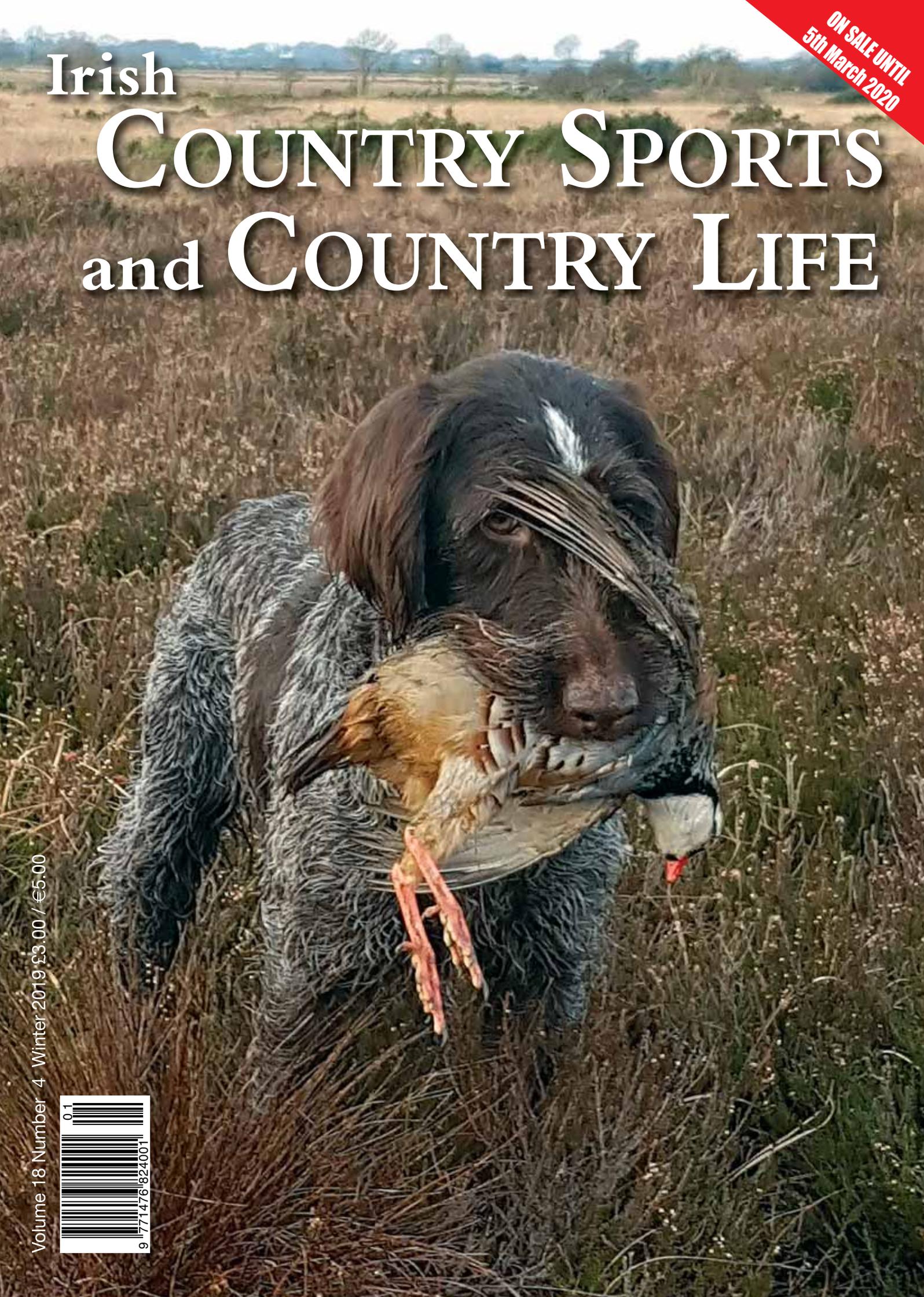


Irish

COUNTRY SPORTS and COUNTRY LIFE

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Front Cover:

Derek O'Connor's WHP bitch Leonarke Galaxy Girl with a stylish retrieve of a French Partridge

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Country Sports and Country Life Rol Comment

At the end of August I joined a friend for a bit of game fishing on his land. My friend is a well-known Offaly farmer who as well as being a beef and sheep farmer has a small lake on his property. He stocks this lake with about 50 trout from a local fish farm every spring and spends the summer and autumn months fishing them.

The lake is a tranquil, peaceful spot surrounded by overhanging deciduous trees. It also has a lot of perch. My friend and I enjoyed several hours sport here in this lovely location one pleasant afternoon and came away with five fish including four trout and a perch.

Standing on the lakeshore I got my equipment ready. I put pieces of sweetcorn on the hook before opening my box of warms and selecting one of them. I put the worm onto the hook, covering as much of the steel as possible so it wouldn't catch the fish's eye and scare him off. Standing on the rocky shoreline I cast my line about thirty feet into the lake and the worm-bait sank down. I sat down on my chair and waited.

From time to time fish broke the surface. Sometimes I caught sight of them breaking the water's surface but mostly I looked in their direction after the event and could only see outwardly expanding ripples in the sun-dappled water.

Fishing is long periods of peace and calm punctuated with periods of excitement. It was a lovely August day, warm. The trees sighed with a gentle breeze. A kingfisher flew a couple of feet above the water, its flash of bright colours a thing of enchantment as always. I sat for half-an-hour, sometimes reeling in my line, removing unwanted muck from the bait and line, and recasting. Eventually the line grew taut and the rod bent slightly. I reeled the fish towards the bank and played out the line again, with the result that the fish swam at an impressive speed away to my left. It was heading towards fallen branches which were sticking out of the water and I didn't want my line to be entangled in that. Therefore I stopped his flight and reeled him in again. This game of reeling in and playing out went on for several minutes, with the aim of tiring the fish out. A more tired fish would be less likely to snap the line. Eventually I decided to draw the game to a close and take my chances. I reeled him carefully in until he touched the bank. It was a small perch and it remained stationary, unflinching while I fetched my net, swung it into the water and scooped him out.

Being a perch it had rough, or ctenoid scales; which would have to be scraped off prior to eating as they are too tough to eat. Perch are carnivorous fish and are usually found in small ponds, lakes, streams and rivers. They feed on smaller fish, shellfish, or insect larvae, but can be caught with nearly any bait. My guidebook told me that perch are known for putting up a fight and being good eating. Well, this one had certainly put up something of a struggle and had displayed a robust temperament. I cooked it Thai style the next day and it was delicious.

I am philosophical. If I go out fishing and catch nothing I don't let it bother me. But I feel the sense of happiness of



catching just as intensely as anyone. There is something very special about this interaction with these creatures out in the beauty of the countryside, and sometimes it's good to get one's just reward for one's efforts.

I put the perch in the plastic bag, and rewormed my hook, drawing blood in the process as the very sharp hook pierced my thumb. I cast again and waited once more. The excitement had passed. Now it was time once again to feel the peace of this small lake and its trees and the blue and grey of the sky above, to rest in a state of calm and contemplation.

An hour passed and then the line went taut again. It was evident this was a considerably bigger creature. In the excitement I forgot to pay out the line with the result that the rod bent alarmingly. The line held. I was fortunate as it could have snapped under so much pressure. I paid out the line, then reeled in again; the same game as with the perch, but of longer duration this time. Finally I could see the fish. It was a fine, big trout and it put up quite a fight, splashing and arching its body.

I brought the rod down close to the ground to try and reduce the pressure. After ten minutes the fighting stopped and the fish went completely still. I sat still as well, for a number of minutes. Then I reeled in again. The fishing net was deployed once more. I coshed the fish over the head and called out to my friend, who was a hundred feet away, that I had caught another.

Over the coming hours I caught three more trout. When we decided to stop the fishing, we sat on the bank for a while, drinking tea and chatting. At one stage buzzards flew overhead, calling. On returning home I gutted all five fish, placed three in the freezer and cooked one of the trout and the perch.

Searching through my fishing literature that evening, I came across a small book by my great-grand-uncle called "Flies for each month and how to tie them". My great-grand-uncle's name was Gilbert Powell and he loved fishing. He was called by my grandfather, 'one of the finest and most devoted anglers that ever trod the banks of Ireland's rivers and streams.' Gilbert had a deep knowledge of flies, whether natural or artificial. He wrote his booklet in the 1950s in order 'to assist young anglers in choosing the correct flies for each month of the angling season and to give them a good idea of the colours that should represent each fly named. The standard dressing for each fly is given, and where possible the original tying is detailed. Some of the flies mentioned have been handed down through hundreds of years and have stood up to the test of time without a change, thereby proving their worth.'

I cooked the fish in one of the most beautiful ways I know of cooking fish with a paste of garlic, red chilli, lime leaves (procured from an exotic food shop in Tullamore), lime juice and olive oil. I spread the paste over the fish fillets and then grilled them. Absolutely delicious.

Derek Fanning
ROI Editor

Stories of climate change and the problems which allegedly are facing mankind are everywhere in the media. So, not to be out Packham'd or to be left blinking in the shadow of St Greta I thought I'd share some thoughts.

Most of us have known for years of the excellent conservation work done by country sports enthusiasts, game keepers etc., and naturally this is often remarked upon in the pages of this magazine and on our Internet pages. This time, I thought I'd get in on the act and share some tips that arrived in the post for environmentally friendly living which were aimed specifically at the student generation.

We get lots of worthy documents through our Internet 'letterbox' at Titterington Towers, but one such really grabbed my attention, something from a company called Waterlogic - see <https://www.waterlogic.com/en-gb/>. It was aimed primarily at students and really made much sense.

Waterlogic say that university campuses and student groups have turned their attention to becoming more environmentally friendly and are taking sustainability seriously. Well, this can only be beneficial to the environment I thought. Just as we as country sports enthusiasts claim (and are) custodians of the countryside, playing an active role in conservation, it is vital that others who do not have a vested interest also recognise the role they could play as well. From reducing consumption of paper and plastic through to better reuse and recycling initiatives, it's clear the younger generation is getting switched on by the green ideals.

If you want to become more eco-minded in your university, there are a few simple steps to doing so claimed Waterlogic and suggested how to be kinder to the campus environment. (Quite naturally considering their own business side of things, they suggested considering using a water dispenser to refill a reusable water bottle and significantly reduce the carbon footprint (something we have been doing for years in the office) and that's fair enough.

Global warming, climate change, and plastic pollution are among the issues we face along with glaciers melting and then we are told that carbon dioxide levels are higher than they've been at any time in the last 800,000 years.

Clearly, the next generation can play a leading role in trying to adopt actions which can help to offset such situations. And so can we of course, maybe just by a simple step like avoiding the use of plastic where possible.

And while Waterlogic offered advice aimed at students in caring for the environment, there are lessons here for the older generation as well.

Apparently upwards of 80m tonnes of printing and writing paper becomes waste each year in the UK, a huge figure. With many newspapers, books and magazines available on the Internet, why not read on line rather than help create that rubbish - once again we have played our part here by making a version of the magazine FREE to READ online at www.countrysportsandcountrylife.com.

Bottled water companies don't actually make water, they sell you a plastic container that adds to our waste problems and is costly to recycle. If you choose a reusable bottle, you can fill up using a water cooler and help avoid the eight million tons of plastic waste that enters our oceans every year.

Refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle is much more than a hugely successful slogan if it's put into practice.

As Waterlogic advises, cut down on buying products with excessive packaging, opt for reusable containers over single-use plastic and if you can't always do that then recycle what you use. You can even cut your water usage by 60% by installing a water-saving shower-head. If you switch the tap off when you brush your teeth, you'll also be taking an easy step to save water.



As well as looking critically at our own non-green practises, the right time to make young people aware of conservation, in its broadest sense, is right now.

A start can be made simply by involving them in county sports. Such pastimes have helped shape the flora and fauna of our countryside, our rivers and lakes down the years and helped make us more aware of the natural world and the problems facing it. Let them see the positive steps which we take as shooters and fishers, the work done by our clubs and organisations to improve habitat and wildlife. It is crucial to encourage them to actually participate - get hands on - in all the varied conservation work going on throughout the year.

Now I realise that we have vested interest in keeping our rivers and lakes pollution free, and that the trees and hedgerows provide a sound environment for our quarry in season. Enhanced environment for 'game' in its broadest sense benefits everyone.

For me and millions of others, the doyen of the natural world is Sir David Attenborough. Climate Change - The Facts, shown on BBC One was described by one newspaper as a rousing call to arms. Sir David has called global warming "our greatest threat in thousands of years." At a time when public debate seems to be getting ever more hysterical, it added it's good to be presented with something you can trust. In the film, Sir David said: "In the 20 years since I first started talking about the impact of climate change on our world, conditions have changed far faster than I ever imagined."

As country sports people, we only have to look at how different things are today in the countryside, how it suffers from the increasing impact of pollution, urbanisation and so much more and recognise that action needs to be taken simply to avoid matters getting worse rather than improve dramatically as we might wish.

A long departed friend of mine once said that country sports people were the original 'greens' and I think that he was absolutely correct. I also think that we need to ensure that us 'real greens' are not the last generations to be able to enjoy what we do. How many times have we driven to shoot or fish passing by somewhere that we once had 'the run of' but where the conditions of that river lake or stream, make fishing a waste of time, or perhaps that spinner or copse is now under the weight of a concert jungle of houses and factories.

We can't stop progress of course, but we can do our own bit to see that what we do have now is kept in good condition. In my view that starts at home by encouraging young people to see what we do and why we do it and to get them involved at an early age in country sports and the conservation which goes hand in hand with them. You have a vested interest in giving nature a helping hand and when you think about it - so do they.

Changing the topic, we are always very keen to promote the benefits of eating game. It's the ultimate free range food and quite simply tastes delicious. We know that many readers have a favourite place where you enjoy the game dishes on offer and we want to hear all about it. In fact you can by letting us know about your 'favourite place for game dishes' you could win great prizes in a brand new competition. There are prizes for whoever nominates the winning establishment. To make it even more simple, hotels, pubs and restaurants can even nominate themselves for the top prizes. There's a competition page in this magazine with full details of how to enter.

Enjoy the season.

Paul Pringle, Northern Editor

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Countrywear has always been an essential part of the Barbour way of life. Designed for people who live and embrace the country lifestyle, this well-crafted collection offers practicality, performance and quality.

Including Barbour's iconic patched tattersall detailing, the colours in this collection reflect the rich colours of the countryside with a classic mixture of green, brown, navy and olive. Featuring a subtle rugby aesthetic as well as classic Barbour styles, across a range of wax quilts, polo shirts, fleeces and gilets, this collection reshapes and modernises the classic essential range without losing its long-lived identity.



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The responses of common buzzards to prey abundance on a Scottish grouse moor

Key points

- Buzzards eat different prey species depending on prey availability.
- On Langholm Moor, voles and red grouse share the same moorland habitat of mixed heather and grass.
- In 2011, when field voles were common on the moor, buzzards spent time hunting in this habitat, incidentally finding and preying on grouse.
- In 2012 and 2013, when there were fewer field voles on the moor, buzzards hunted away from the heather moorland and onto woodland and edge habitat. This reduced predation on grouse.

Background

Buzzards are the most common bird of prey in Britain. Recently, their numbers have increased and their range throughout Britain has expanded. Buzzards are generalist predators and are known to eat small mammals, rabbits/hares, and red grouse.

As a predator, buzzards can be affected in two ways by changes in prey numbers or availability. The population of buzzards could change because of changes in breeding success or survival, called a numerical response. The second type of response is a functional response, which is when predators change their diet to eat a more abundant prey.



Buzzard with rabbit

In this study, the scientists looked at the responses of buzzards in relation to prey abundance on Langholm Moor.

What they did

This study took place between 2011 and 2014 on Langholm Moor in southwestern Scotland.

The abundance of buzzard prey species including field voles, rabbits/hares and red grouse was estimated in the study area. Red grouse were counted twice a year to get an understanding of their pre-breeding abundance both before (in March/April) and after breeding (in July). The abundance of buzzards was also monitored.

To work out the numerical response of buzzards, active nests in the study area were monitored from 2011 to 2013. To work out breeding success, the scientists monitored the nests regularly and recorded the number of chicks that successfully fledged.

The functional response of buzzards was calculated by looking at their diet during the breeding season using nest cameras, prey remains and collecting pellets from near the nest. Prey from remains or pellets was identified in as much detail as possible.

What they found

When vole abundance increased in the study area, buzzards responded by eating more voles. When vole abundance decreased in the study area, buzzards responded by eating



Game & Wildlife
CONSERVATION TRUST

fewer. However, the numerical response (breeding success and density) of the buzzard population did not change.

In 2013, when the vole population crashed, the buzzards ate a wider range of prey from the moorland edge and farmland habitats nearby, but fewer grouse. This could be because grouse and voles both prefer the mosaic of heather and grass on Langholm Moor, and buzzards spent less time hunting in these areas in years when there were fewer

voles. In 2014, when the vole population rapidly increased, buzzards ate more voles and also more grouse.

What does this mean?

When the preferred prey species of a predator becomes more scarce, predators will often swap to alternative prey. However, this may not be strictly true when the landscape is made up of multiple types of habitat.

In this study, the scientists found that buzzards ate grouse incidentally when hunting for voles. As a result, predation on grouse increased when vole abundance was high. This could be because voles and grouse both prefer the heather/grass mix on Langholm Moor, so in years when there are more voles on the moor, buzzards spend more time hunting there, therefore coming across and eating more grouse. This may not be the same on sites with a more uniform heather moorland habitat.

This study shows that declines in the main buzzard prey species does not necessarily increase predation of alternative prey. The scientists suggest that when looking at predator diet and its impacts on prey, it is important to consider all the resources and habitats that are available to the predator.

Between 2008 and 2018, the GWCT was a partner in the Langholm Moor Demonstration Project. This study was part of the Langholm Moor Demonstration Project, a long-running collaboration between the GWCT, SNH, Buccleuch Estates, the RSPB and Natural England, which aimed to resolve the conflict between driven grouse shooting and raptor conservation. Further papers from the Langholm Moor Demonstration Project can be found on the LMDP website.

*Read the original report Francksen R. M., Whittingham M., Ludwig S., Roos S. & Baines D. (2017) Numerical and functional responses of common buzzards *Buteo buteo* on a Scottish grouse moor. *Ibis* 159: 541-553.*

How to deal with hedges

Our research has shown that hedgerows are one of the most important features for farmland wildlife providing shelter, breeding sites and food resources for the majority of our farmland wildlife including birds, mammals, invertebrates and plants.



These villages lie in a landscape of big hedges and small woods



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Along with woodland they also provide a stable environment that is largely free from agricultural inputs and operations. Some of this wildlife is also beneficial for farming and the environment. Hedgerow plants can help filter the air to remove pollution, prevent spray drift and inhibit the movement of water and soil.

Where hedgerows are remnants of pre-existing woodland or the hedgebase was once part of species-rich grassland, then rare species may also be present with up to 130 species being known to occur in ancient hedgerows. Hedgerows, including the hedgebase, can also support a staggering 1,500 invertebrate species from 70 different families, with more botanically diverse ones supporting greater invertebrate diversity.

Connect to other hedges and environmental features creating a network of wildlife corridors, as this allows wildlife to move around a landscape with protection from weather and predators.

Have leafy vegetation throughout as species use different parts of the hedge, ie. grey partridge and yellowhammers nest at the base.

Have grass margins, cross compliance requires this to be two metres from the centre of the hedge. Wider margins are beneficial as they provide greater protection and environmental benefits.

Cut a maximum of once every two years – blossom and berries only develop on growth that is two years and older. Cut in February once the berries have been eaten.

Preserve old hedges by laying or coppicing to rejuvenate old plants. Fencing is essential in areas with livestock or high rabbit numbers to prevent the grazing of young shoots.

Top tip

To protect birds, hedges should not be trimmed in the nesting season (March to August). Try to cut sections of hedge at different times.

Rigby completes first .577 Rising Bite for more than a century

London gunmaker John Rigby & Co. has completed its first rising bite in .577 Nitro Express for more than 100 years. The double rifle was made for a valued client, who wished it to be a tribute to Satao, the famous Tsavo tusker. It includes an exquisite floorplate engraving of Satao himself by Rigby's Finnish in-house engraver, Saija Koskialho.

According to Rigby's historic ledgers, the last rising bite in this calibre to be produced at its workshop was in 1907. In addition to the image of Satao, the 2019 rifle also features a number of unique details on the trigger guard requested by the client, including a miniscule mouse and the rifle's name.



HATS OFF TO LE CHAMEAU!



Le Chameau Tweed cap

When you are shooting all day in torrential rain of Biblical proportions then clothing really does matter. I was - and it did!

There is no point being dry and cosy from your neck down with all the latest wet weather gear, when your head is getting so cold and wet that you can't wait for the day to end.

It hadn't started out as a field test for my new Le Chameau cap but as it turned out I couldn't have chosen a better time.

The day started really badly with atrocious rain and wind. Then it got worse. It was touch and go if things would proceed at all, but we managed everything in the morning but afternoon events were cancelled. Amazingly birds still flew well, due in no small part to the very experienced stalwarts of the beating line and the topography which on some occasions offered a smidgeon of shelter.

At lunch the Guns room and its wood burning stove was more like a sauna as we tried to dry out.

I hadn't given a thought to my Le Chameau cap at all. I just pulled it on at the start of the day and got on with things. Yet despite the gale force winds and shocking rain it kept me warm and dry from dawn till dusk. Unbelievably it also retained its shape on drying out and didn't shrink - and that's not been achieved by any of my other (many) caps and hats.

Whats so special about it? I'm not really sure, it just works and does what it's supposed to do. I think it's very stylish, certainly more up to date than I'm used to and really a bit different. I love the shape, it fits very well and the tweed it's made from oozes class.

It's a modern twist on the shooter's traditional flat cap and while I don't know if the makers make any waterproofing claims, the sheer quality of the tweed and the cap's construction certainly kept me dry. It was only afterwards that I realised that it had sat comfortably and hadn't required any tweaking or stretching here and there to have the perfect fit. Most of my caps required some 'running in.'

Like many shooters, I have used Le Chameau's Vierzonord neoprene lined boots for many years but hadn't looked at their full range, something I must do soon.

Isn't it funny how getting small elements right raises the whole thing. And it doesn't cost a fortune. Perfect.

Irish Gundog Championships 2019



Dundarave Estate

IRISH RETRIEVER CHAMPIONSHIP 2019



The Irish Retriever Championship this year will be in Glennoo Estate, Fivemiletown on 13th and 14th December.

Judges this year are: Paul Toal; Gary Mccutcheon; Roddy Forbes (Scotland); and Ian Openshaw (England).

The 2019 IKC Irish Championship for Cocker Spaniels



The 2019 IKC Irish Cocker Spaniel Championship will be held on Sunday 15th December 2019 at Ballinlough Castle, County Westmeath, by kind invitation of Sir Nick And Lady Alice Nugent, The Syndicate and Keeper. Meet/Headquarters Headfort Arms Hotel, Townparks, Kells, Co Meath.

Judges: Pat Brennan (Clodahill); Peter Avery UK (Deepfleet); John Bailey UK (Churchview); Mark Stewart (Ardcaein).

Special thanks to Gavin Tagetmaeir Patrick Peppard and Tom Hayden for all the help in making this event happen. Schedules available from the Secretary @ markstewartess@hotmail.com

Main sponsor, thanks to hard work behind the scenes of Jenny Crozier, will be William Connolly of Connolly's RED MILLS.

Irish Country Sports and Country Life magazine are delighted to present a prize of crystal for the winners of all three Championships.



The Irish Cocker Championship Winner's Trophy.

44th IKC Spaniel Championship



The Championship will be run this year on Friday 27th & Saturday 28th December at the magnificent Dundarave Estate, Bushmills, Co.Antrim, by very kind permission of Dr. Peter & Nuailin Fitzgerald and Estate Manager, Mr. Ian Chapman. Headquarters for this year's event will be the Royal Court Hotel, Portrush.

Judges are Mr. John Keeshan, Mr. Aidan Patterson, Mr. Will Clulee and Mr. Stuart Morgan.

All entries and enquiries to the Secretary, Ivan McAlister, +353 863020843 or by Email to imcalister@eircom.net

The German Pointer Club of Ireland held its first open trial of the season at Glennoo, by kind permission of Mr Tom Woods.

Results:

- 1st Very good: Mrs Lucie Hustler with GSP bitch Antee Juniper,
 - 2nd Very good: Mr Mark Johnson with GSP dog Blackstone Bond,
 - 3rd Good: Mr Peter Begley with GSP dog Look at Me
 - 4th Good: Mr Sean O Carolan with GSP bitch Clonadoran Areta.
- Thanks to the judges, guns and everyone who helped out.



First place went to Mrs Lucie Hustler, pictured with Mr Stephen McManus.



Second place - Mr Mark Johnson.



Third place - Mr Peter Begley.



Mr Ray Behan was awarded the Guns Choice.



Fourth was awarded to Mr Sean O'Carolan.

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The German Shorthaired Pointer Club held its second open trial of the season at Corrard shoot, Lisnaskea by kind permission of Mr Robert Hogg.

Results:

1st Very Good: Mr Jordan McCooe with GSPB Tomanipont Slip Jig

2nd Very Good: Mrs Harriet Lampart with GSPB Aytee Jessie Jay

3rd Good Mr Stephen McManus with GWPD FT Ch Squire Astor.

Guns choice award sponsored by Vicknoble Kennels went to Mr John Hally with GWPB Little Meg.

A big thank you to Judges Mr Paul Mc Auley, Mr Ray Behan and Mr Dessie Gunning and everyone who helped.



Mr Paul McAuley, Mr Jordan McCooe Winner along with Mr Gerry Devlin Chairman, Mr Dessie Gunning and Mr Ray Behan.



Mr Stephen McManus was awarded third place



Mrs Harriet Lampart received second place.



Mr Joe Mason presenting Mr John Halley with the Guns Choice Award.



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EU Wants an Outright Ban on Lead Shot

The European Union has taken a major step towards a full ban on lead shot despite protests from shooting groups and enthusiasts. The EU has been in the process of implementing a ban on the use of lead over wetlands for some time and a move to restrict the use of lead in other environments has been expected. The European Commission has taken the first step in this process by writing a letter to the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), asking them to prepare draft regulations to restrict the use of lead in ammunition and fishing weights in terrestrial environments such as woodland and mountains.

The agency published a report in September 2018 that concluded there was sufficient evidence of a risk from lead in weights and ammunition to justify new regulation. The report claimed that restricting the use of lead in ammunition would "reduce the mortality of an estimated 1 to 2 million birds, such as pheasants and partridges, that may inadvertently swallow the lead shot, or scavenge or prey on lead-poisoned birds in the terrestrial environment".

The study added that it would also reduce health risks to a significant population of hunters and their families who frequently eat game meat killed with lead shot or bullets. The proposed regulations are expected to take roughly 15 months to develop.

Responding to the news, FACE, the European umbrella group for hunting organisations, said it does not support a general ban on lead in ammunition. It said in a statement: "From FACE's perspective, any further measures beyond lead shot over wetlands must be proportional with the demonstrated risks to wildlife populations and human health via game consumption." The EC and ECHA have clearly signalled their intent to seek a hard line approach in support of a complete ban on the use of lead, however there are a number of uncertainties, not least of which is the potential impact of Brexit and how the UK will respond legislatively to future directives from Europe.

The Environmental Protection (Restriction on Use of Lead Shot) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2009 came into effect on 1 September 2009. To view current legislation in NI – www.caireland.org As members of FACE and Face Ireland, CAI will be avidly monitoring these proposals and we shall keep you updated.

Our Green and Pleasant Land Pre-Consultation Paper

The Democratic Unionist Party is preparing a new policy paper on the theme of the environment. The scope of the paper will be comprehensive with the aim of a full policy statement relevant to the national Parliament, a restored Assembly and local Councils.

A three-stage consultation process is envisaged and this will involve external and internal engagement that will run concurrently. Nothing contained within the Pre-consultation nor Full consultation paper constitute DUP party policy. It is only at the final stage will an idea or an option become party policy.

The core aims of the policy will be to ensure:

- That we can all live in a healthy, greener and pleasant place, region, country and world.
- That we can grow and develop economically while passing on an environment as good if not better than our generation received it.

- That we gain economic advantage by seeking to be in the forefront of technical innovation to achieve environmental goals that are common across the world.

Countryside Alliance Ireland has responded to the pre-consultation paper and we will continue to engage throughout the consultation process and keep our members and supporters updated.

Changes to Firearm Regulations in R of I

Recent changes to R of I firearm regulations will affect visitors to the Republic of Ireland as well as R of I firearms holders. The Minister for Justice and Equality, Charlie Flanagan, T.D., has signed into law the following regulations. These Regulations transpose into Irish legislation amendments to the EU Firearms Directive 91/477/EEC, as amended by Directive (EU) 2017/853. The new Regulations came into effect **from 1 September 2019**.

The main changes are:

New Storage requirements

Statutory Instrument No: 307 of 2009: Firearms (Secure Accommodation) Order 2009 defines the minimum security required for the storage of firearms by holders of firearm certificates. In addition to these requirements, the new regulations require the following:

Storage of ammunition

1. When the firearm is not in use, all ammunition for the firearm must be stored in a locked receptacle that is separate from where the firearm is stored.

Transporting firearms or ammunition

1. When transporting a firearm or ammunition, the firearm must be concealed from view and stored separately from the ammunition.

2. The ammunition must be stored in a locked receptacle.

It is acceptable to transport firearms and ammunition within the boot of a vehicle so long as the ammunition is in a locked receptacle.

Banning of Certain Firearms

The following firearms are prohibited*:

- A. Automatic firearms which have been converted into semi-automatic firearms,
- B. Centre fire semi-automatic handguns which allow the firing of more than 21 rounds without reloading, if:
 1. a magazine with a capacity exceeding 20 rounds is part of that firearm; or
 2. a detachable magazine with a capacity exceeding 20 rounds is inserted into it;
- C. Centre fire semi-automatic rifles and shotguns which allow the firing of more than 11 rounds without reloading, if:
 1. a magazine with a capacity exceeding 10 rounds is part of that firearm; or
 2. a detachable magazine with a capacity exceeding 10 rounds is inserted into it.
- D. Semi-automatic rifles and shotguns that can be reduced to a length of less than 60 cm by means of a folding or telescoping

stock or by a stock that can be removed without using tools.

*The Regulations provide for a period of six months until 29 February 2020 to allow for compliance by Registered Firearms Dealers and holders of firearms certificates with the new prohibition. In points B and C above, in most cases this would involve disposing of a magazine whose excess capacity makes the firearm subject to prohibition.

Countryside Alliance Ireland Membership Insurance

As our members and supporters know, Countryside Alliance Ireland (CAI) promote the countryside, country sports and the rural way of life. As an expert and informed rural campaigning organisation working to protect the future of country sports, we provide our members with country sports insurance; which enables them to take part in their chosen activities with peace of mind.

The Countryside Alliance Ireland membership insurance package is a first rate product and membership benefits include:

- Personal Accident Insurance – cover for a range of benefits including accidental death at £15,000 (£7,500 if under 19 years of age) and permanent total disablement at £35,000
- Employers' Liability – Limit of indemnity £10,000,000 (groups only)
- Public/Products Liability – Limit of indemnity £10,000,000
- Group Liability – Limit of indemnity £10,000,000

The recognised activities as approved by the Countryside Alliance Ireland Board are broad ranging and cover equestrian, shooting, fishing and other activities as follows:-

Taking part legally including officiating, assisting or spectating in riding, horse drawn carriage driving, hunter trials, exercising hounds, lurcher work, whippet racing, terrier work, dog shows, hound trailing, hunting, team chasing, hunt following, shooting including sporting shooting, clay pigeon shooting, rifle shooting, target shooting, angling (including sea, coarse and game angling) deer stalking, falconry, ferreting, vermin control, voluntary unpaid duties at shows and events, field trials, conservation work, archery and coursing.

As well as the vast range of 'recognised activities' covered by the membership insurance provision, cover extends to include ancillary activities in connection therewith. Ancillary activities will vary depending on the pursuit you are involved in but for example for shooting covers pen construction, gundog training, planting game crops and hedgerows and safety training. The setting up of shooting courses, setting up of clay traps and operating and filling them is covered for the clay pigeon shooters. And of course, the other activities such as hunting, horse riding, deer stalking and falconry have their ancillary activities covered too.

To see full details go to

www.countrysideallianceinsurance.co.uk/ancillary-activities

In addition to the membership insurance provision, CAI also campaign for all country sports throughout Ireland and liaise with all political parties; offer assistance to members with firearms certificate applications or queries; send out regular Eroute (Email) updates, keep members up to date with the latest news and issues of interest; have a text messaging/alert system,



CA's Tim Bonner & CAI's Barry O'Connell were among those pictured the IMFHA Meeting.

keeping members up to date with vital information; offer discounted tickets to selected game and country fairs.

For more information – www.caireland.org or contact the office on 028 9263 9911.

Tim Bonner Attends IMFHA Meeting

Tim Bonner (Chief Executive, Countryside Alliance) attended and gave a presentation at the IMFHA meeting in Thurles on Thursday 17 October. CAI's Chairman, Barry O'Connell, was also in attendance.



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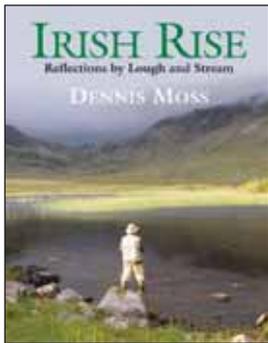
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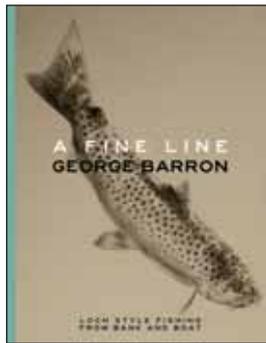
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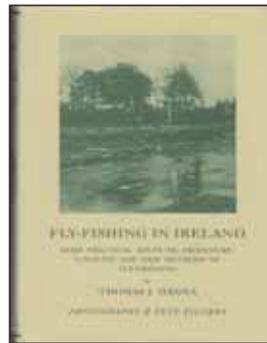
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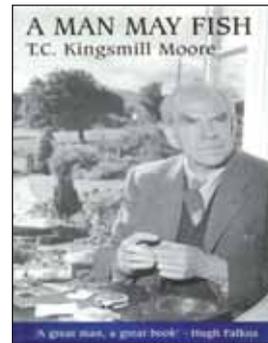
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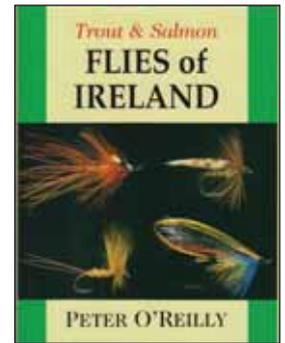
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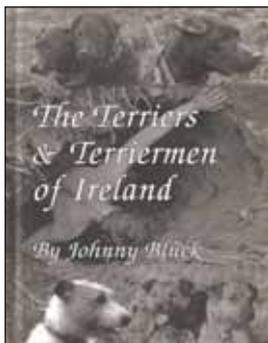
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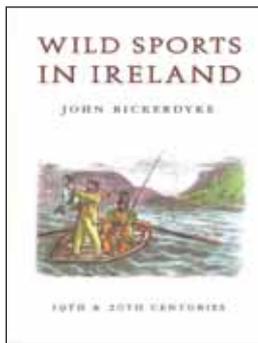
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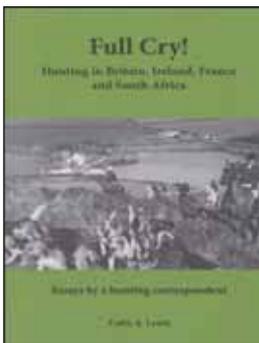
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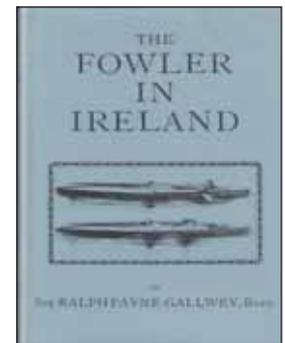
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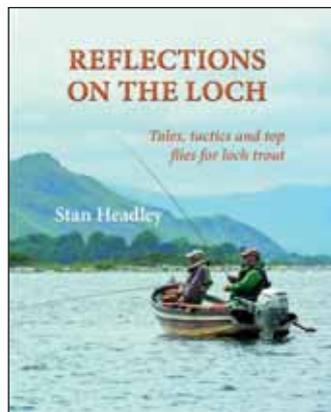
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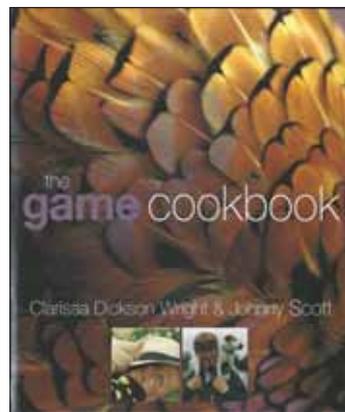
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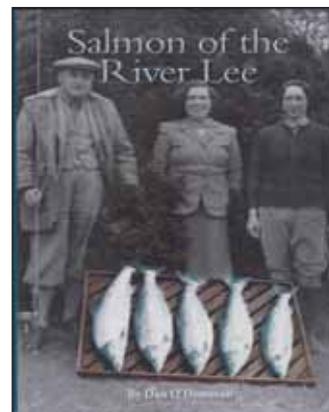
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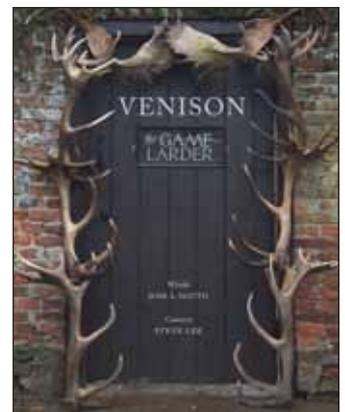
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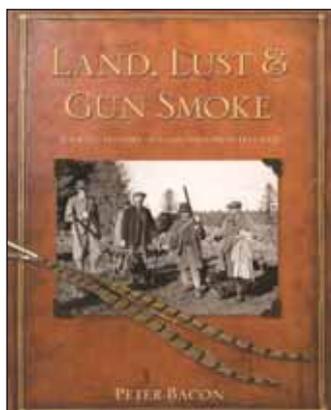
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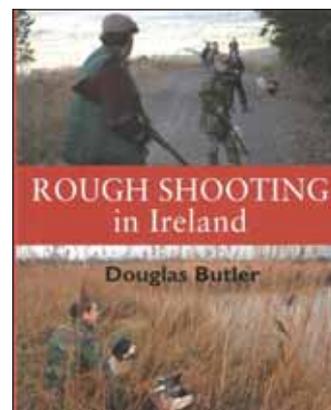
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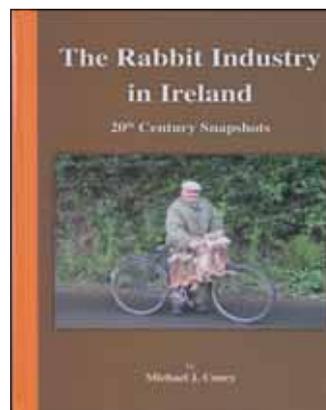
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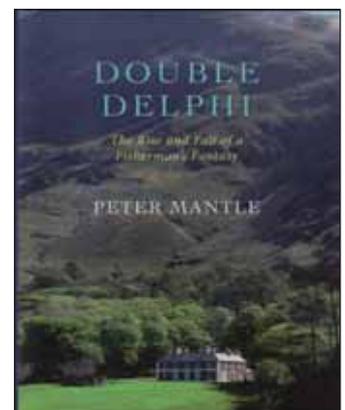
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Increasingly, hotels, restaurants and pubs are putting game on the menu. We also realise that they are rewarded by increasing numbers of discerning patrons who enjoy this healthiest of meat.

So, here's a competition open to all Irish restaurants with game on their menu, including any hosting special Game Evenings. All you need to do is tell us which establishment you think is the best place for great game cookery and our judges will investigate.

The judges will also look for clear evidence of responsible sourcing of sustainable raw ingredients, promotion of game on menus, excellent levels of product knowledge both front and back of house, and examples of how customers are encouraged to eat game.

There are prizes for both the restaurant nominating themselves or being nominated by a patron, and also for diners nominating their favourite restaurant that serves game.

CHEFS' COMPETITION

The winning pub, restaurant, bar, hotel will win:

- A very special inscribed solid bronze trophy presented at the Irish Game Fair Press Launch
- A special colour feature in Irish Country Sports & Country Life (100,000 plus readers worldwide) worth €2,000
- Reserved exhibition space (completely free of charge) at the Irish Game Fair & Fine Food Festival at Shanes Castle, Antrim on 27 and 28 June 2020
- Highlighted in the Great Game Fairs of Ireland's 2020 publicity and PR campaign
- Special media and tv broadcasts
- Inclusion in post event publicity

Other prizes for shortlisted entries

- Two fabulous Game Cookery Books
- A year's subscription to Irish Country Sports & Country Life magazine
- Free tickets to the Irish Game Fair at Shanes Castle 2020

To enter please send us:

- The name and address of your nominated restaurant
- Your name and Email address
- A copy of the menu featuring game and two photographs of game dishes.



Wild Boar Black Pudding and Ballycastle Partridge on a Wild Mushroom Risotto by the late, great Derek Patterson of the Plough Group, Hillsborough

DINERS' COMPETITION

Diners nominating their favourite restaurant with Game on the menu simply nominate the restaurant and briefly tell us why it's your top choice for eating game. **You can win:**

- Two fabulous Game Cookery Books: sponsored by Paul Morgan from Cochy Bonddu Books www.anglebooks.com
- A year's subscription to Irish Country Sports & Country Life magazine
- Free tickets to the Irish Game Fair at Shanes Castle 2020

To enter please send us:

1. The name and address of your nominated 'game eatery'
2. Your name and email address
3. A description of the dish and preferably a photograph

Entries to: irishgamefair@btinternet.com

Winners will be notified by email.

Inaugural Mick O'Neill Memorial Charity Clay Shoot a huge success - a report by Shane O'Neill

Two years ago my father was diagnosed with a brain tumour, an aggressive form of cancer called Ewing's sarcoma. The treatment he received in Beaumont hospital for the next few weeks was 2nd to none and thankfully he is now in remission and recently celebrated his 50th birthday.

In 2018 my grandfather was diagnosed was motor neurones disease..the nurses and staff from MND Ireland made him as comfortable as possible and helped the family as much as possible during these hard times. MND Ireland has very little funding from the government so.i felt like I needed to give back to both charity's because they helped us out in our time of need

I decided to run a charity event for cancer research and MND Ireland because I have seen first hand the work they do to help families who have been affected by the illness

My grandfather was 79 when he died, he was very well known in Kilkenny , having being groundsman in Nowlan Park for nearly 50 years...he would do anything for anyone and I loved noting more than to listen to his stories of years gone by of how he fly fished, hunted with lurchers and setters and training greyhounds, I would listen to him for hours and I still miss him to this day. He was my best friend and I hope both me and Kevin and our extended family have done him proud and that we have created a yearly shoot to remember him.

With over 200 entries the shoot was a huge success. After a three way tie on 46 it was Mathew Duff who came through to be high gun. The 100 yard Teal was won by Mick Carroll and the flush, set up by Sean O'Brien was won by Bill Maher and Paddy McDonald.

Over €6,000 was raised for the two charities and Shane has asked us to thank all of the sponsors who provided a great array of prizes and all involved in making the day such a success for the charities.



Shane O'Neill & Kevin McGarry at Nowland Park with the cheques for the charities.



Top Gun Mathew Duff.



Some of the organising team.



Mountain Goats in British Columbia

Our Base Camp in B.C.

Mountain goats were one of the first mountain-dwelling ungulates to capture my imagination and encourage me to hunt outside of Europe. I saw a fully mounted billy standing on a near-scale faux mountain peak at my first Dallas Safari Club convention some 11 years

ago. I was intrigued by this unusual looking white creature. I finally got around to planning a goat hunt and my friends at Hornady suggested Ryan Danstrom, of Quarrie Creek Outfitters in British Columbia was the man to talk to.

When mentioning my plans to an

avid Kiwi hunting friend, Davey Hughes, he promptly invited himself along – not to hunt having taken mountain goats before, just for a week in the wilderness, such is the awesome beauty of the British Columbian Rockies. This proves that for those of us who travel to these wild places, it isn't



The entire hunt is done with horses, riding for six hours a day, then on foot for the steeper climbs.



A large rock with a pack draped over it made a good resting spot.

just about killing something – there’s something far more complex in our desires to be there – it’s about escaping the daily grind of computers, phone calls and being immersed in nature. Nothing beats the vitality that creeps back into your soul during a week in the wilderness. A week on the edge of danger, of physically demanding activity and away from the unnatural things that have infested our existence, separating us from nature.

Goat hunts are always booked for eight days – the weather and animals are just too unpredictable, so on Ryan’s suggestion, I’d also obtained a tag for elk in case we got lucky. Little was I to know quite how lucky we would be. As my week approached, I looked on the weather forecast with increasing worry – three weeks solid of rain, cloud and then very early season snow preceding our trip, so what would that mean for us? Amazingly, the day before we arrived, the weather changed, and while cold and plenty of snow on the ground, it looked like we’d have clear skies. A great recipe for glassing mountain tops and tracking.

Now Ryan, our guide, is an old-school outfitter – the entire hunt is done with horses, riding for six hours a day then on foot for the steeper climbs. The

log burner-heated cabins are rustic but comfortable, and the landscape is reminiscent of the Hollywood film *The Revenant* – largely unscathed by human interference, one of those rare places in a first-world country that still enjoys true wilderness, many miles from the mining towns that hold the bulk of the population in this area. Having ridden into camp the day before, the weather was on our side after three weeks of no visibility, so we wasted no time, riding out at first light on the horses.

We made our way from camp, which was at around 5,000ft, to around 6,000ft, scouting the walls of the valley as we rode. Davey and Ryan were on mules, while I was on a bay gelding named Quatra. “I’ve been hunting here since around 1999, so 20-odd years, and worked for the previous owners of this outfit,” Ryan told me as we rode. He’s also worked in the Yukon and Northwestern Territories, but clearly this is his home turf. “We have nine horses and mules in camp right now, so that we have enough to carry the packs, but also to switch them out when they’ve had a long day. It’s hard going for them and people are always amazed at the many miles we cover every day. They are so adaptable, it’s a major part of the experience people come for.”

Guides are the guardians of areas where you can’t get to with vehicles

We were riding on trails with any fallen timber cut to allow ease of passage, which Ryan spends many days preparing during the summer off-season. He says this alone is a huge part of the undocumented conservation work that hunters and hunting outfitters such as him do. “We really look after this wilderness, which is something rarely acknowledged. The tag money you pay goes

towards conservation, sure,

but in terms of boots on the ground, that’s us. We are the guardians of areas like this, where you cannot get with vehicles. We also send samples of the animals that are hunted in for records and the tag has to be verified by our local officials.”

The wildlife in this area is incredibly diverse, with not only mountain goats and elk, but whitetail, mule deer, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, moose, lynx, bobcat, wolf, grizzlies and black bears. Most of these are hunted to some extent, all in a highly controlled manner with census information and tags, though grizzlies were taken off the list last year. As Ryan puts it: “It’s a decision that was made in the high towers, not by people with their feet on the ground, putting in the actual work. You don’t have to like what we do, but it’s hard when



The money that hunters pay goes towards conservation.

decisions are made for emotional reasons rather than scientific ones. Grizzlies are a species that do bring up an emotional reaction.”

Time passed pretty quickly talking with Ryan and Davey and admiring the ever-more wild landscape, the rhythm of our mule and horses’ hooves changing as we climbed steeper and steeper trails, and started paying more attention to the slopes above us, scanning for the white, square body of the mountain goat. Three hours in and we saw some, but they were females, and while we were allowed to shoot them, Ryan tries only to take out mature males. It was another couple of hours on the horses before we spotted a single goat, a pretty good sign that it would be a billy rather than a nanny. “That’s a mature male,” Ryan said. “Let’s go for it.” We tethered our rides, hydrated with some ice-cold water from the from the creek and started climbing. The billy we’d seen was a good distance from us, still a steep climb away, but Ryan’s calm demeanour somehow gave me confidence that this would not be a wasted climb.

An hour in and we’d made good progress and were now starting to slow down to make sure we didn’t bump anything we may not have seen and give the game away. And indeed, it was the right moment to slow as we came across a nanny and kid, just a few hundred yards below where we’d seen the billy. We knew if the nanny scented or saw us, we’d be finished for the day, so we slowed pondering every step, moving quietly over the snowy slopes.

I took my time, held point of aim and squeezed

Our slow progress got us ever closer, and then, quite suddenly, the billy disappeared from sight, – but Ryan, knowing this territory, wasn’t worried. “It’ll come back into view shortly. Let’s just sit up here for a moment.” We were on a reasonably flat area, and a large rock with a pack draped over it nestled into the snow made a good resting spot for the spotting scope. Using the latest



Using Leica’s latest rangefinder I worked out the angle, temperature, drop and altitude to make sure my first shot would count.

handheld rangefinder from German optics supremo Leica, Davey ranged the point at which we’d last seen the goat: “That’s 363 yards,” he told me. Having linked the app to load my ballistic data into the device earlier, I was able to make the requisite clicks on my scope, which would account for the angle, temperature, drop and altitude offering me the greatest peace of mind that my first shot would count. We settled and waited. It didn’t take long until there, above us, right where Ryan said, the billy appeared. It wasn’t moving fast, just slowly traversing the near vertical face. “Whenever you are ready, no rush,” Ryan said. And so, calmly, with both elbows rested in snow, my favourite shooting position, I took my time, held point of aim exactly on the scapula, and squeezed. None of this was dramatic – in this wild, hostile, unpredictable territory, the shot was one of the most controlled moments I’ve had for a long time.

It was, however, what happened next that was dramatic: the reaction to the shot was instantaneous and violent. All four of the goat’s legs went rigid, and it toppled over on its side – unfortunately over the downward slope. Head over heels its dead weight plummeted, and every time it hit a rock, Ryan winced,

worrying its horns might break. For me, there was the usual sense of relief that my bullet had found its mark and done its job cleanly. We watched as the billy bounced down, off the rocks and into powdered snow, ploughing to rest conveniently just 100 yards from us, no longer a steep and challenging climb away.

Remarkably, the horns were intact, and the rings told us it was an 11-year-old, an old age for these wild mountains. As we made our way back to camp, darkness caught up with us, and the dramas of the day replayed in my mind. The horses’ hooves were the only sound, clattering on the rocks, their shoes sending sparks up into the crystalline air. We drew closer to camp, welcomed by a plume of smoke visible against the dark sky, the smell of woodsmoke signalling warmth and comfort for the night. Ryan wasted no time, first seeing to the horses, then skinning the goat and feeding us on the tender backstraps, which he rubbed with a secret mix of spices, flash-fried in the pan and we wolfed down. Day one and we had completed our main mission.

I breathed the cold, glass-sharp air outside the cabin, using the satellite phone to tell my family the news. However, it turned out that they had



It was an 11-year-old, an old age for these wild mountains.

news too. The story had just hit the media that Zac Goldsmith, Minister for International Wildlife, was proposing a complete ban on import and export of trophies. I could barely believe it. I told Ryan, whose reaction was one of dismay and shock. “Don’t they realise what that means for conservation? For places like this, which rely on hunting tourism, where the tag pays for conservation and the guides rely on it

for our employment?” We mulled over the shocking news, discussing what far-reaching consequences a ban such as this will have world-wide before heading to bed. And while the news was depressing, to put it mildly, I couldn’t help but be cheered by the knowledge that I’d be spending the rest of the week looking for elk and immersing ourselves in the wilderness, which is the real allure for these trips.

(All photographs & story by Simon K. Barr.)

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The Mountain Goat

The *Oreamnos americanus*, or mountain goat (and doesn’t fall under *Capra*), is, in fact, no goat at all. More closely related to antelope and musk ox, these creatures are related to the European chamois and the Asian serow, and fall under the Bovidae family. It is classified of least concern on the IUCN Red List.

They are thought to have taken refuge in the Pacific mountain ranges of British Columbia that remained ice-free during the last ice age ending 10,000 years ago, with some literature suggesting they came across a land bridge from northern Asia to the North American continent around 40,000 years ago. Today, they populate alpine areas of Western North American from

Colorado to Alaska and the Yukon and Northwestern Territories, with a population estimated to be between 80,000 and 110,000. More than half the world’s population is in BC.

An incredibly hardy species, the mountain goat can survive in temperatures down to -50°C, and are built to thrive in extreme conditions, being incredibly agile in rocky, mountainous areas. Both billies and nannies have beards, short tails and black horns up to 28cm in length, and have fine but dense double coats of white wool. The billy stands at around 1m at the shoulder and usually weighs considerably more than the nanny, as well as longer beards. The mountain goat’s feet are cloven hooved, with inner pads that provide traction and

sharp dew claws that help to prevent them slipping.

Their lifespan in the wild is rarely more than 15 years, with wear and tear to their teeth being a large factor. Sexual maturity is reached at around 30 months, with mating happening between October and December. Mature billies dig rutting pits and fight in scuffles, and nannies mate with several billies. The sexes separate after the mating season, with nannies staying in groups of up to 50 animals. Kids are born after a six month gestation period, and are usually weaned within a month, though they will stay with their mother over the following year.

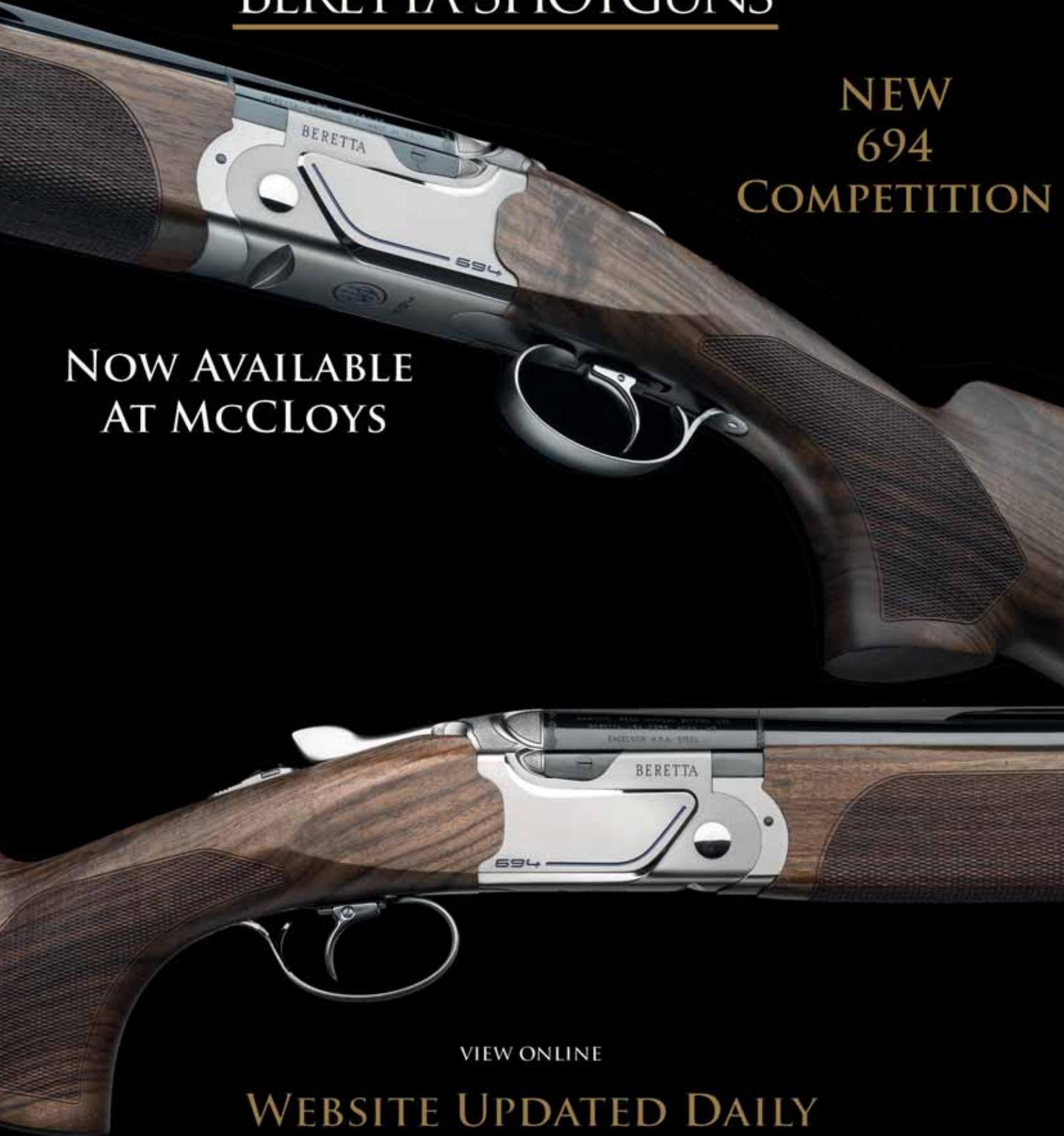
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Report on 51st AGM and other news updates



This October, the NARGC held its 51st AGM in County Cork. My journey from the North-East of the country in glorious sunshine and thankfully light traffic took three hours. Delegates travelled from far North (Donegal), from the West (Galway and Mayo), the South-East (Waterford), the East (Dublin) and all other points of the compass. Most of the delegates, their partners and friends arrived on the Friday. The “Friday evening/night” being the traditional time for the renewal of friendships and for pre-discussions on the matters to be decided on the morrow at the AGM.

As I dined with the Louth delegates, the gentle hum of conversation punctuated with laughter and enthusiastic greetings boded well for the coming event. Like all good people with an early start in prospect it was early bed after a circuit of the room, chatting to friends some of whom I hadn't seen since last year's 50th anniversary meeting. The partners outing was to the historic town of Cobh along the coast and reports coming back were of a very enjoyable day.

Saturday's meeting kicked off with an opening address from Cork's Deputy Lord Mayor Fergal Dennehy. In his comments he congratulated the NARGC on its longevity and on the positive influence we have on our communities across the country. He instanced the many conservation projects and charity activities along with our interaction with Government departments on behalf of our members.

And now to the business of the day:

The Minutes of our 50th AGM were taken as read, proposed, seconded and adopted.

The Chairman addressed the meeting detailing major issues facing the organisation (lead shot ban, new

Government SI's, changing practices in agriculture and the changes in Board na Mona along with other developments in Europe) while assuring the delegates of our continued attention to all these matters on behalf of the members nationwide.

The other officers' reports were circulated in the annual report and were approved en bloc.

The Hon. Treasurer's report (confidential to members) was delivered with his usual aplomb by Paul Doran. Such was the clarity and detail that there were few questions. One pressing, though confidential issue, was raised and Paul dealt with this in great detail tracing the history of the driving issue and the steps taken to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the assembly.

The Compensation fund report was delivered by Chris Gavican. Yet again, great detail was provided and Chris handled all queries regarding the operation of the fund. The Chairman took the opportunity at this juncture to present Chris with a long service award. Forty years involvement with the NARGC (as an officer and later employee) and he, hardly looking a day over 30, but pledging his continued efforts on our behalves.

Elections came next and almost all positions were contested. When the counting was concluded the team returned was:

National Chairman: Dan Curley,
Vice Chairman: Michael Fenlon,
Hon. Secretary: Seamus O'Brien;
Hon. Treasurer: Paul Doran;
Deputy Fund Administrator: Ray Devine,
Public Relations: John Toal
Safety Officer: John Flannery
Game Development Officer:
Ger Byrnes

Predator Control Officer:

Seamus Heraty

Youth Development Officer:

John Butler

National Executive: Paddy Flynn;

Jim Brennan; Raymond McCarthy;

Tom O'Seah; Shane O'Connor; Sub:

Keith Foran.

Trustees: Des Furlong; Tomas O

Curraoin; Joe O' Loughlain.

The outgoing disciplinary panel were returned unchanged to serve for 2019/20

Major motions debated and carried:

1. Proposed change to rules on a duck pond design carried;
2. Changes to divisions in the National Clay shoot left to clay shoot committee;
3. Provision be made for disabilities (disabled) shooters - special competition to be held in the week post the national clay shoot (in Ballinsloe Co. Galway 2020);
4. AGM to be held in February/March in future years;
5. NARGC lobbies Government departments for a ban on the commercial selling of shooting of wild migratory specie;
6. Members submit bag return forms prior to April 15th to be included in a national draw.

Compensation fund changes approved: Rules around the communication of potential claims in counties to change. Rules around multiple claims regarding dogs to change. Wording with regard to the lawful use of poisons to be updated.

Other news:

The issue of the proposed EU wide ban of lead shot in wetlands is now being expanded to cover all lead projectiles over all terrestrial

environments. This one size fits all approach that is not proportionate nor fully scientifically supported is now of great concern to all shooters and hunters Europe wide. Our friends are now realising that the ECHA has the agenda to remove all lead from the environment. There seems to be no understanding of background levels of lead. The fact that wars since the 16th century worldwide have deposited lead across all lands is lost on them. The fact that the biggest source of dietary lead ingestion by humans and animals is through crops drawing lead residues from the soil. The notion that there is no safe background lead level is strange

in this context and seems to be lazy science at best. We should also question what harm will be done to the environment by the proposed alternatives to lead (and not just in shooting) All those alternative substances, polymers, plastics, iron, bismuth, copper, the list is endless and no impact studies worth talking about. Dan Curley and his team are deeply involved in the campaign and regular updates will appear on our web site.

The less said regarding the new laws on the transport and storage of firearms and ammunition the better. Strange, unnecessary, bizarre are a few words that spring to mind. At the height of the

troubles these restrictions were not imposed on us, so why now? We have our own opinions but we will keep our powder dry for now. We did meet with the Department of Justice and seemed to be reaching some understanding only for our hopes of a resolution to be dashed in a follow up communication in which the department rejected totally our considered proposals.

Just another fight in prospect on behalf of our members. Then again that is what we are here for: to represent and to lobby on behalf of our members and we will never shirk that task.

John Toal (National PRO, NARGC)



NARGC Chairman Dan Curley presenting Paddy Flynn of Mayo with his prize.



The N.A.R.G.C. Members' Compensation Fund

Members' Compensation Fund for Hunters, Clay Shooters, Target Shooters and others who are Members of our affiliated Clubs

The National Association of Regional Game Councils encourages game shooters and clay/target shooters to support the Shooting Lobby by joining a Gun/Game Club, Clay Pigeon Club or Target Sports Club affiliated to the NARGC. With 24,000 Members, you will be joining the most authoritative voice for the sport of shooting in Ireland. You will also enjoy the benefits of your Compensation Fund, which pools the cash contributions of its members. Only Fund Members can benefit from the Compensation Fund. Protection is available for Fund Members up to a ceiling of €10m per incident. The Fund is administered by the Association in the best interests of the Association and its Associate Members. The Association welcomes the affiliation of new Clubs through its RGC structure.



In addition, with the NARGC you have:

- Full-time staff dedicated to working for shooting interests
- A say in the running of the Association - elections/resolutions
- A Members' Magazine posted free to your home at least once annually
- Habitat and other Grants for your Club - €350,000 granted annually
- Special Funding for Grouse Projects
- Grants for the purchase of Predator Control equipment by Clubs
- Mallard/Pheasant Release subsidies for Clubs and RGC's - currently €4.37 per bird
- Research into Game and other species
- Club of the Year Award

- Game Meat Handling Courses
- Representation otherwise at EU level
- A good working relationship with Farmers
- An Association Shop - books, badges, stickers, ties etc
- Monitoring and input into the drafting of legislation affecting shooting sports
- Inter-Club & Inter-County Annual Clay Shoots - biggest Clay Shoot in Ireland
- Members' access to information/advise on all issues every day
- Proficiency Courses and Safety Seminars for Associate Members
- Constant Government lobbying in Ireland and at EU level

We now offer Fund Membership to Club Members who are under 14 for just €10



For information on the Compensation Fund, call our Fund Office on **FREEPHONE: 1800 222 444** or telephone our full-time National Fund Administrator on **086 788 8411** (office hours only please)

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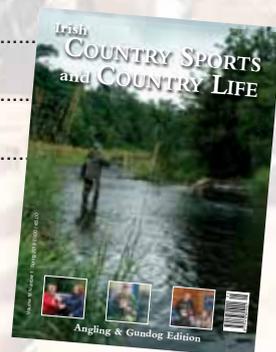
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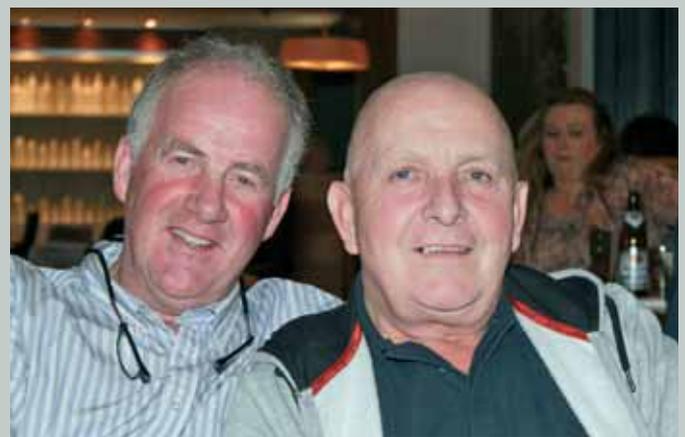
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Pictured at the NARGC AGM & BANQUET



Pictured at the NARGC AGM & BANQUET



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Iascach Intire Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland

250 novice anglers take part in fishing programme in Dublin

Over 250 young people from the Greater Dublin Area took part in the Dublin Angling Initiative, a novice fishing programme delivered by Inland Fisheries Ireland, during the summer. The initiative aims to promote, develop and improve angling among children and young people in the Greater Dublin Area.

Youth clubs, community groups and schools took part in the fishing programme which caters for anyone interested in angling and the outdoors, from the complete novice to the more advanced angler with exposure given to each of the different types of fishing (sea and freshwater fishing).

Young people from communities in Tallaght, Darndale and Blanchardstown tried the sport for the first time over the summer months; enjoying fishing lessons, fishing trips and family fishing days. In addition to practical fishing exercises, fishing presentations and tours provide an insight into fish,

their habitat, conservation measures and even good local fishing spots!

Inland Fisheries Ireland's Dublin Angling Initiative has operated in local communities for over 20 years with many young novices

progressing to become skilled and experienced anglers who then join or establish fishing clubs themselves.

Brian Beckett, Inland Fisheries Ireland Director of the Eastern River Basin District said: "The Dublin Angling Initiative introduces young people to fishing, providing access to angling equipment as well as coaching and guidance around how to protect and conserve our fisheries and broader environment.

We are still welcoming



Mia Cass from NYB Blanchardstown with Rory Keatinge, Co-ordinator of the Dublin Angling Initiative during a fishing trip to Rathbeggan, Meath.

applications from groups who may wish to join the programme for the autumn season which will be running for October and November."

Interested groups should contact Rory Keatinge, Co-ordinator of the Dublin Angling Initiative by email (rory.keatinge@fisheriesireland.ie) or telephone 087 614 2906. All requests will be subject to availability as places are limited. For more information, visit www.fisheriesireland.ie.



Jamie Powell from Sphere 17, Darndale, Dublin, returns a fish to water during a fishing trip at Gaulmoylestown, Westmeath.



Josh Kinsella from Sphere 17, Darndale, Dublin proudly displays his catch during a fishing trip at Gaulmoylestown, Westmeath.

Canney announces 87 angling initiatives granted funding in 2019

Sean Canney TD, Minister with responsibility for inland fisheries, has granted funding for 87 angling events and initiatives across the country during 2019. The initiatives, which received financial grants through Inland Fisheries Ireland's Sponsorship Programme to the tune of €30,000, support novice anglers and angling tourism.

Angling clubs and federations applied to the programme, which is a funding mechanism of the National Strategy for Angling Development, for support in hosting angling competitions, conservation events and novice coaching programmes. This year, the Sponsorship Programme is supporting:

- 45 angling competitions which showcase Ireland's angling offering and contribute to local economies.
- 37 Coaching/ Juvenile events aimed at novice and young anglers with a view to increasing participation in the sport.
- Five public awareness events and



Roisin Moran and Eabha Melvin from Newport Sea Angling Club during a fishing trip sponsored by Inland Fisheries Ireland.

angling related initiatives.

Minister Canney said: "We hope that an additional 600 novice anglers will try the sport and over 1,500 experienced anglers will take part in competitions as a direct result of this Sponsorship Programme. Inland Fisheries Ireland has delivered financial support which will allow us to recruit new anglers and support initiatives which attract domestic and overseas angling tourism to rural communities."

Dr Ciaran Byrne, CEO of Inland

Fisheries Ireland said: "This is our sixth year in a row of providing €30,000 per year in grants to help those who are partaking in angling for the first time and to support the angling community in promoting our wonderful angling product. The Sponsorship Programme is helping us realise some of the objectives of the National Strategy for Angling Development which aims to make angling accessible and attractive through information, infrastructure and support."



Young novice anglers receive angling tuition.

For a full list of projects and initiatives which have received funding, visit www.fisheriesireland.ie/sponsorship

Fisheries Resource comes to life at the National Ploughing Championships

Visitors to the National Ploughing Championships were able to catch their first fish as Inland Fisheries Ireland returned with its interactive angling simulator suitable for novices as well as avid anglers!

Visitors to the Environment, Climate & Sustainability Marquee in the Government of Ireland Village were able to learn how to reel in a fish, identify the various freshwater fish species in a live fish display and examine the creepy crawlies which live in Ireland’s rivers and lakes under the microscope. Fisheries Officers were on hand to answer questions from members of the public around fish friendly farming and angling and to provide guidance around Ireland’s fish species and the aquatic environment.

Suzanne Champion, Head of Business Development at Inland Fisheries Ireland said: “It was great to meet members of the agricultural community and the general public



Tadhg Wright and his dad, Tony Wright, try out the angling simulator.

and to engage with them around the fisheries resource. We had lots of activities suitable for all the family from catching a fish to examining the fish and creepy crawlies which live in our rivers and lakes. Our team were also on hand to provide information and support on how to practice fish friendly farming.”

29 bass and angling rods seized by Inland Fisheries Ireland on the south east coast

Fisheries Officers from Inland Fisheries Ireland seized 29 bass from two boat anglers on the South East Coast in September. The seizure was secured following a surveillance

operation as part of a fisheries protection programme which aims to safeguard Ireland’s valuable fisheries resource.

The protection programme comprises of planned overt and covert patrols at various times of day and night as well as intelligence led surveillance operations. An investigation is now underway into the incident on the south east coast and a file is being prepared with a view to prosecution.

Bass are protected by specific regulations which provide for catch and release fishing only for European bass from the 1st of January - 31st of March and from the 1st of November – 31st of



Sean Canney TD, Minister with responsibility for inland fisheries, with the team at Inland Fisheries Ireland’s stand at the National Ploughing Championships 2019.

December. Each angler may only retain one fish per day (a fish must be in excess of 42 cms to be retained from the tip of the nose to the end of the tail) in the period from the 1st of April to the 31st of October.

David McInerney, Director of the South Eastern River Basin District said: "This incident highlights the importance of ongoing protection efforts to protect bass and other species along our coastline. The vast array of river, lake and coastal based habitats mean that we need to utilise both traditional patrol methods and surveillance technologies to ensure that our wild fish populations are protected."

Fisheries officers work across the entire resource which includes 74,000 kilometres of rivers and streams, 128,000 hectares of lakes and 5,500 kilometres of coastline in their attempts to apprehend those responsible for illegal fishing and environmental offences.

Inland Fisheries Ireland prosecutes three businesses and land owners in Lough Sheelin and River Camlin areas

Inland Fisheries Ireland has prosecuted three businesses and landowners in the Lough Sheelin and River Camlin catchments between



Bass Seizure on the South East Coast.

May and September 2019, for the discharge of harmful substances to nearby watercourses.

In June 2019, Kiernan Milling of Granard, County Longford was convicted in Longford District Court for the discharge of effluent to the River Camlin catchment. Judge Hughes ordered the payment of €2,441.65 in fines and costs, for breaches under the 1959 Fisheries Consolidation Act.

On 23rd July 2019, in Virginia District Court, Mr Patrick Kiernan was convicted and ordered to pay €2,900 in fines and costs, for the discharge of effluent to the Kildorrigh River (Lough Sheelin catchment).

A third conviction was secured by Inland Fisheries Ireland in Virginia District Court in September 2019. Mr John Lynch, Mountnugent, County Cavan, was ordered to pay €2,500 in fines and costs for allowing the discharge of deleterious matter into the Schoolhouse River, part of the Lough Sheelin catchment.

In a fourth case in May 2019 at Longford District Court, Judge Hughes disposed of a prosecution by Inland Fisheries Ireland against Mr Derek Moorehead in relation to discharges to a tributary of the Camlin River and ordered Mr

Moorehead to pay €500 to a wildlife charity.

Lough Sheelin is a well-known wild brown trout fishery in the Great Western Lakes and one of the most important brown trout angling locations in Ireland, while the River Camlin is an important spawning and nursery location for Lough Ree brown trout.

Amanda Mooney, Director of the Shannon River Basin District said: "Pollution events in the spawning and nursery tributaries along these catchments can threaten indigenous fish populations. The maintenance of the aquatic habitat is vital if we are to sustain and enable wild fish populations to thrive. Inland Fisheries Ireland is working to protect and conserve this natural resource to ensure its sustainability into the long term.

Angling for brown trout in lakes in the Inny catchment and Lough Ree generates important economic activity for rural communities and any impact on fish populations in the area may also have negative impact in this regard."

Members of the public can report suspected pollution or poaching incidents to Inland Fisheries Ireland's 24 hour Confidential Hotline on 1890 34 74 24.



Lough Sheelin and River Camlin areas.

Waterways Ireland Erne Pike Classic 2019



The Waterways Ireland Erne Pike Classic took place from Friday 11th to Sunday 13th October on the River Erne at Enniskillen. The 14th edition of the competition which included a one-day Bank event and the option to fish for two days by boat, attracted pike anglers from all over Ireland to compete for a prize fund of £12,275.

The calm but wet conditions on a swollen River Erne produced a record number of pike in double figures with a total of 24 fish over 16lbs in weight recorded. The largest specimen landed was 21lbs

Bank Event Friday 11th October

Friday saw 76 anglers take to the various town sections to fish. The £1000 top prize went to Cahir McGovern from



Waterways Ireland Erne Pike Classic Winner (l/r) Cahir McGovern with Cllr. Diana Armstrong & Hugh Malone.

Co. Tyrone for his 18lb 11oz specimen

from Derrycharra. The second prize of £500 went to Andrew Dundon from Co. Fermanagh for his 17lb 8oz fish landed at Protora and in third place another Fermanagh angler Niall Ward won £250 for his 16lb 8oz fish from Cornagrade.

Boat Event – Saturday 12th October & Sunday 13th October

145 anglers fishing on 83 boats took to the water from Bellanaleck or Round 'O' for their chosen positions over the weekend. Roaming stewards were in position in a number of locations and were quickly kept busy being called alongside to weigh the many catches.

The best fish on day one was caught by Martin Dempsey of Co. Dublin weighing at 20lbs and 12oz. In second with his 18lb 8oz fish was Peter Black of County Armagh and just behind him with a fish weighing 18lb 4oz for third position was local angler Gabriel Hanley. Notable was young angler Cormac McCann age 11yrs who landed



Boat Event Winner Hugh Malone and his 21lbs pike.



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11 year old Cormac McCann with one of his two fish.

minimum weight requirement with over 70 fish weighed. Sunday showed the quality of catches to be had when the lowest weight to make the leader board was 16lbs. All fish were returned to the water unharmed.

The event concluded at the Killyhevin Hotel where Cllr Diana Armstrong vice-chair of Fermanagh & Omagh District Council presented the awards.

The Erne Pike Classic is sponsored by Waterways Ireland and run by Erne Anglers AC in conjunction with DAERA Inland Fisheries and Fermanagh Omagh District Council.

(Below) Cahir McGovern's Winning 18lb 11oz pike from the Bank Event.

two fish, 11lb 8oz and 13lb 8oz at his first competition.

The quality of catches was so good that the fish prize list was set with 13lbs 10oz in 18th position at the end of day one meaning smaller fish on day two need not be landed.

Everyone took to the water on Sunday all hoping for a sizeable fish to top 20lbs 12oz. Success came in a fine fish of 21lbs exactly for Hugh Malone of Co. Armagh to win the competition lifting the Mark Lichtenberg Cup and the £2000 prize. Martin Dempsey and Peter Black held their positions behind him for second and third place to win £1500 and £100 respectively.

Winner Hugh Malone says: "I've been doing this competition every year from it started and have done well in the bank event with best being 3rd place. On my 14th attempt I have won 1st place in the boat event with a 21lb fish. This is a great competition and well organised, the welfare of the pike is paramount, and all fish were returned unharmed, would recommend it to everyone. Thanks to the organisers"

Incredibly over the weekend 300 fish were caught that didn't make the



By Stevie Munn

It's All About The Experience



Mike Wharmby netting a Gloma Grayling.

As I write this, the end of the fly fishing season is on the horizon. It's a strange time of year and can make us older anglers quite melancholy, but I'm back home and I hope to fit in a day or two and try for a few Dollaghan trout and maybe even a salmon before it's all over for another year.

My season started slowly and I did not get a lot of fishing compared to most years, mainly due to bad weather, and my opportunities to fish. I always love a bit of dry fly fishing for wild trout in March and April as I'm trying to hit the Large Dark Olive hatch, which can provide some tremendous fun but, as luck would have it, the best conditions for fishing came when I was away working. When I was home the rivers were mostly unfishable due to heavy rains. Luckily May was around the corner and I started to focus on Lough angling. I had an enjoyable few days on Lough Erne with my friends

Gerry Taggart, Paul Devlin and Donna Harris, but unfortunately the weather again was not so kind. I did get a few nice fish that were starting to take mayflies, and I knew one of my season highlights was about to start.

For over 20 years, I have fished Lough Sheelin with one of my angling clubs trying to hit the mayfly, which is not easy when you need to book 4 or 5 days a year in advance. This time the lough and the weather was kinder to me, and I landed some great fish. My friend and boat partner Gerry and I had fish in the evening on dries and a couple of good wet fly sessions during the day, targeting fish smashing emerging duns in a wave.

I was testing at the time the New Guideline Fario 9'9 # 6 which is a sweet dry fly rod for the loughs and also a prototype of the Guideline 10'6 #6 LPXe with traditional wets, which when they make it will be a fantastic rod for lough anglers. Gerry and I had some

great trout up to 5.1/2 Lb. Fantastic stuff. There is something truly magical about lough fishing when you're lucky to hit it right.

My focus then moved back to fishing rivers locally, giving a few casting lessons and working at more angling events. I had some good fishing on the rivers, Maine and Six Mile, landing a nice trout on dries and also some fantastic Dollaghan and even some salmon. As I write, I'm working on The Irish Fly fair, an event that attracts fly fishers and tyers and their families from all over the planet and is now hailed as one of the best fly fishing only events in the world. Hopefully you will come and enjoy the show.

Guiding this year was focused on Norway. I have done these now for about 9 seasons where I host and guide with Norwegian guide Mr Espen Eilertsen. Espen is also a very good friend, who I met many years ago at the Dutch fly fair and is a regular to our



The Author guiding English angler Geoffrey Armstrong.



Mark Irvine from Scotland with a fine Trysil.

Irish Fly Fair in Galway. He is not only a talented fly angler, but also a great fly dresser, caster and cook, as many can testify.

Freely rising grayling and the occasional wild brown trout

This is a location that was once often frequented by English Victorian gentlemen in pursuit of big scenery, wild places and wild fish, in fact there is a beat on the river still called England. It is a big country with big rivers and one of its biggest is Norway's River Trysil where we are based. The Trysil lies about three hours comfortable drive north east from Norway's capitol Oslo, close to the Swedish boarder in vast wilderness areas with plenty of opportunities for keen, novice and expert anglers a like. We stay in a traditional cottage and host groups of 4 anglers per week. There's lots of water to fish, guide and explore. The fishing can be amazing with freely rising

grayling and the occasional wild brown trout, but never easy. I have noticed many anglers from the UK and Ireland, taking a day or two to get into the fly casting techniques, as these river are clear and big with a lot of currents, so upstream dry fly casting seldom works, which is what nearly all anglers from the UK and Ireland struggle with until they are shown slack line casts that are made downstream from your position, so they get a more natural drift over their target. This makes them leave hopefully better anglers.

The weather was not kind during the first week, but everyone got their fair share. As conditions were hard I rarely fished, for like any good guide I wanted to see the guests do well. Espen and I will also see if we can find a fly or tactic that's working and pass on the information - Espen calls it breaking the code. When conditions improved everyone landed better quality grayling as the fish took their opportunity to

feed. In the autumn in Norway we want cold nights and warmer days, with little wind and sun, this is almost the complete opposite for fly anglers from Ireland and the UK. This can really confuse many good game anglers who have been fishing on home waters wanting the weather to be overcast, a nice wind and no sun at all. I know because when I first started fishing these areas of the world, I was one of those anglers. Espen always laughs when I say, good fishing today its sunny, as when I first fished with him 10 years ago, I like everyone else thought the complete opposite.

Most of these massive rivers freeze in the winter in this area , so the food for the fish is very sparse at times, but in the autumn when you get clear cold nights the grayling and trout , seem to sense winter coming then when it's clear the sun comes up during the day and heats the water, then invertebrates hatch and the fish feed. because



Stevie's fine Norway trout taken on a size 16 dry.

everything is right for them and winters coming, the cold and the warm works together.

You can increase your chances at times with the right fly, a well-presented cast and being stealthy as possible and venue choice. These all increase your chances, but you still need a bit of luck at times. Espen and I had been keeping an eye on the weather and decided the best conditions looked to be on the River Gloma, just over one hour's drive from our base on the Trysil. It's never a hard decision as the Gloma is simply one of the most beautiful places, the drive to it is breathtakingly picturesque over a vast plateau.

When we arrived the fish were already feeding, seemingly locked on to something small and I was pleased to watch all the group catching some nice grayling, mostly on dries but also nymphs. I try to help when needed, spotting good feeding fish in this wonderfully clear and turbulent river, made easier with a pair of really good prescription Costa sunglasses. With a mix of flies on the water, I had on two dries, a Griffith Gnat and a small Elk Hair caddis, great patterns for this river that have worked for me and our guests many times.

I quickly took off the dropper fly in case it was increasing drag

I had been watching two fish feeding enough to get my full attention. Both were tucked into a spot close to big rocks with very fast currents around them. The trick was to get the right angle and hopefully get a drag free drift even for a few seconds. The first cast made one of the fish came up but turn away refusing at the last second. I quickly took off the dropper fly in case it was adding to the drag problem and made another cast with a slack line mend, but again the fish looked and did not fully commit. Time to rethink! I had noticed a few small olives hatching so I went for a size 16 olive quill with a CDC wing, which makes it easier to see in the turbulent waters. It's a fly that I have used on many times. As soon as I put the little fly over the right spot the fish it rolled over it and confidently engulfed it. This happened so fast but, but seemed almost slow motion, something many dry fly anglers experience with a good fish.

As I lifted my 9' # 4 Guideline Fario, I noticed the golden cheeks and knew I had just hooked a really nice brown trout. The fish immediately bolted from

its lie, went airborne, and then turned and took an amazing run downstream in extremely fast clear water. Frantically getting my loose line on to the reel and moving after him over large boulders, trying to keep some control and my footing, I managed a little side strain on the fish and after a long fight and a couple of attempts at landing, my prize eventually lay in the net with my little olive quill in the side of its jaw. It was only on 3lb tippet and knew I was lucky to land this fish. Interestingly, the fine trout coughed up a small fish into my net and this enhanced the theory that most trout in these rivers move onto a fish diet, but this one fancied a few small flies too. I will remember all my life how lucky I was to catch it, to have had the pleasure to see this marvellous creature and set it back free to swim and live in wonderful Norway, in one of the prettiest rivers I have been lucky to ever visit.

Well, that's been my season so far this year. Tight lines and good luck for next season and hopefully luck will be on your side every now and then to give you some great memories. It's all about the experience.

Stevie Munn Bio

Game Angling Consultant Stevie Munn works full time as a fishing guide, writer and qualified game angling instructor in fly casting and fly tying. He is a member of The Guideline Power Team, Partridge Pro Team and the Irish rep for Costa glasses and Semperfli. He has also appeared in many angling books, magazines and DVDs and gives casting demonstrations at angling events all over the world. He has fished many places in the world and grew up fishing on rivers and loughs of Ireland. He runs teaching courses in Ireland and host groups to fish in Norway and other parts. You can contact him via email anglingclassics@aol.com and for more information visit www.anglingclassics.co.uk

Federation of Irish Salmon & Sea Trout Anglers

Conaidhm na Slat Iascairí Bradáin agus Breac Geal

VISIT US AT www.fissta.com



F.I.S.S.T.A.

MAJOR SHIFT IN POLICY NEEDED IF 2020 SALMON SEASON IS TO RECOVER

Last season the draft regulations opened what many believe was the worst Donegal River with fifty fish surplus against scientific advice and without any supporting data. Many believe this was done to prove a point that despite our dispute with state management of our rivers, the message we got back is that they will continue to make it up as they go along just to prove they can.

But in setting this precedent, FISSTA have lobbied vigorously to convince the Minister to continue to open our remaining rivers with fifty fish to salvage what is left of our angling tourism market that are almost defunct at this stage. We will wait and see if an ear is lent to our plea, but somehow judging from past encounters which IFI refuse to engage, no angler should hold their breath.

UPDATE FROM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

1. Meeting in June with Minister in Dublin resulted in deferral of announcement on allocation of grants but follow up meeting delayed for months.
2. No serious response yet to our letter of complaint to Minister on Civil Servant's comments on the extinction of our salmon. FISSTA Chairman's Press statement on Denis Maher get

highest online response hits to date.

3. Campaign to change minds for closed containment at Parc na Mara continues to succeed following FISSTA visit and presentation to seminar in Killkieran.
4. Campaign against diseased fish continues with PQ from Declan Breathnach TD but no clarification on disease identification or action yet from Minister.
5. Protests mounted on Connaught Hotel in Galway against IFA Aquaculture AGM while our Lisdoonvarna protest against Swedish royal visit was cancelled after Sean Kyne changed schedule to MI Oranmore due to our announcement.
6. The list of Parliamentary Questions builds up a horrendous case of denial

and neglect which exposes the IFI thanks to all who posed the PQ's

7. FISSTA participation at the 2 main game fairs was successful with Shane's Castle in Antrim breaking all records once again.
8. FISSTA'S response to the IFI IP report at NASCO was the most successful to date with the great help of scientific advice from Michael Stinson and Jens C Holst. FISSTA got great coverage on publicising Denmark's decision to end open net-cage salmon farming – we asked Minister Creed to follow.
9. IFI notice on Novice Angling to be discussed. IFI claim 250 juniors took part.
10. Kingfisher Shannon Ardnacrusha plan must be progressed after Selune completion of the French project.



FISSTA protest at the IFA Aquaculture Conference in Galway.

11. Mass mortality report by MOWI is a grim reminder that it could happen here again.
12. Trout and Salmon report critics come out strong against Wales being declared a blanket salmon ban in 2020 – it could follow here.

FISSTA CHAIRMAN PROTESTS TO MINISTER ON CONNACHT TRIBUNE REPORTS

There have been many failures by past ministers to stop the decline in our wild Atlantic salmon stocks. We always knew from unofficial sources that advice from the permanent government was to churn out the old phrase “control the controllables” which gave the impression something was being done. But the state inaction proved otherwise and in their opinion therefore, saving the salmon was an impossible goal and many ministers took this advice and did nothing. Even when in 2013 we eventually got the TDI study published that confirmed our national angling product, that was estimated at €150m, was grossly under valued and was then revalued at a staggering €750m. Sadly, not one additional cent was applied for to consolidate and develop the resource. Why? Because nobody in either government or state bodies believes in

salmon angling due to rapidly dwindling stocks. Holding politicians to account has impacted on us greatly and civil servants will never forgive anglers for the rod war of 1987-1990. In August 2019, the mask slipped when the Connacht Tribune carried a story that our main civil servant predicted the demise of our wild Atlantic salmon and the letter of protest which we published in our last issue have yet to be responded to by Minister Sean Canney TD.

INFORMATION DAY OF THE SEA

This columnist approached the scenic village of Cill Chiarain with caution, after reading in a local publication that both friends and enemies were welcome to attend La na Mara. I should not have worried as I was made very welcome and was glad to have paid a visit to their Marine Day organised by Údarás na Gaeltachta in Connemara. The day was billed as an information day with a line-up of speakers similar to a mini version of “Our Ocean Wealth Seminars” albeit with a Gaeltacht perspective. Some media had promoted it as a debate on salmon farming, but our focus when we spoke at the seminar was clearly to highlight the potential employment for

of our wild Atlantic salmon and angling tourism that supports over 12,000 jobs according to an Inland Fisheries Ireland study. We impressed upon the well attended audience that the protection of these valuable wild salmon was paramount and to seek clean and sustainable employment such as Iceland and Norway had already established with good results to date which Gaeltacht shoreline companies from Donegal to Waterford should be encouraged to pursue.

We stated that FISSTA did not find any fault with the principle of a Marine Park that embraced the sustainable opportunities (and salmon farming is not in anyway sustainable) of our ocean potential. But for decades both Udaras and successive government policies was to promote the outdated and rejected methods of open net-cage farmed salmon production which leading companies in Norway and USA had long abandoned for clearer onshore technology. However it was made clear that the protection of the wild salmon and sea trout had been lost in the proposed plans for the Marine Park as salmon farming was being proposed and we in our Federation along with our sister organisation Galway Bay Against Salmon Cages will campaign for that urgent withdrawal of these plans that will continue to damage our wild marine life.

The Príomhfheidheanna of Údarás na Gaeltachta, Mícheál Ó hÉanaigh, responded to my statement on salmon farming by clarifying for the first time, the news that their research plans were only directed towards onshore and not net-cage as was first envisaged. The CEO went on to give a comprehensive view of what is planned for the Marine Park stating that Udaras had received expressions of interest from twenty-four companies who would like to establish an industry on Marine Park. He estimated that 70% would be industries based on seaweed and also said that 200 people could be employed on the proposed Marine Park with a further 400 jobs possible.



Many angling clubs had to clean up their rivers following the damage left by Storm Lorenzo last month. This footbridge on the Glen River got washed away leaving a headache for the Slieve Angling Club to repair.

To get this marine park up and running it would be expected, he said, to establish €50 million private investment in establishing the industries. There would be a strong emphasis on research and close links with scientists around the world stating that this would be a local, national and international initiative. There was a most interesting talk during the conference session on the oysters in Cill Chiaráin Bay and Dr. Oliver Tully from the Marine Institute gave a fine lecture on the history of native oysters.

Former Udaras executive Jim Keogh gave an interesting account of the seaweed industry and the work of Arramara Teoranta in Cill Chiaráin. He told us that Acadian Seaplants, the company that bought Arramara, has four factories in Nova Scotia (Nova Scotia). They employ 400 people with Arramara currently employing 24 workers but it is hoped that this number can be increased by the provision of a good supply of seaweed.

Overall, La na Mara helped us all to focus on how marine jobs will help small Gaeltacht areas to survive in the future. My own Gaeltacht in Southwest Donegal is a good example as it is where Errigal Bay Teo employ over 200 people producing mainly crab and other shellfish since 1964. Their state of the art factory near Carrick operates successfully on the banks of a wild Atlantic salmon fishery on the Glen River and defines what we mean by a sustainable seafood industry. It proves that communities with mutual respect can achieve such job creation if the owners and management cooperate and work with nature. Visiting buyers from around the world see and discuss the positive response from locals and are impressed, so it is good for their export business as well. That is how Gaeltacht regions will survive in the future.

FISSTA SPEAKS OUT ABOUT DISEASED FISH IN CO. LOUTH

FISSTA have expressed their fear and concern that a salmon disease that anglers reported months ago has yet to

be identified and no treatment as yet taken place until they know what they are dealing with in our north eastern rivers. In this situation, where only silence was being maintained we expressed our gratitude publicly to local Dundalk TD Declan Breathnach for raising the very serious issue of diseased salmon and sea-trout being caught in the local rivers such as the Castletown and other waters.

A number of anglers affiliated to our Federation contacted us to explain the silence they were being given by IFI when this disease was first reported in June last. We have received the standard IFI advice for anglers across Ireland anglers across Ireland had been advised by the IFI "to leave diseased salmon in rivers and disinfect tackle waders and equipment," which many fear will have a detrimental effect on our spawning stocks.

The local journalist Tia Clarke reported it best with the quote that a member of a local anglers' club contacted the Dundalk Democrat to speak out anonymously about the diseased and decaying fish in Dundalk's Castletown River.

The local angler, who has been fishing in the area for a number of decades, told how he was concerned after he spotted "blistered and scarred fish" that were in a "deteriorating state" whilst fishing in the Castletown River. He had also spotted diseased fish in all of the connecting rivers in Dundalk basin. The fishing enthusiast told how he was frustrated that "no action" had been taken to inform the public about "potential health risks" after he reported the rotting fish to his local anglers group. The man explained: "There are anti-contamination procedures being put in place (at the Castletown River), but they are not saying what it is."

He also revealed that Louth angling clubs were planning to hold a private meeting where members of the Inland Fisheries Ireland would also be in attendance and asked "will the content of the meeting be made available to the

public?" The concerned Louth man added: "There's no public awareness about this. I really think this should be highlighted. People who are members of local angling clubs and regular people who would be out walking along the river with their dogs and children need to know about this." The angler also raised concerns about diseased fish affecting the quality of seafood sold in Louth. He added: "There is a duty of care there to the public. People are entitled to know if there is an imminent danger. There are too many questions and we need answers." Fianna Fáil TD Declan Breathnach raised the issue with Minister Sean Canney in the Dáil. The TD outlined how "large numbers of fish had been found in the Boyne, Castletown, Dee and Fane rivers that appeared deformed or diseased". "Fishing and Angling Clubs have sent photos and videos of the fish to Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) but have been left unsatisfied with the responses they have received," Breathnach continued, "For now, Minister Canney stated anyone who catches diseased fish should follow normal biosecurity procedures and disinfect tackle, waders and equipment. Anglers are also advised to contact IFI's 24-hour confidential hotline at 1890 34 74 24. I hope this disease is identified quickly and we can stop the spread of this unknown disease."

It was also reported that anglers in the north-east are "terrified" that a "mysterious virus" could completely wipe out salmon stocks across Ireland. The report outlined that the disease "which causes bleeding and skin ulceration on salmon and sea trout" has still not been identified "despite the best efforts of Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) and scientists internationally". The salmon affected by the disease were showing "signs of bleeding ulceration and haemorrhaging" on the belly of the fish and the heads and tails. In several cases, secondary fungal infections took hold resulting in death.

FISSTA will continue to question Minister Canney TD to pursue IFI for answers and proposed remedies until

this panic in our fresh water fisheries is resolved.

FISSTA TO AIM CAMPAIGN AT PARENTS AND SCHOOL MANAGEMENT BOARDS TO GET BIM BRAINWASHING BUS REMOVED PERMANENTLY FROM SCHOOL CAR PARKS.

FISSTA have consistently campaigned for the ARC bus to be swept back to BIM in Dublin. Since its launch last year, FISSTA and local opinion have opposed the use of the controversial BIM bus that has been travelling around the country targeting of school children with propaganda on salmon farming.

Local anglers have mounted pickets and demonstrations wherever the bus appears as many parents agree that nature lessons for the youth should be accurate and educational. FISSTA and GBASC have succeed in getting the bus closed and moved on where parents have joined in our objections such as in Cork and other venues. The bus, named the ARC contains a mobile classroom with interactive screens that presents fin fish farming in an entirely misleading way which young people should not be subjected to and we will depend on the parents and school staff to challenge this practice every where the encounter the bus.

FISSTA & GBASC PICKET AGAINST FARMED SALMON

Earlier in the season we cancelled at short notice a silent picket against farmed salmon and sea lice which we planned for outside the Burren Smokehouse in Lisdoonvarna, County Clare. The King and Queen of Sweden were scheduled to visit the Smokehouse but schedules were abruptly changed, probably as a result of our action and the Royal guests were taken to an alternative venue hosted by Minister Sean Kyne TD at the Marine Institute at Oranmore. We asked Minister Kyne to convey our serious concern regarding the unsustainable open net salmon farming taking place in the Irish waters

and the Baltic Sea. Our picket was to highlight to the VIP visitors that the salmon farmed product served by Burren Smokehouse was unsustainable and is seriously damaging our wild Atlantic salmon. We were using the occasion to highlight the Burren Smokehouse unbridled promotion of farmed salmon not only in Ireland but internationally as well.

Our protest and silent picket by our Federation and Galway Bay Against Salmon Cages was deferred to another date and another venue for whenever the next opportunity arose. That opportunity presented itself at the Galway City Connaught Hotel last month when IFA Aquaculture held their conference and many of our supporters including Oughterard Anglers mounted a silent protest with an impressive crowd of anglers and supporters. See picture

IRISH MARINE ARTIST LAID TO REST

The sad news on the loss of Kenneth King RIP, one of Ireland's most renowned marine artists shocked many, as many messages from both at home and around the globe appreciated his unique work. A part of his great legacy is documented in a book published by Marianne O' Kane Boal in 2013 titled "Kenneth King – Life and Work" which is the largest study to date on an Irish Marine Artist. Terry Conlan from Skerries wrote in the preface of this book on "his magnificent and sustained first class contribution to recording the stunning coastal scenery and the lighthouses, lightships, harbours, tiny havens, merchant ships, naval ships and the endless variety of fishing craft from the smallest to the big ocean going trawlers of this sea girth island." The book records his formative beginnings, his time at sea and his significant artistic contribution which includes over one hundred illustrations of Ireland's maritime history and heritage.

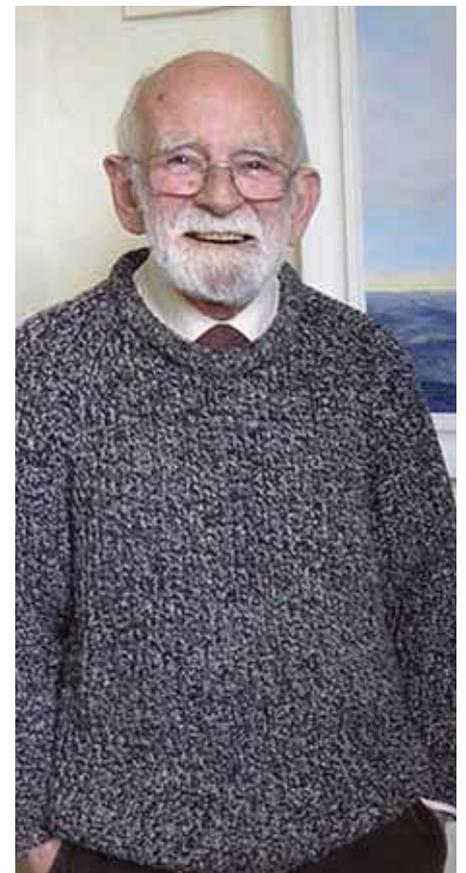
Kenenth King from Straid Gallery in Glencolmcille, Co, Donegal and formerly of Dalkey, Co. Dublin passed

away (peacefully) on the 17th August 2019 in the wonderful care of the staff of Donegal Hospice, Letterkenny.

Many attended the funeral mass in Glencolmcille's St Columba's Church, and burial in Church of Ireland graveyard where fond memories of Kenneth were lovingly recalled. He enjoyed and got inspiration from the wild Atlantic coastline of Donegal where much of his work was created in his studio in Glencolmcille. He directed the Oideas Gael School of Marine Painting for many years and taught in Colaiste na Carraige for a period where his introduction to the visual arts and artistic direction was very much valued by his many students.

Kenneth was the first Irish artist to have his work accepted and exhibited at the 1985 Mystic International in Connecticut USA. He was from an artistic background, his father was the late Richard J. King, Stained-glass artist and Designer. He was a member of the Maritime Institute of Ireland and Visual Artists Ireland.

Suaimhneas siorai na bhflaitheas dó.



The late Kenneth King with a fine example of his work.

You don't always get what you want

Over the years, I have heard many stories about people going fishing or shooting, having a great day but not getting what they set out to target. Most often this happens when fishing as you can only be sure what you have caught once you see it. I once caught what I thought was a full string of mackerel and only discovered that I had caught a single huge mackerel when I reeled it in.

I once worked with a chap who both fished and shot. He told me a story of how he had set out to shoot a roost of pigeons in the early seventies, and surprised his wife when he arrived home with a ten pound salmon and a five pound note. He had left with a .22 rifle. I'll state here that shooting pigeons at roost with a .22 rifle is a dangerous thing to do, but this chap was renowned for being a bit of a chancer (I'm being polite), the sort of chap you would only go shooting with once.

I use a .22 air rifle to shoot pigeons myself but a pellet from an airgun will not have the range or weight of a .22 bullet. Anyway this chap was a fishery officer and I know from experience that the habit of looking over bridges sets in, and is hard to break. He headed off on his motorbike from Dublin with his rifle



I was to take home a brace of partridge instead of the expected fish.

to Co. Meath to a particular wood he knew. Every river he crossed he paused to glance over the bridge. At one point he heard a commotion in the pool below the bridge and checked it out. He told me that he saw a big dog otter fighting with a lovely Salmon in the river. He waited until the otter had killed the fish and dragged it ashore before he shot the otter in the head. Then he climbed down and retrieved both the otter and the salmon which had been killed by a bite to the head. He duly brought the dead otter to a garda station and claimed the

five pounds bounty which was on otters at the time. He told me when he arrived home his wife was very surprised at his 'luck.' But no pigeons!

Many times I have gone fishing and been told: "Make sure you bring back some fish." For some reason this always happened when salmon fishing was involved. I did sometimes catch a salmon, but more often not. I don't mind admitting that in those days I sometimes resorted to buying a fish from a fishmonger's to bring home. I say those days because these days it



Simply roasted and served with potato and other seasonal vegetables.



Late October and while the weather was fine some rolling seas were to come.

would be farmed salmon you would get in a fishmonger's and they don't compare to wild fish in my opinion.

In October, I went out with a pal to try for a last go at getting some fresh mackerel for the pot and for bait. We tried hard but could only catch joeys, suitable for bait. Fishing hard for a time we also caught a few coalfish and pollack. Many would say not great eating fish but fine when smoked. When we returned to the slipway we met up with a chap who had hoped to come with us as he wanted some fish but literally 'missed the boat,' so we happily gave him some coalfish and pollack. Sharing is all part of fishing in my book.

In return he gave me a brace of French partridge also called red legged partridge and not to be confused with our smaller native grey partridge. He had been at a driven shoot in Northern Ireland that day and had done well. I was delighted to bring home some partridge for the first time to eat, instead of the expected fish.

As this was my first opportunity to try partridge, I asked him for advice as to how best to cook them and I looked up several game cookery books as well. His advice was in agreement with the books, in that you should fry the bird in butter to brown it before simply roasting for a short time. I'm not a big fan of bloody game, so I just sprinkled with pepper and covered and roasted it until I thought it was cooked through.

Young partridges are the tastiest

I had skinned rather than plucked the birds as I am required by the boss not to make a mess. I don't think it seemed to matter in this case. About thirty-five minutes at 200 C. I did check several books on game cookery and all agreed that it was young birds which are best to eat. In fact, in Mrs. Beeton's (1888) edition of her famous book 'The Book of Household Management,' it states that older birds are valueless. Well, I must have got young birds because in my opinion I agree with the books in that they are the tastiest game bird I

have tried and I hope to try them again when I can. I'm quite sure the French and Spanish have many recipes for this delicious bird, but simply roasted was very tasty and not at all gamey.

Since eating them that evening I have discovered a whole lot of other recipes on YouTube for partridge which I would love to try. Some were surprised that I left the house with a rod and returned with a brace of game birds. But anyone serious about fieldsports will not be surprised that sometimes we can get lucky, perhaps despite the quarry we intended in the first place. I will have to look into the possibility of a French partridge shoot before the end of the season.

Last chance at skate turns up a nice ling

Recently, I managed to get out off West Cork for a skate trip with my pal Ross. Late October is late to get out for a day's fishing, but the weather looked at first like it would hold up. However, our skipper Nick warned us that a swell was forecast. This would probably be our last chance this year so we decided to go for it anyway.

There was indeed a swell and I don't mind admitting that I am a fair weather fisherman, so for a while I did not feel well as we headed out but I soon adapted to the roll of the boat. We tried for some fresh mackerel but could only get some small ones. This seems to have been a common thing this year, as decent sized mackerel have stayed well offshore. Anyway, Nick had brought a few frozen ones for bait and once

anchored up we sent the baits down on heavy tackle. It was hard to keep in touch with the baits because of the big swell but we persisted.

Soon Ross had a nice ling on and brought it aboard. I had hoped to see some of the 'Portuguese Man of Wars' which had been around, but the north westerly wind ruled that out. A couple of smaller ling were caught by Ross once again. I had a take from what felt like a skate but did not hook it. At one point Ross saw something large and white below the boat and Nick said that it was probably a whale. Needless to say I was eager to see one, but as is often the case, I was looking to starboard when one surfaced just behind us. I saw the 'footprint' or swirl on the surface as it dived, but did not see the whale itself. Nick did say that it was a minkie which are common all year around in this area.

While watching some birds later I did see a blow, but it was too far to say what type of whale it had been. There had been two humpback whales around the boat a few days previously while fishing wrecks further out but on that day I couldn't say it that was what it had been. Anyway, the day passed and unfortunately no skate obliged by taking the hook. Like the case of the partridge, we had gone fishing for skate (which are released unharmed as soon as possible) but came home with some fine eating fish. Ling being related to cod taste just as good I can safely say. It was great to get out and try anyway and have something for supper was an unexpected bonus.



Ross with his fine ling.

A Great Angling Book Which Is More Than Fishing

A few years ago I was trawling through my big library of hunting, shooting and fishing books when I came across this quote, which immediately caught my eye: “Rivers and the inhabitants of the watery element were made for wise men to contemplate, and fools to pass by without consideration.” I immediately loved the sentiment. It struck a chord with me, because I am firmly of the belief that there are countless fools in the world who pass by the beautiful things of the world without a moment's consideration; there are countless fools who adopt a sneering attitude when you point out the objects of beauty or allude to the higher sentiments in our minds. Here was a writer's outlook which chimed with my own. At the end of the quote the writer's name was revealed: Izaak Walton.

Izaak Walton is one of the most famous anglers who ever lived. He was also an excellent writer. He lived during the 1600s. When we look at pictures of people from the 1600s or read their opinions on life, they feel very alien to us. However, when you immerse yourself in the works of a great author, such as Walton, then you realise that they, some of them at least, experienced similar emotions to ourselves. At the end of the day, despite all appearances to the contrary, we are all human beings and therefore we experience similar responses to existence; no matter what century we lived or live in.

Walton was born in August 1593 in Stafford (which nowadays is the county town of Staffordshire in the West Midlands of England and has a population of about 70,000). His Dad ran an inn in the town but died when Izaak was only five. The family moved to London and, after school, Izaak found employment in a clothing shop.



View of Ware on the River Lea by Thomas Creswick. Walton often fished on the River Lea in Hertfordshire, South-Eastern England.

He married Rachel Floud in 1626. The marriage allied him with a prominent clerical family because Rachel was a relative of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. Izaak was also a parishioner in St Dunstan's Church in London and became a close friend of the vicar, who was the famous poet John Donne.

Over the years Walton's loyalty to the Church of England, coupled with his facility for making friends, inspired him to write biographies of a number of eminent theologians and poets, including John Donne and George Herbert. These biographies were insightful and filled with an enthused energy, which made them attractive and popular books. Samuel Johnson rated them as being among “his most favourite books.”

What became even more popular than these biographies was a book published in 1653, called “The Compleat Angler or, the Contemplative Man's Recreation.” One of the extraordinary things about this book is it was written during the stressful period of the Civil War, during which period

Walton, because he was a Royalist, was compelled to flee from London.

The Compleat Angler was an immediate success upon its initial publication and has since become the most reprinted secular book in the English language. In the book we join three men called Piscator (Angler), Venator (Hunter) and Auceps (Falconer). These fieldsport practitioners are on a morning journey through the English countryside. As they walk they discuss the hobbies they love so much. Naturally, given the title of the book, it's mostly Piscator who is talking. He expounds on the catching and eating of different species of fish and he talks about the satisfactions of the fisherman's life.

Walton's book is much more than a guide to the technicalities of the sport; it is also a charming portrait of the benefits of living a simple life, a way of being which is enriched by virtue and good friendship. The book expresses the thoughts of an intelligent and sensitive Englishman and his preoccupation with leading a contemplative life. Walton

knows the importance of pursuing a contemplative life simply because it can help us steer a safe course through the challenges and dangers of existence.

As well as this, some have also interpreted the book as being a veiled satire against Cromwell and the Puritans. The book's potency and magical spell is captured excellently in a comment made by a friend of the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, recommending the book to him: "It breathes the very spirit of innocence, purity and simplicity of heart. It would

sweeten a man's temper at any time to read it; it would Christianise every angry, discordant passion; pray make yourself acquainted with it."

In the opening of Chapter One, Venator says to Piscator and Auceps: "Sir, we are all so happy as to have a fine, fresh, cool morning, and I hope we shall each be the happier in the others' company. And, Gentlemen, that I may not lose yours, I shall either abate or amend my pace to enjoy it; knowing that, as the Italians say, 'Good company in a journey makes the way to seem the shorter!'"

Venator tells his two companions that as far as he is concerned otter hunting is the best form of hunting known to man: "...hunting the otter, is much pleasanter than any other chase whatsoever...tomorrow morning we shall meet a pack of otter-dogs of noble Mr Sadler's, upon Amwell Hill, who will be there so early, that they intend to prevent the sun rising."

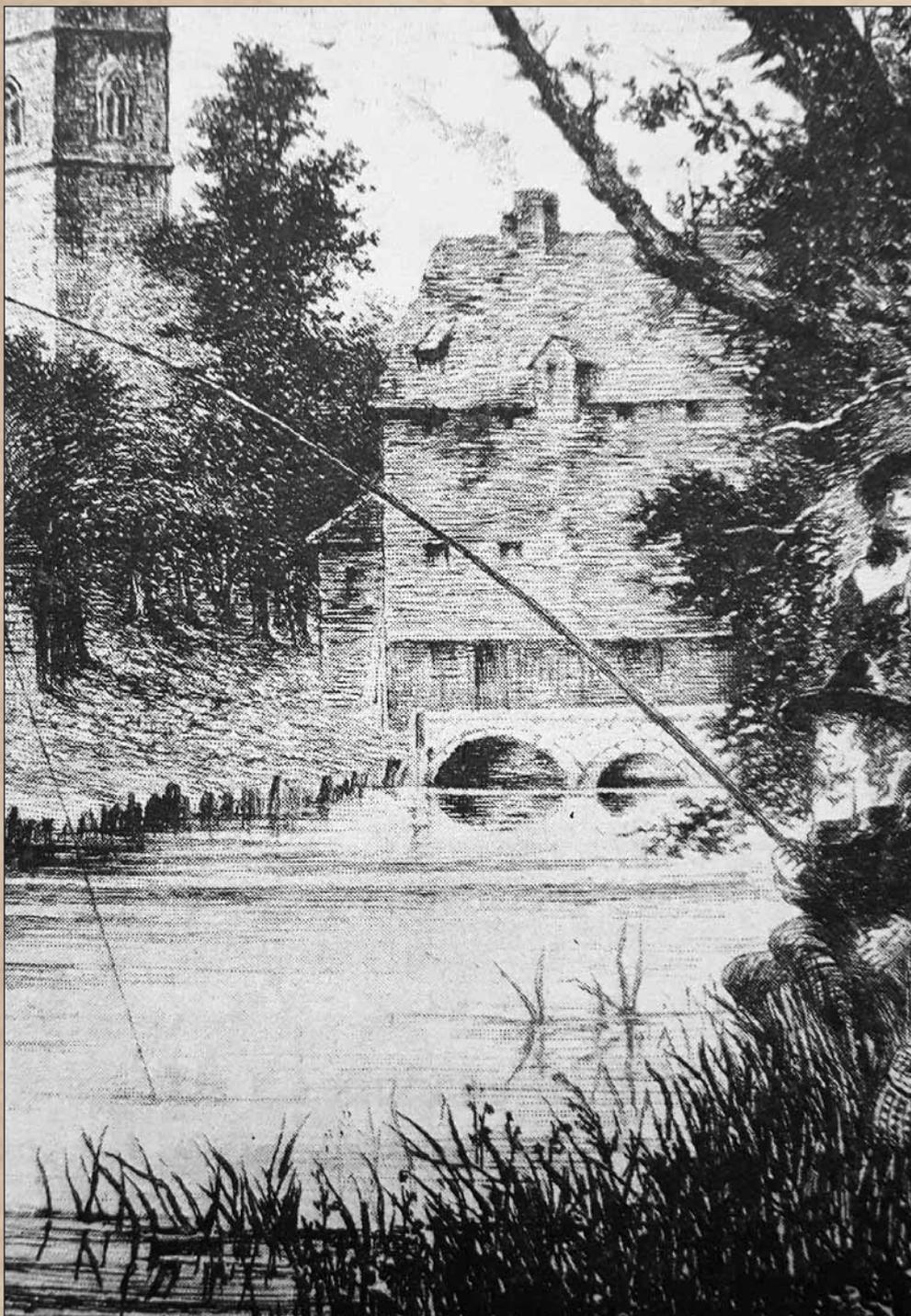
A 'Brother of the Angle'

Piscator says he hates otters and talks of spending a day or two "in helping to destroy some of those villanous vermin; for I hate them perfectly, because they love fish so well, or rather, because they destory so much; indeed, so much, that, in my judgement, all men that keep otter-dogs ought to have pensions from the King to encourage them to destroy the very breed of those base otters, they do so much mischief." Venator says foxes do "as much mischief" as otters. "O Sir," replies Piscator, "if they do, it is not so much to me and my fraternity as those base vermin the otters do." Piscator refers to himself as "a Brother of the Angle" and states that "we Anglers all love one another."

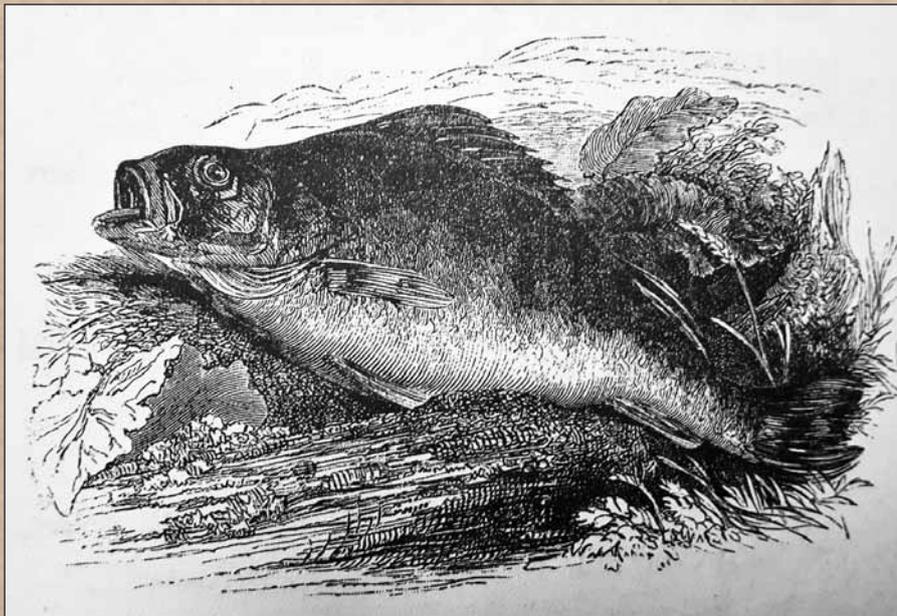
Venator says he has followed "many a pack of dogs many a mile." Unfortunately, he adds, he also heard "many merry huntsmen make sport and scoff at Anglers."

Auceps says he too has heard people disparaging anglers. "I have heard many grave, serious men pity them, 'tis such a heavy, contemptible, dull recreation."

The interesting thing about this interchange is they reflect opinions which still exist today. On many an occasion when I have talked about fishing in the company of fox hunters on horseback or shooters, they have expressed their belief that fishing must be a boring,



"Piscator's Lesson." Piscator shows an interested party how it's done.



"The Perch," from a painting by FR Lee in the 1844 edition.



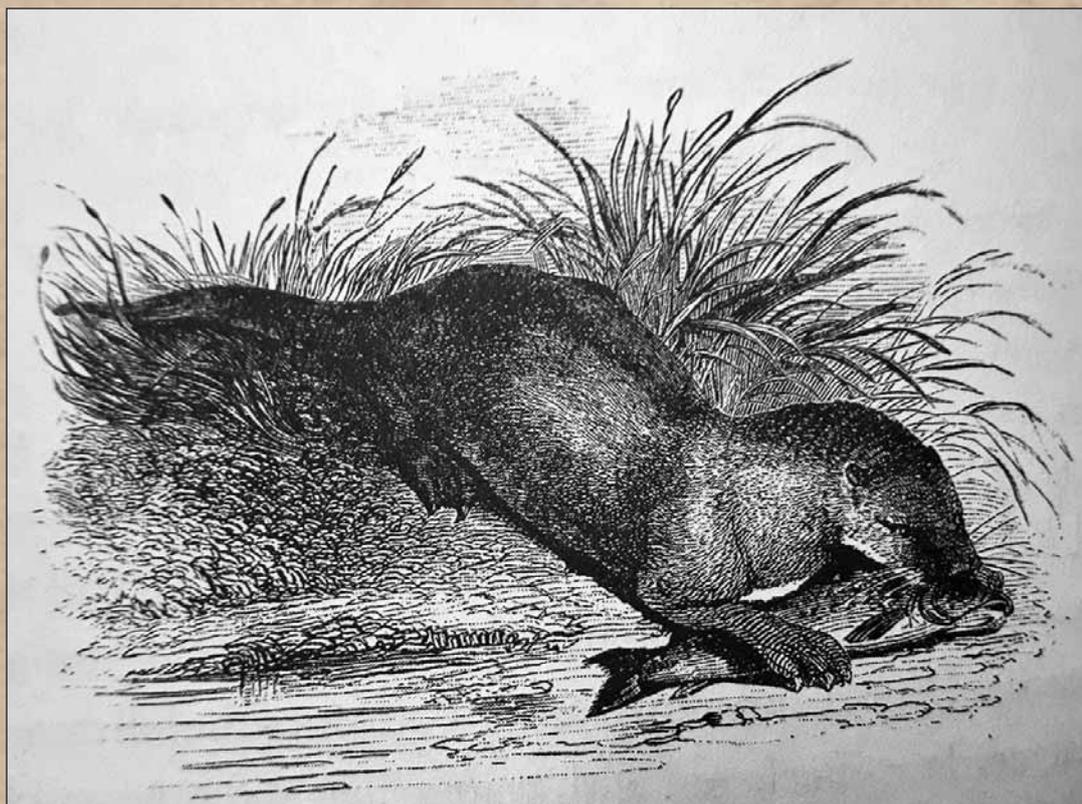
"The Milkmaid's Song." This charming picture is a depiction of a 17th Century scene where a milkmaid entertains a couple of anglers with a song.

unexciting pastime and it holds little interest for them.

Piscator's response is priceless and it remains as relevant today as it ever did. "You know, Gentlemen, 'tis an easy thing to scoff at any art or recreation: a little wit, mixed with ill-nature, confidence, and malice, will do it; but though they often venture boldly, yet they are often caught, even in their own trap...If to this you add what Solomon says of scoffers, that 'they are an abomination to mankind'; let him that thinks fit scoff on, and be a scoffer still; but I account them enemies to me, and to all that love virtue and Angling."

He then turns to Auceps and makes comments which remain as relevant as ever because of the commercial world which we live in. "Sir, there be many men that are by others taken to be serious and grave men, which we contemn and pity. Men that are taken to be grave, because nature hath made them of a sour complexion, money-getting men, - men that spend all their time, first in getting, and next in anxious care to keep it, men that are condemned to be rich, and then always busy or discontented: for these poor-rich-men, we Anglers pity them perfectly, and stand in no need to borrow their thoughts to think ourselves so happy. No, no, Sir, we enjoy a contentedness above the reach of such dispositions."

Venator says to him that he had always looked upon Anglers as being patient and "simple" men. Piscator examines the interpretation of this word "simple." Piscator says anglers are indeed simple men if you imply the word in a positive manner. By this definition anglers are "quiet men and followers of peace - men that are so simply-wise as not to sell their consciences to buy riches, and with them vexation and a fear to die; if you mean such simple men as lived in those times when there were fewer lawyers, when men might have had a lordship safely conveyed to them in a piece of parchment no bigger than your hand, though several sheets will not do it safely in this wiser age, - I say, Sir,



The Otter, drawn by JW Archer, in the 1844 edition.

if you take us Anglers to be such simple men as I have spoken of, then myself and those of my profession will be glad to be so understood. But if by simplicity you meant to express a general defect in those that profess and practise the excellent art of Angling, I hope in time to disabuse you." Fishing, he says, "is worthy the knowledge and practice of a wise man."

'Angling is an Art'

Auceps speaks for a while about why he loves Falconry. He also points out that the three of them deal in different elements. Venator is concerned with the element of Earth, Piscator is concerned with the element of Water, and Auceps is occupied with the element of Air: "In the air my troops of Hawks soar up on high, and when they are lost in the sight of men, then they attend upon and converse with the Gods; therefore I think my Eagle is so justly styled 'Jove's servant in ordinary'....from which height I can make her (the falcon) descend by a word from my mouth, which she both knows and obeys, to accept of meat from my hand, to own me for her master, to go home with me, and be willing the next day to afford me the

like recreation."

Venator sings the praises of hunting with hounds: "Hunting is a game for Princes and noble persons; it hath been highly prized in all ages; it was one of the qualifications that Xenophon bestowed on his Cyrus, that he was a hunter of wild beasts. Hunting trains up the younger nobility to the use of manly exercises in their riper age. What more manly exercise than hunting the Wild Boar, the Stag, the Buck, the Fox, or the Hare! How doth it preserve health, and increase strength and activity!" He says he can't praise hounds enough. Their scenting powers are formidable, he remarks, so much so that they are able to follow a scent despite changes in the landscape and the introduction of various other scents; they are able to follow a scent even when in the water. He also speaks admiringly of the music which a pack of hunting hounds makes.

Piscator further expounds on the element Water. He refers them to Genesis and the statement that Water was the first element upon which the Spirit of God moved. He points out that God ordered that myriad species emerge from Water and Water constitutes much of our bodies.

He talks about people's diets and argues that the wiser diet consists of herbs, salads and plenty of fish.

He points out that Angling is an art, because it's an art to deceive a trout with an artificial fly. A trout, he claims, is more sharp-sighted than any hawk. To be a good fisherman, he says, you must have an inquiring, searching and observing intelligence. You must have hope and patience, "and a love and propensity to the art itself; but having once got and practised it,

then doubt not but Angling will prove to be so pleasant, that it will prove to be like virtue, a reward to itself."

Walton remained active well into old age. The Restoration of Charles II in 1660 returned many of his friends in the Anglican clergy to positions of influence, and they were quick to reciprocate the acts of goodwill he had displayed during Cromwell's reign. Following the death of his second wife in 1662, Walton was employed as steward to the bishop of Worcester. At the bishop's residence of Farnham Castle in Winchester Walton continued to write and revise his published works.

In 1676 Walton asked a young follower, the poet Charles Cotton, to furnish a supplement on fly fishing for the fifth edition of *The Compleat Angler*, and the two pursued the project at a cottage on the banks of the Dove River in Derbyshire. On the 9th of August, 1683, the inveterate angler marked his ninetieth birthday by drafting a will and securing it with a seal given him by John Donne. He died three months later on December 15th, 1683, and was buried at Winchester Cathedral.

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The Visitor

One would think that an evening spent fishing a moorland river would be an innocent enough pastime. One could be mistaken however, for there are moments when the veil separating this world from the next can be surprisingly thin.

Would you like to hear of a supernatural encounter, experienced some years ago? Well.... if you're sure.....

Warm, and with just a hint of a southerly breeze, the June evening

was as perfect as one could wish for and as I wandered river-ward, cane fly rod in hand, the air hung heavy with the scent of dog-rose and elderflower.

From the surrounding fell-sides drifted the bleating of Herdwick and Swaledale, whilst over meadows rich in purple vetch and clover, uncountable insects hummed. The background to this mid-summer symphony rested with a tumbling beck fed river, whose roar was a constant as it cascaded between

steep sided dales and over a bed of emerald green slate.

Known to me since boyhood, this jewel of Westmoreland had drawn me back year on year, as its brown trout were both wild and tenacious. Averaging two to the pound, they rose freely to the fly on warm summer evenings such as this.

Leaving my car in the farmyard, I clambered over a wooden gate of remarkable age and marvelled at how, once again, the mesh of my landing net had managed to snag the only protruding bolt head in sight. Having untangled this spider's web of green nylon squares, I re-shouldered my fishing bag, and with a considerable sense of anticipation, strode on toward the river. Not only was this stretch of water one of the finest I had ever fished, I also had the owner's assurance that this evening I had it entirely to myself.

Before me, a high drystone wall ran parallel with the riverbank for some quarter of a mile; an ancient construction formed to prevent errant sheep from meeting a watery grave. This barrier being much too difficult to climb when clad in waders, the river was best accessed through a wide breach where, unbalanced by successive frost heave, the wall had collapsed into a jumble of uneven stones. Deep and with a back-eddy that always held trout, the pool lying directly opposite this gap was where I intended to first cast a fly this evening. Popular with the farm's waterfowl, this shelving pot had gained the nickname, 'The Duck's Nest.' A rather fitting title.

The temperature suddenly and inexplicably plummeted

With footfalls muffled by soft earth and a lush growth of grass, I now headed downhill and toward the uneven opening in the wall, the 9



Oblivious to my presence, the angler commenced to cast across the pool.



He landed a trout of about a pound... then simply vanished.

foot Hardy Palakona well balanced in my right hand. Scrambling over the scattering of tumbled down stones, I was struck by a strange phenomenon, as the air temperature, on what had been a balmy summer evening, suddenly and inexplicably plummeted. It was as though on

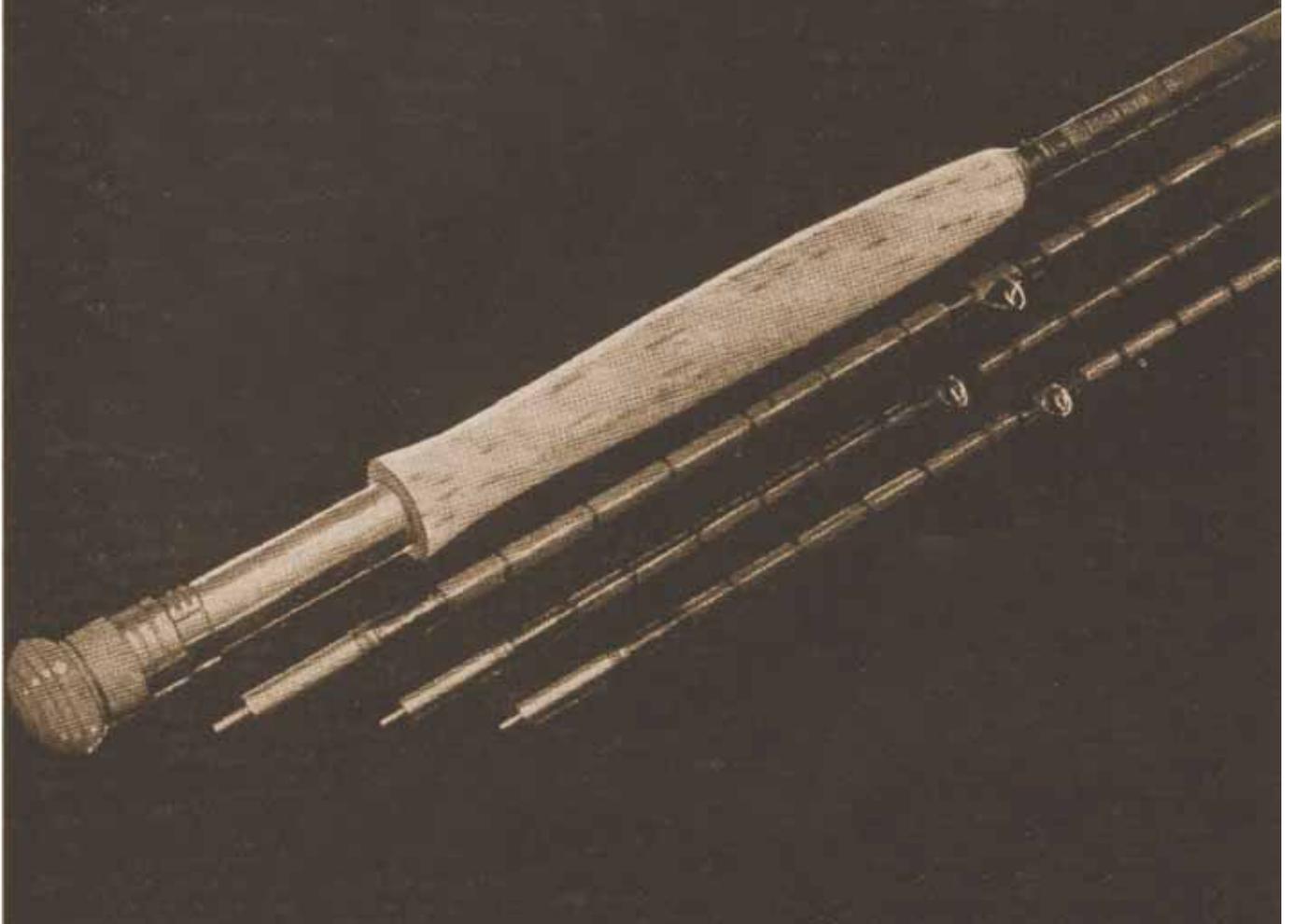
passing through the wall, I had stepped into a large refrigerator. If I had thought that this would be the evening's only surprise, I was wrong, for raising my eyes to view the river, I discovered that I was not alone.

Clearly, the owner's assurances

that I had the water to myself, counted for nothing, as there, standing right in front of me, was an angler already fishing the 'Duck's Nest'!

I have always credited myself with being a sportsman, and take pleasure in sharing waters with my

Using a built cane fly rod was rare enough in these days of carbon fibre.



fellow anglers, but I have to admit to a certain degree of annoyance on discovering that I had been beaten to my chosen pool and by one who had no right to be there!

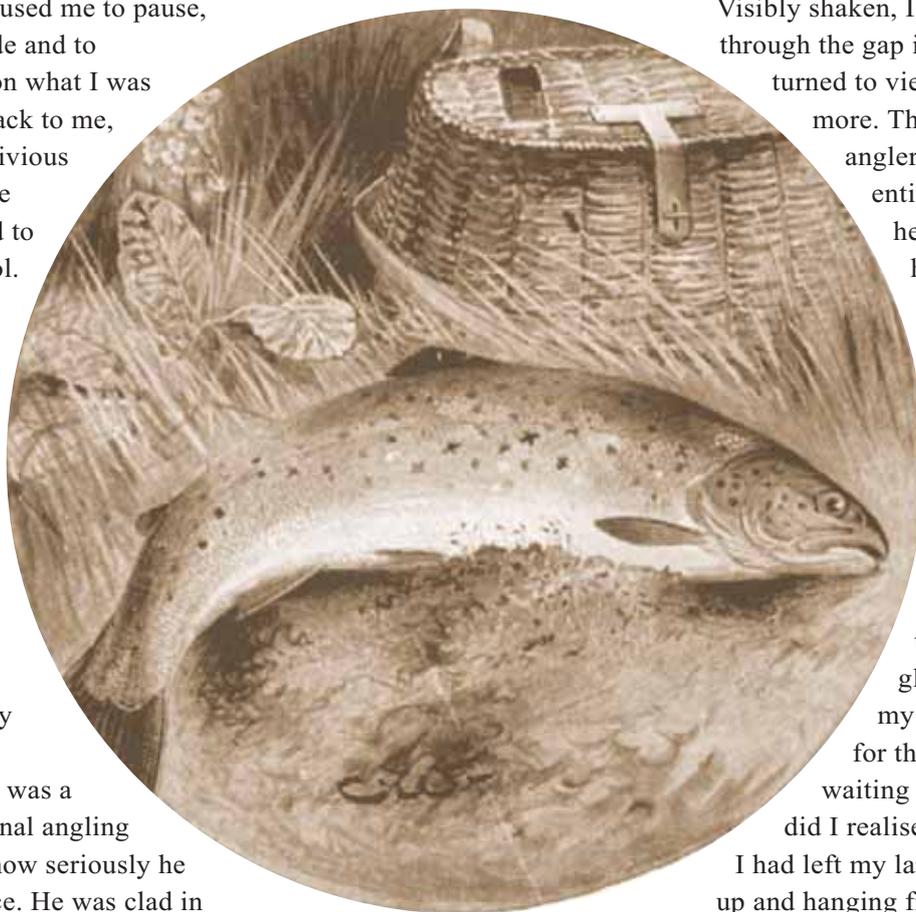
Fuelled by indignation, I took a step forward, intent on challenging my unwelcome competitor, but stopped. There was something about this interloper, something about his appearance that caused me to pause, almost in mid stride and to concentrate fully on what I was seeing. With his back to me, and seemingly oblivious to my presence, the angler commenced to cast across the pool. That he too fished with a built cane fly rod was pleasing to see, for in this age of carbon fibre it is rare enough. And although I resented his presence, I had to admit that this trespasser cast a fly very well indeed.

That this fellow was a disciple of traditional angling was apparent, by how seriously he took his appearance. He was clad in a jacket of rough brown tweed with matching breeks; the latter being largely obscured by a pair of heavy, black rubber waders. On his head he wore a trilby hat of faded grey felt. As the angler turned slightly, I could see that he sported a handlebar moustache and wore heavy framed spectacles. Between his teeth and emitting a rising cloud of smoke, was clenched a meerschaum pipe. All a little eccentric I thought.

I had entered a world of silence for now even the river was hushed

I continued to watch as the angler covered the pool with the most graceful casting. Smoke from his

pipe drifted toward me on the evening breeze although, oddly, I could smell nothing of it. There was an indefinable strangeness about the whole scene, for something wasn't right. From the moment I had stepped through the gap in the wall and noticed the sudden drop in temperature, I had entered a world of silence, for now even the river



The creel marked him as a disciple of traditional angling.

was hushed.

Suddenly, the angler became animated, as with rod bent he commenced to play a fish. Spellbound I stood, aware that I was witnessing something very strange indeed, as gradually, all colour bled from the scene, transforming it into a world of sepia. The trout, feeling the hook, leapt, but with a silent splash, and even the angler's reel failed to produce the customary whine. Then, grasping a small, wooden hooped net from where it hung on his creel, the angler before me stooped, carefully netted a fish

of about a pound and then simply vanished.

Standing, trembling from head to foot, I realised that in shock, I had dropped my fly rod in the grass at my feet. As I bent to retrieve the cane wand the sounds of nature returned to the dale and the chill that had been all pervading, ebbed into the warmth of a late June evening. Visibly shaken, I stumbled back through the gap in the wall and turned to view the pool once

more. The gravel, where the angler had stood was entirely deserted, for he, his fish and even his pipe smoke had disappeared as though they were never there.

With all thoughts of fishing now far from my consciousness, I hurriedly returned to the farmyard glancing back over my shoulder as I fled for the safety of my waiting vehicle. Only later did I realise that, in my flight, I had left my landing net hooked up and hanging from the bolt on the farm gate.

In the years since this incident occurred, I have not once returned to the river or its steep sided dale, nor could I be encouraged to do so. Furthermore, I have no explanation for what I witnessed there that evening at a shelving pot, so favoured by local waterfowl. Did I perhaps glimpse an Edwardian fisher in his moment of triumph, an event forever etched upon the celluloid of time? I don't know.

Should you wish to cast a line on this beck fed river, you are most welcome to do so. However, despite assurances to the contrary, you may discover that you don't have the water entirely to yourself.

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TEN YEARS ON

It's a cold spring day in January 2009, the early morning sun makes the frost glisten pink on cobwebs clinging to the dead rushes bordering the Six Mile Water in Antrim. The water runs high and clear but there is no sign of life, no minnows in the shallows, no trout in the pools. No otter or heron has trodden these banks in months, the stream has been polluted and winter floods have washed away the evidence, all the age classes of the trout, dollaghan and salmon wiped out along with the aquatic invertebrates which nourished them. The river runs sterile and barren.

It's hard to accept that such a thing could happen. All the signs were there, but no action was being taken. Polluters who had been polluting for ten years or more were given meaningless warning letters, a steady stream of toxic filth emanating from Mallusk Industrial Estate flowed down the Ballymartin tributary on a daily basis but businesses weren't being held to account.

Then it happened: in low water conditions a plug of deadly chemical oozed down the stream, killing everything. Trout thrashed and turned belly up, eels slithered up the banks convulsing and the freshwater shrimp floated downstream like rice krispies, their insides burned out. Colin from Pattersons Spade Mill phoned me at work, there were dead fish. I knew this was it! I contacted NIEA and every other government agency I could think of and mobilised the anglers from the club but it was all in vain, the pollution passed down the Ballymartin unhindered and into the Six Mile Water at Templepatrick. By the time it reached Dunadry there was a scene of utter devastation, dead and dying fish were everywhere, thrashing and convulsing, gulls and herons were eating the poisoned fish. By the time the pollution got to Antrim thousands of fish had perished, we put up signs not to bathe or



Anglers now respect their quarry and release them gently.

swim near the Loughshore, contacted farmers to stop livestock drinking the water and stood helplessly watching in horror as the beautiful Six Mile Water was destroyed before our eyes.

Distraught perhaps, but we weren't going to give up

Standing on banks on that January day in 2009, my mind goes back to the champion of the Six Mile Water, Alan Kirkpatrick, or 'Abbey' as he was known to his friends. Sadly Abbey had passed away just before the pollution, I was glad he couldn't see it for it would have broken his heart. Abbey could see the potential for the river and he told me of his plan to stamp out the pollution and poaching, install fish passes and initiate habitat enhancement and conservation measures, he was a man of vision and he loved the Six Mile Water river. We might be distraught but we weren't going to give up, Abbey's legacy would continue on and we would fight to bring the Six Mile back to health! Following the pollution a public meeting was held in the Antrim Forum and the public expressed their disgust at the incident, it ended in a Trust being set up and NIEA offered to send one of their officers to assist. Shortly afterwards a small core of people met in the Civic Centre and the Six Mile Water Trust was instigated. Eileen Mallon

from NIEA had the skill set to get things going, wonderfully efficient and with charm and determination to get her way, she was instrumental in getting us organised and a little group of anglers, birdwatchers, bat watchers, residents groups, etc., along with a council officer converged each month, to draw up a plan to help the river recover and protect it from further pollution.

Local businessman Martin Mc Kay donated a laptop and soon we had contacted Alan Keyes and Mark Smyth from Ballinderry River Trust, the Wild Trout Trust, Fish Legal, DCAL Fisheries, AFBI, Ulster Anglers Federation, Alan Morrow from DAERA and anyone else who may be able to help. A strategy was beginning to evolve. Eileen suggested we did kick sampling to check for pollution as well as signage, leaflet drops and visual checks, we knew most of the hot spots, Abbey already had shown us when he was alive. Eileen also helped arrange a meeting with the Environment Minister and just by chance a few days before the meeting another pollution had occurred but despite being called repeatedly NIEA hadn't responded so I changed the venue of the meeting to the pollution site. When I got to the meeting a few minutes late the minister was standing there seething and NIEA staff got a serious warning for not reacting. The

outcome was that he gave the go ahead for prosecutions; I directed NIEA staff to several sites and there were seven court prosecutions that first year, businesses started to pay attention to pollution after that!

Priorities and action

Our priority was to stop pollution but we knew more had to be done, drainage schemes had destroyed much of the salmonid habitat and we enlisted Tom Woods to do a survey, then John Kane and Richard Kennedy from DCAL Fisheries did a bit of fine tuning and indicated which areas to begin on. We contacted Henry Boyd from the Quarry and he donated stone and Lagan Ferruvial Constain were building the Larne carriageway so they donated two huge diggers and a tipper lorry plus drivers for the week as well as doing habitat enhancement schemes on the streams at the carriageway for which they got environmental accreditation. Eileen helped get £10k funding from NIEA and we raised another £12k from the Antrim & District Angling Association, I spoke to Ross Kenny the farmer and the first habitat scheme was somehow completed in a week. We were so lucky the weather had been kind and on the Friday afternoon as the

last of the plant equipment was towed off site the rains came and it lashed for days, I'll never forget the relief of locking the farm gate, the water was running down my collar, but the job was done. We had electro fished the site before the work and a test site just upstream, a year later we electro fished it again, the test site hadn't changed but the enhanced site score was through the roof, we fished through it three times and still there were more fish.

The design of the enhanced site is on the Wild Trout Trust website, paired deflectors at the top of the beat gives enough current to scour the river bed, keeping it clean; a deep holding spot for larger fish to rest; the middle is gravel mixed with assorted stones to provide numerous lies for mixed sizes of fish then a smooth gravel run at the tail for spawning.

This was the start of many projects, we had the backing of two local MLA's, Danny Kinahan and Paul Girvan who were instrumental in opening doors at Stormont and council offices to address the many issues regarding pollution control or rather the lack of it. We crossed swords with many agencies and developers but always came to some arrangement in the end, EEC Water Framework Legislation was on our side,

it was up to government agencies to uphold it.

Soon one project became another, there were bat surveys, bird boxes, kick sampling, litter lifts, talks for schools and community groups, submissions for planning and developments, electro fishing, more habitat enhancement projects, tree planting, working with schools, conservation measures for the angling clubs, upgrading of the local Waste Water Treatment Works and several pumping stations. Luckily we have a formidable negotiating team, some have experience through working with Belfast City Council, others have great environmental knowledge having worked for NIEA and yet others have great technical knowledge and one has super communication skills for working with schools and community groups.

If a problem wasn't being resolved there was a two-pronged approach: Stormont and meet with the minister, secondly, the Press, insert an article in the newspaper or a radio interview. Unfortunately in the cut and thrust of the modern world government resources are scarce and if you want something sorted you may have to fight for it and unfortunately the Trust has had to do this on many occasions. Fortunately farming issues were very ably handled by Alan Morrow and the DAERA team but other matters we had to call in or MLAs, Fish Legal, Ulster Angling Federation, EEC officials, the list goes on. We often fought tooth and nail to keep the river clean and stop building on the banks and it takes a strong team not to be disillusioned.

The river thrives and streams brim with aquatic life

All this work was not in vain. Many thought the Six Mile Water was dead but its pulse was still beating strongly in the myriad tributaries and the upper river. In these little side-streams lived the minnows, fry, the parr, the generations waiting to repopulate the river again, unseen and unnoticed, these streams brim with life in miniature and with the pollution flushed from the main



River Water Crowfoot exists only in the Six Mile Water in Ireland. It's a biodiversity red book listed species & provides oxygen, shade and habitat for fish and aquatic invertebrates.



This pollution seen entering the Ballymartin tributary had to be dealt with effectively.

river it wouldn't be long before the aquatic invertebrates and fish started to migrate into it. First out of the blocks were the freshwater shrimp, Gammarus, and with no predators or competition the population exploded, every kick sample revealed hundreds of them. Then gradually caddis, olives and stone-clingers arrived. Now that there was food for fish they came from the tributaries, the river was full of fat little brown trout, grown plump on a rich diet of Gammarus probably. We helped transplant the river water crowfoot which provides oxygen, shelter and habitat and it has flourished, no longer suffocated by algae because too much nitrate was entering the river from sewage and slurry.

Habitat enhancement provided cover and spawning redds for trout, dollaghan and salmon. This year saw huge shoals of minnows for the kingfishers to feed their young. The dollaghan arrived and spawned, anglers had a new respect for the fish and gently released them, they put on a couple of pounds every season out on Lough Neagh so they were growing to prodigious sizes, these fish were thrilling anglers but more importantly laying thousands of ova on the redds and recruitment into the lough is phenomenal, which also describes the number of dollaghan returning to the

river in recent years.

Recently we have been working with DAERA placing tags in large dollaghan so we can track their movements, their spawning grounds and where they feed, learning more about this iconic fish. This will help us to manage the Lough Neagh Co Op scale fishery to provide

jobs and continue to improve the fishery by assessing the harvestable surplus and allowing fish free access to the river to improve the fishery and increase the recruitment back into the Lough year on year.

Ten years on and the Six Mile Water is thriving. There are otters, kingfishers, herons, salmon, bats, dollaghan, etc. It's a fantastic angling and tourist resource, there are walks and visitor attractions along its banks so families and tourists can enjoy this beautiful place. No longer is the river taken for granted, it is protected and managed, studied and assessed, the best dollaghan fishery of the Lough Neagh basin and so much more besides; the legacy of 'Abbey' Kirkpatrick lives on and I wish he could see it now!

Editor's Note: Michael Martin often writes eloquently about his angling experiences to delight and entertain readers. This time we asked him to describe the transformation of his local river and the vital role played by the hard working voluntary team and others in its enhancement.



The river is now a fantastic angling, community and tourism resource.

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TAXIDERMY ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP



The Taxidermy Association of Ireland (TAI) is a non-profit organisation founded back in 2017 to fill the need for a professional body to bring together both taxidermists as well as those with a general interest in taxidermy across the island of Ireland. Their goal is to create a productive working environment where our members can find help and support while sharing ideas and furthering the field of taxidermy.

Following the incredible success of last year's event, the T.A.I held its second national taxidermy championship back in September 2019. The event took place at the beautiful Castle Oak House Hotel in Limerick, and special deals were made

available for those attending.

The main guest speaker this year was Martin Berndt from Dortmund, Germany. There are few who have experienced large mammals in the wild as Martin has. His extensive first-hand knowledge enables him to know what a perfect taxidermy specimen should look like. As an accomplished craftsman Mr. Berndt is capable of creating unique works of art. This is where field experience combined with technical mastery makes all the difference. His achievements in international competitions are proof. He won first place at the World Taxidermy Championships 2012. At the European Championships 2010, in each of the eight categories he entered, Martin

Berndt placed among the top three. During his seminar Martin worked a roe deer buck shoulder mount.

Attendees were allowed close-up views and no question was left unanswered as Mr. Berndt continued his work. The roe cape had already been tanned previously and the roe shoulder form was modified to fit the measurements of the original animal.

Other speakers involved some of Ireland's very own: TAI Chairman Michael Dunne and Secretary Tracey Murphy covered a more traditional method of body reconstruction, by holding a presentation that covered the wrapping of a wood-wool body for a small fox cub. During this presentation attendees were encouraged to take part in reconstructing the limbs, and were shown what pitfalls to watch out for and where to pay extra attention.

Another seminar covered the often troublesome subject of modifying a shop-bought mannikin. These are rigid polyurethane forms that can be purchased for a wide variety of species, however these need to be modified to fit an individual specimen properly; after all no two animals are the same. This helpful demonstration was presented by Peter Gregory and Dave Hogan.

Peter Gregory has been practising taxidermy for the last 35 years. His trade was handed down to him by his father, as successful taxidermist with a booming trade. With his father big into bird watching Mr. Gregory would often come along as a child to Bull Island and the Saltees off Wexford. Needless to say, that passion for wildlife which he grew up with never left him.

Alongside Mr. Gregory was Dave Hogan. Mr. Hogan is a full-time taxidermist from the beautiful county Kerry. He first came across taxidermy at



Professional Birds 1st and Best in Show - David Irwin



Professional Mammals 1st - Ingrid Houwers

a very young age and has been fascinated ever since. He mainly works on mammals; from the smallest right up to the larger specimen. Mr. Hogan has been practising taxidermy for well over 30 years now and is a firm believer in the fact that you never stop learning.

Judges and Results

Returning to the championships event this year was the esteemed international award-winning judge Rick Way from the Netherlands. Mr. Way, who has been practicing taxidermy for 27 years, started when he was just 11 years old, along with his good friend Peter Spanenburg. Peter has previously won best bird taxidermist in Europe. For the last 6 years Mr. Way has worked as a full-time taxidermist at “De Museumwinkel” in the Netherlands and also at home for his own clients and collection.

This year Mr. Way was joined by colleague Wesley Kevenaer, a mammal specialist, who has also won many awards and was recently given placement at the world renowned Bouten & Zoon VOF taxidermy company. Together this ‘dynamic judging duo’ focussed on giving everyone the tips and tricks needed to learn the most from their competition experience and further improve their skills and standards.

Unlike the previous year, this time all pieces were judged using the international points standard. In keeping with this, European point scoring

system pieces are scored from 0 – 100, based on anatomical as well as technical aspects. A piece needed a minimum of 70 points to qualify for 3rd place, 80 for

2nd, and 90 for 1st. This meant that sometimes placings could not be awarded if the minimum amount of points were not reached. This system creates a fairer balance when there aren't many competing submissions for certain categories. Rarity or size of specimen is completely irrelevant, although technical difficulty does come into play. In short, a mouse can win over a lion if it scores higher; it all comes down to technical skill and anatomical correctness.

As is customary, judges picked the Best in Show from all the submitted pieces that had been placed. The Public's Choice award was down to all the attendees present, hotel staff and the viewing public to cast their votes on.



Professional Shoulder mounts - 1st Ingrid Houwers



Hobbyist birds 1st place, Tam Powell

Results:

Junior (anyone under 18) placing awarded regardless of points

- 1st - Aoife Lennon - Grey Squirrel
- 2nd - Rebecca Considine - Rook

Hobbyists

Mammals

- 1st - not awarded
- 2nd - Janika Wagner - Red Squirrel, 86 points
- 3rd - Gail McKie - Red Squirrel, 70 points

Birds

- 1st - Tam Powell - Rook, 91 points
- 2nd - Gail McKie - Songthrush, 81 points
- 3rd - Tam Powell - Magpie, 75 points

Shoulder

- 1st - not awarded
- 2nd - not awarded
- 3rd - Janika Wagner - Roe deer, 73 points

Professionals

Mammals

- 1st - Ingrid Houwers - Juvenile Red Fox, 94 points
- 2nd - not awarded
- 3rd - not awarded

Birds

- 1st - David Irwin - Goldfinch (right), 91 points
- 2nd - David Irwin - Gyr Falcon, 90 points
- 3rd - David Irwin - Goldfinch (left), 85 points

Shoulder

1st - Ingrid Houwers - Red Fox, 91 points

2nd - Dave Hogan - Roe deer, 86 points
 3rd - Dave Hogan - Blue Wildebeest, 81 points

Honourable mentions (pieces that score above 70)

Peter Gregory - Fallow deer, 70 points
 David Irwin - Indian eagle owl, 71 points
 David Irwin - Pintail, 72 points
 Peter Gregory - Roe deer, 75 points

Best in Show - David Irwin, Goldfinches

Public Choice - Dave Hogan, Roe deer pedestal

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People's Choice - Dave Hogan



Houwers

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ART & ANTIQUES

Earlier this year I noticed an auction house had withdrawn some war time memorabilia because the items involved were said to have annoyed a certain section of our society. Now I know there is such a thing as bad taste, poor judgement and even downright carelessness among some vendors when offering certain items for sale. Make no bones about it, I would draw the line sharply if certain items of pornography, and others which created distaste came to auction at an open sale.

But in an era which will go down in history for its over-egging of so-called political correctness we just cannot object to everything that comes to sale just because it might cause offence to one section or another of society.

I know terrible things have been done during two World Wars. Indeed terrible things have been perpetrated during all wars. But as a sharp reminder of man's inhumanity to man it is no sin, surely, to bring the items of war to public attention at a public sale.

There are many things I would not



Jack B Yeats' 'On the Skibbereen railway' made €120,000 (ADAMS)

buy or even consider putting a bid on because I personally found them distasteful. But so long as they did not offend public decency I would leave it for the other man or women to make their judgement on whether or not they should have them.

Auctions, I believe, reflect not only the present society we live in but earlier times which are almost forgotten. I know some people would be annoyed to find

the shackles of a 17th century plantation slave coming under the hammer. Others don't like to see memorabilia from the Nazi era appearing in the sale room.

Then there are those who would adopt a prudish attitude towards something as innocent as an early saucy 20th century postcard.

You really don't have to like everything!

Of course you don't have to like everything that appears before your eyes in an auction room. But don't fault either the person whose taste is for the weird, the bizarre or the downright ridiculous. We are still, as far as I know, still entitled to free choice. So if you decide something is not for you then don't chase after it. And if another person does feel an affinity with such an item as an Iron Cross, a Hitler poster or whatever, let them have it.

I know with the passage of time, the sense of evil that sometimes attaches itself to the relics of war, of man-made catastrophes and personal belongings of someone, who was not a pillar of society, diminishes. But it would be a sad day, and a poorer one for those of us who enjoy the hustle and the bustle of the auction room, if we all to make clarion calls for the banning of these items from public sales.



Paul Henry's 'Connemara landscape' sold for €120,000 (ADAMS)



Rowan Gillespie bronze 'Peace II' sold at €26,000 (ADAMS)



John Behan's Famine Ship bronze made €19,000 (ADAMS)



Cleef & Arpels sapphire, diamond and turquoise bracelet sold at €55,000 (ADAMS)

Just imagine here in Ireland: would we no longer have copies of the Irish Proclamation coming out of dusty attics to be appreciated by certain collectors? Would we no longer sell the 'Sash my Father Wore'? No way. They are all important items from our diverse history. And people have a right to sell them and other people have an equal right to purchase them. So bring them all out, I say. Would we ban items such as old Ulster Volunteer Force guns and other relics from that troublesome era? No. Personally I believe that every effort should be made to preserve the relics of war even if it is only to remind ourselves and those who follow us about the folly of such confrontations.

In over forty years of frequenting auction rooms I don't believe I have seen an item that hadn't earned its place on the catalogue or sales sheet. But today it would seem it is easy to be offended by the simplest and most innocent of things. The sales room will be a poorer, barer place if we continue to ban things from it just because we feel they may give offence to someone else.

AROUND THE SALES

Now we are well into autumn hopefully we can anticipate fine lots and equally fine prices from the many sales between now and the end of the year.

Dublin based ADAMS Irish Art sale in September saw a fine Paul Henry oil, 'Connemara landscape' sell for €120,000

which was twice its low estimate. An enigmatic Jack B Yeats, 'On the Skibbreen railway,' an oil on panel went for a similar amount. Another Paul Henry oil, 'Digging Potatoes' realised €110,000 while Sir John Lavery's 'The Red House' made €69,000 and was followed by a Gerry Dillon 'Fighting Tinkers' at €52,000.

A Rowan Gillespie bronze, 'Peace II' came under the hammer at €26,000 while a Tony O'Malley oil, made €25,000 and an Anne Madden oil, €20,000.

John Behan's fine Famine Ship bronze was well appreciated at €19,000. A Nathaniel Hone, 'Cattle resting' made €18,000.

In the **Fine Jewellery & Watches** sale, also in September, a Van Cleef & Arpels sapphire, diamond and turquoise bracelet made €55,000, an attractive pair of sapphire, diamond and turquoise ear clips, also by Van Cleef & Arpels realised €30,000 and were followed by an Art Deco diamond and emerald bracelet, circa 1925 at €26,000.

In ADAMS 'At Home' sale earlier in the month, a pair of Victorian oak and brass mounted hall stools, attributed to James Shoolbred, went at €4,200 which was well over their high estimate.

A mid 19th century open bookcase of rectangular form made €2,700 and a George IV bowfront serving table €1,800 with a fine Irish mahogany longcase clock by Chancellor selling for €1,800.



This pair of Victorian hall stools at €4,200 (ADAMS)

Abandoned in the Bush

Participating in African Safaris usually means running into strange or difficult situations from time to time. Over my years of involvement, several issues arose – mainly minor problems such as running out of fuel, ammunition, water and even getting lost. These were considered as almost routine events. Another more serious incident involved confrontation with the local Witch Doctor - yes, they are alive and thriving in rural Africa - a story for another day perhaps. The strangest of all was an evening with darkness descending rapidly when a rascal of a tracker deliberately disappeared leaving me alone in the bush. African trackers are born with an uncanny ability to identify and follow animal species in all conditions.

One chap that I frequently hunted with, Joe, not the man in question here, was way above average and could be

trusted with one's life. He showed me many tracking methods including backtracking – circling back on our own tracks to see if we were being followed by a two or four legged predator. When this incident occurred, we were again hunting in South Africa's Limpopo province. I was well familiar with terrain, camp and staff having previously been in charge of the operation on a number of occasions when the owners were away. Their absence on those occasions was due to attending distant funerals of colleagues who had been murdered by marauding armed gangs!

The tracker in this situation was known to me, not considered the most efficient, usually sullen. I had spent that particular afternoon moving slowly through the bush with this bad humoured gentleman, who was more interested in smoking some local 'weed' (marijuana mixed with tobacco) wrapped in

newspaper, than in hunting.

Remonstrating with him constantly to stop smoking the evil-smelling stuff fell on deaf ears.

We were supposedly tracking a very large warthog that had been spotted in the district and were unlikely ever to get close enough for a shot due to his smoke advertising our presence. Having being dropped off earlier by bakkie (4 x 4) some miles from the hunting lodge, the plan was to spend the afternoon slowly making our way back, checking for the easily identifiable spoor of the warthog.

After finding tracks which could only be those of "that" warthog, we began following them. As the afternoon wore on the tracker lost the tracks, became even more disgruntled muttering away in the Xhosa dialect. African dialects with their numerous clicking sounds are quite unfathomable to European ears, so his words were lost on me. Picking up a few



The author with top tracker Joe.



Rolling bushveld - formidable - even in daylight.

Afrikaans words here and there was relatively easy as the Boer language is a mixture of mainly Dutch, German and a smattering of English. Given the Latin influence on most European languages, it's possible to have a basic grasp of what was being said. However, South Africa has eleven official languages, nine more

than most foreigners can cope with.

I had never witnessed lightning like it

Throughout the afternoon ominous dark clouds had gathered overhead – although vision skywards is limited in the bush. Later, loud rumblings of

thunder rolled in, the sky darkened rapidly, soon to be illuminated by the most extraordinary display of dancing lightning. Lightning of all shapes and dimensions, the likes of which I had never previously witnessed. Incredibly, there was no rainfall as the wind increased dramatically. We were experiencing a dry thunderstorm!

Possibly the incoming weather or fallout from smoking weed may have precipitated a further deterioration in the tracker's attitude. By now he was acting quite aggressively and suddenly made an unsuccessful attempt to pull the rifle from my shoulder. He tried again – each time I pushed him back. Having failed with that, he put his hand on his knife and took a step closer. The situation was ominous – face contorted in the flickering shadows cast by lightning and with knife in hand, clearly up to no good, he approached yet again. In desperation, near panic and pointing the .270 Mauser, I told him to step back or else. He retreated – then shouted that he was going back to the lodge to get help, whatever that meant - and disappeared



The elevated observation hut.



total darkness accompanied by nature's noisy fireworks display was one of those never-to-be-forgotten experiences.

Out of his mind on wacky substances

As dinner was being served at the lodge around 8pm someone noticed that I was missing, it was assumed I was in my room, until my wife arrived and confirmed otherwise. The tracker had been seen earlier heading for his nearby quarters and when questioned as to my whereabouts his replies were incoherent – at this stage apparently out of his mind on wacky substances. Immediately several bakkies, including one driven by my wife with accompanying guide, were dispatched in all directions to search for me, each in touch with base by radio.

Eventually, while still stumbling along, headlights from a vehicle travelling at high speed illuminated the dirt track some distance behind me. Driven by one of the camp staff, the appearance of its lights was a most welcome sight. After almost two hours of walking in the wrong direction, the seat in that 4 x 4 felt like the safest, most comfortable place on earth!

Back at the lodge I related what had happened, quickly wiped the rifle clean - always a priority - then we set out to find that tracker. Why he had chosen me as a prospective victim remains unclear, he had to know he wasn't dealing with a raw beginner. Apparently he had last been seen heading in the direction of the metalled road several miles away. He never came back. It further transpired that he was on HIV retro-viral drugs and was presently in remission. I reckon he was to be pitied and needing more support than he was ever likely to get. His situation had to have been desperate. AIDS is still a frightful and mostly terminal scourge rampant throughout the African Continent and along with shocking murder rates receives scant news coverage in Europe. When things settled down in camp, the usual gallows humour followed. Smart remarks and such, someone even left a map in my room. All good for a laugh - and I never did get "that" warthog!

Marie Brophy with the bakkie she drove in the search.

into the oncoming blackness. So I was left standing in the bush in darkness, with high winds, thunder and lightning raging all around. Whatever about knowing the direction of camp in daylight, finding it in sheer darkness was going to be nigh impossible.

We were in leopard territory and leopards are nocturnal feeders

Quite a difficult situation to be in, as I didn't know if he really was going back to the lodge - and if so, why wouldn't he have suggested that we return together? By now it was around 6pm, pitch black with zero visibility. Clearly the fellow had wanted to steal the rifle - it would have been valuable to trade for drugs, alcohol etc. raising the distinct possibility that he could be waiting somewhere to waylay me. Perhaps he was hoping I'd somehow get myself injured, or worse - and he could return in the morning to retrieve the rifle and ammunition? There was a further possibility that wild animals might decide to have Irish stew for supper - we were in leopard territory and leopards are nocturnal feeders. Hyenas or wild dogs in packs are not exactly timid either, especially when they scent fear. Not very comforting thoughts accompanied by howling wind, booming thunder and

lightning flashing eerie images on the surrounding bush. To be blunt, I was scared stiff.

The only possible plan was to find a track and start walking. Luckily, being aware of the main track's general direction I stumbled back there within minutes. Knowing we were in the Southern Hemisphere I looked towards the stars hoping to get some form of bearings. Silly idea - the sky was black! No compass either; it was back in my room along with the torch. No water, it had gone with the tracker. In daylight it would have been so easy to recover a sense of direction and walk towards the lodge. By now the situation had become desperate.

A custom-built observation hut overlooking a water-hole was somewhere in the vicinity. Specifically built high above ground level and accessible only by ladder it would be a safe place to await daylight, assuming it could be located. Mentally flipping a coin, I turned left and walked slowly, feeling my way more than seeing it, rifle at the ready with a round chambered, thumb on the safety catch. Unfortunately, I was heading for Zimbabwe and the Limpopo River which were just a few miles away - the opposite direction to the lodge, although I wasn't to know this until later. Stumbling along that track in

Obituary

Joe Morrison 1956 - 2019

It is with deep regret and sadness that I write about the death of my great friend Joe Morrison. Joe passed away on Thursday 19th September after a long illness at his home surrounded by his family.

Joe was very well known within the gundog fraternity and was recognised by all who knew him for his great passion for countryside sports.

Joe was one of the founding committee members of the Ulster Select gundog club alongside misters Eddie Moore, John Rea, Ronnie Spence, Ronnie Humphries, and Joe McGivern. He judged and competed many times both in Northern Ireland and in Scotland in international club events. In addition to dog handling, Joe was also involved in a small duck shoot in Annahilt, often accompanied by his young grandson Johnny, rearing a variety of game birds.

After being an active member of gundog clubs for many years, Joe was voted in as the Field Trial Secretary for the Labrador Retriever Club of Northern Ireland, a position he held for several years and, as I'm sure all who were involved with the club would agree, he did a stalwart job.

In his professional life, Joe showed his talents as an entrepreneur by owning his own pest control business and consistently demonstrating an avid knowledge of both entomology and vermin control.

I first met Joe many years ago at training classes held by Mr Michael McKee and Mr Jack Skelly that began a friendship that would last over twenty-seven years. He had just purchased a black Labrador bitch and found his first victory in the novice class of the late Mr Larry Lee's charity event held at Magherascouse in Ballygowan. This was, however, was just the first taste of success Joe was to have in the world of gundog competition and, like many of us, was all it took to start a lifelong



(l-r) Eddie Moore, Martin Rush, Michael McKee and the late Joe Morrison.

association with his sport.

When I think of Joe now my mind goes back to the early days when he picked up with his gundogs in both Rademon and Clandeboye estates and particularly on the Copeland Islands. Mr John Agnew had the shooting rights to the island where Joe, myself, Billy Higginson, Tony Kent, Michael McKee, and not forgetting the late Harry McCarrol, were the regular team, spending the day gathering up to two hundred partridge. It was hard work for both man and dog, but Joe, always ready with a joke and laugh, would help get us through the day until we could return to the mainland for some well deserved sustenance and refreshment. This is how I like to think of him.

Generous in nature, Joe was always there to give advice to novice handlers. He organised and oversaw training classes for the Labrador Retriever Club of Northern Ireland, keen to pass on the experience and skills accumulated through years of competing in both

working tests and field trials to anyone who showed an interest.

In addition to dog handling, Joe was involved in a small duck shoot in Annahilt.

Joe was made a Kennel Club B Panel Retriever Judge a role he undertook with the highest sense of pride and dedication to fair play in a sport he had dedicated years of his life to. I never knew him to refuse a judging position if he were asked, right up until he was no longer able to do so. Gundogs and country pursuits gave Joe years of enjoyment, friendships, and memories. They introduced me to one of my great friends who I shall miss, but through our shared interests have given me a wealth of happy times to remember him by.

It was an honour and a privilege to know Joe Morrison, and I would like to send my condolences to his wife, Jacqueline, daughter Hannah, and his son Johnny and all his family.

Martin Rush

Terrier, Lurcher & Whippet Show Roundup

Mid & East Antrim Charity Working Dog Show & Race Day Sunday 11th August, 'Field of Dreams Schooling Track,' Maghera

Set in the rolling countryside of Maghera on the edge of the beautiful North Coast of Ireland is the now famous 'Field of Dreams Schooling Track,' the venue for the Charity Dog Show and Race Day. There was a very nice crowd of like minded countrysports people all out with the same goal in mind, to bring a trophy home and generally enjoy a good relaxing event.

Showing Results

Children's Handling Class Cayce Coyle with Tyson

Lurcher Champion Earl Gardiner with Silus

Whippet Champion Colin Tucker with Cooper

Terrier Champion Aimee Higginson with Toby

Overall Champion Pup Davy Best with Danny

Overall Show Champion and Best in Show Aimee Higginson with Toby

Congratulations to all above winners and well done.

Racing Results

Bull Cross Charlene Rafferty with Shifter, Reserve Charlene Rafferty with Red

Hairy Dogs Earl Gardiner with Cillus, Reserve Danny Maxwell with Blue

U21" Lurcher Fiona Devlin with Robin, Reserve Earl Gardiner with Bonny

U23" Lurcher Alison Gamble with Zara, Reserve Fiona Devlin with Batman

O23" Kirsty Harper with Joker, Reserve Michelle Rafferty with Sally

Whippets Sean Burke with Lilly, Reserve Susanne Addis with Poppy

Thanks to everybody who came to support this show and to organisers Chontelle Mc Meekin & Mark Mc Callion and 'Field of Dreams' owner Joe Hurley Chontelle Mc Meekin has informed me that i £900 was collected on Sunday in memory of Christopher Hurley and the treatment from the Marie Curie organisation, with some more cash to come in.



(Above) Colin Tucker with Champion Whippet Cooper.

(Left) Overall Champion and best in show Aimee Higginson with Toby and owner of The Field Of Dreams Schooling Track Joe Hurley.



All the Racing winners.



Earl Gardiner with Champion Lurcher Silus.

Tullyish Show & Race Day 25 August

This was one of the best venues for a show that I have been to this year, with ringside parking, well spaced out rings and a good heavy up hill racetrack. The weather displayed what a good summers day should be, a scorcher, and this no doubt brought the crowds out to full capacity. No matter how many shows I have been to over the years I still meet and make new friends. What a lovely job this can be.

Showing Results

Overall Champion Pup
Stewart Graham with Ace, Reserve
Kieran Gribben with Buttons
Overall Champion and Best in Show
Paul Mc Keown with Pops, Reserve

Neil Pinkerton with Ben.
Northern Ireland Champion of
Champions Whippets
Davy Best with Merlin, Reserve
Janet Duke with Luca
Northern Ireland Champion of
Champions Lurchers
Neil Pinkerton with Ben, Reserve
Maurice Mc Dowell with Blue
Northern Ireland Champion of
Champions Terriers
Paul McKeown with Pops, Reserve
Eamo McErlain with Spooky

Racing Results

Simulated Racing Neil Pinkerton
with Jake, Reserve Barry Reavey with
Twister
Under 21" Rose Mc Coy with Texas
Hairy Under Danny Maxwell with
Blue

Hairy Over Sheamus Harte with Nora
Under 23" Alison Gamble with Zira
Over 23" Michelle Rafferty with
DINO

Bull Cross Kirsty Harpur with Regal
Congratulations to the winners and
many thanks to the Judges and to
organisers John Barry and Paul Mc
Alinden and their back up team for a
first class show.

The End of Season Sporting Whippet Club NI Dog Show/Race Day and Barbecue, 15th September, Ballee Park, Ballymena.

As this was the last show of 2019, there was a large turnout of Whippet paws on the ground. Although a little bit nippy, we were blessed with good weather all day. With the barbecue lit,



Tullyish Overall Champion Pup Stuart Graham with Ace, Reserve Kieran Gribben with Buttons.



Racing at Tullyish Sean Burke with Lily.



Neil Pinkerton with Ben, Reserve Maurice McDowell with Blue along with Judge Thomas Coleman.



Davy Best with Merlin Reserve Janet Duke with Luca and Judge Tom Barry.

burgers and sausages on the grill, pigeon soup simmering in the pot we were well catered for.

Racing Results and Overall Points winners from 2019 season

KC Grade A Pat McGovern with Musketeer, Kirsty Fyffe with Rascal, Colin Tucker with Cooper, Tracy Gill with Luca

KC Grade B anet Duke with Oscar, Sean Burke with Jet, Tracy Gill with Isla, John McStay with Jack

KC Grade C Shane McKillian with Frankie, John McStay with Pip, Shane McKillian with Suzie, John McStay with Jill

KC Veterans Lisa Dumigan with Frankie, Colin Tucker with Tia, Rea Wilson with Otis, Pat McGovern with Charley

Non KC Pups Stephen Jackson with

Buck, Stephen Jackson with Sasha
Non KC Adults Sean Burke with Lily, Barry Chambers with Alfie, Suzanne Addis with Poppy G Fyffe with Roxy

Overall Points Winners 2019

KC Adults Kirsty Fyffe with Rascal, Shane McKillian with Suzie

KC Veterans Colin Tucker with Tia, Lisa Dumigan with Frankie

KC Pups Shane McKillian with Frankie, Sean Burke with Jet

Non KC Adults Barry Chambers with Alfie, Sean Burke with Lily

Showing Results

Children’s Handling

Mason Thompson with Harley, Ava Rose Leonard with Nova, Abi Fyffe with Bindy

Overall Champion Whippet Suzanne Addis with Poppy, Reserve Steven Dumigan with Frankie

Champion Child Handler 2019 Conghal Burke.

Champion of Champion Whippet Elaine Smyth with Millie

Reserve Suzanne Addis with Poppy
Many thanks to Judges: Barry Holland and Paul Morrison for a job well done. Thanks also to Chairperson, Chontelle Mc Meekin and Mark Mc Callion, Vice Chairman John Mc Stay, Racing Manager Janet Duke and Tracy Gill, Secretary Lisa Dumigan, and all the hard working committee of the Sporting Whippet Club NI, for a most successful and satisfying year of Showing and Racing at Ballee Park in 2019.

As the showing and racing season comes to an end and the hunting season begins, I will look back on 2019 with the fondest of memories. I made many new friends in the canine world, we helped various charities and clubs along the way.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all the good men and women who have supported this Club and all clubs throughout the year. I hope you have all enjoyed the shows and race days, and hope to see you all again in 2020. Keep safe and God bless.



Champion of Champions Whippet Winner Elaine Smyth with Millie.



Racing at the Sporting Whippet Club NI.



Overall Show Champion Suzanne Addis with Poppy Reserve Steven Dumigan with Frankie.



Stephen Jackson and Colin Tucker and their winning Whippets along with Judge Barry Holland.

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TECKELS AND PRINCES



The dynamic duo Cider and Poppy.

It's been a while since I folded a 1st September duck, but that's exactly what happened this year, quite by accident. It was a dull, wet & cold day and I was home alone. The Teckels and lurchers had been exercised and fed and I was - unusually- at a loose end. I realised it was the opening day and as the light began to fall a little, I loaded my shotgun, some 4s and a young Teckel called Poppy into the truck and made for the river. I unloaded, slipped a bright orange elastic signal band on Poppy and set off in the direction of where we would wait for a crossing mallard.

I had in my cartridge bag a small folding saw and I stopped on the banking on the way down and began to cut back the tree branches and other overgrowth that had closed off the tunnel that lets us through the cover in winter. I had not visited the river all summer and the growth was phenomenal, so much so that it had completely closed the usually well-beaten walk way to the bank.

As Poppy watched and waited, I cut my way through and within a few minutes we had a good clear path. This

would not only make it easier, but safer too, as it has been all too easy to get snagged on a branch coming back through in the dark and risk injuring an eye. This happened me only a year ago and the saving grace was the contact lens in my eye! I walked through the tunnel, making contact with a fine branch which hit my eye and apart from initial panic, did no harm at all save for my contact lens which rolled up into the corner of my eye and acted like a preventive barrier and no doubt saved me injury or at least a painful eye for a few days. Lenses have saved my eyes before as well. While cutting with a grinder after I removed the lens it had a pin head sized hole burned onto it.

The river was in flood and the usual two or three foot drop to the water on the first bend was gone and the water was now up on the flat where we normally walk. I doubted there'd be any ducks on the water in these conditions. Other areas differ, but here the opportunity for a duck is most likely in low water and calm conditions when it seems ideal for them to feed on the river bottom, but today wasn't looking good. Our only chance would be a 'mover'

crossing to or from somewhere else.

I missed the first and folded the second

As we rounded the first bend, peering between two whins I spotted a pair of teal on the water. This was an unusual occurrence as it was firstly very early for teal and secondly because of the totally wrong conditions for this area. I sent Poppy forward and kept where I was, my thinking was that they may come back over me. As luck would have it, they went forward, and I missed the first and folded the second which hit the water quickly, followed up by Poppy who wasted no time getting to it and making a swift retrieve to my hand. The teal looked like a mallard in her small jaws, but she made short work of it, fetching it up out of the water and onto the bank.

Poppy has for some reason taken to shooting very well. She arrived with me in late August '18 and it was early November when I took her for a walk along the river bank where we flushed and shot a teal and it fell almost at her feet. She picked it up and carried all the way back to the Jeep and hasn't stopped retrieving since.



Poppy's First teal.



In full flight.

My Teckel bitch 'Cider Vom Nonnenkloster' or Cider as I call her, celebrated her first birthday in September. It seemed like her third or fourth as not only does it feel like she has been here a long time, but she has matured very quickly. Cider has been a different experience for me in terms of Teckels. She was around 18 weeks when she arrived as she wasn't allowed to travel from Germany until 12 weeks old, but even then she seemed older than she was. She was a delightful little pup to own, she is bright, inquisitive and full of confidence.

Cider and my trip to Germany to collect her was an unforgettable experience too. My friend Julia Szer selected Cider from the litter as her dog Milo is Cider's sire. As well as being a superb working dog acquiring endless championships and titles across Europe, he is a great worker. I knew from the beginning with that foundation behind Cider and being Julia's choice, I had a great pup and this is proving true on a daily basis.

I work Teckels to their full ability and find that each one has its own talent and strength as it grows. From the beginning Cider showed phenomenal prey drive and also great concentration while blood tracking. There can be a tendency in our part of the world for a young puppy to be left sitting in the kennel until that 'big day,' when it is a year old and is taken into the wide world to learn what its life will be about

- but definitely not Teckels and not in Germany.

Dark evenings were spent training

It is early October as I write, the hunting season has opened and the long days of summer have passed. Cider arrived with me in mid January this year so of course there would be no hunting for her as the season drew to an end and she was far too young. We spent the dark evenings training, which was easy as Julia Szer is an exceptional dog trainer and gave both Cider and I a good grounding! I found how good Cider's concentration was and attention not only in blood tracking but also on the place board. I only have to say 'place' for her attitude to change. "Teckels cannot be trained," was what I always heard and what I always believed, however after my trip to Germany in January, Julia took all those ideas and threw them straight out the window! Teckels can be trained, they can be trained really well and they like to be trained. My bitch Poppy was seven months when Cider arrived, never had a day's training and with what I had been taught in Germany, she was retrieving a few days.

Place boards, blood tracking and training aside, what about hunting? Early September was too warm, we had a few very early mornings but it was unpleasant and the only work the dogs received was retrieving ducks from the water. But even then they were minimal

and Cider got only a few opportunities for a retrieve while Poppy had more.

Early October had arrived when I placed a locator collar on Cider, took my shotgun we headed to check a few local fox burrows in the hope that we might flush a fox as they had been causing problems all over the village since late Spring. Some Teckels go to ground, some don't, and Cider is very keen on investigating small dark tunnels! From she was only a few months old I had been constantly careful as she would slip down the first burrow she found and several times I lost her, only to find her again several minutes later emerging from a kicked out rabbit warren.

One evening in midsummer I was checking traps on a pest control job on some government property and had Cider with me when she vanished. I assumed she was hunting rabbits as it is a large wood with a lot of rabbits in it. After 20 minutes of searching I couldn't find her, but as I walked back to the car for a torch, she appeared through some nettles, looked at me and ran back the way she came and dropped into a large hole. I sat there for ten or fifteen minutes and I could hear her baying below. She sounded like a little mastiff and I could only smile as much as I was panicking! It was getting dark and she had no collar and I had no tools. I rang a friend who lived nearby just in case I needed him but just as he arrived she appeared at the hole and I grabbed her as she attempted to wiggle out of my



Cider drying off after a duck retrieve.

arms and get back in.

This winter we have had a new addition by the name of ‘Prince Ali,’ named by my daughter Isla from a character in the Aladdin movie. However, Prince Ali is not a dog or a ferret but a Harris Hawk, something I have wanted since a teenager but the timing was just never right.

After filming a documentary with the



The author and the ‘Prince’.

BBC on my work as a rabbit controller since January last and meeting with lifelong Iranian Falconer Pedro Soltani (who featured in the documentary and encouraged me to take up the sport as well as providing me with a yearling Harris he bred himself) I had no other choice. It has so far been an incredible experience, not only for me but my daughter Isla as well. She has been

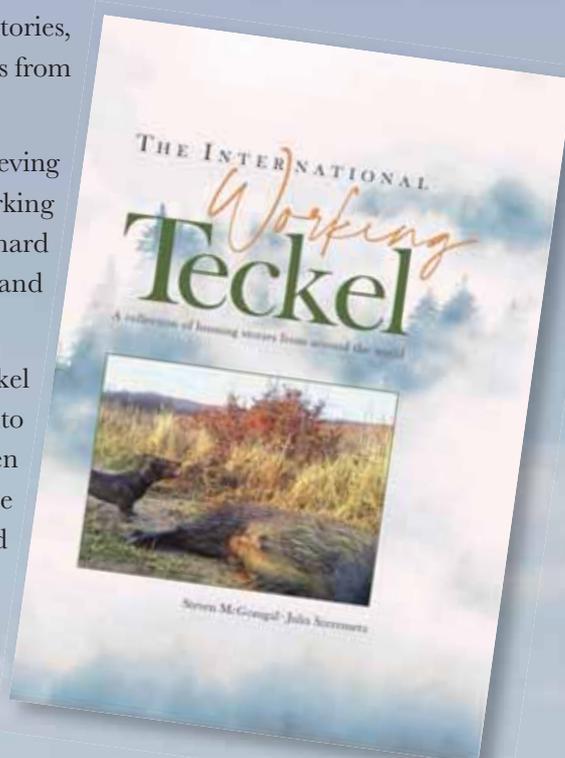
absorbed with the bird and has really enjoyed the entire experience of manning and training Prince Ali. She even has her own glove which Pedro kindly gave her. The Prince has slotted right into the Oakleaf Rabbit Control Team and may even earn his keep in the future, but for now it’s winter and we have rabbits to catch! Have an enjoyable season.

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Hunting Roundup

Around the late puppy shows

At the East Antrim Hunt's puppy show, at Parkgate, huntsman Robbie Hodge produced a very small new entry of 1 couple of doghounds and 1½ couple of bitches, from two litters, for judges Laurence McAllister MFH and huntsman Dan Kinney from the Glens of Antrim Foxhounds.

The judges quickly passed the following placings to John Minford MH:

Doghounds

Bodmin Procto Bonny
Bowman Sibling of Bodmin

Bitches

Galway Cattistock Ilchester
Fitzwilliam (Milton) Gamble
Gadfly Sibling of Galway
Galaxy Sibling of Galway

New Mastership for East Down Foxhounds

The East Down Foxhounds have a new mastership comprising former Hunt Chairman Pat Turley and Hunt Secretary Donna Quail, while Tony Weir has joined the South Tyrone mastership.

At the Co Down Hunt Andrew Jopson has been appointed huntsman, while local man Joe Thompson will hunt the Mid Antrim Hounds, in succession to Tom Haddock.

Iveagh Foxhounds appoint new huntsman

The County Down based Iveagh Foxhounds have appointed Jack Harris as huntsman, who joins them from the Oakley Foxhounds in Bedfordshire.

A native of Devon, Jack always wanted to enter Hunt service and he duly began as second whipper-in at the Heythrop, where Julian Barnfield was huntsman.

After one season at Chipping Norton Jack moved back to Devon as first whipper-in to huntsman Chris Matterface at the Silverton, where he



New Huntsman Jack Harris getting to know the Iveagh Foxhounds.

also spent one season. Jacks next move was to return to the Oakley as first whipper-in where he was to spend two seasons initially turning hounds to Duncan Cinnamond and, in the second season, to Bill Bishop. A move to Shropshire saw Jack spend a season as whipper-in to Oliver Dale, at the Ludlow. His return to the Oakley brought his first position as huntsman and he spent three seasons there before taking the plunge and moving to the Iveagh Foxhounds.

Jack will be assisted by amateur whipper-in Alan Watson and he has busied himself by getting around the Iveagh country which he describes as 'very varied and challenging.' Everyone at Seapatrick wishes him every success in his new post.

NIMHA presentation to its Chairman

At a recent Committee meeting of the Northern Ireland Masters of Hounds Association chairman Bill Montgomery celebrated forty years in office.

The occasion was marked with the presentation, by vice chairman Craig Caven, of a framed print depicting a Jack Russell terrier.

A lifelong country sportsman Bill has overseen the Association with a mixture of wisdom, approachability and excellent contacts across a very wide spectrum of people. The presentation was universally approved by those present.

Heard it on the Grapevine

East Antrim huntsman Robbie Hodge has become engaged to Miss Emma Newham, who has been Honorary Secretary of the Staintondale Hunt in North Yorkshire and its fieldmaster.



East Antrim Huntsman Robbie Hodge with judges at the Hunt Puppy Show.

Lionel Defies His Arch Conspirator

Events had conspired to keep Lionel out of the field for six weeks. In truth, though Lionel found it difficult to admit that the real Arch Conspirator was old age. Nowadays even short forays with his nine year old black Labrador Teal were

proving increasingly untenable.

Of late Lionel drove as near as possible to his preferred location. Steep gradients were an impossible obstacle.

Most tellingly of all on a very good day two hours walking was his absolute limit. Most days he could steal less than

an hour from the Arch Conspirator.

Muddy ground was deemed particularly perilous by Lionel since two seasons ago when he found himself marooned beside one of the estate's flight ponds. Only a chance mid-winter visit to the pond by the new under keeper, David, saved him from certain hypothermia.

Arthritis meant that he could no longer always depend on his forefinger to squeeze the trigger. Driven days had become impossible as he simply lacked the flexibility to swing at high incoming birds. Rather than shoot poorly, he now spent all of his driven shoot field time assisting his nephew Douglas pick-up behind the guns.

Some days the arthritis was so severe that all of his fingers seized up. A dodgy hip added to his woes. Plodding along slowly, very slowly, the days of long strides were consigned to history. He now fully understood what his elderly father William had meant by 'This stiffness is killing me' when he pleaded with a teenage and highly insensitive Lionel to "Slow down, Son!"

He deeply resented one particular aspect of the Arch Conspirator's relentless assault. Evening flying wigeon from late November onwards was usually impossible. He could simply no longer bear the cold. Hence, he packed in as much flying as possible into the months of September and October. But mallard could never compete with the lure of wigeon calling against the back drop of racing clouds and a full moon.

Four Novembers ago he bagged a single cock wigeon. It was the highlight of the past five seasons. But he paid a heavy price for trying to defy the bitter northerly wind which had steered a flock of seventy towards his chosen splash. Doctor Osborne gave him



He now spends all of his driven shoot time picking-up behind the guns.



His birds were added to the game cart.

medicine for the cold and Vicar Baldwin gave him a dressing down for his stubbornness. Confined to the house for three weeks, Lionel's mood veered between defiance and plain sulking.

When rough shooting solo, if he did manage to bag an unlucky cock pheasant, he felt the weight of the bird in his game bag. Lionel had always revelled in his capacity to tumble fleeing snipe. A snipe was a very welcome addition to the game bag and not just for sporting purposes!

His side by side felt like an extension to his body

On the plus side, Lionel was blessed to retain keen eye sight. He recalled that his mother could read the daily paper into her early nineties. His knowledge of the local terrain was second to none and his field craft remained sound. Crucially, his side by side which he had inherited from his uncle Ted felt like an extension to his body; another limb almost. Whilst the stock bore the scars of old age, the gun remained as solid as the day uncle Ted's widow handed it over to him four decades ago. He could still manage going away shots with relative ease and crossing shots more than occasionally folded in mid air.

Old age brought one critical advantage. The estate gave Lionel near total leeway to hunt the western and

eastern fringes of its 9, 000 acre property. With the exception of two Christmas walks up days, he typically had up to 700 acres of mixed rough shooting terrain all to himself. In fact, keepers, farm managers and stable hands regularly tipped off Lionel about the whereabouts of game and wildfowl.

And then there was Teal. Teal's steady pace suited Lionel. Sedate at the best of times, she meandered rather than walked. An energetic performance in Teal's terms was to lift her ears on hearing gunshot. But she had a superb nose and rarely failed to pick up a shot bird. No one would ever accuse Teal of being classy or stylish. But she could deliver the goods when required. In truth, Teal suited Lionel and Lionel suited Teal.

Lionel's recent six week confinement was not on this occasion induced by his shooting rambles. Rather he had fallen whilst filling the garden bird feeders. Securing just slight bruising Lionel's self-confidence had taken a severe dent.

The gun was oiled and the game bag was put under the kitchen table

Nevertheless, he was determined not to let the Arch Conspirator win. However, on this occasion the Arch Conspirator had a significant ally, namely his wife of sixty years, Marilyn.

Lionel was expecting resistance from Marilyn as he gathered his side by side for his first post confinement foray. He attempted to ease the way for his re-entry to the field the previous evening. The gun was oiled. The game bag was put under the kitchen table. His favourite woollen socks were placed beside the stove. A trip was made to the gunsmith for cartridges which were not needed. Hints that Teal was "a bit off" were dropped over supper. Reassuring utterances that the land was very dry for this time of year were made. It was emphasised that even if all the wigeon in Ireland flighted into the eastern splashes, he would still be home well before dark. Marilyn remained silent. Lionel was not sure whether her silence signalled a grudging consent or a mounting resistance.

At 2:00pm on the final Sunday of the season, Lionel had no sooner gathered his favourite socks when the question he had not wanted to hear was posed: "Where are you going, Lionel?" "For a short ramble, Marilyn. Sure poor Teal is begging me to go. "And what about me," Marilyn retorted. "Promise to be back by four," Lionel meekly replied.

Lionel was then confronted with the moment he had feared for the past decade: "It is time you hung up that gun, Lionel Stanley Mayhew. You are not able for those fields and ponds anymore. And it is not fair leaving me here for hours on end knowing that I am worried about you getting a bad fall in the depths of winter."

Stunned, Lionel a retired army colonel retreated to the library. The alliance of the Arch Conspirator and Marilyn was proving to be a formidable one. The last time Marilyn had referred to Lionel as Lionel Stanley Mayhew was when uncharacteristically he got into a brawl in his late twenties. "Perhaps, Marilyn is right," he pondered. "Maybe, I am a selfish git after all."

Resorting to a sip of Irish whiskey Lionel gained courage. "No, this is not fair!" Storming into the Kitchen, he pleaded with Marilyn: "I could no more

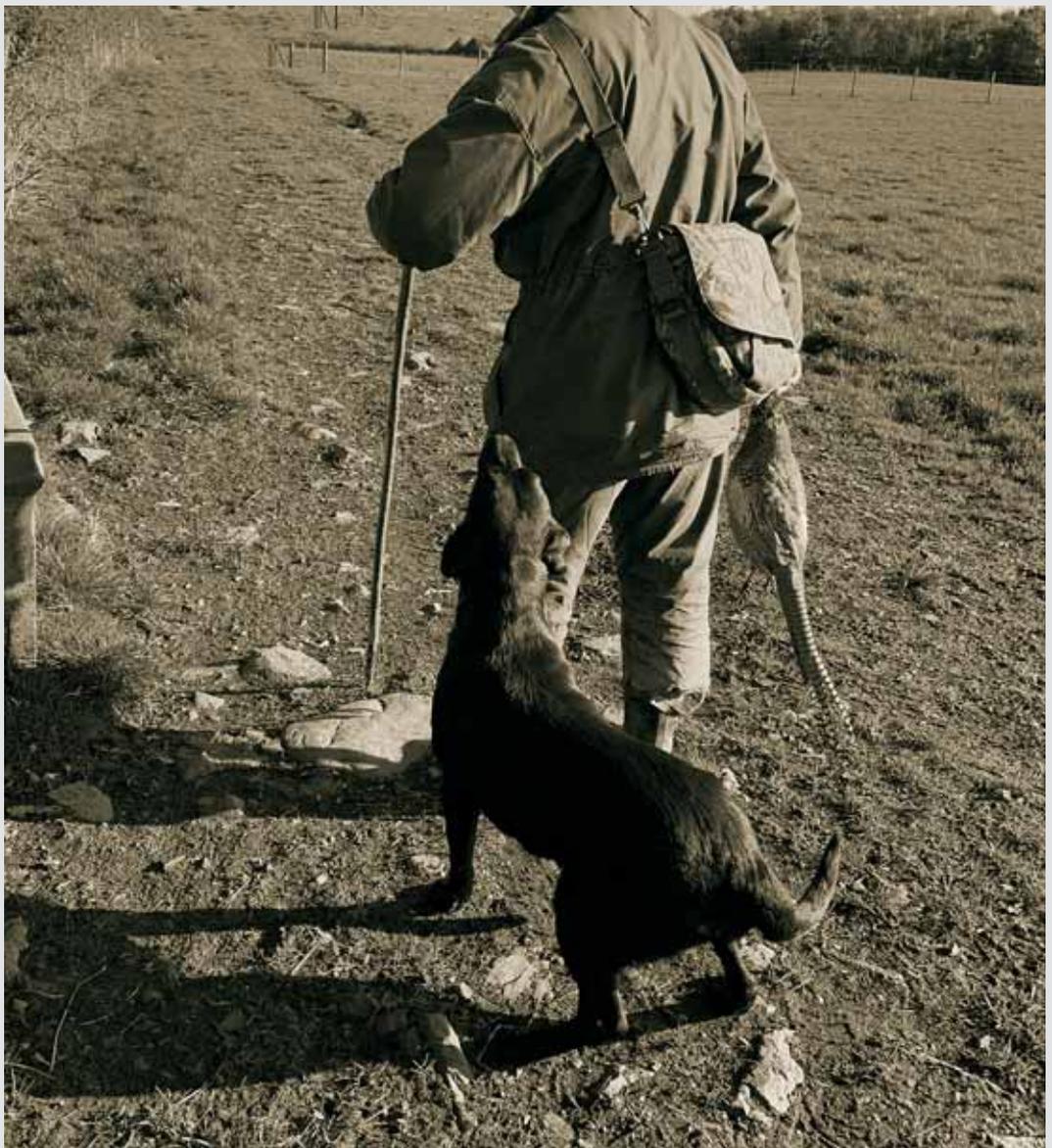
give up shooting than I could give up you. Will you finally accept that if I die in the fields, it will be a happy death!”

Now it was Marilyn’s turn to be stunned. With a tear in her eye, Marilyn took the game bag from under the kitchen table and handed it to Lionel.

Lionel arrived at Sidcup pastures thirty-five minutes later. Whilst the alliance had been torn asunder, the Arch Conspirator had not retreated. Lionel’s knuckles ached and he felt a great stiffness come over his wrists. However, the cabin fever had already lifted and Teal was even wagging her tail. All his life Lionel loved those haunts which offered the prospects of a mixed bag. Sidcup’s was such a place. Unusually thanks to Sir Neville’s foresight it had not become a causality of modern agricultural techniques. Whilst it had changed since his youth, unlike many of his favourite spots, it had not done so beyond total recognition.

Crucially for Lionel, Sidcup’s was accessible and the terrain with one exception was flat. An hour sauntering around this small forty acre mixed piece of terrain would be an ideal reintroduction for Lionel and Teal. Even though it was the last Sunday of the season, it might however yield a cock pheasant or mallard. It was too mild for woodcock and a prolonged dry spell meant snipe would be absent from the two upper pasture fields.

What Sidcup’s lacked in size, it more than up for in a combination of streams, trees, and heavy cover. Sir Neville’s father had made one half-hearted attempt to drain the main pasture fields. Thirty years later the drain had become



A snap shot had brought the bird down.

overgrown with an assortment of weeds and thick brambles. Pheasants were constantly drawn to both sides of the drain.

Behind the drain there was a largely impenetrable mass of trees, reeds and streams. Many younger shots gave this mass a ‘thorough’ hunt. From experience, though Lionel knew that mallard frequently ‘bedded in’. A dog would literally have to be on top of them before they resentfully took flight.

At the upper end of Sidcup another stream flowed adjacent to heavy woodland. In harsh weather, the stream was a favourite retreat for mallard. Harsh or mild, pheasants loved the reed beds on Lionel’s side of the stream. The stream flowed into the local river but this stretch was generally too deep and fast flowing to hold ducks. A small inlet

five hundred yards up river was always worth a try on the return journey. But it had been years since Lionel had flushed, let alone shot a duck there.

A violent flapping of wings presented Lionel with a struggling drake mallard erupting from the drain

Lionel followed his usual routine. Following the drain, Teal did her own thing. Neither whistles nor hand signals were required. Teal simply knew the routine. Half way down, Teal was concentrating her efforts in one small area. ‘Ah, we are in business,’ Lionel thought. Lionel was certainly in business but not in the way he expected. A violent flapping of wings presented Lionel with a struggling drake mallard erupting from a bramble filled drain.

Momentarily dazed, he recovered his composure. Taking his time he waited for the mallard to rise presenting him with a straightforward going away shot. One minute later, Teal dropped the drake at his feet.

A perplexed eighty-one year old stood beside the drain. In thirty-five years of walking this drain not as much as a single duck had been encountered. Major surprises were no longer a feature of Lionel's hunting life. Local patterns were ingrained upon his mind and these patterns were seldom deviated from. But on this day, he had a new story to share with his two great grandchildren at the weekend.

Lionel would have gladly returned to the car at that point. However, despite the single shot and the general fuss caused by this mallard, he decided to move to the upper end of Sidcup's where the stream flowed under the adjacent woodland. The reed beds were always worth a try. The birds typically ran towards the stream and exploded

upward over the trees on the far bank.

Immediately, on reaching the reed beds, Teal was on a trail. Certain that a cock pheasant was on the move Lionel stumbled forward. It was too wide an expanse for one gun to cover. "Trust your dog, Son" echoed his father's booming voice from times past. Sure enough, Teal was heading for the stream's lower edge. Lionel could almost hear his bad knee creek as he positioned himself just yards behind her. This time old patterns were confirmed. The cock was rising between the trees on the far bank as Lionel raised his gun. A snap shot between a break in the trees brought the cock tumbling down. Experience told Lionel that the cock fell dead, but it would still be a difficult retrieve for Teal.

Teal was already working the wood. Lighting his pipe Lionel waited. Five minutes later, she was swimming towards her master. An old cock was delivered to hand. Lionel's crinkled face tightened as he grasped what would

certainly be his last bird of this season, perhaps even a lifetime. Memories of the very first cock pheasant that he had shot in his deceased brother's company came flooding back.

Aching all over, Lionel headed towards the car. Out of habit, Teal glanced towards the inlet upriver. But he was too tired and besides, this was the perfect way to end the season.

The smell of rabbit stew greeted Lionel as he entered the kitchen. In addition to his usual woes, the Arch Conspirator gifted Lionel swollen ankles making the removal of his boots a tug of war like exercise.

Eventually reaching the fire place, he dozed for forty minutes in his favourite armchair. Suddenly energised by the day's excitement, Lionel rushed to the kitchen. Slamming his aching fist on the table "I beat him!" he exclaimed defiantly. A bemused Marilyn gazed intensely and asked "Beat Who, Lionel?" "The Arch Conspirator, of course." Marilyn nodded and smiled.



His favourite place where mallard frequently 'bedded in'.

Review of Summer 2019

Henry David Thoreau said: “One must maintain a little bit of summer, even in the middle of winter.” The summer of 2019 will be remembered as a period with great sunshine and little rain. The human capacity for remembering only good things on the past. However, nature is always a stark reminder to memory. The breeding season for grouse particularly seems to have been hit by the heavy rains in late May. Come to think of it, while the school state exams beginning on June 3rd every year usually herald the best weather of the year, not so this year. And so, the context of the summer circuit is set.

The summer circuit traditionally begins with the Irish red setter club stakes on 1st & 2nd August. The meet is in the quaint village of Kilchreest in the county of Galway. A great turnout for the Irish red setter breed stake with many excellent running dogs sadly yielded no result. The next day is the open stake for all breeds and with a change in ground there was an adequate supply of game. The result was 1st Joan McGillicuddy’s Irish setter FTCH Ballydavid Gaelforce of the Kingdom who had a nice find on top of a hill overhanging a covey of grouse. Second was Pat Reape’s Irish setter dog Lisduvoge Bruno who showed great intensity and control by holding a young bird and flushed well on command. Third place went to my own Irish setter Malstabodarna Embla who had a neat find on a single bird.

The Irish field trial association’s trial to be held in Kinnity was cancelled on the following day. On Sunday, 4th August the trials moved East to the Dublin mountains with the spectacular views of Dublin bay and the city beneath. Again birds were scarcer than we have become accustomed. Judges were Kieran Walsh and Christy Davitt



Joan McGillicuddy’s FTCh Ballydavid Gaelforce of the Kingdom.

and they were generous in their time and efforts as a number of dogs were given a third round to try and find the elusive grouse but to no avail. The winner was declared as Pat Dooley’s pointer dog FTCh Raigmore Sirocco who had a joint find with the second placed dog Ray Monroe’s Irish red and white setter Craigrua Hardy.

The following day was a short drive to the Wicklow mountains with the

magnificent vista of the Sugarloaf mountains. Judged by Billy Grace and Anthony Mulhall, Joan McGillicuddy’s FTCh Ballydavid Gaelforce of the Kingdom was declared the winner after producing a grouse sitting tight out of the wind. There were some other excellent dogs such as Kevin Quinn’s Sheantullagh Bronagh and Eugene Moriarty’s Moonhill Ahiga, however game was not as plentiful as previous seasons.



Billy Grace and Capparoe Aife with the winning find on a running cock grouse. Credit Ray Monroe

The following Saturday 10th August, we had unseasonal weather more akin to a harsh March. Judged by Anthony Mulhall and Larry Quinn, only one round was completed however it was a memorable day for Billy Grace. The winner with a long production on a cock grouse was Capparoe Aife. This made Aife a FTCh. It was particularly poignant as this was the late Tom Dunne's dog which Billy continued to campaign. Second was his own FTCh Capparoe Jata who had a nice find on a covey.

Been away dogging in the Highlands, I am going on the results from social media. The popular Donegal field trials took place in Scotstown, home of the perennial Monaghan football champions. This is a ground that is improving year on year with game and credit to all involved. The judges were Jim Sheridan and Michael Houston and the results were 1st Mark Adams' Irish setter Hunshigo Donard with 2nd and 3rd to Ray Monroe's brace of red and white setters FTCh Rosie Jim and Granaghburn Nebraska.

The 24th and 25th August heralded the pinnacle of the trialling year with the Irish Kennel Club's Irish Championship on grouse. Great credit to the championship committee for another spectacularly run event and particularly the officers Michael Houston (Chairman), Christy Davitt and



Jimmy Griffin with Glanlough Flak was second in the Irish Red & White setter stake. Credit. Ray Monroe

Maeve Waters (Secretaries). The meet was in the gorgeous village of Roundwood. This year the three chosen judges were Pat Dooley (Wildfield), Jim Sheridan (Craigrua) and Kieran Walsh (Blackmoor).

The annual dinner was in the Roundwood Hotel where awards were presented to the best dog of the first day of the Irish Championship and the 2018 IKC Dog of the Year. The best dog of the first day was announced as Ray Monroe's red and white setter Granaghburn Nebraska while the 2019 IKC Dog of the Year was my own Irish setter FTCh Malstabodarna Idun of Ballydavid. This was a very high quality stake with many stand out performances. The second round dogs

were as follows the English pointers were Michael Houston's Int FTCh Ardclinis Francie Frank, Linda Westron's FTCh Goddrib Florence, Jim Crotty's Brackbawn Thunder, English setters were Mandy Brennan's Chieftain while the Red & white Irish setters were Ray Monroe's brace of FTCh Rosie Jim and Granaghburn Nebraska. The Irish Setters were Bill Connolly's Sheantullagh Cormac and Sheantullagh Jessie, Ken Watterson's Erinvale Nippy Glow, Pat Reape's Lisduvoge Lilly and Lisduvoge Bruno, Paraig Kiely's Ballinahemmy Rose, Alan Bartley's Lisduvoge Tyson, Joe O'Sullivan's Gardenfield Rena, Joan McGillycuddy's Int FTCh Ballydavid Starjet and FTCh Ballydavid Gaelforce and Hugh Brady's FTCh Malstabodarna Idun and Malstabodarna Embla. Many dogs improved their position in the second day. After round two, two dogs were called for another run for the opportunity of grouse. These were Lisduvoge Tyson and Ballinahemmy Rose. After a controlled run they were adjudged to have a joint find and the trial was declared over.

The winners were declared in reverse order by secretary Christy Davitt which increased the tension enormously. The Irish Championship winner for 2019 was announced as Alan Bartley's Irish setter Lisduvoge Tyson. This win now made Tyson a FTCh. Second was Paraig Kiely's Irish setter Ballinahemmy Rose and this result also made Rose a FTCh.



Mandy Brennan and Chieftain producing grouse at the Irish Pointer club stake. Credit Ray Monroe



Pat Dooley with Wildfield Firedancer producing grouse under watchful eye of Jason Benson at the Irish Pointer club summer stake. Credit Ray Monroe

Coincidentally, Rose was bred by Alan Bartley. Third place was Bill Connolly's Irish setter Sheantullagh Jessie while fourth place was also an Irish setter being Ken Watterson's Erinvale Nippy Glow. There were Certificate of Merits for Mandy Brennan's English setter Chieftain, Jim Crotty's pointer Brackbawn Thunder, Bill Connolly Irish setter Sheantullagh Cormac and Ray Monroe's Irish red and white setter FTCh Rosie Jim.

After the excitement of the previous weekend, the Munster pointer and setter stake returned to Kilchreest on the 31st August however despite a high quality trial, game proved elusive so there were no awards. The premier county scheduled for Kinnity was cancelled on September 1st.

The Irish red and white setter stakes began in fine weather though lack of wind was proving a major obstacle. Judged by Billy Grace and Anthony Mulhall, a number of birds presented themselves. It was to be an all English setter day with the winner announced as Gerald Devine's Gortinreagh Faith, second to Jimmy Griffin's Glanlough Flak, third to Gerald Devine's Ballyellen Tango and reserve to Mandy Brennan's Chieftain.

The next day was back in the Dublin mountains hosted by the Irish pointer club stake and this was to be the trial of the season. Judges were Michael Houston, Jason Benson and Sean Hogan and from the start, birds presented

themselves and by and large all dogs managed their quarry well.

At the end of the trial after deliberations, club secretary Pat Dooley announced Gerald Devine's Ballyellen Tango as the winner, with Pat Dooley's Wildfield Firedancer in second. This made Firedancer a FTCh. Hugh Brady's FTCh Malstabodarna Idun of Ballydavid was placed third and Donal O'Leary's English setter Kerry's Pick up placed in reserve. There was certificate of merits for Davy O'Neills Irish setter Shan-ry-con Casey, Carol Calvert's Ballyellen Blue Grass. Several other dogs with finds in round one were lost in the later rounds.

There was a break in trials on the 14th and 15th September, the Ulster red setter club trials been rescheduled till the end of October. The Cashel field trials judged by Jim Crotty and Kieran Walsh was held in Kinnity. The winner was Aidan Dunne's Maodhog Feochadan ahead of Pat Reape's Irish setter dog Lisduvoge Bruno. On the same day in Slieveanorra, county Antrim the Northern Ireland pointer



Strabane's Michael Houston was the winner in Glarryford with Ardclinis Francie Frank. Credit Ray Monroe



*James Coyle being presented by President of Irish Pointer Club James Dalton.
Credit Pat Dooley*

club trials took place. The most difficult terrain in Ireland with game being again elusive, some of the dog work was exemplary and according to judges Ger Devine and Brian Morris, dogs in the second round impressed. The winner was declared as FTCh Ballydavid Spitfire for Mark Adams ahead of Bill Connolly's Sheantullagh Djouce. The next day's Strabane trial in Legfordrum was cancelled on the morning with continuous torrential rain.

The scheduled Cill Dara trial on 28th September was cancelled but the Northern Ireland pointer club's pheasant trial proceeded in Glarryford, county Antrim. A hot, breathless day in sympathy with the Irish rugby team's efforts against Japan, running pheasants undid some excellent dogs. Judges Meryl Asbury and Sara Chichester announced Michael Houston's Int. FTCh Ardclinis Francie Frank as the winner with Mark Adams Irish setter Hunshigo Donard in second and Joan McGillicuddy's Irish setter Gaelforce in third.

The next day was the Ulster Gundog

League on the kept Glenwherry Hill farm with the same judges as the day before. Mark Adams' Hunshigo Donard was announced as the winner with Davy O'Neill's Shan-ry-con Andraid in second with Gerald Devine's English setter FTCh Gortinreagh Faith in third and his FTCh Ballyellen Tango in reserve.

On the same day in the west of Ireland, the Connaught field trials held their trial near Athenry. Judged by Bill Connolly and Jason Benson, there was a good supply of game with the newly arrived snipe providing great sport. A highly competitive trial with a good number of finds and excellent dog work at the end. The winner was announced as Hugh Brady's Irish setter FTCh Malstabodarna Idun of Ballydavid and second Hugh Brady's Irish setter pup The Morrigan with third to Pat Reape's Irish setter dog FTCh Ballinahemmy Mike and reserve to Billy Grace's English setter FTCh Capparoo Aife. There were COMs to Joe Tannion's Irish setter FTCh Mountbay da Vinci and David Bell's Irish setter Sheenmel Dream.

The open pointer club stake took place in its customary home in Athy in the sugarbeet. Despite the best efforts of the club and local gun club, there were no awards. The pointer club confined was run the following day. James Coyle, eighty plus years young was a hugely popular winner with Brackbawn Wanda. A superb performance and with the Irish Pointer team competing next year in Balmorral, James won't be retiring anytime soon.

On the same day Strabane field trial club held its trial on 5th October in Slieveanorra. Despite the early fog, the trial proceeded although a later start. Another fine trial as this venue always delivers. Judges for the day were Michael Houston and John Murray. The winner was Andy Law's Shan-ry-con Diamond, with second to Joan McGillicuddy's Ballydavid Gaelforce. Third was Ray Monroe's Irish red & white setter Granaghburn Nebraska with Ger Devine's FTCh Ballyellen Tango in reserve. There were COMs for Mark Adams' Hunshigo Donard and Des Linton's Craigrua Flute and Craigrua Nevin.

The red and white setter breed stake took place in the Dublin mountains on Saturday 12th October under experienced judges Pat Dooley and Jason Benson. Ballymena man Dessie Linton took the honours on snipe with both first and second places to Craigrua Flute and Craigrua Nevin respectively.

The Ulster Gundog League also took place on Saturday 12th October, again in Glarryford with judges Carol Calvert and John Murray. A fine trial with an abundance of game yielded the following results. First was Ger Devine's English setter FTCh Gortinreagh Faith, with second to Michael Houston's Int FTCh Ardclinis pointer Francie Frank and third to Joan McGillicuddy's Irish setter Int FTCh Ballydavid Starjet and reserve to Ger Devine's English setter Gortinreagh Jack Duggan. Certificates of merits were awarded to Hugh Brady's brace of Irish setters FTCh Malstabodarna Idun and Embla.



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Mostly Grouse

Richard and Sandy get ready for action.

It was at this year's Pointer and Setter Champion Stake that one of the Judges said to me, of the dog that went on to win the stake: 'If you were shooting on a typical dogging moor with only a few grouse, then any Gun would be happy just to watch that dog at work.'

Now, Bollihope, where the Champion Stake was held could never, by any stretch of the imagination, be said to have 'only a few grouse' but a few weeks later, up in Perthshire, we set out with our pointers and setters to shoot grouse on a hill that matched the description perfectly.

High above Loch Tay, this is the sort of ground where pointers and setters are quite simply the only way to have any hope of shooting a grouse or two. The coveys are so thinly scattered over the hill that, without a hunting dog, you could walk all day and never get so much as a glimpse of a grouse. But take a team of bird dogs, fighting fit and full of running and you might – just might – come home with a brace or two.

It isn't the actual shooting that will

provide your entertainment for the day. You won't need a loader or a glove to stop the barrels burning your left hand. You will need good walking boots, a reasonable level of fitness and the ability to get your gun into action quickly when a grouse jumps forty yards in front and is heading for the horizon at full throttle.

You will have to appreciate the glorious scenery and revel in the feel of rock, peat and heather under your boots. Most of all you will have to enjoy watching dogs at work – not difficult because there is no better sight in the shooting world than a top-class pointer or setter flying across the hill and then slamming on to point from a full gallop and standing like a statue as you work your way up the hill to where you hope (and the dog knows for certain) there will be a covey of grouse.

Sooner or later they will burst out of the heather

The dog handler will make sure you are in the right position to maximise your chances before clicking the dog in

to flush the birds. They may be right under the dog's nose or they may be forty yards in front: they may be tucked down into the heather or they may be running, but sooner or later they will burst out of the heather and it will be down to you to make sure that you don't go home with an empty game bag.

Before we had even started out on the Twelfth we had seen an Osprey sailing over the loch, then we stopped for a few minutes to enjoy the chase as a merlin tried, unsuccessfully, to swoop on a pipit. It helped to break up a hard slog up the hill onto the high ridge where finally we started to find a few grouse.

To be accurate I should say the dogs started to find a few grouse because at the start of the season on a warm day, grouse may sit so tightly that you can walk right through the middle of a covey without them flushing. Our first find, by Scooby, Martin's Irish setter, was a bit of an anticlimax because they were cheepers: a late brood and so left for another day. After that though any



Richard is ready for action as Hannah works pointer Boo in to the covey.

grouse that we found were well grown and strong on the wing: sometimes too strong for our Guns, Sandy, Richard, Glyn and John.

The dogs were all in good form. We had three pointers, two Irish setters and a Gordon setter plus a Lab and a spaniel for picking up duties. It wasn't long

before there was a bird to pick as Scooby pointed again and produced a nice covey that gave us the first bird of the season. It's always good to get that first score on the board and to know that today at least won't be a blank day.

A barren pair were next but managed to evade four charges of shot and then it was Hannah's black pointer Boo's turn to run again. Boo was quartering across from down the hill to our right, went out of sight below a little heathery ridge and didn't reappear. Might she be on point? Hannah led Richard and Sandy cautiously over the ridge and there was Boo solidly on point and waiting patiently for Hannah and the Guns. This covey sat very tightly, but eventually they rose and there was a second bird in the bag.

We kept finding the odd covey

There were quite a few patches showing signs of heather beetle damage which seems to be quite widespread this year following a mild winter. Even so,



Breaking for lunch with the loch and mountains in the background.



Labrador Blotto retrieving a grouse.

we kept finding the odd covey thought they didn't all sit as tightly as Boo's birds. Georgie's pointer MayBelle pointed on the edge of the loch as we were heading back to our vehicles, then broke away to swing first left and then right before hardening up on her birds again after they ran from where she originally pointed. Georgie got her Guns into position, then roded MayBelle in to lift five birds of which four made it safely round the edge of the hill and the fifth went into the gamebag. Boo was next to go and she tracked the remainder of the covey up over the ridge and into some beetled heather where they had run and then spread out, finally getting up

individually perhaps a hundred yards apart and all getting away safely in the confusion.

That was the last of the action for the day, but we were back the next morning to do it all again on a different beat. For the second day we had good scenting conditions, enough birds to keep everyone's interest levels up and some good shooting to keep the bag ticking along. A couple of roe deer that sprang up from an apparently bare hillside after Boo had pointed in some rushes gave us all a surprise and Ian's pointer Bruno found a covey that were a good hundred yards away when he first pointed. It was one of those occasions when you really, really hope the dog is

right as you lead the Guns away down the hill knowing that once the grouse have been flushed – if there are any grouse – you are going to have to climb right back up the hill again. On this occasion John and Glyn were both on target and the climb back was greatly eased by having two more grouse in the bag.

MayBelle pointed out on the flat to produce another brace for Sandy and Richard and finally Finn, Jocelyn's Gordon setter who is a Champion in the show ring as well as being a really useful dog on the hill tracked a running covey through the peat hags for several minutes, before they finally lifted and gave us the last brace of the day.

We ended up with seven brace over the two days: not a lot when compared to some driven moors where two days could easily yield seven hundred birds. To shoot those kind of numbers though you would need very deep pockets and you wouldn't get anywhere near the amount of exercise that we did as we followed the dogs over the heather. While I certainly wouldn't spurn an invitation to take part in such a shoot I think, on balance, I would still be happier out with the pointers and setters.

Georgie and MayBelle watch on as Hannah works pointer Boo in for the Guns.



REDMILLS sponsor Irish Gundogs



Just some of the events sponsored by Redmills. If you want your event featured email Jenny Crozier results and a couple of Hi Res photographs.

Craigavon Gun Dog Club - 2 day at Glennoo Estate - 13th-14th Sept

- 1st Sam Drysdale Highwalk Kerry
- 2nd Declan Boyle INT FTCH Miller McDuff
- 3rd Peter Colville FTCH Skerryview Alisha at Annaloughan
- 4th Sean Kearney Kelmarsky Crow

The English Setter Club of Ireland held their Open Stake- Tinryland Co.Carlow on 6th October

- 1st Billy Grace's F.T.C.H Capparoo Aife
- 2nd Billy Grace's F.T.C.H Capparoo Jata
- 3rd Maeve Waters F.T.C.H Blackstairs Tess.



Craigavon GDC Winners & Officials.

Clones Retriever Club Novice Stake - 29th September in Finnea

- 1st Ciara Behan Hand
- 2nd Sean Kearney
- 3rd Wayne Carlisle.



Clones RC Winners & Officials.



The English Setter Club of Ireland.

European Championship for Irish Red Setters on Snipe - Claregalway, Co Galway - 15-17th October

Winning Handler - Jean Francois Meret.



Red Mills' Bill Connolly presents the Winner with his trophy.



Pictured at the European Championship for Red Setters.

Dalcassian Gun Dog Club Novice Retriever Trial - Castlegarde Shoot, Co Limerick - 19th October

- 1st Donal Donohue with Ladykenz Fergus of Bishopswood.
- 2nd David Boyce with Dorretsland Dido.
- 3rd Michael Cronin with Monsell Cooper.
- 4th Anthony Reilly with Kilgolagh Morning Due.
- 5th Paschal Clarke with Brockaghs Geidis at Willowmount.



Dalcassian GDC Winners & Officials.

Mohill Gun Dog Club - Mohill, Co Leitrim - 20th October

- 1st Anthony Reilly, Lab Bitch Kilgolagh Morning Due
- 2nd Harry Gillanders - Lab Dog Astraglen Calton
- Graded - Excellent
- 3rd Peter Fitzpatrick Lechbay Harley



Mohill GDC Winners & Officials.

Donegal Working Spaniel Club's Open Cocker stake - Urbalshinney Shoot, Co Tyrone - 23rd October

- 1st Mallowdale Quin CSD (Ftch Kingcott Robson x Ftch Mallowdale Urika) owned and handled by Mick Walsh



Donegal WSC Winners & officials.

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