me!

Martin Deeley once said 'Good dogs fetch us good friends.' I will therefore on this occasion take the opportunity to officially thank my dogs for fetching me all my Irish friends and I will keep coming back here, to these dear Irish friends, for more trials!



Success at Golden Vale Gundog Club: DKFTCH SWFTCH FTW Bierspool Blackbill of Lakedown takes first place.

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STAY AHEAD OF THE GAME



David Latham with the soon to become 2010 Retriever Champion, FTCh Delfleet Neon of Fendawood and John Halsted with the defending Champion, FTCh Roberto Rannaldini of Bolton Abbey.

Ireland is in love with names. Think of that literary comic genius Dr Brian O Nuallain or Brian O’Nolan aka Myles na gCopaleen and, for good measure and most famously, Flann O’Brien. But what’s in a name? It’s a famous and oft-repeated question. And when Shakespeare’s star-crossed lover Juliet asks it she provides a no less celebrated answer. “That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” Romeo is called Romeo, sure enough, but his being the particular character, Romeo does not depend on his being called Romeo. Just as ‘a good horse is never a bad colour’ names are, ultimately, neither here nor there. If something is considered a class act the label it trades under will probably come to be considered good as well. Few names are inherently good, in and of themselves. Take any area of activity - horse racing, teams, bands - where names are prominent and I’d be willing to

bet that the names we think most effective will be those attached to the animals, individuals or groups whose exploits we especially admire. An aura, charisma, call it what you will, is more often the reward for effort and achievement than something which itself makes celebrity possible.

And yet, we do have our preferences. However intuitive they may seem we can sometimes account for why we have them. No-one, for instance, will ever convince me that The Beatles, with its arch pun, is as

good a name as the Rolling Stones. Countless other examples tell the same story. Most great names achieve their greatness, some have it thrust upon them and a few are, as it were, born to it. Certainly, when it comes to dogs I have some favourites which I can readily

Registered names may be good, bad or indifferent, says Graham Cox, but what we call our dogs really matters

explain. Simplicity matters. Long names with ‘of’s’ and ‘at’s’, inevitable though they often are, never seem so effective as straight prefix and name arrangements. You have to go a long way to beat Alan Rountree’s Int.FTCh Leacross Rinkals just as you would have

been pushed to beat him in real life, as it were: or his FTCh Derryboy Drummer. Alliterative sparkle for a dog who proved to have just that quality in spades.

There is actually plenty that can be said about what makes for a name that has something about it. Alliteration, where words with the same letter or sound are used, often makes for a name that rolls off the tongue and sounds natural. But more important, for me at any rate, are the connotations the name has: the connections that they suggest. Some names, because of the images they bring to mind, are truly names 'to conjure with' and when they are allied to competitive excellence they start to take on an almost magical quality. A few more examples - and everyone will have their own - will convey the sense of what I mean.

Of the many Holway Golden Retriever Field Trial Champions, for instance, four names are particular favourites of mine. FTChs Holway Gaiety and Holway Jollity have names which perfectly capture the spirit of goldens at their best. Gay is a word that has now been so thoroughly appropriated for one purpose that we have forgotten that in animals it conveys a sense of being lively, spirited and alert. It is time we recovered this marvellous old word which I have loved ever since, as a lad, I visited Navy Days in Plymouth and thought the very best thing I went on was a compact and fast Motor Torpedo Boat with what I thought was the splendid name of Gay Charioteer. Jollity has the added bonus of prompting the strains of Jupiter, bringer of jollity from Gustav Holst's Planets Suite.

Say it once - and again and again

And so it goes. FTCh Holway Barrister, always referred to as The Barrister, had a name with authority stamped all over it whilst FTCh Holway Corbiere, whelped on Grand National day and given the name of an illustrious competitor in that most demanding of races, went on to acquire a supplementary name as his appearance and performances invited comparison with his equine contemporary Desert Orchid. The great National Hunt grey, like Red Rum and Arkle, captured the heart of the nation and Corbiere too became a huge favourite. Both had charisma to spare and the connection between the horse and the dog with a horse's name seemed utterly natural. If I were nominating the pick of the alliterative names I wouldn't have to struggle to decide. Some names are



Alan Rountree's FTCh Waterford Galahad of Tasco.

a gift to commentators and at the 1986 CLA Game Fair at Harewood House the performance by one of the Irish team gave us every opportunity to repeat a splendid tongue twister. Ireland won by a convincing 35 points and in George Eastwood's young black bitch Yubber Burr Ruby they had the best retriever and the top individual. Yubber Burr Ruby. Don't you just love it. Say it once, and you want to say it again, and again. And we did. We had to.

Do I have an all time favourite? A name that I would pick if I could only pick one. I do. It is the name of a dog that I never saw, but it meets all my criteria for quality. It is associated with an exceptional animal, it has countless connotations, both immediate and less obvious, and it rolls off the tongue like a tumbling stream. Ronald MacDonald's black labrador Rockstead Footspark, whelped in 1945, became a Dual Champion with a name that has everything. It suggests utter dependability combined with the ability to be spectacularly exciting. And for me the musical connotations in both parts of the name, the relentless beat of West Indian rock steady music and the brilliance of Paul Simon's 'Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes' enhance those core images. A name with everything going for it for a dog who did everything.

So, there are good names, there are not so good names and - no names no pack drill, as they say - there are some downright awful ones. But, ultimately, formal registered names don't matter that much. What we choose to call our dogs, however, really does. And in this respect there really are some clear criteria and some names really are better than others. In building a relationship with the dogs we train and work we bring all manner of factors into play. Hands, touch, facial expression are all important: but nothing matters more than voice.

In dog training the voice has to be like a musical instrument which you play with as much variety and modulation as you can manage. Listening to someone like June Atkinson talking to her dogs was a revelation. Beginners, by contrast, are invariably self conscious and inhibited so that even when the importance of tone is pointed out they seem reluctant to use it. Just as the great American landscape photographer Ansel Adams talks of the negative as being akin to an orchestral score with the print a 'performance' capable of great variation, so a dog's

name should lend itself readily to easily contrasted expression.

Monosyllabic names have very little orchestral potential. You need, really, to be able to sing a name. If you can do that it will lend itself to the exaggerated elongation which is such a vital aid to control. We should take our cue from the huntsman's 'music.' Managing large packs, huntsmen have no choice but to speak to dogs as they should be spoken to. They know that dogs are, for the most part, unaware of consonants and selecting one dog from a pack of perhaps fifteen couple means making full use of the vowel sounds that dogs react to. Given their particular requirements it is no wonder huntsmen long insisted on names with three syllables. For gundogs two syllables will usually suffice.

Daphne Moore's *The Book of the Foxhound* is an education on the subject for it includes an alphabetical appendix running to some forty pages, of the names of doghounds and bitches. Monosyllabic names are conspicuous by their absence. Huntsmen don't underestimate what can be done with voice and neither should we. The inherent biddability of well bred gundogs makes them very responsive: providing, that is, the person seeking to elicit the response realises the full potential of tone and the significance of the

high pitched, yet softly spoken delivery.

Speaking softly is important. Dogs have acute hearing and there is nothing to be said for escalating the volume of communication. Softness makes for attentiveness and yet leaves plenty in reserve for moderate yet effective admonishment when needed. In all this the dog's name is crucial. It is a critical marker, a badge of identity. And just as the relationship between you and your dog needs to be carefully modulated, that marker has to be something which you can manipulate and use to achieve your training aims. So, whilst registered names matter when it comes to filling out forms the names we give our dogs matter every day. And because dogs learn new names so readily it's never too late to be sure that you have one you can sing. I can't guarantee 'diamonds on the soles of your shoes': but responsiveness is assured.

In the late afternoon glow, Tagabea Flame of Ribblesdale retrieves to Ricki Molone.



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The best day of my life....so far



John Smyth sharing the joy of a fishing trip with his father, Stephen.

I had enjoyed a brilliant week fishing for salmon with my Dad, down south in June, but we hadn't caught any on that occasion. But, school term was finally over and the summer holidays now awaited and Dad had taken a complete break from his shop. Dad was teaching me how to fish, and I had managed to catch two good sea trout fishing with worms. We had loved spending this time together, just him and me, and talking about things. My Dad was full of fishing stories about when he was a boy of my age, fishing together with his own Dad, Russell, and we were extremely happy. The next day when we returned home, I went to Romania for two months so that was the end of the salmon fishing. Dad and I kept in touch, but we were both eager to try and catch a big salmon when I came back to Coleraine. When I was over in Romania, Dad had discovered a very good place to fish on the River Bann near Kilrea. When you fished there, you had a boat, which was great, and when you rowed

out you anchored the boat and then fly fished from the anchored boat. Dad said it was really peaceful, in fact you didn't see anyone at all, and he had caught some very good brown trout. But he told me you had a good chance, if you were lucky, to catch a big salmon in the place. Now that I had returned from Romania, I couldn't wait for us to go fishing together again.

The first available day we had to go out fishing was on Friday evening. On the drive up to Kilrea, Dad said that we would stay until it was pitch black. When we arrived, Dad assembled the rods and I picked the flies for us to use. We were both eager to get into the boat and start fishing, but when we went down to the boat, it was full of water so Dad had to empty it out with a milk bottle that just happened to be there. He told me this was called 'bailing out the boat.' I just hoped the rowing boat was safe enough. When Dad had finished bailing the boat he told me to get in first. The minute I put one foot in the boat started wobbling. Then Dad got in and started to row us out, telling me that we were going to the deadliest part of the river, called the Big Rock. When

Dad had rowed us there he said: "Ok son, its half past seven now, the salmon will start taking at about half nine. Until then you might catch a trout or two."

No-one else was there; we were completely alone with nature, with just the bubbling sound of the water and the wild birds to listen to. So Dad and I started casting. Dad was casting towards the far bank with such a force that every time he cast his line out, the whole boat gently rocked from side to side. I was casting up stream towards the closest bank and was letting the flow of the current swing my fly around downstream.

After about fifteen minutes, I felt a take and immediately struck back at the fish. It started to jump and we saw it was a brown trout. It was a very strong splashy, golden trout and it took me several minutes to play it and wind it in close to the boat so that Dad could net it for me. I really hoped it would stay on and wouldn't escape and soon I had the first fish of the night safely in the bottom of the boat. Dad said: "That's a real beauty John," and knocked it on the head. He made me take the fly out of its mouth by myself so that I would learn and then I started to fish again. I felt great and Dad was delighted as well. He said: "That's the pressure off us now son, mum and Sylvia will be delighted."

Then, half an hour later, Dad had caught one a little bit smaller than mine. Dad said jokingly, "It's one all now." I knew Dad was a better fisherman than me, but he always said that every fisherman needed luck too. Dad and I were talking about Romania and business in the shop, and our experiences over the summer, but he kept on saying: "John, just keep watching your fly line and your flies in the water, even when we're talking".

The fly had hooked perfectly

The river was so still, when suddenly, out of nowhere, a massive fish leapt from the depths of the river and attacked my fly! There was a huge explosion of water exactly where my fly was and I struck it firmly by raising my rod. The rod nearly bent in two and was almost pulled out of my hands, but my fly had hooked perfectly to the top of the fish's mouth. Dad knew immediately it was too big to be a trout and it had to be a salmon! I wanted him to take the rod from me but he laughed and said: "No way John, it's all yours and it's a beauty."

The big fish fought for over ten minutes before it got tired, running off and pulling line from my reel. I had never felt such power before and asked Dad would the fish ever tire, but he just kept saying that I was doing a great job and to keep the tip of the rod up high. Oh this was a mighty fish and at every second I just dreaded that it would escape. I only had a small trout fly on and I just hoped that the wee hook and all the knots would stay true.



Young John proudly displays his fine fish.

Eventually the fish was ready to be netted and when Dad lifted it into the boat the two of us cheered out loud. It was a really great moment together; I had caught my first salmon, and it was really massive. During the drive home, Dad and I realised that we were wet through from the rain, but we couldn't have been any happier. I think I will always remember this very special day whenever I see anyone fishing, and indeed it's the best day of my life...so far!

Editor's Note: We are always eager to hear of young people sampling country sports. This is 12 year old John Smyth's account, written by himself, of a fishing expedition with his father Stephen. We would be delighted if other youngsters would like to tell us about their own experiences, whether shooting, hunting, fishing, or ferreting. Editor.

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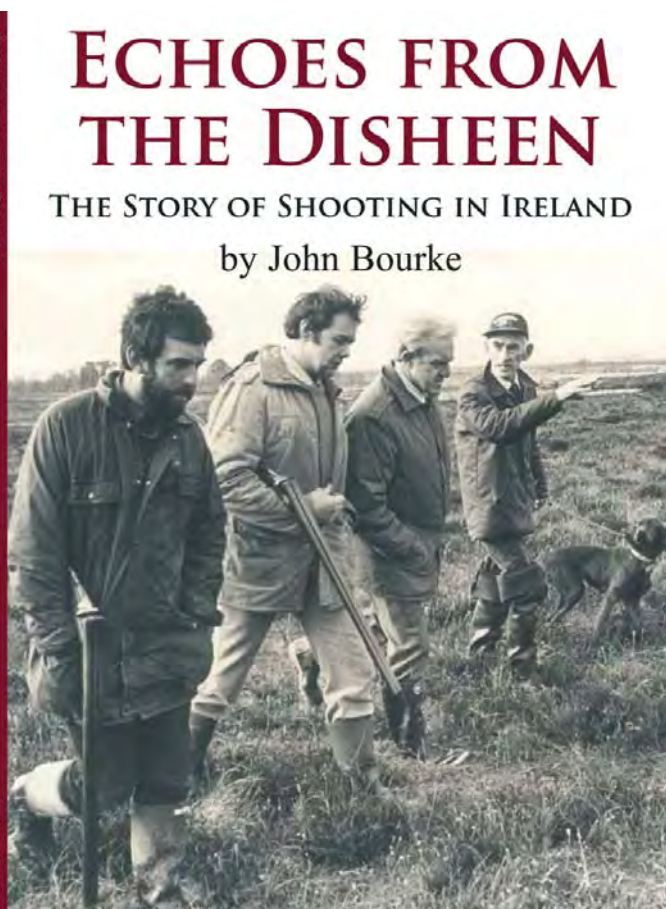
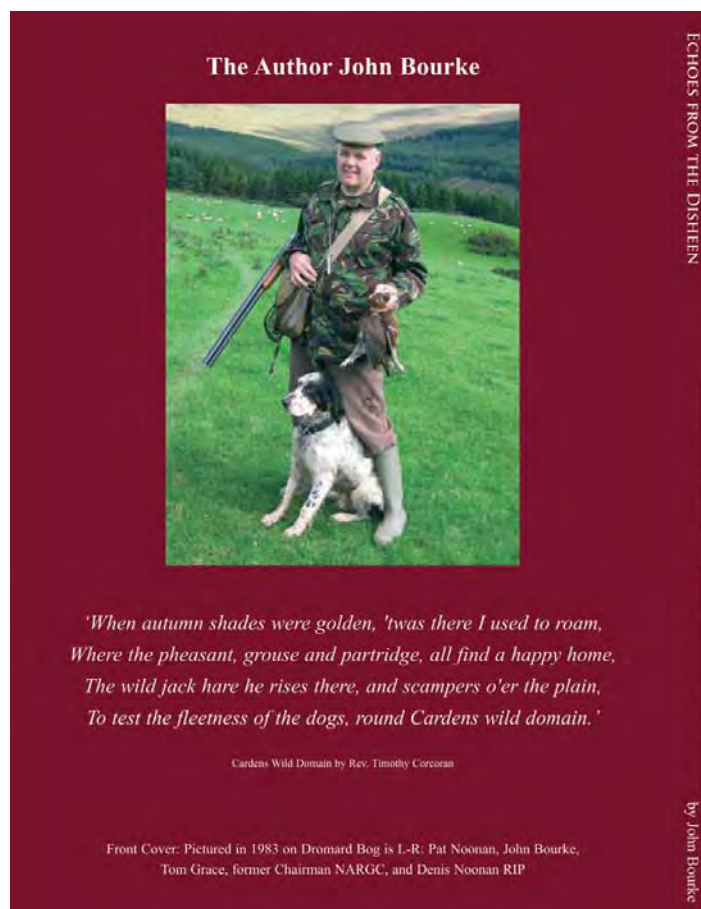
Here's what to do next - and it couldn't be easier.

Just Email your story of not more than 1200 words and photographs to us at www.countrysportsandcountrylife.com and we'll do the rest.

It doesn't need to be 'the works of Shakespeare,' just something that involves you and fishing, shooting or hunting which you would like to share with the readers.

As a thank you we will send you £20 as a 'Junior Author's Fee' if we publish your story.

And Smyth's Country Sports of Coleraine, famous for stocking Barbour Clothing for the whole family, have generously donated a £50 prize for the best story published over the next year.



Echoes from the Disheen: The Story of Shooting in Ireland By John Bourke

Reviewed by Dr Anthony O' Halloran

John Bourke who hails from County Laois is no stranger in the world of Irish game shooting. A tireless advocate of country sports and frequent columnist in shooting publications, it will be no surprise to those who know him well that his first book was published earlier this year.

The book titled *Echoes from the Disheen: The Story of Shooting in Ireland* (paperback) which is 114 pages in length consists of seventeen chapters and is accompanied by black and white photographs /illustrations. The preface is written by a true giant on the Irish shooting landscape: Dr Douglas Butler. Chapters include: A New Beginning, Life in the New State, Sporting Guns, The Hungry Thirties, The Birth of

the Game Movement, A National Association for Gun Clubs, Extraordinary Gentlemen and The Irish Fly Fishing and Game Shooting Museum.

In this book, John tells 'the story of the development of the sport for the ordinary individual since independence and all the various trials and tribulations along the way' (p.10). This book is therefore not a history of estate driven shooting in Ireland. Instead, it focuses on what is the backbone of shooting in the Republic of Ireland: the parish level rough shooting. John devotes a considerable part of his energies explaining the history and evolution of the gun club movement in the Republic of Ireland. Nevertheless, he does not entirely omit the 'Big House' from his musings. In this regard, readers from John's locality will particularly enjoy chapter two which explores the life of the Second Lord Castletown.

John's overall approach to his task is very effective. Rather than looking at rough shooting in isolation, he

situates the sport in its proper historical context. Thus readers will learn about the impact of various historical milestones on rough shooting. Such milestones include: Irish Independence, World War Two and entry to the European Economic Community.

This reviewer's two favourite chapters are Life in the New State and The War Years. In Life in the New State John reminds us: 'Following the breakup of the large estates, it did not take long before wild game stocks that had long been jealously guarded promptly became the focus of attention. Gradually wild game soon doubled as a source of food and a means of income and virtually a whole cottage industry quickly sprang up around its pursuit and capture' (p.41). In the remainder of this chapter, the John explains the many ingenious methods rural dwellers employed to kill rabbits and game birds.

In the War Years John explains: 'One totally unexpected side effect of war from an Irish perspective was that the scarcity of fresh meat now turned into an enterprising opportunity for those with a basic knowledge of how to harvest from the countryside. Before long rabbits, pigeons and game once looked upon as the poor man's dinner quickly saw a hyper escalation in prices as agricultural commodities fast began to dwindle with the onset of rationing' (p.56). Of course, ammunition was in very short supply during this period. Consequently, hunters tried to fill the void by making their own cartridges. Judging by John's account, this was a somewhat hazardous exercise at the best of times.

Many honourable names make their way on the pages of this book. Two however, deserve a special mention namely the late Noel Reid of Kildare and the late Stanley Foot of Laois. Both gentlemen made a very significant contribution to game shooting and conservation in their respective counties and indeed nationally.

John quite correctly devotes a full chapter to Walter Phelan's Irish Fly Fishing and Game Shooting Museum located in the village of Attanagh, County Laois. Walter is making a tremendous effort to preserve important archival material at this museum. It is already a very valuable resource for those interested in conducting research on game shooting in Ireland.

Inevitably by the end of the book, readers will have a good sense of the kind of man John Bourke is. Two things stand out. Firstly, John comes from that tradition where game shooting was passed on from father to son. John is obviously very proud of the fact that his late father was one of the founding members of his local Errill Gun Club in 1957. There is a wonderful family photograph on page 49 dating from 1904 showing John's grandfather also John Bourke with gun in hand.

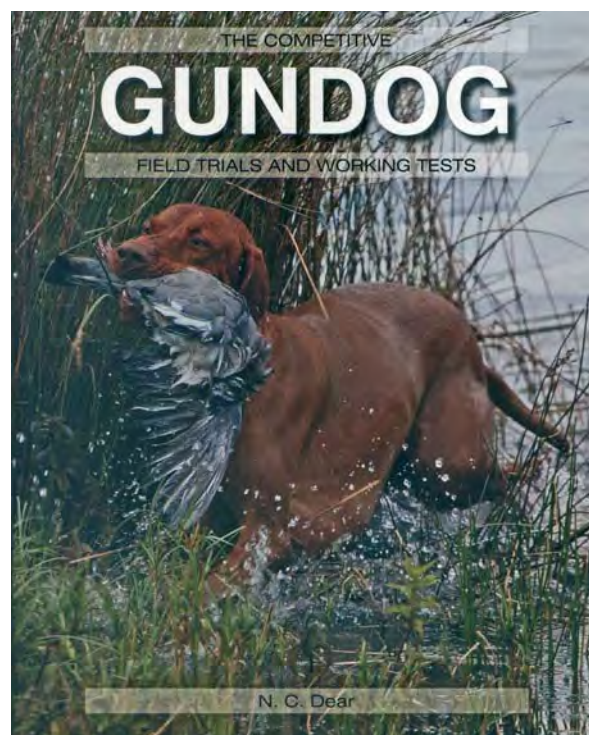
Secondly, for John Bourke game shooting is a way of life. And it is a way of life that should be accessible to so

called ordinary men and women. Game shooting is no mere hobby or recreational pursuit for this proud Laois man. I suspect that John spares more than an occasional thought for those who have gone before him and those who may come after him as he walks through familiar fields and woods.

In conclusion, John Bourke should be commended for telling this story. The book's free flowing narrative style makes it a delightfully accessible read. Echoes From the Disheen: The Story of Shooting in Ireland would make a lovely Christmas gift for game shooting enthusiasts, particularly those interested in reading and learning about times past.

(Copies of this book priced at €15 are available from the author by contacting woodcockjbourke@eircom.net)

The Competitive Gundog by Nigel Dear



Many readers who visited the Kennel Club stand at the 2011 Irish Game Fair at Shanes Castle will have met the author who has taken over from Anne Greeves as Field Trial Secretary of the Kennel Club.

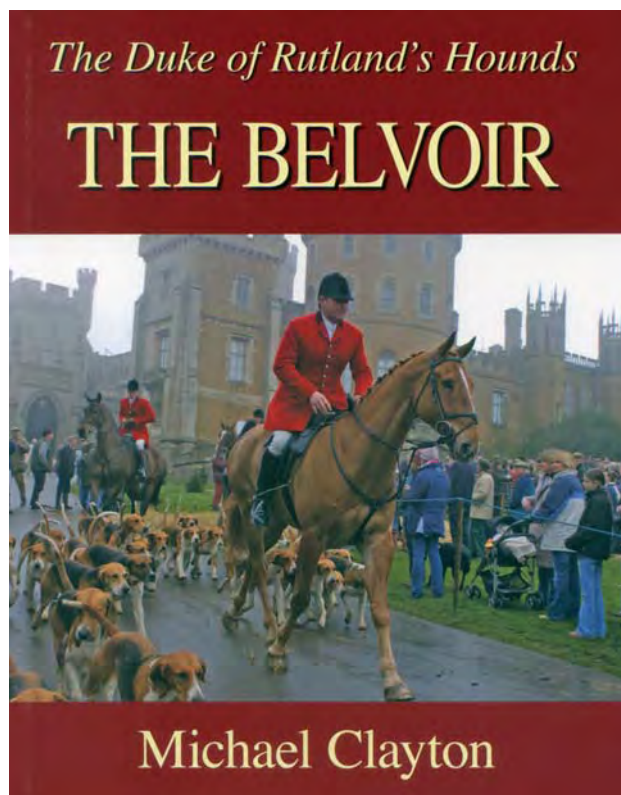
Nigel is himself a keen field trial and working test enthusiast within the HPR breeds. He has been FT Secretary of the Hungarian Vizsla Society and Chairman of the HPR Field Trial Association. He has considerable success with his own Vizlas.

His book is aimed at the field trial beginner taking them in a 'step by step' fashion through the rules, regulations and procedures of running all breeds of gundogs in trials and tests.

Contents include: Field Trials and working tests; working with Retrievers, Spaniels, Pointers, Setters and HPRs; spring and grouse pointing; the show gundog working certificate, etc.

This is the book to encourage the beginner to take the plunge, join a training group and enter the world of the competitive Gundog. It is available at £19.95 from Crowood Press. www.crowood.com

The Belvoir - The Duke of Rutland's Hounds by Michael Clayton



This is the enthralling history of the Duke of Rutland's Hounds, the Belvoir. Superbly illustrated with a wealth of pictures, historic and contemporary, this is an exceptional anatomy of a Hunt which will delight hunting people everywhere – and those who care about our countryside and its unique sporting heritage.

Founded by the 3rd Duke of Rutland as a Foxhound pack in the mid-18th century, the Belvoir hounds gained a major reputation for exciting sport in a superb terrain, ranging from High Leicestershire to sporting Lincolnshire.

The Belvoir hounds, always owned by succeeding Dukes of Rutland even to this day, received fervent local support – and an annual influx of eager visitors who included future Kings of England, Prince Albert and the Empress of Austria.

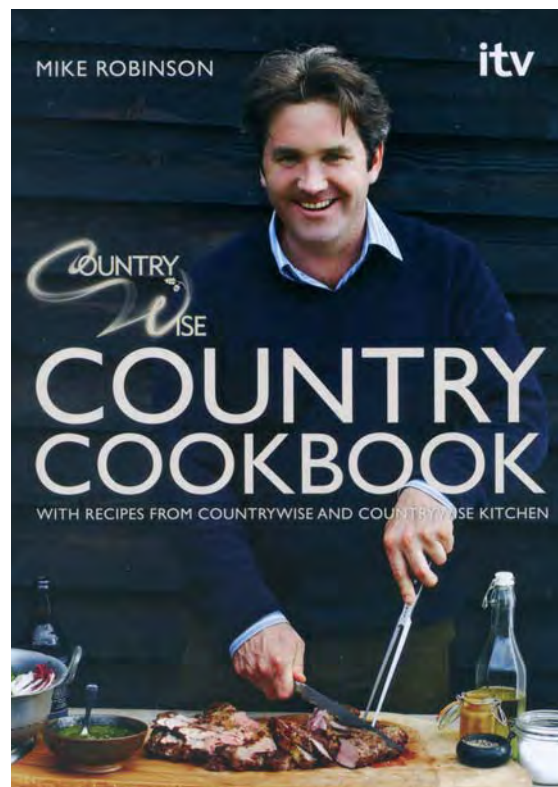
Today many hunting people from all walks of life have golden memories of hunting with the Belvoir, which Michael Clayton's lively narrative reawakens.

The Belvoir has had the benefit of a long line of great huntsmen, vividly described here, and a pack of hounds which is now one of only three in the United Kingdom entirely bred on Old English Foxhound lines.

The author Michael Clayton writes with the authority of someone who has hunted with over 200 packs in

Britain, Ireland and the USA. He has been Editor in Chief of Country life, The Field and Horse and Hound and a television and radio commentator. He is the author of over 20 books on hunting and equestrianism.

Lavishly illustrated the book is available at Price: £25.00 from Merlin Unwin Books www.merlinunwin.co.uk



The Countrywise Country Cookbook by Mike Robinson

The Countrywise Kitchen proved one of the most popular food series of 2010, with viewing figures regularly hitting over 4 million when it aired on ITV1 primetime. Now, for the first time, its co-presenter and chef Mike Robinson brings you the best recipes of the 2010 and 2011 series - plus dishes from its sister show Countrywise, which is now entering its third series. There are lots of recipes for cooking with country ingredients, from partridge to chicken, lamb to pork, salmon to mackerel, blackberries to plums. Stews, roasts and soups sit alongside cakes, puddings and jams in this accessible cookbook that celebrates the best of British ingredients in dishes that herald from far and wide - from a roast shoulder of pork to a Thai noodle soup.

All the recipes are simple to prepare and even those with the most surprising flavours are created from everyday ingredients that can be bought from the supermarket. Packed with information on selecting the best ingredients, eating seasonally and foraging, this book is an invaluable source of information as well as a delicious collection of recipes.

The book is available price £20 from most good bookshops or from www.anovabooks.com

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FISSTA hopeful for a 2012 Salmon Recovery - AGM is packed with salmon anglers from across Ireland

The FISSTA AGM on 20 November 2011 was opened with a statement read from Mr Pat Rabbitte, TD Minister for Communications, Energy & Natural Resources that carefully avoided any direct references to either fish farming or reopening of any mixed stock netting. However, many in the well attended room were still very concerned by the new policy to develop aquaculture projects in west of Ireland bays and also to keep mixed stock fishing back on the agenda following a buy-out in 2006.

Mr Pat Rabbitte, TD
Minister for
Communications, Energy &
Natural Resources



Extract from the Minister's message to delegates

Please accept my good wishes to your delegates attending the AGM in Athlone today. It is almost nine months since I assumed responsibility for our salmon and sea trout resources and in that time I have been struck by the commitment and dedication of the angling community to the protection and

recovery of the wild stocks. There are many challenges for the Inland Fisheries sector which cannot be tackled in isolation and I am aware that your organisation has worked tirelessly to address these issues, including the conservation of wild Atlantic salmon and water quality. I am confident that we can continue to make progress in ensuring the long-term sustainability of this important natural resource for the benefit of all stakeholders.

I am also confident that the new structures now firmly in place under the direction of Inland Fisheries Ireland will herald a new era for the sector with improved management and sustainability at its core. The newly formed National Inland Fisheries Forum, in which FISSTA members participate, will provide the various stakeholders with an opportunity to influence policies on how the resource is managed and developed in the current challenging economic climate.

I thank the members for the time and attention they have committed to the Forum, noting that the valuable spirit of volunteerism is alive in the inland fisheries sector. I look forward to FISSTA's continued cooperation to fulfilling our shared goals.'

Minister Pat Rabbitte TD

North Atlantic Salmon Fund's Message to FISSTA

Orri Vigfusson conveyed his very best wishes to all my friends in FISSTA clubs all over Ireland adding his hopes for a

most productive meeting: "I congratulate the National Executive Council for your excellent work in lobbying for our wild Atlantic salmon and for your continued support to me and NASF over the many years. In my message to your AGM last November the good news that John Carroll was elected on to the new body titled Inland Fisheries Ireland was a great achievement and endorsement of your collective work to date. Since this time John has carried the trust and confidence of us all in salmon conservation to the table of government and I am pleased that he will continue



The picture of Martin and Pauline Opineer of Donegal and formerly of Netherlands who was presented with the highest honour for his services to development of angling in EU at the recent EU Anglers Alliance AGM in London where FISSTA attended a presentation dinner in his honour.

to do so for 2012. I wish to acknowledge his term as Chairman as a most productive time for salmon and seatrout development and all members must be very proud of all the achievements to date. I wish the new Chairman and members elected to 2012 National Executive Council well and hope to meet you on my next visit to Ireland. Salmon rivers in Ireland have improved since the buyout of the driftnets by the Irish Government in 2006. However, this season I note that while we had a major victory with the temporary lifting of the Foyle nets this season, the reopening of the mixed stock fishery at Castlemaine made absolutely no sense as it proves we must never take our eye of the netting issues.

'No salmon nets in Irish waters'

"I thank FISSTA for their lobbying work to end the North coast nets and enjoy the FACEBOOK pages set up under the title 'No salmon nets in Irish waters' as a good example of the new publicity tools we should use to get our message across. We must continue to highlight the draft net extensions into August and rod extensions into October as anti conservation and ill thought out - as if we have the luxury of abundance. I thank the FISSTA NEC for their assistance and support in lobbying fellow NGO's on the international stage where most of the key decisions on Irish salmon are made or not made as the case may be too frequently. This year, NASF continues to buy out or lease out nets from Greenland, Faeroe Islands to the UK and we hope that Norway will soon make the welcome decision to end mixed stock fisheries once and for all. The fact remains that NASF is now conserving all the fisheries that NASCO was created to manage, yet the EU could recognise this work by funding it as the benefits are obvious

Motions Passed at 2011 AGM

That FISSTA oppose the threat to wild salmon fisheries by the introduction of commercial rod extensions into October 2012 (Lee Salmon Anglers)

That FISSTA renew and lobby further on their 2009 motion to support the closure of all commercial netting (Cumman

Iascairachta Sliabh a'Liag)

That FISSTA oppose the threat to wild salmon fisheries by the introduction in spring of commercial netting extensions into August for 2012 (Cumman Iascairachta Sliabh a'Liag)

That FISSTA support the DGAF campaign to recover the Gweebarra Fishery as a Community Angling Project (Cumann Iascairachta Na Rossan & Baile Na Finne)

That this Federation in their support for the Castleconnel Initiative oppose attempts to delay development work to allow free passage of wild salmon to the upper reaches of the River

Shannon as outlined in recent publications (Kingfisher Club Castleconnell)

That this federation renews our opposition to the state policy of unbridled promotion and development of fin fish farming at the expense of our wild salmon and seatrout by the establishment of a new state agency to protect our wild fisheries against environmental crime such as the OKIKRIM model in Norway.

FISSTA represented on the National Inland Fisheries Forum

It was encouraging to see many friends of the wild salmon attend the inaugural meeting of the National Inland Fisheries Forum in Athlone recently where Chairman Derek Davis and CEO IFI Ciaran Byrne addressed the gathering to state the new body has been established in compliance with Section 7(4)(A) of the Inland Fisheries Act 2010. The act provides of the establishment and management of a forum to facilitate stakeholder input into policy formation. The inaugural meeting of the National Inland Fisheries Forum was held in Athlone on 20 October. Dr Ciaran Byrne, the CEO of Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI), hosted the meeting at which Mr Derek Davis was installed as chairman of the Forum following his appointment by the Minister. The role of the Forum is to provide advice on general policy issues relevant to the inland fisheries service both from sectoral and geographic perspectives. The Forum, which will meet at least twice annually, is made up of 60 members drawn from various stakeholder groups throughout Ireland. The selection process was conducted by the Public Appointments Service. Membership of the Forum is voluntary and attracts no fees or expenses.

Welcoming the members, Mr Derek Davis, stressed that the Forum provides an important opportunity for stakeholders to participate in the development of policies regarding our inland fisheries which is a wonderful natural resource. Mr. Davis said: "The Forum can influence policies for the protection, management, development and conservation of this valuable

resource now and for the generations to come."

The meeting considered the Inland Fisheries Ireland's Corporate Plan and dealt with seasonality, a matter of interest to all involved in fisheries, angling, conservation, protection and development. The important and relevant topic(s) of climate change and environment were also discussed.

Acknowledging the experience on the Forum, Dr Ciaran Byrne commented that "a number of you have served as members of the Central and Regional Fisheries Boards, some for over 20 years. As members of the Forum you have the opportunity to discuss and advise on the future of inland fisheries in Ireland. IFI looks forward to receiving your considered views on the various issues."

In a message to the meeting, the Minister Mr. Pat Rabbitte said: "The Forum will provide the various stakeholders with an opportunity to influence policies on how the resource is managed and developed in the current challenging economic climate and into the future". The Minister wished the Forum well in its endeavours and pledged his support for the inland fisheries sector: "Our national inland fisheries resource is an important asset. Stakeholders participating in the Forum have expertise in a wide range of areas including recreational and commercial fisheries, the environment, the hospitality sector and farming. I believe that the Forum will provide a meaningful channel of communication between the stakeholders and management of the inland fisheries resource." He went on to thank the members for the time and attention they had committed to the Forum, noting that the valuable spirit of volunteerism is alive in the inland fisheries sector.

Public Consultation on the Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme and conservation measures

Minister Pat Rabbitte TD announced a 30 day public consultation process on the Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme (No 2) Regulations 2011. Regulations are made for the management of the wild salmon and sea trout fishery from the 1 January, based on the scientific and management advice provided to the Minister by Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI). In launching the public consultation process, the Minister remarked: "The preliminary advice I received indicates that some of the salmon fisheries did not perform as well in 2011 as they did in 2010, in part due to water levels and weather conditions. While 2011 saw several additional rivers opened for angling, there will be fewer changes to the status of rivers in the new 2012 season. While there have been improvements in some rivers, 'catch and release' restrictions and closures will be applied in a number of cases to protect fragile stocks."

As usual, individual rivers performed differently, which emphasises the importance of managing salmon stocks on a river by river basis. In all the Salmon Standing Scientific



Ed Power Vice Chairman of FISSTA being consulted by 'Lord' Lawton, ROI Editor, ICS&CL on the quality of the horse flesh on display at Kinnity Castle Co Offaly

Committee of IFI assessed 141 rivers and the managers preliminary advice is that:

43 rivers are open (a surplus of fish has been identified over and~ above the conservation limits in these rivers) which is 7 less than in 2011;

34 rivers have been classified as open for angling on a "Catch and~ Release" only basis, i.e. 6 more than in 2011; and

64 rivers are closed (no~ surplus of fish available for harvest), compared to 63 in 2011.

Otherwise the Tagging Scheme regime for 2012 is, in essence, unchanged from the Regulations which currently apply. This is also the case with regard to the conservation bye-laws.

New conservation initiatives

The Minister does propose, however, on the advice of IFI, to introduce additional conservation measures for the further protection of sea trout (by the introduction of a bag limit) and salmon in closed rivers by restricting the type of angling for other fish species. As part of an ongoing review and on an experimental basis, the salmon angling season in the River Blackwater in Co Waterford and Co Cork will be extended on a catch and release basis until 12 October 2012. The Minister explained that the purpose of this initiative is to facilitate an examination by IFI of the effects on salmon of an extended angling season, which may be justified given that salmon may have been running later in the year. The effect of this initiative will enable fisheries operators to attract tourist anglers further into the shoulder of the tourism season. I understand there is a healthy surplus of fish returning to the River Blackwater over

and above the conservation limit. The performance of the fishery during these two weeks will be closely monitored by IFI with a view to determining the prospects for extending the season in other such rivers.

Summary of main changes to the management of the wild salmon fishery

3 Rivers which were closed in 2011 will open for "catch & release" in 2012

Corock (Waterford Fishery District), Bungosteen (Ballyshannon Fishery District) and Dee (Dundalk Fishery District).

7 Rivers which were open in 2011 will be limited to "catch & release" in 2012

Garavogue (Sligo Fishery District), Eany (Ballyshannon Fishery District), Crolly/Gweedore (Letterkenny Fishery District), Castletown (Dundalk Fishery District), Argideen, Owennacurra (Cork Fishery District) and Glenamoy (Bangor Fishery District).

4 Rivers which were open for catch and release in 2011 will close in 2012

Grange (Sligo Fishery District), Clady, Glenna (Letterkenny Fishery District) and Glyde (Dundalk Fishery District).

The requirement to use brown tags on the River Suir has been relaxed as the river continues to improve from a being closed in previous years to being open on a restricted basis last year ("catch & release" for most of the season and anglers restricted to one fish from 15 August to the end of the season) to being fully open in 2012

Additional Conservation Measures - Conservation of Sea Trout (National) Bye-law

This Bye-law provides for a bag limit of 3 Sea trout (less than 40cm) per angler per day. Up to now, protection has only been afforded to sea trout greater than 40 cm in length.

Prohibition on Angling Bye-law. This Bye-law prohibits the use of any fish hooks, other than single barbless hooks, and the use of worms as bait in angling for all species of fish in the rivers, which due to the status of salmon stocks, are closed for salmon harvest or opened for "catch and release" angling only of salmon.

In July 2011, the Minister requested IFI to conduct a full review of the run timing of salmon populations using the available information to scientifically test the hypothesis that salmon runs are coming later, and also attempt to identify the dynamics of any change identified. The output of this review will further inform the management measures for the 2013 salmon fishing season.

Anecdotal reports have suggested that the mean timing of salmon runs have been getting later in the year leading to a situation where 'fresh' fish have been running into rivers which have harvestable surpluses and have been meeting their conservation limits, but neither anglers nor commercial fishermen have been able to benefit as the runs are outside

their respective seasons, 30 September in the case of the majority of recreational angling rivers and 31 July in the case of most commercial fisheries. This will facilitate an examination of the actual effects on salmon stocks of an extended angling season. The pilot extension of the season in the Blackwater (Munster) river will facilitate an examination of the actual effects on salmon stocks of an extended angling season.

Conservation of Salmon and Sea Trout (Blackwater River) Bye-law

This Bye-law extends the angling season on the Blackwater (Munster) river including the Glenshelane and Finisk from 30 September 2012 to 12 October 2012 on a "catch & release" basis and provides for the use of single barbless hooks.

Statutory notice

The Minister is giving statutory notice of his intention to make the Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme (No. 2) Regulations, 2011 to provide for the management of the wild salmon and sea trout fishery by Inland Fisheries Ireland following the 30 day public consultation. Any person may submit objections to the draft regulations at any time during the period of 30 days until 8 December 2011 either in writing to the Department at 29-31 Adelaide Road, Dublin 2 or by e-mail to inland.fisheries@dcenr.gov.ie. Details of the conservation proposals and the draft regulations are available on the Department's website www.dcenr.ie/natural/inland/fisheries.

30 day public consultation process on the Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme Regulations Announced

Regulations are made for the management of the wild salmon and sea trout fishery from the 1 January, based on the scientific and management advice provided to the Minister by Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI). The Minister remarked: "The advice I received indicates that some of the salmon fisheries did not perform as well in 2011 as they did in 2010, in part due to water levels and weather conditions. While 2011 saw several additional rivers opened for angling, there will be fewer changes to the status of rivers in the new 2012 season. While there have been improvements in a number of rivers, catch and release restrictions will be applied in some cases to protect fragile stocks." As usual individual rivers performed differently, which emphasises the importance of managing salmon stocks on a river by river basis. In all the Salmon Standing Scientific Committee of IFI assessed 141 rivers and the managers preliminary advice is that:

48 rivers are open (a surplus of fish has been identified over and above the conservation limits in these rivers) which is 3 less than in 2011;

34 rivers have been classified as open for angling on a "Catch and Release" only basis, i.e. 4 more than in 2011; and

59 rivers are closed (no surplus of fish available for harvest), which is one less than 2011 now that the Corock (Waterford Fishery District), Bungosteen (Ballyshannon Fishery District) and Dee rivers have shown sufficient improvement to allow angling on a catch and release basis.

Otherwise the Tagging Scheme regime for 2012 is, in essence, unchanged from the Regulations which currently apply. This is also the case with regard to the conservation by-laws. The Minister does propose, however, on the advice of IFI, to introduce additional conservation measures for the further protection of sea trout (by the introduction of a bag limit) and salmon in closed rivers by restricting the type of angling for other fish species, details of which are available on the Departmental website. As part of an ongoing review and on an experimental basis, the salmon angling season in the River Blackwater in Co Waterford and Co Cork will be extended on a catch and release basis until 12 October 2012. The Minister explained that the purpose of this initiative is to facilitate an examination by IFI of the effects on salmon of an extended angling season, which may be justified given that salmon may have been running later in the year. The effect of this initiative will enable fisheries operators to attract tourist anglers further into the shoulder of the tourism season. I understand there is a healthy surplus of fish returning to the River Blackwater over and above the conservation limit. The performance of the fishery during these two weeks will be closely monitored by IFI with a view to determining the prospects for extending the season in other such rivers.

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1 River which was open for "catch & release" in 2011 will open for harvest in 2012 Bunowen (Connemara Fishery District)

2 Rivers which were open for catch and release in 2011 will close in 2012

Grange (Sligo Fishery District) and Clady (Letterkenny Fishery District)

The requirement to use brown tags on the River Suir has been relaxed as the river continues to improve from a being closed in previous years to being open on a restricted basis last year ("catch & release" for most of the season and anglers

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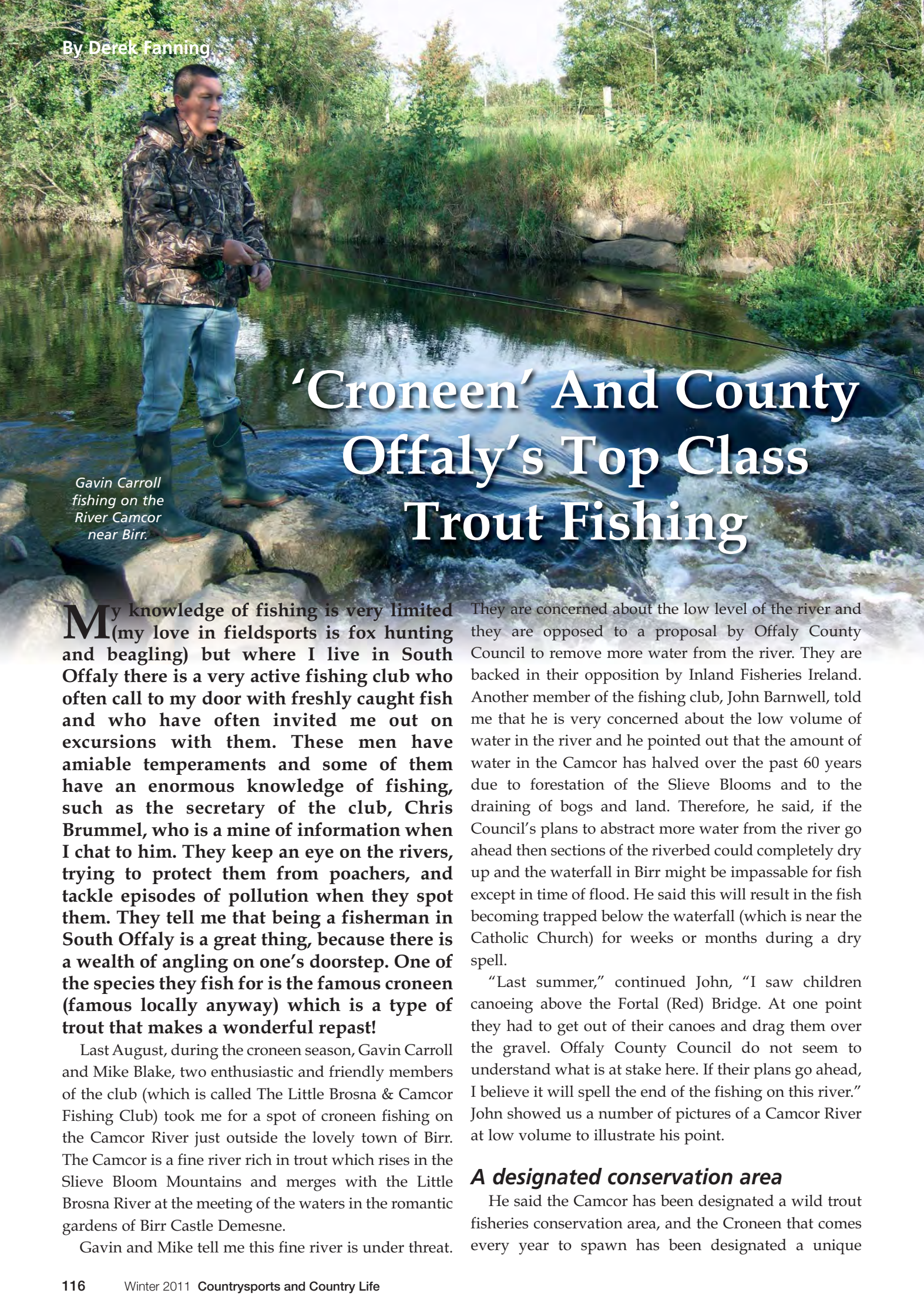
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Conservation/Consultation+Process+on+the+Wild+Salmon+Salmon+and+Sea+Trout Tagging Scheme Regulations+ 2012

A man in a camouflage jacket and waders is standing on a rocky bank, fishing with a rod and reel. The river flows over rocks, creating a small waterfall. The background is filled with lush green trees and vegetation.

Gavin Carroll
fishing on the
River Camcor
near Birr.

'Croneen' And County Offaly's Top Class Trout Fishing

My knowledge of fishing is very limited (my love in fieldsports is fox hunting and beagling) but where I live in South Offaly there is a very active fishing club who often call to my door with freshly caught fish and who have often invited me out on excursions with them. These men have amiable temperaments and some of them have an enormous knowledge of fishing, such as the secretary of the club, Chris Brummel, who is a mine of information when I chat to him. They keep an eye on the rivers, trying to protect them from poachers, and tackle episodes of pollution when they spot them. They tell me that being a fisherman in South Offaly is a great thing, because there is a wealth of angling on one's doorstep. One of the species they fish for is the famous croneen (famous locally anyway) which is a type of trout that makes a wonderful repast!

Last August, during the croneen season, Gavin Carroll and Mike Blake, two enthusiastic and friendly members of the club (which is called The Little Brosna & Camcor Fishing Club) took me for a spot of croneen fishing on the Camcor River just outside the lovely town of Birr. The Camcor is a fine river rich in trout which rises in the Slieve Bloom Mountains and merges with the Little Brosna River at the meeting of the waters in the romantic gardens of Birr Castle Demesne.

Gavin and Mike tell me this fine river is under threat.

They are concerned about the low level of the river and they are opposed to a proposal by Offaly County Council to remove more water from the river. They are backed in their opposition by Inland Fisheries Ireland. Another member of the fishing club, John Barnwell, told me that he is very concerned about the low volume of water in the river and he pointed out that the amount of water in the Camcor has halved over the past 60 years due to forestation of the Slieve Blooms and to the draining of bogs and land. Therefore, he said, if the Council's plans to abstract more water from the river go ahead then sections of the riverbed could completely dry up and the waterfall in Birr might be impassable for fish except in time of flood. He said this will result in the fish becoming trapped below the waterfall (which is near the Catholic Church) for weeks or months during a dry spell.

"Last summer," continued John, "I saw children canoeing above the Fortal (Red) Bridge. At one point they had to get out of their canoes and drag them over the gravel. Offaly County Council do not seem to understand what is at stake here. If their plans go ahead, I believe it will spell the end of the fishing on this river." John showed us a number of pictures of a Camcor River at low volume to illustrate his point.

A designated conservation area

He said the Camcor has been designated a wild trout fisheries conservation area, and the Croneen that comes every year to spawn has been designated a unique

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species. "These fish come from Lough Derg, so therefore the Camcor River is vital to their future and to the future of angling on Lough Derg, as many of the other rivers flowing into Lough Derg have been wiped out by pollution, rivers such as the Cappagh River and the Killcrow River." He said the ESB Fisheries Conservation has spent a huge amount of money over the past six years improving the habitat for trout and salmon and making walkways along the Camcor River.

We didn't catch anything during my fishing excursion with Gavin and Mike but it's always lovely to be on the riverbank. Gavin and Mike were practising the wet fly technique, which is a preferable method for the beginner angler as opposed to dry fly fishing. This is because, unlike dry fly fishing, when using wet flies the angler is not necessarily attempting to precisely imitate any particular insect. Instead of looking precisely like a particular type of insect, a wet fly is more an imitation of a stage of life of aquatic insects. Also, generally speaking, wet fly fishing doesn't require perfect casts nor split-second timing when setting the hook.

Croneen spawn in some of Lough Derg's other river systems but the Camcor is their last major stronghold. They look and behave very differently to other Irish river and lake trout and in fact more closely resemble Connemara sea trout in colouration and body shape (torpedo shaped body, small body and forked tail. They are a blue-silver grey colour and unlike most brown trout they don't have red spots and the flesh is pink). Croneen normally travel in large shoals, feeding only sporadically and then usually at night. They average a pound and a half in weight but fish of six and a half pounds or greater have been reported.

Salmon make a welcome return

Salmon have made a welcome return to the rivers in South Offaly in recent years but they face a threat because of poaching. Chris Brummell told me that 39 salmon have been illegally taken from the Little Brosna River during the last year. Chris said there are now quite significant numbers of salmon in the Little Brosna and starting four years ago the salmon began to reappear in the river after an absence of a decade. The Little Brosna and Camcor Rivers are both closed to salmon fishing and Chris' Club is lobbying to change this to a catch and release system, because a catch and release would increase the number of law-abiding anglers on the river who would keep an eye on the goings on and be able to prevent poaching taking place.

Chris pointed out that Inland Fisheries Ireland has been doing an excellent job in that they have been watching the river and ensuring fish are not taken illegally, however it is impossible to police all of the river all of the time. Chris said the salmon have made a



Chris Brummell from Birr with a 4.5 Croneen Trout he caught while fishing the Camcor River.

comeback because of the excellent work which has been done on the Camcor by the ESB during the last few years. The ESB introduced salmon parr into the Camcor and Little Brosna and began to improve the Camcor. "They have put stones in the river which have oxygenated the water," commented Chris. "They have installed vortex weirs which scour out blockages and keep the weirs clear for the fish to pass through." The ESB have carried out similar work on rivers in Athlone and Nenagh which also includes installing deflectors along the river. Deflectors keep the bottom of the river clear and prevent silting.

Chris said the silting in the Shannon is 'awful' and hasn't improved since Bord na Móna stopped putting silt into Ireland's longest river about a decade ago. However, he said that Lough Derg has improved. "About five years ago I noticed that you could see the bottom of Lough Derg. It wasn't possible to see its bed before."

The salmon spend two years in the river and then make their way to the sea, which is a similar pattern to the croneen trout. "It's believed that the croneen travel to Lough Derg but we don't actually know where they go. It's planned to place receivers on some croneen and track them by GPS to find out where they actually go."

Chris said the people illegally taking the salmon are also using illegal fishing methods which includes using bunches of worms and shrimp. He said: "If people continue to illegally take salmon away from the river then there won't be any salmon left. We lobbied Deputy Corcoran Kennedy about introducing a catch and release system and she said she spoke to Minister Pat Rabbitte about it."

If you are interested in trying some fishing in this region then you can call Chris Brummell who is very helpful. Chris' mobile number is 086 3858221. The season for the Little Brosna and the Camcor Rivers is March 1st to September 30th. Inland Fisheries Ireland has published a useful pocket guide for the two rivers which features a map, angling regulations, rules, popular angling stretches, plus a feature on the Croneen Trout. If you'd like a copy email info@shannon-fishery-board.ie or call 05791 21777.

A Hair Of The Dog

It all began one evening last summer. I had spent the afternoon fly fishing on the small river that runs outside my house and my night was taken with trying to find a fly pattern that would match the small, white-bodied flies that had been on the water that day. I had tied on my usual suspects, but they had failed to tempt the trout, who appeared to be on a white-only diet that afternoon. I do hate faddy eaters. As I was rummaging through my materials box, my fawn saluki bitch suddenly yawned and stirred herself from under the tying bench. As she walked past, I took one look at that creamy, silky saluki fur and almost before I knew what I was doing, I had reached out and plucked a thumb and forefinger full. Call it the hunting instinct. Kizzie jumped, looked at me contemptuously down her long saluki snout, then continued with her business, minus that little bit of loose coat. As for me, I put a size twenty hook in the vice, dubbed the fur (which dubbed surprisingly well) onto a length of waxed silk, made body and thorax with it, finished it off with a small grizzle hackle and there we had it - a tempting white-only morsel for picky eaters. The next day the white flies were there again. I tied on Kizzie's fly, and to my utter delight - not to mention astonishment, it was taken by a most indignant 9 inch wild brownie. Did I say Kizzie's fly? What kind of name is that for a fly? Of course I meant to say - Kizzie's Killer.

It is a small, rain-fed stream that tumbles past my house. I have two great passions in my life - salukis, of which I have three, and fly fishing for wild brown trout. This river is central to my life. If I am not in it casting a line, I can usually be found beside it, running my hounds. I work from home, and the sound of the river is constantly there, like a soundtrack to a favourite film, reminding me of it, calling me. At stressful times during



Loki with Loki's Lament (inset).

the working day I tune into it. It has meditative qualities.

I was fishing a stretch of the river a few weeks ago now, and there were thousands of up-wings about. For non-fly fishers, 'up-wing' is the name given to insects of the order Ephemeroptera - which includes mayflies. It is when these flies are on the water that some of the best fly fishing sport can be had. If you know one thing about fly fishers, it is probably that they are often keen entomologists. I am no exception. I am going to tell you now how I categorise the up-wings I find on my river. I split them into two groups - those with a red-brown body, and those with a brown-red body. I hope I didn't blind you with science there.

When the brown-red are on the water, a Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear tied as a dry with a red cock hackle usually proves deadly, but on this particular evening, red-brown was the predominant colour. Given my earlier success with Kizzie's Killer, my thought's immediately turned to my red saluki boy, Loki.

First, catch your saluki

There is a well known fly pattern called the Blue Dun, as devised by Roger Fogg. It uses fine hair from the throat of a black greyhound. In his tying instructions Mr Fogg famously writes: "First, catch your greyhound." So, first, catch your saluki. Now out in open play I wouldn't rate my chances, but that night in the confines of my fly tying room, Loki didn't stand a hope. I combed out some of his red hair, split and waxed the silk thread, dubbed it, popped on a gold rib and plucked out the hairs around the collar to form a hair wing of sorts. There we had it, on a size 14.

That fly can't have been on the water for more than three seconds before it took its first brownie. That

glorious summer evening I had five in as many minutes as the trout took it for a spent spinner, drifting in the film. And so Loki's Lament was born.

By now I was well and truly on a theme - hunting wild brown trout with my hounds. There was one left to go before I had caught on all three. That was Gydion. Gydion is really a saluki x greyhound, and he was my first longdog, a rescue, and the reason I subsequently became fascinated by all things saluki. Gyds has a courser coat than a pure saluki - and better manners. He is almost white. I took a couple of hairs from his tail and tied them as a tail on the fly. I then split the thread again, and tied as I did with Loki, again plucking out the hairs in the collar and thorax area, suggestive of a wing. The finished fly had the look of a White Wulff about it, if you squinted hard enough. I thought it might stand a chance well into dusk, when those little white moths come out.



Gydion with Gydion's Glory (Inset).

Gyd's has. So it isn't that he is a favourite as such, but he is the one who can bring a lump to the throat if thought of in a certain way. And this emotional baggage had somehow transferred itself to the fly. I tied it on with that mix of excitement, pride, and apprehension. "Go on lad."

Third cast, I think it was, when I felt a tug. A little wild brownie must have heard the plot and obligingly attached itself to the hook. To be fair, darkness was approaching and I had started to see sedge on the water, so maybe the white hair had been suggestive of that. Or maybe it was just a stupid trout, who cares? All that

matters is, Gydion had had another happy ending.

This had all been a lot of fun, hunting wild trout with my hounds, but with my serious fly fishing hat on (I have a rather good orvis one) have any of these flies found a permanent home in my fly box? Kizzie's Killer - yes, good little general fly that works, and her fur makes for a super mayfly. Loki's Lament? Yes, but limited

application. And Gydion's Glory? Much as it pains me to say so - no. But it is still my favourite.



Kiz with Kiz's Killer (inset).

They were feeding selectively on something

It was another of those beautiful summer evenings on the river. Trout were rising, but it was difficult to see what for. It wasn't that there were no flies on the water, there was an embarrassment of choices out there for the fishy diner. A midge hatch, upwings of varying colours and sizes, a crane fly or two. I put over a banquet of flies, but there were no takers. They were feeding selectively on something. It was then that I committed the cardinal sin of fly fishing. I tied on the fly that I wanted to catch with, not the one that matched the naturals. I tied on Gydion's Glory. The thing is about Gydion, now I know it doesn't do to have favourites, but, well, he sort of is. He was my first longdog, a rescue, and he had had a bad start to life. I am always a sucker for a hard luck story, especially when they have happy endings, as

A little wild brownie obligingly attached itself to the hook.





One man's conservation is another man's interference with nature

An interesting conflict of viewpoint on conservation in this issue prompted me into giving my point of view on conservation. On one hand we have a fascinating piece on the Red Kite release programme and, on the other, criticism of the RSPB and other conservation bodies by Dan Kinney. We shall of course give the RSPB the right to respond in the next issue.

My own position is that I am graduate biologist and a bird lover. Our gardens are alive with song birds of all kinds, plus doves and wood pigeon, as we feed from bird tables and game feeders. We are also blessed with visits from a Red Kite and a buzzard or two. The latter try, unsuccessfully to date, for our Guinea Fowl and visiting pheasants, and I have to admit feeding them carcasses out of the freezer during last year's hard winter. I have two resident families of jackdaws, which amuse me especially in summer by their acrobatic flying over the atrium, and we have both ravens and rooks drawn in by our Guinea Fowl feeders. Below, when it floods, we have swans, ducks and geese, while swallows nested and reared young in one of our dog kennels.

I have no vested interest in anything other than seeing a diversity of bird life and the only intervention that I make apart from feeding is that I catch and despatch magpies, which of course decimate the nests of song birds.

AJ's Angst

'lets off steam' with his frank opinions

However I am also a game shooter who loves to see wild species of game birds flourish – particularly the grouse. And, if I had worked as tirelessly as Dan to try to maintain and grow the grouse population, I would have a totally different concept of balance and a different attitude to increasing numbers of raptors.

Dan has spent many hours working in the relatively inhospitable environment of the moors in the Glens of Antrim. Dan had almost single handedly - and with no outside finance - created a balanced environment, where grouse and other moorland birds and wildlife flourished. I can understand his frustration at government financing and funding not only conservation but release / enhancement programmes for predators, without apparently having overall environmental impacts properly assessed, and realistic population targets set.

Also, one has to consider the interests of people running commercial shoots. Recently I was watching a programme on the release of sea eagles in the east of Scotland when they interviewed Kenny Horne, a keeper with whom we used to shoot. While supporting increasing diversity, he was gravely concerned at the number of pheasant poults they were taking at ultimately a cost of £30 a bird. Thus, this particular release was interfering with a man's livelihood.

As I have said, I support and applaud the release of the Red Kite and other large raptors, but somewhere along the line there must be a management plan put in place to balance their needs and numbers with those of grouse, curlew, lapwing, larks, grey partridge, etc. Certainly raptor population numbers must be monitored, especially buzzards, and proper management plans drawn up. There must also be equivalent government support for schemes to increase Red Grouse and Grey partridge populations. To date the government's Red Grouse management plan appears to have been long on discussion and short on delivery on the ground.

I look forward to publishing the RSPB's response to Dan's article.

Democracy and our organisations

I was pleased that Peter Bacon, the new Chairman of Countryside Alliance Ireland (CAI), was happy to take some searching questions from our editor about how he sees his future role in the organisation and how the organisation works on behalf of its members. I applaud his frankness about how the organisation works in Ireland, and his willingness to co-operate positively and constructively with other country sports organisations.

I can see where the CAI has attempted to build in basic democratic principles to their structures and feedback mechanisms but, on a personal basis, I should still like to see the organisation hold an AGM in Ireland. I think it is unrealistic to expect Irish members to travel to the UK to the Countryside Alliance (CA) AGM. Surely the 10,000 plus Irish members have a right to their own AGM or perhaps the CA AGM should travel round the regions?

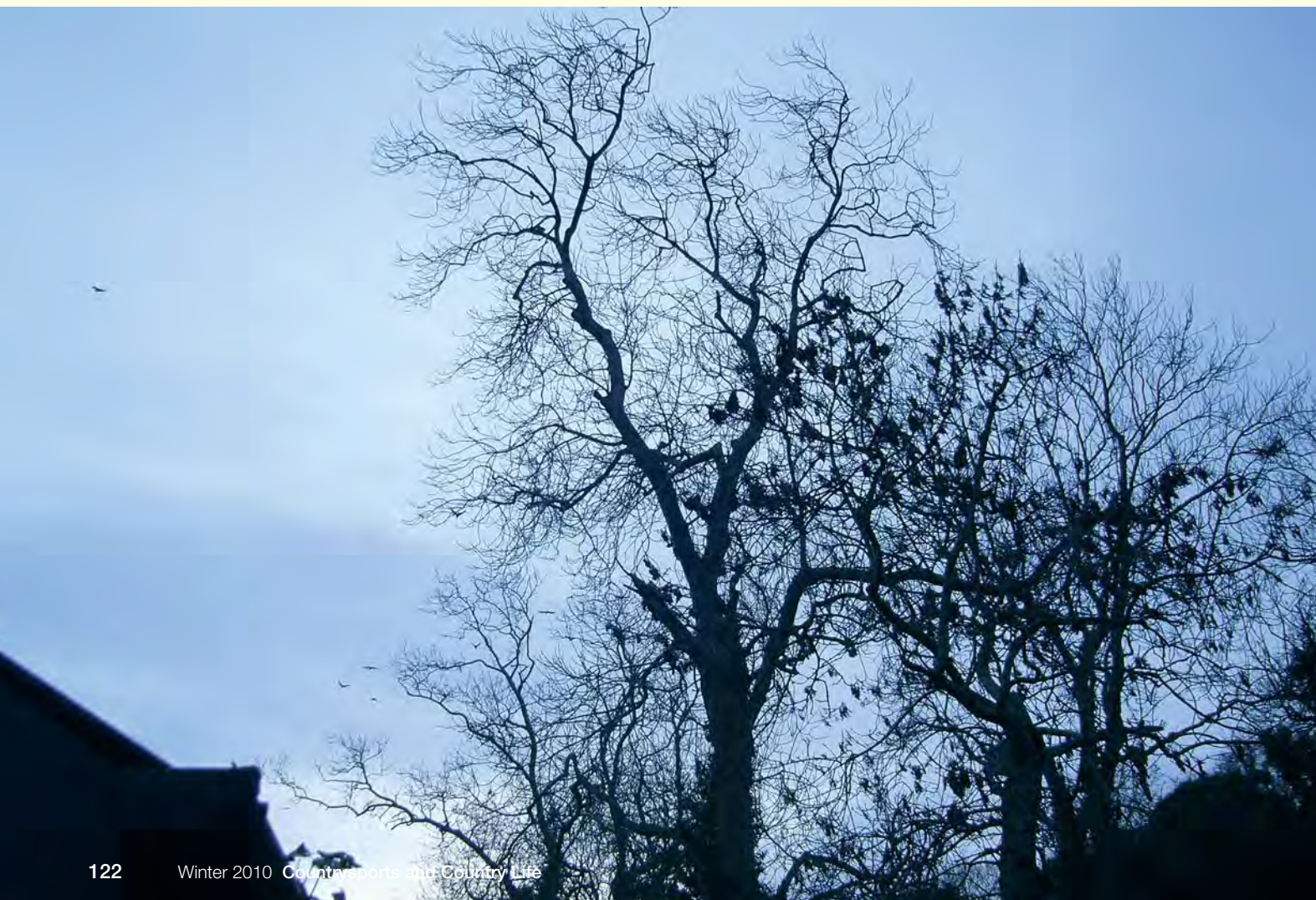
That said, I would like to pass on my own and the magazines best wishes for a successful and productive term in office. Sometimes we do not value enough the enthusiasm and commitment of people such as Peter, who voluntarily give so much of their time to the promotion and

defence of country sports and the rural way of life.

A big plaudit

A very big plaudit to our Northern editor Paul Pringle, for a number of interesting innovations which he has brought to the magazine which have increased not only the readership but the political and sporting credentials of the magazine. These have included searching political interviews with government ministers, North and South; liaison with the organisations on readers questions and concerns and the organisational policies and practices including this new series of interviewing chief executives, directors and chairmen of our sporting organisations; and two other new series launched in this magazine – Terrier Talk, with interviews with terrier and lurcher enthusiasts, and the Smyth's Country Sports Young Authors' series.

With such an innovative editor at the helm, allied to the marketing strength of the rest of the team, it is no surprise that Irish Countrysports and Country Life, both hard copy and FREE to READ online versions, continues to lead in the Irish country sports market and increasingly in the wider international market place.



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