

Irish COUNTRY SPORTS and COUNTRY LIFE

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The VOICE of Irish HUNTING, SHOOTING & FISHING since 1985

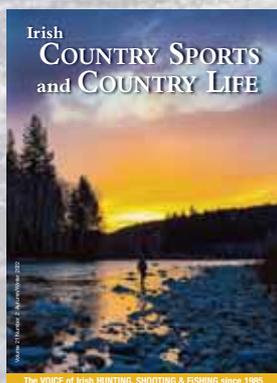
Irish COUNTRY SPORTS and COUNTRY LIFE

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An exciting new format planned for Winter 22 and 2023

Against the backdrop of a threatened recession, the massively increased cost of publication and distribution, and many readers preferring to go online to read the magazine, we have decided to change our focus from mainly promoting our hard copy glossy edition of the magazine to concentrate more on promoting and building on our existing huge ONLINE audience currently running at between 50-80,000 per issue. We have several exciting innovations planned.

- **AND OUR online version at www.countrysportsandcountrylife.com WILL REMAIN FREE of CHARGE for 2022-23. As is our ARCHIVE of magazines at <https://issuu.com/bluegator/doc>**
- **BUT fear not, those readers who love having a hard copy glossy magazine to browse. We are using the latest technology to produce and distribute hard copy glossy copies more efficiently and for one year we are prepared to absorb the cost of Postage & Package.**
- All you need to do is pre-order the next magazine at just £6/€6 per issue TO INCLUDE POSTAGE. Payment can be made by cheque or through PAYPAL using the irishcountrylifestyle@btinternet.com account.



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Front Cover:

Fishing the Bogachiel River on the Olympic Peninsula of Washington State

(Photo: courtesy of Jan Evans)

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Our online Winter version of the magazine at www.countrysportsandcountrylife.com contains additional material, including news from the organisations including FISSTA, CAI, CI and the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust; more perspectives on the Irish Game Fair, including competition results for clay shooting, gundogs and terrier & lurchers; and comments from exhibitors and public, plus a wide range of photographs showing the range and depth of the programme. This version will be updated monthly.

Managing Editor: Albert Titterington, **Editor:** Paul Pringle, **Associate Editor:** Irene Titterington

Publishers: (Editorial, Ordering & Advertising) Country Lifestyle Exhibitions Ltd. Cranley Hill, 5b Woodgrange Road, Hollymount, Downpatrick BT30 8JE **Tel:** (028) (from ROI 048) 44839167

Email: irishgamefair@btinternet.com **Web:** www.countrysportsandcountrylife.com

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First there was Covid and lockdowns and then there came bird flu as if the former was not enough to put thought of game shooting out of the minds of country sports folk across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Glynn Evans, BASC head of game was interviewed in June 2022 on the Fieldsports Channel where he looked at the prospects for shooting. As was reported, on the Fieldsports Channel, outbreaks of avian flu in the UK and France have pushed up the price of gamebirds and were jeopardising shoots. And not least, the prices for game birds was also jeopardising shooting.

Glynn Evans went on to say that although the import of chicks and eggs from much of France is not possible until July, the impact on shoots varies tremendously, says BASC's head of game and gundogs Glynn Evans. "Some shoots have had no stock. I'm actually one of those people in that situation. We won't be shooting this year. Other shoots are able to carry on with their plans in one shape or another."

In France, the winter outbreak of avian influenza is in the area where most of the UK's game birds are bred. The game farms of the Vendee and Loire regions export large numbers of eggs and chicks to the UK. Around half of the low ground birds released each year are imported, mostly as eggs from France. Until July 2022, no eggs or chicks can leave these disease control zones without a licence. In 2019, the last 'normal' year of sales pre-Covid, the UK imported about 20 million pheasants and up to 10 million partridges from France, the majority as eggs for hatching in the UK.

So it does not take much to see that for many shoots reliant on those imported eggs, any thoughts of the game season 22/23 running as normal were dashed. Northern Ireland has been affected as well, with some shoots deciding not to go ahead with any sort of game shooting. A notable example of one such being the Cleggan Estate set in the hills above the Glens of Antrim and which usually offered some of the finest shooting in Northern Ireland. This year they will only offer simulated shooting. This will be for groups of 8 to 16, and which the Estate says 'will replicate the atmosphere of the "driven day" as closely as possible, with a range of challenging drives offered, representing pheasant, partridge, and grouse shooting.'

Having shot at Cleggan on many occasions over the years, I have no doubt that it will indeed be the closest possible to a 'normal' shoot day and the lunch will be as spectacular as the clay birds.

But what of the rest. Well, Dundarave

rear their own birds and so they and CherryValley should be alright. Saintfield will go ahead as planned and possibly others but the effect on the coming season will be felt by Guns and will no doubt prove difficult for funding enthusiasts as well. But count your blessings as for a time it looked like it was to be a real letdown for all concerned.

Now, on to the Irish Game fair at Shanes Castle in June. As it was the first time in three years that we were able to run the Fair, it attracted very large crowds despite the very changeable and inclement weather. We had a record turnout on the Saturday, the first day of the event, and truth to tell we were rather hoping for a spectacular attendance on the Sunday but the heavens opened early morning and I am sure deterred many from attending. In between the downpours of Biblical proportions, the sun shone and all was right with the world..... but stand in that rain and you almost got drowned! Elsewhere in this magazine there will be a photograph of me in the Main Arena with a virtual river running off my head.

All of which brings me to another point I wish to make about why I was drowning (almost) in the Main Arena. I was calling for countrysports unity. Let me explain. I have often thought of the Game fair as a microcosm of all that is to be admired in countrysports. We have experts on display, we have top gun dogs in action, there are countrysports organisations such as the Countryside Alliance Ireland, Country Sports Ireland, FISSTA, and others showcasing what they do. We have clay shooting, and we have 'have a go' events for the casual visitor and we have spectacular prizes for the lucky winners etc. This year we even had a superb Fly Fair on the same site where you could watch experts in action at their fly dressing tables. Advice on casting, a put and take fishery for kids - again read just one person's account of the joy it brought to their child to actually go fishing and actually land one!

Then there were the public who trooped in to join in the fun. And one thing I noticed was the number of families this year who came along to enjoy themselves. And this brings me to why I was almost under water in the main Arena clutching a microphone which threatened to drown at any minute. I was there to call for unity of support from all shades of countrysports - the anglers, dog handlers, clay shooters, terrier and lurcher enthusiasts, falconry people, game shots and rough shooters and any others who didn't actively take part but who enjoyed the sight of others doing so.

The very people who were there at the Irish Game Fair at Shanes Castle in their thousands.

I was brought into country sports by my father, as many others have been as well. I was then taken under the wing of an elderly gardener who lived not far from my family home in Ballygawley. I was shown how to 'tickle' trout just below the rim of the bank, an art form in itself that he was expert in but I simply could not accomplish. I was shown how to 'briar' the rabbit burrows - a long briar inserted and twisted down the rabbit hole until it made contact with a resident rabbit who was attached by the scut to the briar's twisting, a bit like a corkscrew going into a bottle and then withdrawn. I never would have believed it but I saw it over and over again. Then I took up wildfowling and eventually walked up over the moors before an odd day on a peg. And picking up on shoots became a particular pleasure, as did training and trialling spaniels for a short time in the 70s and long before the picking up.

The public at Shanes that day would I was sure have stories of their own about their Fieldsports journey. Many were there (as was told to me many times over the years) as a result of their parents bringing them as children and now they were there with their own children.

So, in a nutshell what I said was this: we have a unique sporting history that should be treasured and built upon. Yet day and daily we read of an attack by antis or others on some element of our completely legal country sports. They want it banned or they want it altered to suit their own agenda. First they take a poke at one country sport. 'Oh we don't mind shooting, or oh no fishing is safe with us etc. But I see it differently. Let's just say for a moment that one person is indeed genuine in only wanting to do away with one type of country sport, but if they succeed then the hardliners egging them on will turn their eye to yet another country sport ripe for the picking off.

So what I asked for is unity. Support ALL country sports as numbers are the only thing that a politician understands. And support the bodies that are YOUR representative bodies of what you enjoy. They are all that is standing between country sports as we know them now and country sports that YOUR children will read about in history books. And we certainly want to see countless thousands bringing their great grandchildren to Game Fairs in years to come as well. Please enjoy the season ahead.

Paul Pringle

Country Sports are under threat like never before - here's how you can help defend them

The recent anti hunting bill brought to the NI Assembly very nearly succeeded on the basis of a flawed consultation process, the passion and commitment of those supporting the bill and their effectiveness at generating publicity for their cause and political support across the political spectrum. They were also aided by the lack of unity and apathy amongst country sports enthusiasts.

There is a clear expression intent to bring this bill back to the Assembly and next time round with a changed balance in the Assembly it could go through or be an even closer run thing.

And there is no doubt that if hunting goes, shooting and aspects of it will be next on the agenda. This is very clear from the League Against Cruel Sports literature and surveys, in many ways they appear to think shooting is more detrimental to wildlife than hunting.

Headlines in the top UK newspapers and BBC indicate that the PR battle against shooting is well developed and gathering pace and of course Chris Packham and his Wild Justice organisation have been very effective with their legal challenges on a wide range of issues connected to shooting.

They have challenged the shooting of corvids and other vermin, pushed the agenda against supermarkets selling game, attempted to prevent the large scale release

of game birds and now argued for a huge reduction in the season for woodcock.

No matter what one thinks about Packham and his Wild Justice colleagues – these three part-time unsalaried individuals have been highly effective in putting country sports ‘on the back foot’ through generating very effective anti country sports PR. Packham’s BBC profile helps but what makes him and Wild Justice really effective is their excellent PR contacts, their use of the law, and the passion and commitment of his supporters, and his ability to raise funds to attack our sports from his supporters.

Although on our side the sporting organisations have the better science, especially through the efforts of Game Conservation and Wildlife Trust www.gwct.org.uk Wild Justice through skilful use of the law and PR have rather put them ‘on the back foot’. It is of course always easier to attack than defend, but the GCWT has issued some excellent science based rebuttals to Wild Justice attacks and media reports which we include in this issue.

We must encourage our organisations to be more pro-active in defending our sports and be prepared to give them the funds to do so.

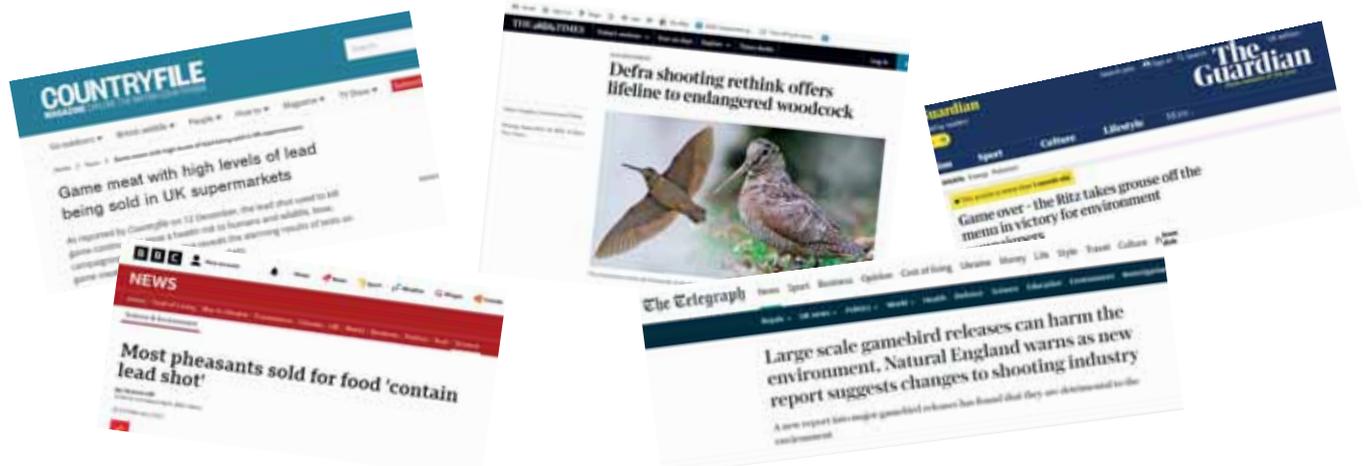
The cost of living crisis, it's impact on business including our own

The current cost of living crisis also

threatens our sports including the cost of putting game birds on the ground, the increased costs of virtually everything including travelling to shoot, hunt or fish or to compete in competitions and the cost of equipment. Coming on the back of the costs incurred by businesses during the Covid epidemic many businesses will be put under extreme pressure. Our own business is no different.

During the pandemic we thought it important to keep Irish country sports active through The Virtual Game Fair, www.thevirtualgamefair.com, developing a You Tube Channel www.youtube.com/channel/UCZwsE_EUmvu2xZvmwuq5CzA/about, and publishing the Irish Country Sports and Country Life magazine www.countrysportsandcountrylife.com. All of these were provided FREE to the country sports community but of course involved us in considerable expenditure. We also continued to sponsor and support events and charities as we have done since we started the business. I think it fair to say that no organisation has invested more in sponsorship of our sports and events.

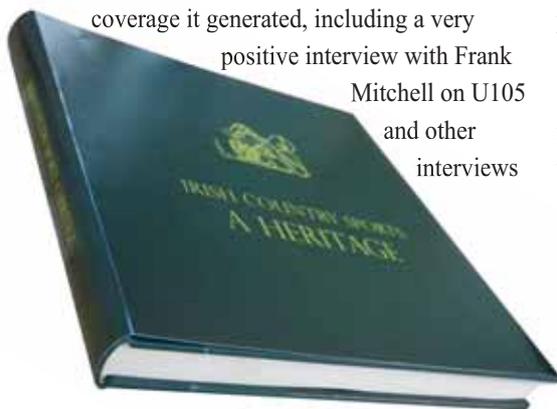
As a reaction to the anti hunting bill we decided to publish a heritage book to demonstrate to politicians, the media and the country sports community what could be lost if our sports are banned or curtailed. The ‘Irish Country Sports – A HERITAGE’ book is an impressive book which was



launched at Stormont and had a great media reaction. Once again because we felt it important that country sports needed a PR boost like this we produced a very high quality product with a tiny margin. You can see elsewhere where, if you haven't got a copy and we feel all Irish country sports households should, you can purchase one of the final copies available and help us continue to support our sports.

We also worked hard to keep the Game Fair going during the pandemic organising, re-organising and then having to postpone fairs in June '20, Aug '20, June '21 and August '21 before rather belatedly getting the 'green light' for 2022. This was not our biggest and best Game Fair but in spite of truly appalling weather on the Sunday was an event enjoyed by many people from all over Ireland and further afield.

The large turnout, the publicity generated (full page adverts in 25 newspapers) and the excellent media coverage it generated, including a very positive interview with Frank Mitchell on U105 and other interviews



including on Shannonside/Northern Sound demonstrated to press and politicians the continuing strength of support for country sports and the rural way of life in Ireland.

There is no doubt that the fair is the 'flagship' for country sports in Ireland and one of the best defences against those who would ban or curtail our sports. Obviously other key facets in defending and promoting our sports are the sporting organisations, virtually all of which were represented at the fair, and of course the support for country sports in magazines such as this and social media.

The 2022 Game Fair was a difficult one to organise as we had incurred huge costs through organising and re-organising fairs in 2020 and 2021 and with little revenue coming in spent heavily on the Virtual Game Fair and keeping the magazine

going. Before making a commitment for 2022 we had to be sure that we could deal with the prevailing Covid challenges. It was only due to the almost superhuman efforts of our team that the fair did take place and we took the financial hit by absorbing the huge increases in costs of virtually every aspect of the event to deliver it without increases in stand rental and admission.

We have given very full coverage of the attractions at the 2022 Irish Game Fair and trust that you will agree that the fair, together with this magazine continues to play a major role in promoting and defending our sports. If you missed the fair in 2022 – please do make an effort to support us and the future of our sports in 2023.

Irish Country Sports and Country Life – the future

With more people moving from reading printed media to online plus huge increases in the costs of producing, printing and distribution of a hard copy glossy magazine we have made changes to how the magazine will be produced and distributed. We have been 'flying the flag' for Irish country sports since 1985 and we felt it important that we ensured the continuation of publication of a high quality publication acting as the 'voice of Irish hunting, shooting & fishing.'

Fortunately in 2011 we had observed how the printed media was giving way to online publications and we launched the FREE to READ version of the magazine – since then we have built up an impressive worldwide readership of 4-7k per week or over 50- 80,000 readers per issue for our high quality product. With greater promotion we intend to target 100,000 plus readers per issue. We have many new innovations planned and YOU can help by recommending it to your friends, using it to advertise goods and services, pups for sale, dogs at stud etc and suggesting to your local gun & tackle shop that they should be supporting it through advertising! If you want to be kept up to date on publishing dates of the magazine – email us your email address to countryandsportsandcountrylife@btinternet.com or follow us on

facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/194380487692983/? Or Twitter on [countrysports](https://twitter.com/countrysports) <https://twitter.com/countrysports/status/1465369223329464326> You can also read the magazine going back 12 years in our ARCHIVES at <https://issuu.com/bluegator.com>

You can get the hard copy magazine posted out to you for only £6/€6 incl P&P.

By cutting out the high cost and hassle of distributing the hard copy magazine through the shops we are making it available by ORDER ONLY at a very low price of JUST £6/€6 to include P&P. We are stopping distribution of the magazine through the shops so if you wish to continue to get your copy of the magazine you need to order it – full details on page 2 of this magazine.

All country sports people including the trade should have a vested interest in promoting and defending our sports. We were disappointed by the lack of support from the gun trade for the 2022 Fair. In spite of offering ALL NI dealers heavily discounted stands including floored tentage and power from just £200 (costing us £1,000 plus) we had little take up. Many had good reasons for not attending and we thank those who have supported us in the past and genuinely tried to make it this year BUT for Irish country sports to survive and prosper we consider that public and the trade must give more support to promotional initiatives for our sports such as the Game Fair and this magazine. If we can see YOUR increased support and we get support from the TRADE we intend to continue to publish online and hard copy glossy editions of the magazine and be able to mount a bigger Fair in 2023. Both you, as individual sports people and the trade should have a vested interest in supporting both. You can visit the Irish Country Sports & Country Life ARCHIVE of magazines going back to 2011 at <https://issuu.com/bluegator/docs> to see what could be lost. We would like to thank CastleWood Holiday Park, TourismNI, Antrim and Newtownabbey Council and all of our other sponsors for the support which helped make the 2022 Game Fair possible.

Smyths Country Sports of Coleraine



It is always a pleasure to visit Smyths Country Sports, sited in the centre of what is widely recognised as one of Northern Ireland's best shopping towns, with a great mix of independent and multiple retailers. The Smyth family, with a long history of retailing, are situated right in the centre.

As I travelled up to do this feature, I reflected on the first time I had met current proprietor Stephen Smyth, in the country sports shop run by his father Russell, a true legend in hunting, shooting and fishing circles in the North West.

Stephen had just left university to help rescue the family's department store which, like all such stores, had suffered from the worldwide decline in demand at that time. Academe's loss was retailing's gain, as Stephen was given full rein to totally re-organise the store and he built on his retailing experience to introduce innovations that really worked, including a café on the top floor.

After he stabilised the business, Stephen sold the premises and then honed his retailing skills and experience in managing a large retail chain in NI, while at the same time setting his father up in new premises in what is the current Smyths Sports shop.

Excellent customer service and satisfaction

Stephen combines great retailing skill, imagination and experience with a big personality and a real commitment to providing excellent customer service and satisfaction. When he took over the shop from his father, he focused on brands that would help him deliver satisfied customers and repeat business.

One such brand was Barbour, which fitted Stephen's concept of a great country sports product in terms of brand history and image, a great range of styles and fits, and overall quality products that delivered comfort, service and value.

Stephen has promoted the brand and



his personal reputation for service throughout Ireland at the Great Game Fairs of Ireland and indeed throughout the world through his clever use of social media and digital marketing. He showed me huge files of letters and emails from satisfied mail order customers.

I suggest you pay a visit to Coleraine to see Stephen – the craic is mighty and the stock extensive BUT if you can't and want great country sports clothing as Christmas presents then do have a look at his website.

Now over to Stephen:

"Smyths of Coleraine expect that this Christmas will be the best ever trading period in the Family business for past forty five years. Last year, you will remember that we had the £100





A festive snow storm at Smyths

discount bonus scheme which really helped family businesses over that crucial ‘getting back to normal after Covid. Well, this year, with great supplies of mens, ladies and accessories already delivered from Barbour, Smyths are looking to break all their existing records.”

In-store shopping and online business booms

“Following on from an excellent Game Fair at Shane’s Castle we have seen a huge upturn in both our counter



trade and our huge online business during September and October. Fingers crossed, this excellent trading will continue over the Christmas period, and our new stocks have already been hugely successful.

“The Barbour ladies fashion end gets stronger and stronger, with a big new demand for longer length coats and quilts and we have an excellent variety of these in our store. Interestingly, for about four years now in sales of Barbour men’s wax jackets, we have selected the five very best selling garments of all time, three fashion and two classics, and they are still selling better than ever. The Barbour brand is just going from strength to strength.

“The Barbour quality, reliability and the new designs are all getting better and better and our stocks for Autumn/Winter ’22 and Spring ’23 give Smyths great confidence that this Christmas will be our very best.

“Everyone at Smyths look forward to seeing you in our shop very soon where the keynotes are the latest quality items and first class service. Our premises in Coleraine will be undergoing a huge refit in February 2023 and our



trademark friendly service and unique atmosphere will actually be enhanced.”

Please take a look at the Smiths Country Sports website where you will see our new Barbour ranges and 1,000s of favourable 5 star customer reviews at www.smythscountrysports.co.uk





Smyth Country Sports, 1 Park Street, Coleraine BT52 1BD N. Ireland
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Homefield & Stream, 18 Church Street, Enniskillen BT74 7EJ N. Ireland
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Barbour Countrywear

Countrywear has been at the heart of the Barbour brand since it was founded in 1894. With practical clothing inspired by the colours of the countryside, it's fit for purpose in relaxed, capacious fits designed for those who live and work in the country. For men, versatility and performance feature

throughout in a choice of wax and waterproof breathable jackets, quilts, essential gilets and smart tweeds. Tattersall shirts are refreshed in new fabrications and check sizes alongside comfortable knitwear and heavyweight overshirts.

For women, this season's countrywear collection takes

inspiration from exploring Victorian country houses and grounds. With a refined attention to detail, the range features a country-based colour palette with prints and tones that are classically elegant. It's a collection to be discovered and enjoyed.

For further information, please visit your local stockist or barbour.com



Fontwell Gilet RRP £159.00 Hogside Tartan Regular Shirt RRP £64.95, Reg Fit Jean RRP £79.95, Cairn Cap RRP £39.95



Catbell Overshirt RRP £89.95, Eastwood Thermo Weave Shirt RRP £74.95



Stavia Knit RRP £99.95, Cranleigh Shirt RRP £69.95



(Left) Daffodil Shirt RRP £64.95, Beadnell Jacket RRP £229.00

(Right) Alder Wool Gilet RRP £179.00, Primrose Knit RRP £69.95, Essential Slim Jeans RRP £69.95, Barbour Daffodil Shirt RRP £64.95

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SMALL, LIGHTWEIGHT, AND COMPACT! THE NEW ATC/STC SPOTTING SCOPES FROM SWAROVSKI OPTIK

When every ounce counts but every detail needs to be discovered, SWAROVSKI OPTIK offers the ideal solution with its new ATC/STC spotting scope. It will be available in three different versions from October 3, 2022.

“With the ATC/STC, we are reaching out to all those whose passion for nature takes them into rough terrain or remote areas. The priorities for this target group include a small pack size and a light weight with no compromise on optics,” explains Stefan Hämmerle, Member of the Executive Board – Marketing & Sales at SWAROVSKI OPTIK.

Big performance in a small package

With a length of 258 mm/285 mm (10.2 in/11.2 in), the ATC/STC is smaller than a sheet of DIN A4 paper. Its light weight of 970 g/980 g (10.2 in/11.2 in) also makes it a perfect companion for demanding activities and long trips. One of the biggest challenges for the product developers at the Tyrolean family company was incorporating high optical performance in this compact design. Stefan Hämmerle explains how this was



achieved: “Packing optical perfection into a small product calls for huge efforts from our optical calculators and designers. They had to push the boundaries of physics to their limits for the ATC/STC. The result is amazing.”

User-friendly operation

But the ATC/STC impresses with more than its outstanding SWAROVISION quality optics. Its practical ease of use is another clear benefit. A half shell allows the spotting scope to be positioned stably on a surface even without a tripod, and allows unimpeded turning of the focusing and turning wheel at all times. A carrying strap is supplied with the spotting scope.

Compatible with the VPA

Like most SWAROVSKI OPTIK observation optics, the new compact spotting scope can be easily connected to a smartphone using the variable phone adapter (VPA). This makes it

possible to immediately capture observations on camera.

The ATC/STC (17-40x56) is available in three versions: with angled view (ATC) in either green or Burnt Orange, and with straight view (STC) in green. The ATC/STC is produced as a single unit and cannot be separated into eyepiece and objective modules.





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Obituary **Stuart Greaves**

From a little boy, all Stuart dreamed of was to be a gamekeeper, as long as he could remember, that's all he wanted. He never considered any other occupation, and to that end, Stuart attended Sparsholt College, in Hampshire, U. K. where he studied Game Wildlife Habitat Management with an emphasis on Gamekeeping and Game Bird rearing.

From 1992 to 1993, after completing his education at Sparsholt College, Stuart went to Half-Way Hatchery, Co. Roscommon, where he was responsible for rearing day-old pheasants and both English and French Partridges, caring for their feed, water, and health in every way, until the birds were sold out to various Shooting Estates, Syndicates, and Shooting Clubs for both walked-up and traditional driven shooting.

From 1993 until 2001, Stuart was an under keeper at Dromoland Castle Estate, Co. Clare, Ireland.

From 2001 to 2015, Stuart was the single-handed Gamekeeper at Annes Grove Estate, Co. Cork, rearing and supplying all of the birds, managing the release and care of them after release, designing layouts, expanding, and operating the estate's traditional driven shooting. He was also in charge of beating crew and pickers-up. As the Annes Grove Gamekeeper, the shooting return on the birds was 40%, with 20 shooting days. Stuart left Annes Grove when the owners of the estate made an agreement with the Irish Office of Public Works to manage the estate for non-shooting tourism.

From 2001 until his passing in 2022, each year Stuart reared 25,000 - 50,000 day-old pheasants, partridges, and ducks for various Shooting Estates, Shooting Syndicates, and Sporting Clubs throughout Ireland, as well as his own game birds, all cared for personally by him at his own facility. This entailed complete management of the health and well-being of the birds, including recognising potential disease, consulting veterinarians, medicating properly, providing clean fresh water, food, heat, bedding, and maintaining a totally clean and safe environment for the game birds. Stuart had between 90% - 95% rearing return on his game birds.

From 2015 until his passing, Stuart managed and operated Awbeg Sports, LTD. Awbeg was his own driven shoot, encompassing over 1,500 acres on which he released 5,000 game birds (pheasants and partridge) reared by himself in his own nearby facility, for traditional driven shooting. He had a 40% shooting return on birds, with 25 shooting days. (The photo above shows Stuart on the Awbeg Shoot).

In 2020 Stuart took on the Gamekeeping position at Ballyvolane House Estate, Co. Cork, rearing and supplying the pheasants, managing the release and maintaining care of the birds after release, designing the layouts and operating the traditional driven shoots offered to clients by Ballyvolane House Estate, and additionally in charge of the beating crew and pickers-up. Under his management, the shooting return on birds increased from 18% to 35%, with 10 shooting days. He was to continue with

Ballyvolane House Estate for the 2022 season.

Stuart was quite active in the gundog world, having facilitated the 2008 Irish Spaniel Championship when he was Gamekeeper at Annes Grove Estate, about which the organisers of the Championship made this comment: "As head keeper, Stuart made a magnificent job of preparing the ground for 19 bitches, 8 dogs and 1 cocker with an excellent supply of game." Stuart also facilitated the 2016 Irish Spaniel Championship on his Awbeg Sports ground in North Cork, as well as many spaniel trials.

Many people in the shooting and dog world consider Stuart to be one of Ireland's great sportsmen, a man of strong character, genuine, honest and one who was particularly kind to the elderly when they were shooting. While he excelled in shooting, during the season he would walk endlessly with his dogs in search of game, and never came back empty-handed, fly fishing was his greatest passion. Every chance he had, Stuart would be in the water, casting his fly rod on the Blackwater, the Nore, the Suir, as well as many other rivers throughout Ireland and the U.K. Stuart loved to tie his own flies, and never used a spinning rod. He particularly enjoyed the challenge of fishing for steelhead in the Pacific Northwest, and was the subject of an article for this magazine. He said these words about his passion: "It's an addiction, an obsession, the desire to connect with this fish, to feel the sharp, powerful grab of the fly, the reel singing as the fish runs, the cold blue water swirling around me, the fish and I sharing the same world. It's a feeling like no other. I will chase the steelhead forever." Stuart fished in the Pacific Northwest for the last time February-March 2022.

Stuart Greaves sadly passed away on 29th May 2022.

While we mourn greatly for Stuart's tragic passing, a life cut way too short, with much more game to shoot, more countryside to walk, more rivers to fish, we must remember, and be comforted by, the extraordinary life that Stuart did have. For when a little boy dreams of being a gamekeeper, how fortunate is he to have fulfilled that dream, to have been successful, respected, admired, and most importantly, to have been much loved.

Editor's Note: We are grateful to his partner, Jan D Evans, for the text and photographs which we are publishing as a tribute to this fine country sportsman and we offer our sincere condolences on her loss.



The Irish Game Fair

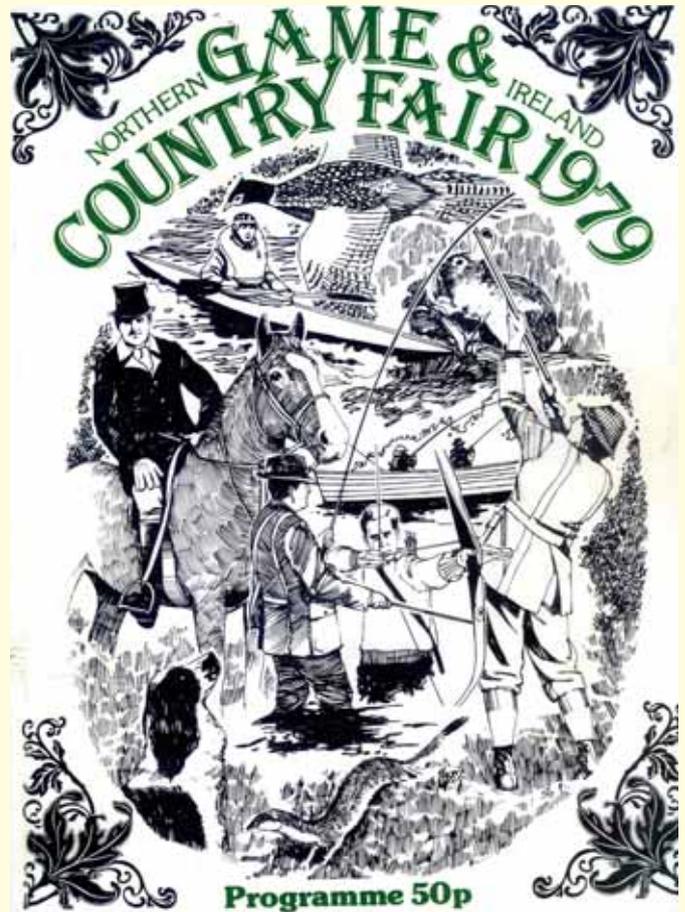
Albert Titterington looks back at the history of the Irish Game Fairs and some highs and lows over its 43 year history.

The Irish Game Fair was launched in 1979 by Albert Titterington, Michael Dickey, the late Major Donald Hoy (land agent of Clondeboye Estate), the late William Brownlow and Stanley Scott (Chairman and Secretary of the BFSS -now CAI). The objective was to organise and deliver a sustainable Game Fair for Ireland to meet and defeat the growing threats to our sports, the environment in which they take place and the rural way of life.

Sixty nine fairs have been staged over 43 years at Clondeboye, Ballywalter House, Montalto, Slane Castle, Necarne, Galway Racecourse, Ards Airfield, Castlecoole, Loughanmore House, Birr Castle and Shanes Castle. What has characterised these events is the sheer professionalism of the team in delivering well organised award winning events well attended by country sports enthusiasts and the general public. In some ways the latter are more important because these are the people whose support and goodwill we need going forward if our sports are to survive.

Over the years the threats to the fair have been many and varied including Foot and Mouth Disease when we were the only event to run albeit at Ards Airfield; weather – in 2008 when major events in GB were cancelled we ran a successful event and of course bad weather impacted on Sunday this year. Covid had a hugely negative impact in that we had the costs of organising and postponing four times and of course this also impacted adversely on our exhibitor base.

Animal Rights activity was a threat – previously they protested at the gates of the fair and flying an aircraft with banners over it, damaging our posters, running a campaign of attempted intimidation against me with telephone and mailed threats, attacks on my house and car and a dozen braver thugs attacked me outside



Clondeboye, Crowded aisles at Shanes Castle, Crowds at Birr Castle .

my house and were put to flight by a baseball bat! Ultimately I took legal action and a sympathetic judge made such attackers amenable under the anti-terror legislation.

Having 'seen off' these threats from our opponents and after the huge effort made by everyone on our team to invest serious sums of money and effort to bring back the fair after its enforced absence due to Covid, it was disappointing to hear largely unwarranted criticism from within our own ranks! Everyone is entitled to an opinion but those few people who chose to voice their opinion on Ireland's largest country sports event, not constructively but in a pejorative fashion, in my opinion do not help to promote and defend country sports.

In fact, they demean the work of the sporting organisations which attend the fair, the many thousands of people and clubs, many no longer with us who worked at and for the fair, and the hundreds of people including staff and club volunteers who, in very difficult circumstances, came together this year to put on an event enjoyed by so many.

The internet has been a useful promotional tool for the fair and other businesses but it also provides potent threats to the fairs and other country sports businesses – firstly by giving potential purchasers the opportunity to search for and purchase discounted country sports products – the sort they used to purchase at fairs or local shops. This impacts greatly on local business and the attractiveness of fairs as a trading location for businesses. Many potential exhibitors argue that there is little point in them paying albeit modest fees to display products which people look at, handle and then seek to purchase at a better price elsewhere.

The other threat posed by the internet is that social media gives a voice to 'instant experts' who try to impress by making ill informed criticism of the efforts of others. I was stunned when I learned that a couple of the most vociferous critics of the fair this year hadn't even attended it and for some bizarre reason were voicing an opinion on third or fourth hand information!

Even worse in my opinion were the 'experts' who definitely were not in attendance but appear to want to appear knowledgeable by voicing 'an informed opinion' and erroneously claimed to have intimate knowledge of the economics and management policies of the fair. Typical of this level of criticism and misinformation posted on social media, was one 'expert' claiming that 'Stall costs at Birr had got very expensive'. In fact during the 10 years of the Birr Fair in spite of increases in costs including estate rental STAND PRICES REMAINED STATIC and this year NI gundealers were offered subsidised shedding stands with power, flooring and tentage costing us over £1,000 for just £200.

Another lady claimed that her sporting relate organisation had thought of attending but the costs for exhibiting were too high. When it was pointed out to her that had she or they bothered to contact us they would have found that stands for sporting organisations are FREE! When this was pointed out to her she did apologise and claimed she was voicing an ill informed personal opinion and not speaking on behalf of the organisation!

The fair has been a mainstream public success with excellent

media coverage and several tourism awards from all over Ireland and the UK, and obviously informed and expert opinion from publications and tourism and marketing experts is more important to the fair's promotion and defence of Irish country sports than the opinion of a few 'malcontent's', some of whom did not even attend the fair. But it should be pointed out that these 'critics' with their ill informed comments do the cause of Irish country sports much more harm than good and in my opinion in effect they are acting like 'fellow travellers' with those who wish to see our sports curtailed or banned.

Contrast their behaviour with that of animal rights activists. Chris Packham's Hen Harrier Fest, staged around the same time as the fair, was hit with bad weather and attendance was well down – did we see social media criticism from animal rights activists – NO we did NOT! Animal rights activists are savvy enough to realise that any public event and the publicity it generates furthers their cause – it is a lesson several 'supposed country sports supporters' have yet to learn.

Thankfully threats to the fair from ill informed social media activity are tiny and pale into insignificance when viewed against the opinion of the huge number of very satisfied visitors but against a backdrop of other major problems they are an irritant with which we, as organisers and defenders of our sports, can do without.

See some of the comments and photographs from visitors, trade and the sporting organisations in the fuller report on the Fair in the online version of the magazine.

Apart from poor weather, the biggest threat to the fairs are rising costs. People see crowds going in the gate and think fairs are a licence to print money. Those people who have organised them realise that in fact they can be a great big hole in which to pour money with often little hope of return. Ireland and GB have seen several Game Fairs start and finish – even the mighty CLA Fair and the Midland Fair group ran into difficulties. The costs of building an event from the grass up are massive and increasing.

Overall costs connected to the 2022 Game Fair went up by between 25 and 30%, whereas our stand costs and admission remained the same as they have been for over 15 years and offered both trade and public exceptional value.

Exhibitors travelling to the Fair from GB and the ROI also faced hugely increased costs because of the Protocol and increased ferry, accommodation and fuel costs and of course visitors and competitors travelling a distance were hit by huge fuel increases.

With having to face all of these threats plus truly appalling weather on the Sunday, the strength of the Great Game Fairs brand was demonstrated by us still delivering a well organised and run event that delivered for our exhibitors, competitors and the huge number of sporting families that attended on both days – fuller report in the online version of the magazine.

With the forecast recession without the clearly express support of the sporting public and trade I would ask how many of you would commit the €150,000 for running an Irish Game Fair in 2023? I am tempted to suggest that some of the social media 'critics' could step forward to invest their time and money!



The Mayor Alderman Stephen Ross arrives in style for the opening



Jim Shannon, MP, Alderman Ross, Equestrian Director Philip Titterington and Director Albert Titterington



Paul Pringle presents the Mayor with a copy of THE HERITAGE book



Game Displays were a key part of the fair



Muzzle loaders provided historical entertainment



John Wray, Kieran Young, Paul Pringle and Ken Perrott on the Irish Country Sports & Country Life stand



Crowds in the Fine Food Pavilions



Crowds in the Salmon & Woodcock Pavilion

Standing up for country sports and the rural way of life

The Great Game Fairs of Ireland team, when they started the Irish Game Fairs in 1979, committed themselves to promoting and defending ALL country sports and the rural way of life. It is true to say that no other individuals or organisations have made such a contribution including in the recent debate over the anti Hunting with Dogs Bill. Realising that this bill threatened not only hunting with dogs, but potentially opened up threats to ALL country sports and indeed the very fabric of rural life they suggested that country sports people should demonstrate their support for hunting by cheering on the hunting demonstrations at the fair.

Several hundred people answered the call for a dignified show of support for hunting by watching and clapping the Killultagh mounted pack and then Dan Kinney and his foot pack from the Glens of Antrim Foxhounds complete with 5yo whipper in Conor. An interested passing ‘spectator’ which challenged the ‘whipper in’s’ control was one of the estate fallow deer! The Kinneys paraded their hounds in pouring rain – as Dan said the pack go out in all weathers to protect sheep farmers’ livelihoods.



Young people getting to meet the hounds

It had been arranged that Liz Brown from the Sunnyland Beagles would interview Dan and Conor to hear why they felt hunting should be defended by ALL country sports people.

The showers that had bedevilled the fair on Sunday worsened as Paul Pringle was giving an impassioned introduction to the demonstration of support for hunting. And as Albert Titterington and Liz Brown interviewed the Kinneys, Bill Mnntgomery and Owen Mulcahy with Charley Jacoby from Field Sports Channel and George Logan filming, the

angry skies open and there was a torrential downpour of apocalyptic proportions.

As the interviews proceeded quite a few hardy souls with and without umbrellas braved the rain, while the majority of supporters retreated to the Salmon & Woodcock Pavilion and other nearby tentage. However, each person being interviewed was roundly cheered by the crowd, in and out of the tents, and there was no doubt that the majority of people attending the fair made it clear they wanted to see hunting continue.



The crowd braving the rain to support the hunts



When the rain literally came down 'in stair rods' many hunting supporters retired to the Salmon & Woodcock Pavilion



United in support of hunting - Albert with the Kinneys and the representatives of the Irish Working Terrier Federation



Crowds supporting the Killultagh mounted pack



Albert interviews Dan Kinney



Dan Kinney parading the Glens of Antrim Foxhounds in the rain



Young Conor Kinney with one of the Glens of Antrim hounds



Albert interviews Bill Montgomery, whose family have been hunting for several hundred years!

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Game Fair Press Briefings

The Irish Game Fair and Fine Food Festival has always had a good relationship with the media recognising the important role it plays in being for most of the media and general public, the public face of Irish country sports.

As one would expect when looking at the CVs of the team it is a marketing led event with Albert Titterington, Paul Pringle and Emma Cowan all having extensive media experience and connection and their expertise is professionally supported by Rosemary Hamilton from Future Image PR. And each year this team generates extensive positive publicity for the fair, the host area and of course for the promotion and defence of all Irish country sports.

This year it was decided to promote two major themes each with an Antrim



Vanessa Elder, Operations Manager with Castlewood Holiday Park accompanied by Site Manager Andrew Wright, pictured with Albert Titterington (right) Director of the Great Game Fairs of Ireland

connection. The first was a Living History theme based on the Vikings

sailing up the Bann and giving rise to the legend of the Red Hand of Ulster and the O'Neills.

The second was to celebrate the angling heritage of the area with Lough Neagh, the Maine and the Six Mile Water by bringing Stevie Munn's fly fishing fair as a unique angling attraction to enhance the normal angling attractions at the fair. This delivered the largest public angling event ever staged in NI.

Press Sponsorship Launch

These two themes formed the basis of our launch to announce CastleWood Holiday Park as a new sponsor. The launch was staged with a Viking and Angling theme quite appropriately at the new CastleWood site which is based beside the River Maine and features Scandinavian type pods which can be hired by families and anglers, and touring and static caravan sites. There are also static caravans to rent.

This launch was supported by press releases, newspapers advertising and radio interviews. Several excellent radio interviews were carried out with local and ROI radio stations including with Northern Sound & Shannonside Radio and with Frank Mitchell of U105.



A fabulous location for the CastleWood Holiday Park



A Viking family 'invades' CastleWood

Extensive advertising and PR campaigns were carried out with media groups in the ROI, virtually all of the newspapers in NI, and several UK publications. We were delighted to welcome Fieldsports Channel TV and Charlie Jacoby who set up a recording studio at the fair.

Press Breakfast

A Press Breakfast is normally staged on the Thursday morning of the fair to allow the media to preview the fair by seeing the finishing touches being put to the various fair attractions and, through press coverage, create an opportunity to send a strong country sports message to the public.

It is also a great opportunity to honour those who the team recognise have made a major contribution to the promotion and defence of Irish country sports and the rural way of life in front of an invited audience of their peers.

Speakers at the event included Councillor Leah Smyth, the Deputy Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey, Vanessa Elder representing sponsors Castlewood, Gary McCartney from CAI, Ronan Gorman from CI and Albert Titterington.

Lifetime Commitment Awards

This year the Irish Country Sports &

Country Life 'Lifetime commitment awards' went south to Dan Curely, past Chairman and current Vice Chairman of the NARGC, John Toal past PRO of the NARGC and Owen Mulcahy, Secretary of the Irish Working Terrier Federation.

Presenting Dan with his award, Albert said: "Dan is a lifelong shooting enthusiast. From as long as he can remember he was helping out the local Gun Club at Fox drives. At 16 he got his first Gun, and he has always been involved in all aspects of shooting and gun club activity since.

"He is Secretary of his Club, Annagh-Ma-Kerrig Gun Club in Co Monaghan. He is Secretary of Co Monaghan RGC, and he is currently Vice Chairman of both the NARGC and FACE Ireland and he completed his three terms as NARGC Chairman in March 2022.

"When he started shooting over 40 years ago, he did not appreciate fully what he and we all had then. If we could get it back now - to walk across the local fields and raise a few wild birds on most outings.

"His shooting activity is all centred around the local club, be it game, vermin or target shooting, depending on the time of year. It is about his fellow members and the local countryside, and been an integral part of the countryside community.

Albert added: "Dan really enjoyed his time as NARGC chairman, working for and with the 25,000 members of the NARGC. It was a great privilege to head up the organisation he has been involved in all his life. He is still involved as vice chairman, and his hope is that the NARGC can become central to creating an active and vibrant countryside force, in cooperation with the wider countryside community.

"To that end he believes FACE Ireland which represents 14 Field sport organisations including the NARGC, will be one of the key organisations uniting all our sports going forward. We all want the same things for the countryside, but we need to unite our sectorial interests coherently so that that we leave a vibrant active countryside going forward. Our opponents and challenges were never greater, but together we can preserve the traditions and sports we love and cherish. It is up to us to do it."

Presenting John Toal with his Award, Paul Pringle said: "John developed his love for country sports in the company of his uncle Peter Murphy of Eadenmore, Mayobridge, Co. Down. Peter, the husband of John's father's twin sister, was his mentor and like a second father to him.

"School holidays were spent in the



Stevie Munn and Albert Titterington look forward to the new Fly Fishing Fair and the Viking attractions at the Game Fair

countryside each year and John's earliest memories are of being hoisted up with arms wrapped round Peter's neck as they traversed Mourne stone ditches with gundog foraging in front.

"The sights, sounds and above all the smell of bog water as the boot sinks slightly in spongy ground stay forever and "Follow carefully and stay behind the gun!" Trips to sheep dog trials, excursions up mountains and the taste of bilberries all helped make the hunting man.

"John has been fishing and shooting since his early teens. Game and coarse fishing together with pheasant shooting and crop protection make up the bulk of John's sport. Wildfowling was a passion in his youth.

"John has been a member of Dundalk & District GPA since 1978 and of Little Ash gun club from 1985, serving on the executives of both clubs in a variety of roles. A keen conservationist, John is always involved in game rearing and habitat improvement. John also represents Louth RGC in ORCCA (Oriel Rivers Catchment and Coastal association) The Rathescar Game Reserve Project is another key interest

"Currently Chairman of Louth RGC, John is a long serving member of the Governing body of the NARGC and was elected to the National Executive in 2016. John worked for the membership as National PRO, networking with Regional PROs to present the NARGC's message far and wide.

"John has contributed articles to magazines and periodicals on behalf of the NARGC, as well as representing the organisation in fora such as the CRRU (Campaign for Responsible Rodentiside use) and the FACE communications working group.

"Now in retirement, John finds time to pursue his interests in hunting, fishing and conservation. A current focus is in training on invasive species.

"In John's own words: 'The future of country sports is under threat from misguided Greens who, if they were not coloured by fanatics on the extreme edge of animal rights should be our natural allies. Work is still needed to properly portray our sport as the natural activity that promotes conservation and biodiversity regeneration.'

"Well said John! I have seen at first hand many examples of your PR

expertise and your unique take on country sports generally, as can be seen in your aptly named article - The Way I See It - in the current edition of Irish Country Sports & Country Life. I am delighted to make this presentation to you of this coveted Lifetime Achievement Award."

Presenting Owen with his award on the Sunday – Albert paid tribute to Owen's tireless work on behalf of Irish working terriers including on the recent anti hunting with dogs bill. Bringing a touch of fun to proceedings was Paul Smith dressed as a Leprechaun who even had a donkey there! Paul creates a bit of entertainment in his costume for the children at the 'Put and Take Fishery' but has also raised money for charity with his 'The Leprechaun' book having written an angling book. John Carmichael Jnr added interest with his golden eagle.

At the close of proceedings Albert presented three copies of the 'Irish Country Sports – A HERITAGE BOOK' to Councillor Smyth, Vanessa Elder and to Ray McKeeman for his contribution to the success of the Fly Fishing Fair.



Albert and Paul with the NARGC Team, Ken Lindsay (Gundog Director) and Kieran Young (Terrier & Lurcher Director)



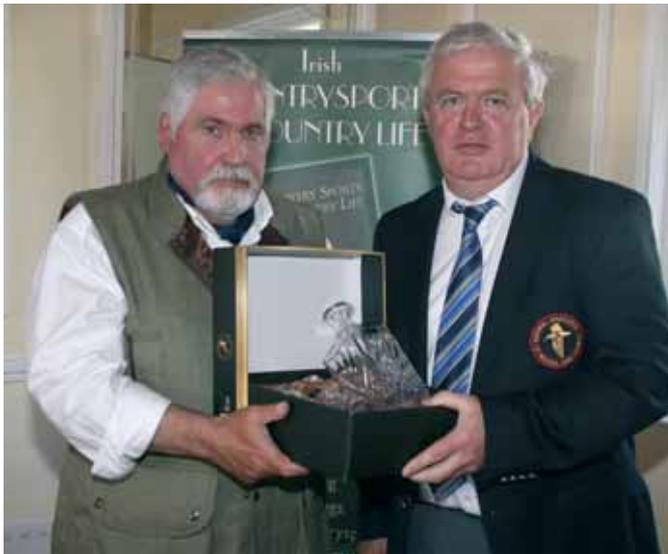
Albert with the Deputy Mayor and John Carmichael's eagle



Leprechaun & Donkey



Speakers at the Press Breakfast



Dan & John Presentations



Owen Mulcahy Presentation



Albert Presenting Ray McKeeman with Heritage Book



Albert Presenting Leah and Vanessa with Irish Country Sports – A HERITAGE book

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An Irish Country Sports & Country Life 'Lifetime Commitment Award' for Owen Mulcahy secretary of the Irish Working Terrier Federation

It was with great pleasure that we made a 'Lifetime Commitment Award' to Owen Mulcahy, secretary of the Irish Working Terrier Federation at the Game Fair and we were delighted that the IWTF had a stand at the Fair.

Owen and his colleagues were far sighted enough to realise that hunting and particularly terrier work, would come under attack from politicians, many of whom had not taken the time to objectively 'see for themselves' what terrier work carried out under strict code of conduct actually entails. We at the GGF of Ireland were very happy to give support to help the organisation in its early stages and have supported it ever since. We had great pleasure in making this award to Owen as a public recognition of the very valuable work carried out by the IWTF.

We asked Owen to supply some background of his life with dogs, hunting and fieldsports protection.

"I grew up in Cork City, a city steeped in hunting of all kinds. There are probably more packs of hounds, terriers and lurchers than any other county in Ireland, if not anywhere else in the world. I started hunting from a very young age, but I didn't come from a hunting family. On my mother's side they were bird men, but there isn't any other hunting enthusiast that I know of.

"When in primary school, I was up playing in the local fields when I met what became a lifelong friend out with a few terriers after rabbits. So we tagged along with Richie and caught a rabbit with his few terriers. I was hooked. We then collected all the local dogs in the estate, as dogs used to stray around the streets in those days and anything that looked like it could hunt, we brought



The IWTF stand at Irish Game Fair

them along. We got quite good at catching rabbits with our bobbery pack, but eventually as we got older, started to get out with local hound packs.

"We started with the Maryboro Foot Beagles and when we got old enough, about fourteen years old, I became a whipper-in to that pack. At the same time we started getting more serious with our terriers and were gathering better bred dogs about myself, Richie and Micky. Our first dogs had no particular breeding and we went to the older lads in the locality such as Brendan Morris (Mossy) as he had proper earth dogs at the time. Mossy gave us a few pups and within a few years we had far better working dogs from local legends like Jerry Allen and Jim Murray with the General lines, and also dogs straight from John Parks' red dogs in the U.K. that Jim Price's excellent red Fell Fury dog was the sire.

"So, by the time I was 17, we had some decent enough stock around us that we could take hunting on a Saturday with the terriers, hunting with

the hounds on a Sunday and lamping mid-week with our lurchers. I hunted for many years gaining great experience with the various aspects of hunting. I spent time working terriers for local harrier packs and also spent time, when free during the summer, on the river with the Cork City mink hounds. We even got to use terriers a few times on the river which as a young fella was quite a buzz at the time.

"As the years went on, I became much more serious with working terriers and in particular the white Cork bred dogs that were from our area, that I felt performed better than what was about at the time. Then, with work and family commitments I dropped off the other hunting activities to concentrate my time on the terriers. I am of the belief if you are going to do something you should try to it right instead of spreading yourself too thin. I am still trying to get it right 35 years later, but happy enough with my lot.

"Along the way I got very interested in the protection of what we love to do –



Owen (left) presents the IWTF Working Trophy at the Fair

all fieldsports. As I grew up surrounded by all the codes of hunting, I was equally as passionate about protecting all that we do. I often attended local pro hunting rallies that were organised by the HAI/FACE against certain threats to hunting over the years. When at work one day and mainly due to frustration at what I saw as inaction to adequately defend fieldsports, I wrote an open letter to the heads of the HAI/FACE suggesting where I, as a younger man, thought that pro hunting defence groups should be doing and the direction they should be going.

“Having an engineering background I think makes me work in a particularly regimented manner. This was about the time when the dog breeding Establishments Bill and Draft animal Welfare Act was circulating. I took the time to write approximately 70 pages dismantling of the draft Act. Pointing out all the areas of contention that would impact hunting into the future. A few people took notice and eventually I was invited to represent the mink hounds on the HAI/ FACE.

“At the same time RISE (Rural

Ireland Says Enough) had developed and I was drafted onto the younger committee, and we set about organising meetings around the country. I arranged the meeting in Silversprings hotel which had quite a large attendance from all over Ireland, including many terrier men and made local political representatives take notice. HAI/FACE sent a delegation including me that met with government representatives in the Dept of Agriculture to discuss the draft Bill around this time. At this meeting I gave a fair account of myself that the government reps at the end of the meeting made me the point of contact with them for future correspondence. I think this put one or two noses out of joint with some of the old boys, but such is life.

“Being surrounded by mostly hound, horse and shooting men, I noticed that terrier work had little representation and certain individuals (still around today) had not the best interests of terrier work or terrier men in their minds and terrier work was under threat by the then Minister Simon Coveney. To me this was totally disheartening because as an

honest hunting enthusiast I would fight as much for terrier work as I would for any other hunting activity when others are only in it for themselves and lack what I call the big picture. The IFHA Harrier men backed us from the start, but others took a little more time and others still lost in their our contradiction and repudiation.

“It was then that I and a few others involved in terrier work in Cork decided to found the Irish Working Terrier Federation. Word was put out around the country via the network of terrier men and the inaugural IWTF took place in the Horse and Jockey over a decade ago. The IWTF was first floated in the 1970s but died off after a period of time. This time around, after a somewhat rocky start, the group of men that first met in Silversprings hotel and later in the H&J were determined to keep representation for terrier work at the forefront of hunting defence. Men like Ger O’Donoghue (RIP), Wesley Cole, John Phelan, and Mark Brown are still involved today along with many members who simply “got it” from the start. Without them they would be not IWTF. Of course we are as always ably assisted by the legend that is Barrie Wade in the U.K. my friend and mentor.

“We had lots of contacts with various TDs and it wasn’t long that with persistence and determination we got meetings with the department officials and Minister and for the first time in this country terrier men had able representation. Some in the wider hunting community had concerns that we would do harm. It was quite the opposite as we had very able men and brought people from a place of bias or ignorance regards terrier work to an educated opinion. Terrier work is about balanced pest control and wildlife management in a humane manner with respect for all quarry species and workers with little effect on the local ecosystem. Not what the media would like to portray us as.

“A decade later, the IWTF has been gaining strength year on year. We eventually became a member of FACE

three years ago and now sit at the same table as all the other countrywide hunting organisations. This was a sign that most of the open minded and what I consider proper hunting people finally understood what the IWTF was about and that it was being run by accountable men.

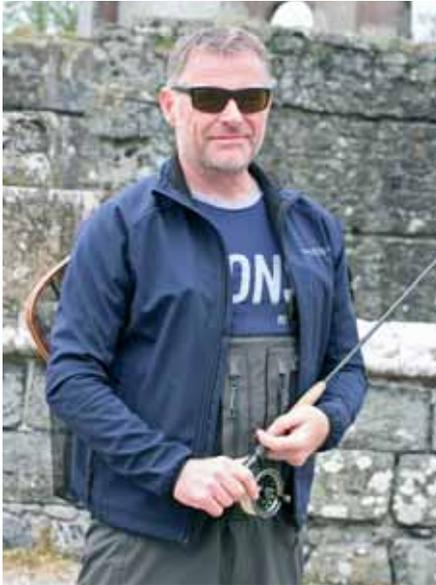
“The IWTF is now widely accepted by all hunting groups across Ireland and more recently the Committee and members have been extremely busy in Northern Ireland with defending terrier work from the Alliance Party’s anti-hunting Private Members Bill which is a completely shambolic piece of legislation that thankfully due to hard work of the IWTF and other organisations got defeated in a Stormont vote. With the recent changes in N.I. political party seats we expect the return of the Bill in the near future, and we will need the support of all terrier men, fieldsports supporters, including fishing and shooting men, women and children if we all are to succeed. I along with my colleagues in the IWTF will be there fighting hard to educate those who wish to listen and keep terrier work and working terriers active well into the future.”

Owen Mulcahy

Essential terrier work goes on in all weather conditions



The Fly Fair at the Game Fair



Stevie Munn

The first FLY FAIR at the Great Game Fair was a wonderful success and I first of all would like to thank Albert and his team for making this great addition to the already marvellous yearly event. It was certainly fantastic to see many likeminded people back at shows after the recent miserable times, of bans and restrictions on events and get together due to Covid.

Fly Fishers certainly had a fantastic time, the new angling attractions were included at the wonderful, picturesque

setting of Shanes Castle on Lord O'Neill's Estate on the banks of mighty Lough Neagh. The Fly Fair featured a good range of stands selling everything for the fishing enthusiast, there was also a lavish fly dressers hall with a fabulous line up of Fly Tyers, covering all styles of fly dressing from river and lough Trout flies, Salmon flies, Pike flies and Saltwater patterns.

I would like to thank personally all the fly dressers who came from far and wide to demonstrate their art, I would like to mention them all. Thanks to Dean Armstrong, Michael Currie, Trevor Greene, Ryan Houston, Peter Kealey, John Maduro, Anthony McCann, Joe McDonald, Andrew Laverty, Mark McLoone, Steven Moates, Darryl Mooney, Pat Mulholland, Desmond Paul, Mark Robinson, Joe Stitt, Owen Trill, and all the way from England, the marvellous Melvyn Wood and the great Keith Passant.

We must also give a huge thanks to Ray McKeeman and team, who along with his great casting instructors, taught and demonstrated all day. Ray was also a key help with the set up before the event, something which most people

don't see. The overall feedback was tremendous from the anglers that came to see us and something that the game fair will build on, if possible, in future years.

It was fantastic to see so many young people interested in fishing, always a big part of this event was the Put and Take Fishery and the NSN team, headed by Bobby Bryans. I would also like to thank APGAI Irelands Arthur Greenwood for tirelessly teaching fly tying to many young people all-weekend. Susan Brown and team provided a wonderful entomology display, where we could see the many types of water bugs that our trout and other fish feed on, I personally loved this as it was very interesting for everyone, not just the kids. I would also like to thank my sister Elaine for her amazing work, building our websites and advertising on our social media pages, not my thing, but I know it's very important for the promotion of any event. Last but not least, I would like to thank Partridge, Semperfli and Cadence fly Rods for their continuing and valued support.

Stevie Munn

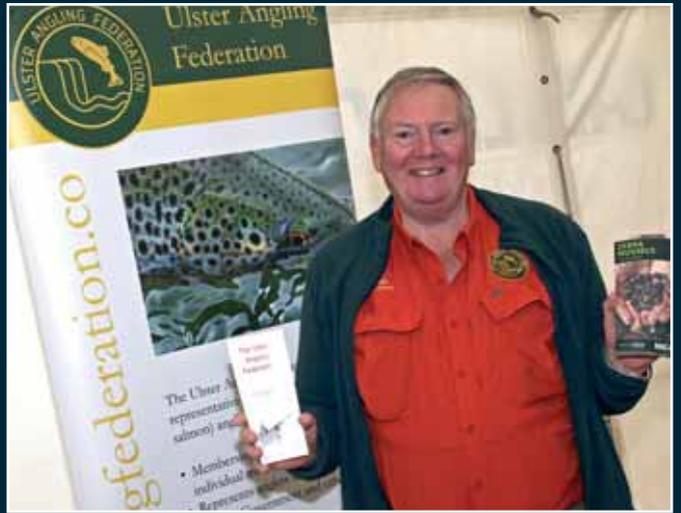


Landing a fine fish at the children's Put & Take Fishery



Two of the amazing fly tyers in action





Family Fun at the Game Fair - reflections by Elaine Munn

Every year, the Irish Game Fair at Shanes Castle features several attractions to help make memories for the whole family, which is why several generations of families who started off at the fair at Clondeboye in 1979 still come to make memories each year.

Every year we add new themes to existing attractions at the Fair which have family appeal. This year it was a look at the historical link of Shanes Castle and Antrim with the Vikings who sailed up the Bann and gave rise to the legend of the Red Hand of Ulster and the O'Neills. Within a wider historically accurate living history village, we had a Viking encampment complete with a real Viking longboat and displays of Viking warfare.

The second theme was enhancing our angling facet of the fair, by adding a new Angling Fair organised by Stevie Munn to the existing angling attractions



Matthew with his Mum Tammy at the Fair of the 'Salmon & Woodcock Pavilion' and the 'Put & Take Fishery,' sponsored by DAERA and organised by Bobby Bryans, Paul Smith (AKA the Leprechaun) and their team.

Here, Elaine Munn, in words and photographs, gives just one family's perspective on a special day out for a young lad:

Elaine said: "My Grandson Matthew had a wonderful day at the Irish Game Fair in Shanes Castle. He caught his first trout and he was just over the moon! I took him round the Fly Dressers' Pavilion and the story of the fish got bigger and better every time he told it ... the last telling I honestly believed he had caught a 12lb salmon. By the time he got home, he had caught a Great White Whale!

Matthew also had a go at the Bug Dipping, and I can't thank Susan, Maddy and Dorothy enough for their time and patience with him to explain the different bugs - he loved it! Thank you to all the Children's Fishing Team for all their hard work and patience, and for making super memories for my Grandson and lots of other families. Kids really do learn to fish at the game fairs!

Bug dipping and learning about the ones that live in or near the water





Here he learns the rudiments of holding the rod the correct way

A quick learner in no time Matthew has his first fish on!



A little adjustment



Honestly it really was THIS big

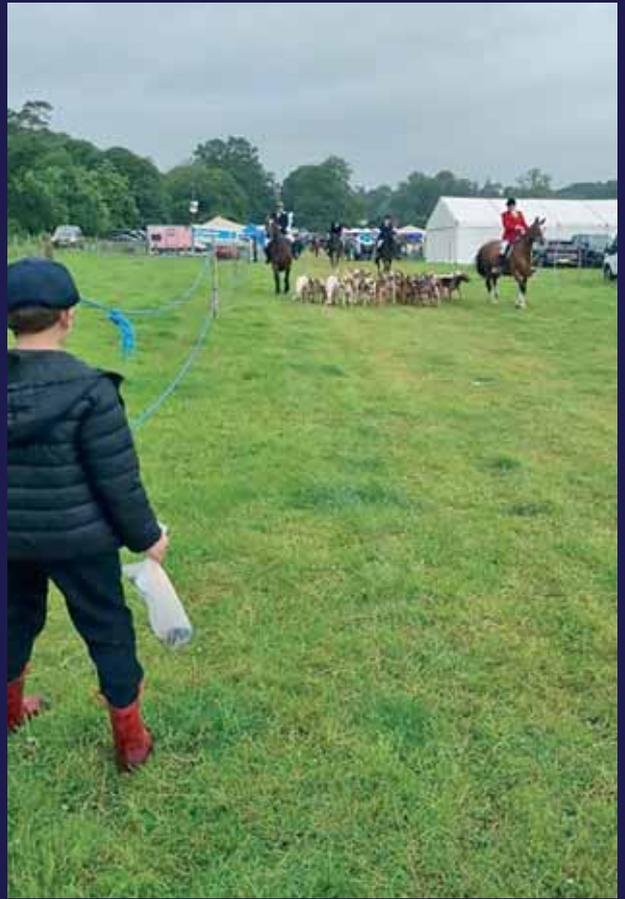


With one safely landed there might be another in this place....





Away from the fishing he had his 'sights' on this stand next



And on the way back from the super put & take fishery these hounds were spotted on their way to the Main Arena



And what better way to finish off the day than some artistic 'mud splashing' before the journey home



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The neo-Gothic Château du Val

Going for gold

Hot on the heels of a Brittany spaniel, Mark Hedges heeds the purist's call of *la chasse* when walking-up resplendent Reeves's pheasants in France

THE tinkling of the bell on the dog's collar in front of me suddenly stopped and my heart rate did the opposite—silence is the trigger for action. My Brittany was on point, as if turned to stone. I tiptoed forwards and, with a flick of the handler's wrist, the dog sprang forward. The pheasant shot sky-wards and flung its neck backwards as it fell to the pine-needle-strewn ground, the sunlight catching the golden feathers as it tumbled.

This is just how captivating and exhilarating the thrill of shooting walked-up wood-cock, partridge and pheasant—in this case, the splendid long-tailed Reeves variety over Brittany spaniels in northern France is.

In stark contrast, driven shooting as we know it today began in Britain as a



consequence of the invention of the breech-loading gun in the mid 19th century. This new type of shotgun allowed ready-made cartridges to be placed in the barrel of the gun and vastly increased the number of shots that could be fired in any given time, in sharp contrast to the hitherto laborious process of reloading with black powder.

This new fashion for driving large numbers of game birds over guns delighted the nation's landowners and aristocracy, so much so that the landscape of Britain was changed to accommodate the necessary copses and cover to hold the game birds. Shooting, alongside hunting, became the focus of the country-house party and, since then, driven shooting has steadily replaced traditional rough shooting.

For me, the rough shooting of my



Above: In the bag: a handsome Reeves's pheasant with its extraordinary tail

child-hood is a much-missed alternative. It's the sport of a bygone age, that of 1,000 table-mat illustrations by artists such as John Frederick Herring, with a top-hatted man shooting a partridge flushed by his spaniel-type dog.

Across the Channel, due to the peculiarities of the Napoleonic Code and other French laws following the Revolution, shooting has remained a far less money- or class-dominated sport and is a much more popular pastime than it is here. La chasse is almost always walked-up and it thrives, so when the invitation to shoot in Brittany came, I jumped at the chance.

Our host, Jas Saini, is a remarkable, charming man and a successful businessman; his father left India penniless and worked every hour he could on British Rail to earn the money to bring his family over. Now, Jas shares his time between Switzerland and Brittany, where he owns Château du Val, a neo-Gothic house dating from the late 19th century, which is available to rent, along with other separate accommodation in the grounds.

Jas's shoot day began with croissants and the gradual arrival of battered cars, out of which appeared a stream of Brittany spaniels and their owners. The Brittany isn't really a spaniel, but the smallest member of the HPR (hunt, point, retrieve) tribe. Most frequently

orange-roan in colour, it's ideal for this sort of sport and will work more closely with the sportsman than other pointing breeds.

Extremely energetic, some on this shoot were fitted with sweet-sounding bells on their collars, so that you could listen to where they were or, occasionally, where they weren't.

Setting out from the chateau, we walked into a forest of sweet chestnuts and fir. The ground was surprisingly dry, making scenting difficult. A team of six, including five paying guests from the Channel Islands, fanned out into a line, each tracking a Brittany and its handler in the search of game.

Soon, to my right, a whirlwind of feathers launched a pheasant into the sky before a sharp crack rang out and the bird fell just in front of me. It was a Reeves's pheasant, the speciality of the estate and quite unlike anything we shoot in Britain, not only in size, but also especially in the length of the cock bird's extraordinary tail.

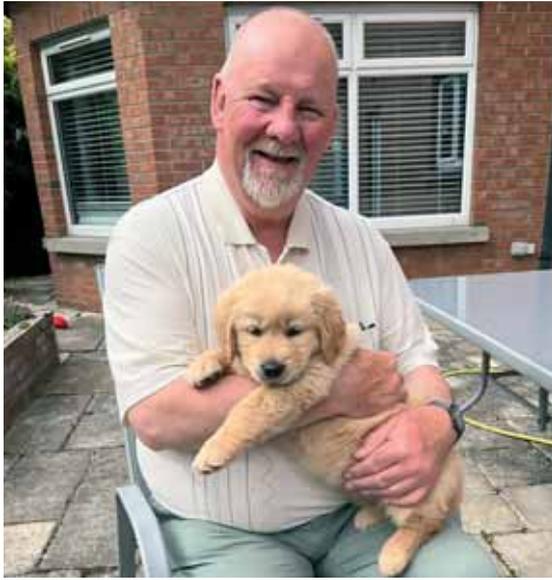
Other shots resonated across the glades and the bag slowly increased as the day progressed—each gun is allowed three birds. I walked on, full of hope, but out of luck. This was proper, hard-earned sport. Later, we went duck flying, which was

an added bonus, however, our quarry evaded us by waiting patiently until the darkness totally shrouded my eyes before splashing into the gloom.

Back at the chateau, we celebrated our great day's sport with a fine dinner. I'd shot just a single bird and missed three others, although some in the party had been more successful. However, these days shooting are, for me, less about numbers and more about memories and this was an experience to rank alongside shooting snipe on South Uist or teal on the Wash: unforgettable.

For details of shooting breaks at Château du Val, 35550 Saint Just, France, email: jsaini.abc@gmail.com or visit www.chateauval.com. Article originally appeared in the June 21, 2017, issue of Country Life magazine (www.countrylife.co.uk)

The Way I See It



The new generation is settling in at home

The scare brought about by the bird flu outbreaks in France this year gave concern for the prospects of the pheasant shooting this season. Supplementing stocks and sourcing birds became a problem. Our usual suppliers were unable to guarantee delivery in a reasonable timeframe for our release programme.

Heads were put together. Our new

Hello again to readers of Irish Country Sports and Country Life magazine.

As Summer gave way to Autumn and Autumn slipped chilly into Winter, our sadness at the loss of light turned to joy with the opening of the game seasons. The anticipation of game shooting and wildfowling always fires the blood of us hunting folk. September saw good mature mallard and surprisingly some very early widgeon. I had observed an excellent breeding year for mallard. They have not disappointed, as I made my rounds counting wild fowl large numbers of Brent geese, shelducks (those handsome devils) and some pintail presented.

To my joy our resident teal numbers seem to have increased and I have happened upon them on my travels in places where I have not seen them for many years now. This year, whilst feeding our penned poult I have seen and heard adult pheasants about the preserves. Other club members have posted videos of hens with good broods during the summer. These truly wild stocks provide superb walked up hunting and are the mainstay of our sport in my part of the world.

club chairman having exhausted most other options suggested to the team that we must embark on our own breeding operation. He asked yours truly (club treasurer) what was in the bank and reserves, and having been reassured that we had the wherewithal, he launched a major pen building effort and the acquisition of incubators, brooders, heaters and all the paraphernalia

required to rear a potential five hundred pheasants.

As they say 'Cometh the hour cometh the man' or, in our case, cometh the men.

Nobody should underestimate the sheer amount of work needed nor the level of commitment required to bring this project to fruition. I was taken aback by the response from club members.



The Chairman pitches in



The pen door under construction under



The pen takes shape as the netting is added



Everyone doing their bit as the pen nears completion

A new and committed generation

Without singling any one out in particular, the chairman and secretary hardly missed a work party and the vermin officer was ever present. The club carpenters excelled in shelter building, door hanging and shed

erection. Bridges were built, three new pens constructed and the existing pens refurbished. The new club members rose to the challenge and made us old guys content in the knowledge that we were handing over to a new and committed generation.

One day I saw three generations

working on pen building, grandad, father and son, not forgetting all the extended family that contribute to the club. Grandad/father, son, daughter, daughters partner, his dad, the glue that holds us together and assures the continuing success of our sport.

Special mention goes to the lads



All ages played their part



Bridge building nears completion.



Just one of the shelters being built

breeding and rearing the chicks and to their long suffering wives and partners who put in the long hours with the attendant disruption to their homelife and social life. I have refrained from mentioning names as they are all too modest to seek recognition but together they show all that is good about the Game/Gun Club movement.

There are in excess of nine hundred NARGC clubs in Ireland alone, with many clubs and syndicates affiliated to other sporting bodies. Ferreters, terrier handlers, dog trialers, hunts, foot hound followers, hawkers, fishing clubs, and a myriad of allied activity make a strong case for an Island wide coalition to represent our interests.

Too often the noisy voiced, but numerically small, anti-hunting groups have held the ear of governments and government civil servants. This has resulted in unnecessary restrictions on us. Dodgy science, questionable statistics, a clear agenda on the part of authority to have an unarmed public (and I will say no more on that) has gone on to give us the most stringent firearms

legislation in Europe. The latest review of firearms legislation here in the ROI is a case in point and I will bet the outcome does not recommend any easing of the law - any takers?

Having mentioned the country sports organisations, it was great to see so many represented at this summer's Irish Game Fair at Shanes Castle. I had a thoroughly good day in the company of my buddy Michael Finnegan. Michael is something of an epicure and as such enjoys the food halls and purchasing cheeses, and meats seems the highlight of his day. This year I happened on Armagh Apple Rum. Having in my youth sailed with the captain and those of you that were also aboard will understand my fascination I bought a bottle. Michael assured me that it was delicious. No longer supping the Devil's buttermilk myself, I have dispensed small shots to various friends who agree with Michael's assessment of this spirit.

Lifelong memories of my first visit to Shanes Castle

All of this brings me back to my first

visit to Shanes Castle many years ago. The club chairman proposed a coach trip to the game fair. Who could pass up such an opportunity? Well this was long before the historic agreement and it was with some trepidation that some of our motly crew boarded the mini bus on our adventure northwards. We had doggy men wanting to see the retrievers, we had hot shots wanting to check out the clay shooting but mostly we had men looking for a good day out.

The first experience of Shanes Castle's Irish Game Fair was breath taking. The layout, the stalls, the gun displays with Berettas and Brownings to drool over. Fully stocked deer rifles, first generation night vision equipment, hunting knives and clothing: all you could wish for. Demonstrations of bullet reloading (something denied to us in the south) all lent themselves to a fabulous day out. The sun shone. I still remember my first sight of Lough Neagh from the old castle battlements; the sights the sounds, but most of all the warm reception we got from all there. Pat and I were wearing our NARGC badges and to say we were well received would be a complete understatement!

I have attended many Fairs since, smaller ones like Scarva and one on the Ard's Peninsula, down south there was Birr Castle and Galway Race Course, plus a club trip to Punchestown. All good but the memory of that first trip to Shanes and the characters on board (some now deceased and gone to the happy hunting grounds) will live with me forever. What Albert and his crew have achieved can not be measured but we country sports people will be forever grateful.

As I close for now, let me wish you all a good hunting season and a joyous and peaceful Christmas.

Be ever vigilant regards bird flu, carry and use disinfectant spray on boots and clothes as you move from place to place. We all learned about biosecurity during the pandemic, let's put into practice those actions that keep us and livestock safe.

Yours truly on invasive species patrol





Tuna fishing for science

A tuna takes the Author's bait

Everyone probably has a bucket list of things they wish to do. For me it was to catch a bluefin tuna on rod and reel. My first experience of one, was seeing a dead one on the floor of the old Dublin Fish market. It struck me then as a magnificent creature.

I worked in Fisheries in the 1970s when one of the Sea fishery Officers, Kevin Linnane, was sure it would be possible to start a bluefin fishery in Ireland. He and Derek Davis did go out several times on exploratory trips looking for them, as they had been sighted regularly by commercial fishing boats but they never encountered them.

In the 80s they were seen in Donegal Bay and some boats started to target them. I am glad that Kevin lived to see a number of these magnificent fish caught by recreational anglers. Unfortunately some anglers then wanted to sell their catch. These folks are not recreational anglers but commercial fishermen, and did true anglers no favours.

The body that controls tuna fisheries, ICCAT (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas), decides quotas and scientific advice eventually classed bluefin tuna as endangered and protected - tuna farms in the Mediterranean were catching young tuna to fatten up in farms off Spain. It was discovered that there are two separate populations of bluefin in the Atlantic, one in the West which spawns in the Gulf of Mexico. One in the East which spawns in

the Mediterranean. It was not known if the two stocks mix or if they did by how much.

As a result of the missing data, stock being just one, in collaboration with scientific institutions, the Chart programme was started. This authorises 25 charter skippers each season to fish for bluefin to tag and release them to discover where they go, their dive characteristics and other information.

Other than these 25 boats it is illegal to fish for bluefin tuna in Irish waters. As with any resource you cannot manage any stock without the data. In my opinion, this has been and is the problem with all species in the sea. We have no idea how many protected species die in nets each year. Not intentionally, but as by-catch. I'm referring to whales, seals, sharks and bluefin. Most anglers will point to the large trawlers and talk of the numbers killed by them. These cannot be landed so are meant to be dumped at sea when caught, (I think that many may find their way onto non EU vessels far offshore but that's just speculation). As I say, by EU law all protected species are meant to be recorded, but has not happened yet.

Someone thinking of heading out for Bluefin is risking having their gear and boat seized and a prosecution. No one will buy it if you decide to bring it onshore. Being at the top of the food chain Bluefin flesh has very high concentrations of toxins such as PCBs mercury and other nasties. Other than a small taste I would

not eat it myself and these are very big fish.

All the bluefin caught are tagged

A decent rod and reel setup could easily cost €2000 and if caught you will have a large hole in your pocket and a poor reputation as an angler. All the bluefin caught are tagged with at least a floy tag and, when they can, scientists from the Marine institute and universities deploy satellite tags on as many as they can, and can afford, as these are expensive bits of kit. All skippers must attend a training course on how to handle, unhook, recover and release a tuna. If successful getting a chart position, a skipper must invest in quite a lot of very expensive gear. The Satellite tag is released after about a year and can be traced similar to an EPIRB, its information downloaded and processed. One tag from Donegal showed the fish had crossed the Atlantic and spawned in the Gulf of Mexico. Another type of tag releases fairly soon after release and shows the success and recovery period of the fish before it resumes its travels. It seems most released fish go to the bottom and recover for a while before heading off again, often to the middle of the Atlantic, before turning around, heading to West Africa and then into the Mediterranean to spawn and some go up the Bay of Biscay and into the Channel in their travels.

The whole idea of tagging itself can be

contentious. I know a chap who advises against their use altogether, as any tag will increase drag on the animal and put it at a disadvantage. The floy tags used in tuna tagging are tiny and minimise any drag. I know the shark tags put on sharks by IFI have revealed some amazing facts. A blue shark tagged off Kerry was recovered off Venezuela, and a tope shark tagged off the east coast was recovered off Morocco .

You must remember that in times past, there was a very big and important recreational fishery for bluefin in the North Sea even as far north as Norway. They can produce their own internal heat (endothermic) unlike most fish. My own view on this is that they went there to feed on the once massive herring shoals.

A few years ago, I went out late in the season with an authorised skipper, but the weather was terrible and we did not see anything. However, this year I got a booking for Damian and myself in the prime of the season due to a cancellation. So plans were made and we arrived early the day before in at the appointed pier

. We were going out with Adrian Molloy, one of the early participants in the emerging recreational fishery, before this was banned. In fact, Adrian caught the largest Bluefin in Europe and still holds the Irish Record at 440kgs. That's a very big fish! The first Irish one was caught on rod and line in the late 1990s The fishery varied year to year until 2006 when numbers declined. But regulation by ICCAT and the EU saw numbers increase until by 2012 their numbers seemed to have recovered and continue to increase, being seen now in areas where they have not been seen for years

Bluefin tuna return to Irish water each year

A commercial quota was reintroduced, but Ireland does not claim any, even a recreational by-catch quota. (The Albacore fishery does have a small by catch quota.) What is clear now is that each year Bluefin tuna return to Irish waters and a regulated catch and release fishery is a sustainable way for many coastal communities to make a living ,without depleting the resource. But, as



At the side of the boat to recover fully before release unharmed

with other fisheries, I believe enforcement is key. If it is banned altogether the fishing will go underground and stocks could be wiped out in short order.

What started out as an Irish and US university study under the CHART name has now expanded as UK anglers are seeing the return of Bluefin to areas where fisheries previously existed. They are exploring their own version of this scientific catch and release fishery. Not only does this recreational fishery expand our knowledge of this beautiful fish, but it is a great way to monitor the health of the stocks. Mind you, there are plenty who would try to ban any disturbance of any species declared as endangered, for any reason.

This would mean no angling for skate, bluefin, undulate ray and lots of other popular species. Ireland has a unique position, as anglers wishing to catch a bluefin on rod and reel have very few options in the world to go to to target these top of the line gamefish. They are willing to travel and pay for the privilege. In 2019 67% of anglers came from abroad. IFI has details of origins as it clearly is a tourism opportunity. Many of the the anglers involved in the catch and release programme are from outside Ireland, so it is clearly a very high value recreational fishery reflected in the spending these anglers contribute to local businesses - accommodation, car hire, food and drink plus the boat hire. A tuna caught by an angler benefits an entire community, whereas one caught by a commercial boat(if there was a quota) benefits the owner and crew.

Recreational angling is allowed for smaller albacore tuna for your own use

For me, the most amazing thing is the cost of a days angling. The skippers could charge a fortune and still fill the available trips. But I consider it great value when a

day's fishing for a single angler in Cuba on a comparable boat is over 800 dollars. OK, this is for marlin and Ernest Hemingway made that famous, but I fished there in the 80s for about 200 dollars for a boat and gear hire for the day. I hope I have not jinxed myself now. Recreational angling is allowed for smaller albacore tuna for your own use. Selling catches makes you a commercial fisherman not a recreational angler and subject to their rules. I believe there needs to be more enforcement on this issue across all species, not just for the future of anglers, but also for the livelihoods of commercial fishermen. I recommend checking out Adrian's website www.Tuna.ie for more information on the history of tuna angling in Irish waters.

The evening before our trip, Adrian returned to the pier with four happy clients aboard. They had boated (the fish are not brought aboard) but held alongside, tagged, measured and released unless the scientists are aboard when they are carefully brought aboard to be examined tagged and released, four of five strikes at the lures.

Great, there were tuna about! After a long night of anticipation we were on the pier at the agreed 8:00 am. Two lads had arrived from near Belfast, which was great as the boat was now full. These lads were fly anglers (not for Tuna) and had even travelled to the Russian Kola Peninsula in pursuit of salmon, where they had both caught Atlantic salmon in excess of thirty pounds. We had great fun with these guys all day. One of them, Johnny, had broken bones in his hand two days previously when he slipped releasing a salmon, so would (could) not fish. However, he had previously been out and had caught one before and was happy to go out just to witness the fishing. Only an angler can understand this.

Once at sea the gear was rigged up and we watched common dolphins play

around the boat. It was decided that Damian and I would take a pair of rods on one side of the boat and the Northern lads the other two rods. As it happened the first strike was on a rod on our side so I suggested Damien take it as I wanted to take a few photos and watch proceedings, and as the fish raced off peeling line from the reel we reeled in the other lures to leave a clear space behind the boat.

Damian was kitted out with a harness and the rod put in the fighting chair, and hooked into the harness as Adrian leaned over him I heard Adrian advise him that this was 'not a battle of strength so relax.' He watched and offered advice all the way through the ensuing fight. "Take line back when you can - let him run when needed." No pressure except on Damian. Every so often Adrian would grab the line possibly to assess the condition of the fish. He monitored the fish the whole way through the fight as these fish can die if not looked after, one of the reasons I was keen to go was to see how they were caught and released without harm.

It took just under an hour before the tuna's head emerged and disappeared again as it tired out. Adrian exclaimed: "That's a huge fish!" It was duly brought up to the hatch on the side of the boat where the mate Gavin secured its jaw and Adrian removed the hook. It was then tagged and measured. 2.70 metres. Adrian estimated its weight at 850 lbs. A fish of a lifetime. Not bad for a first timer. After a time being pulled alongside the boat with its mouth open the fish was released to swim off.

The only damage I could see was a small amount of scales taken off its flank by the line as it tore away from the boat on that first run. As it recovered at the side of the boat I thought that it was nothing like the big dead fish I had seen in the fish market. This was a magnificent fish with iridescent scales all over its streamlined body, sometimes shining blue on its back and a shimmering line of gold from its gills to its dark crescent tail. The counter-shading of its contrasting dark blue back and silver underside was amazing. When swimming in the sea we could see the lure in its mouth but not the fish itself, until it turned its side to us.



A close up shows the tuna's remarkable colouration

We continued on and, not long after the first strike, another fish hurled itself at a lure and took off. James, one of the pair from Northern Ireland took the rod and soon had the fish at the boat's side after about half an hour. Adrian estimated it at around 250 pounds.

I was next up and had the harness on when the next rod screamed. I jumped into the chair and when handed the rod was glad that Gavin and Adrian were beside me as I had never used a two speed reel before. High gear certainly got the line on the reel, and low gear just pulled the line in. It would have been relatively easy to land any size skate or conger with this. Heavy gear is needed, not just to make it easier on the angler but also for the safety of the fish. I concentrated on the fish and soon we could see the spreader bar with the rubber squid which meant the fish was about 6 feet behind it. Adrian took the leader and led the fish around to the hatch where its mouth was secured. It was unhooked, measured, photographed and released. Adrian estimated its weight from the length of 220 metres equalled approximately 380 lbs. I was delighted, and hands were shook and backs clapped, as with the other two fish as it was released.

We went back to watching the sea and the lures towed behind the boat. I saw a whale blow off in the distance and pointed it out to James who saw the follow up blow. Too bushy to be a fin whale, but right for a humpback. I saw another blow as it headed south. Adrian had seen a fin whale a week or so earlier. Again the dolphins were around the boat and even in the spread of lures. Adrian has never seen

one take a rubber squid but the dolphins sonar would allow them to avoid anything that was not real. He said he had seen mothers with calves go close to the spread. I have no idea how many dolphins were about, as we could see them leaping around us and further off as well. It was not long before another rod went off and James again took this one with Johnny by his side as he reeled in another Bluefin, not another monster but a beautiful fish.

We had been on the go for ten hours at this stage, so when Adrian asked "What do you think?" I said that everyone had a fish, so we were happy to head in. Having thanked Adrian and Gavin for the experience and said our goodbyes to all we headed for the cars. I was delighted as both Damian and I were novices at this and both of us had caught a fish, thanks mostly to the guidance of Adrian and Gavin.

All in all a great day's fishing in good company, and a privilege to see bluefin tuna up close. Photographs do not capture the beauty or size of these fish. A dead bluefin is a poor reflection of the majesty of this fish. Saying that, when we packed up and got into the car for the journey home I turned on the radio to hear the sad news that Queen Elizabeth had passed away. I remarked to Damian that he will always remember where he was that day and so will I.

There certainly appears to be increasing numbers of tuna in our waters, but is this because there are more tuna or could warming waters be just moving them closer to shore where they are seen more often? Work still needs to be done before we get an answer.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COUNTRY SPORTS and RURAL PURSUITS BOOKS

There is no doubt the internet has brought an ‘immediacy’ to our search for information, knowledge and news. It also takes out the ‘leg work’ that I used to have when researching books and articles for the academic papers that I wrote – now these are being used for reference by current environmental researchers as they are available on databases. Of course, it is flattering to have these papers accessed and cited by researchers from all over the world but I feel a little sad when I think of the many happy hours I spent in libraries doing my own research.

Increasing paper, printing and distribution costs have impacted greatly on ‘the printed word’ in terms of magazines and newspapers – I now get my Daily Telegraph on my computer screen rather than the paper shop and while I still get my sporting magazines either by subscription or collected in the newsagents I recognise these are on ‘borrowed time’.

For several years we have used a combination of high quality glossy hard copy and FREE to READ online versions to keep the country sports enthusiasts of Ireland and further afield abreast of their sports and the environment. The latter online version has taken the readership to new levels of readership for an Irish hunting, shooting and fishing magazine and a readership far beyond the shores of Ireland.

With soaring paper, printing and distribution costs we have been subsidising the production of the hard

copy glossy magazine for several years but with the cost of postage getting higher than the cover price of the magazine we had to drop our subscription service and with the cost of paper, and printing now making the cost of production of each magazine also greater than the cover price, we have had to make the decision that future editions of the magazine will solely be online.

These will be FREE to readers but obviously incur a substantial cost to us so if you want Ireland to continue to have its own hunting, shooting and fishing magazine you can help by obviously using this service yourself, recommending it to your friends including on social media and supporting our advertisers – the FUTURE of the magazine is NOW in YOUR hands! **In praise of books and what should be a very special one for Irish country sports enthusiasts – the ‘Irish Country Sports – A HERITAGE book’.**

I like many people get a great deal of my information online but I love books. I have a huge collection of countryside books and we hope to encourage others to acquire hard copy books as a source of both reference and enjoyment, something that can be handed down your family and of course keep country sports publishing alive! Unlike the internet which is a transient medium books are a physical product that can give years of enjoyment to several family members and generations.

Paul Morgan, from Coch-y-Bonddu Books, a regular a game fairs, has put

together a wide selection of books suitable for all interests at very good prices and we are carrying several reviews of books that caught our interest. With Christmas approaching there is no finer present, and one with a longer shelf life, than a good book.

When we decided to publish ‘Irish Country Sports – A HERITAGE’ we did so because we wanted to not only capture the memories, across all of the sports, of sportsmen and women of my generation but also highlight what could be lost for this generation through the current threats facing our sport. Those who have reviewed, seen or purchased the book have been impressed by the quality of the production of the book, the size of the book – an impressive 30cms x 30cms weighing 2.5kg and the depth of information contained within. In short it has been recognised as one of the best advertisements for Irish hunting, shooting and fishing and something that should become a legacy book to be passed down the generations in Irish country sports households.

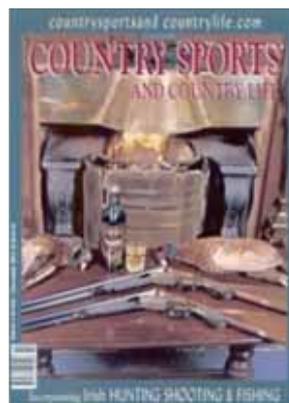
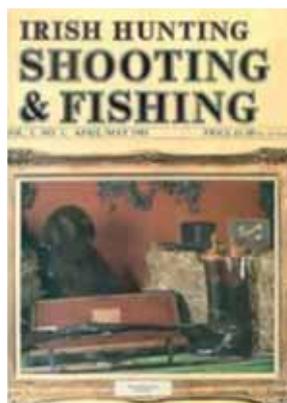
Two of the most relevant reviews were published in the UK’s Field magazine and in various publications by Michael Drake OBE, the ex Agricultural editor of the Belfast Telegraph.

Arguably the top UK country living magazine – The Field- was among many UK publications to publish an impressive reviews of the book.

“This excellent book has more than 50 contributors, who pay tribute to Ireland’s magnificent sporting legacy. It is a must for any lover of British fieldsports. But whilst commemorative and celebratory, there is also a stark warning to those who misunderstand the critical part played by fieldsports for both the countryside and rural communities.

In his prologue, Titterington asserts that should such pursuits be further curtailed, ‘our native habitats, species, ethics and way of life will be profoundly and perilously diminished’. His words are echoed in a joint foreword by landowner Bill Montgomery and Jim Shannon MP,

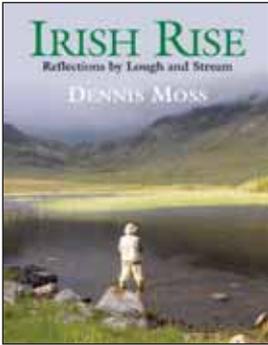
There have been many changes in publishing since we launched the Irish Hunting Shooting And Fishing magazine in 1985 and the first FREE to Read online Irish magazine Irish Country Sports & Country Life in 2011.



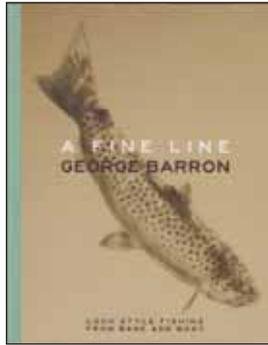
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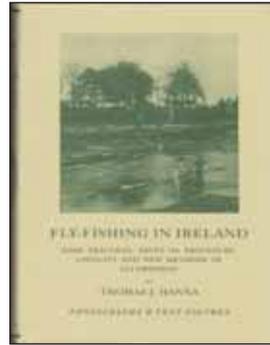
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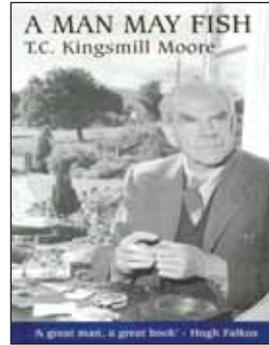
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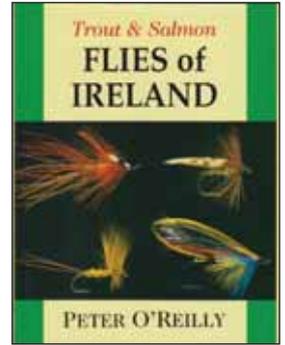
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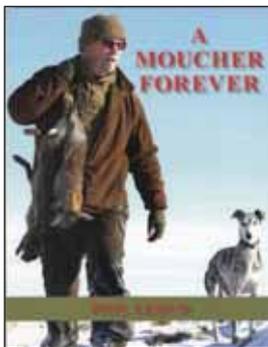
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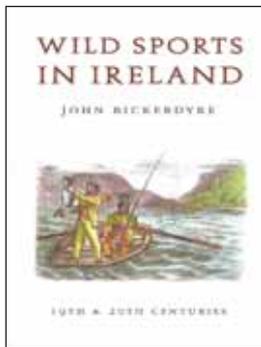
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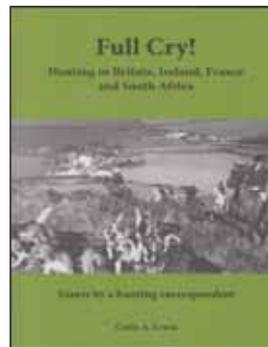
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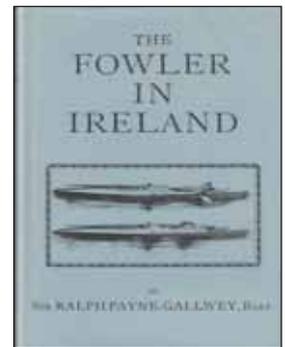
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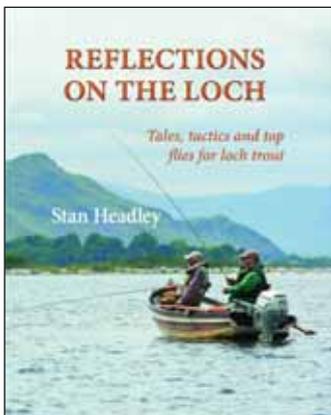
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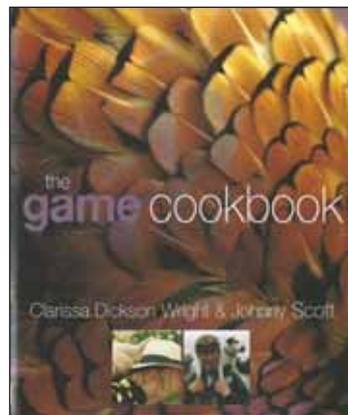
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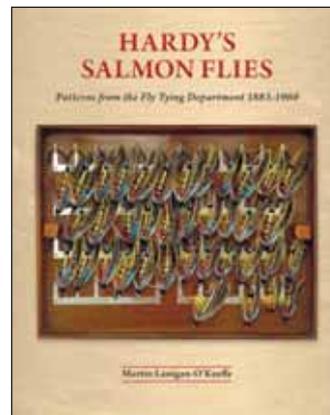
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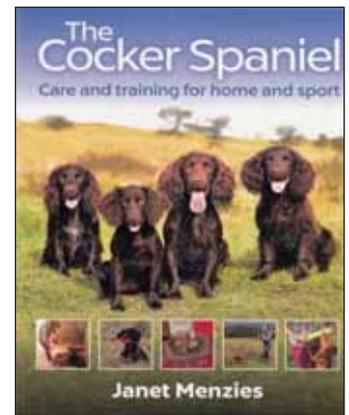
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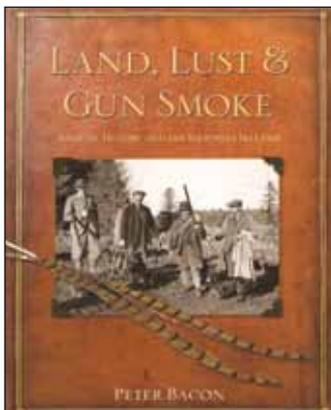
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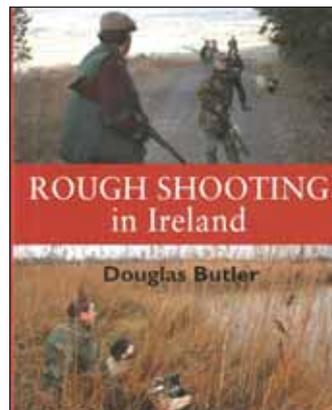
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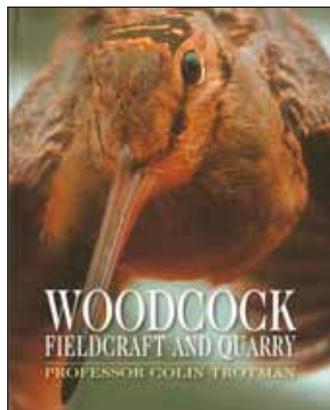
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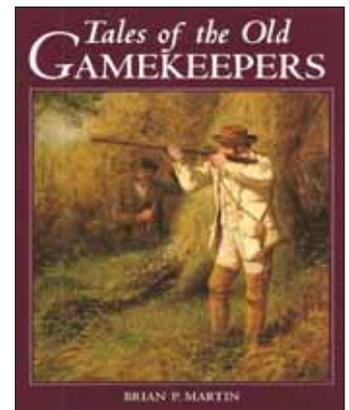
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which extols the part country pursuits play in conservation.

The 13 chapters are thematically arranged and feature a rich array of photographs, covering everything from dog breeds to falconry and taxidermy, angling to stalking, hunting to gunmakers. It finishes with an index of suppliers."

Ettie Neil-Gallacher, The Field

Award winning Journalist Michael Drake, a former Agricultural Editor of the Belfast Telegraph and someone with a long connection covering the Game Fair wrote this more detailed review:

Over the years country sports in Ireland have given inestimable pleasure to the many thousands of people who follow them. For the deer stalker, angler, gamekeeper or humble poacher the land and the wildlife that inhabits it have had a magnetic attraction.

Now Albert Titterington, the well known and deeply respected co-founder of the Irish Game and Country Fairs has excelled with his most recent publication, "Irish Country Sports - A Heritage." An acknowledged expert in country sports Albert has, with a dedicated editorial team, done exemplary service to the scene he loves so deeply.

Throughout the publication, a well chosen team of writers, selected for the knowledge and the passion they hold for their own individual pursuits and rural passions, has given us a chronicle of the country sports scene as it stands today and how it existed in the past. They have dug deep into their memory banks, their personal experiences and of course their labours of love to take us into a world, well worthy of exploring.

Here we are given an important insight into game shooting in Ireland, followed by a journey through many of Ireland's loughs and rivers in pursuit of angling adventures.

A short history of hunting sharply puts into perspective a valid case for this sport to continue. Without a doubt Ireland's oldest sport, its origins stretch back to a time when it was necessary for survival, hunting continues to play its part, not only in wildlife conservation but also in breed selection for the dogs that are used today.

We are also introduced to many of the outstanding personalities who made up the current scene from the legendary George Briscoe who, at the time of his

passing, was considered to have been the longest serving master of hounds in the world. He is said to have served no less than 73 years which is some achievement. But it is worth noting too that Craig Caven of the Seaforde based East Down Foxhounds was a joint master from 1978 until 2013. That in itself is quite an achievement.

For those who have heard of the Irish Kennel Club but don't profess to know much about it then the section devoted to this august body is well worth a perusal. So too are the various other sections on the various gundog breeds ranging from English Springer and Cocker Spaniels, retrievers, pointers, setters and HPRS. Mention too is made of legendary Irish greyhounds, lurchers and terriers.

And who can forget the Irish gunmakers who over the centuries have contributed so much to the scene.

But that's not all. Within well over 250 pages of what is no lightweight publication is a plethora of information about many subjects and a lavish compilation of excellent photographs, no doubt the product of many excellent photographers also grace many of its pages.

There too, you will find whatever you want to know about deer and deer stalking, falconry and taxidermy and even the heritage of game and fish food.

And to complement this, one will find many mouth watering recipes for the preparation of everything from smoked herring to potted char and tempura of wood pigeon to wild boar.

There is even a recipe for the traditional oaten bread which in earlier days was always to be found on the country table.

Yes, this mighty tome will without doubt become the established 'bible' of country sports for a long time to come. It will fill the serious vacuum which has existed for too long concerning what

country sports are, what they stand for and the calibre of people who passionately enjoy them.

There is much in this book too for those who know little or nothing about country sports.

Within its pages one finds only those who know what they are talking or writing about. And the information they impart shines a brilliant light on the countryside, those who live in it and those who make a living from it.

In weight it is not a light book. This is no throwaway paperback. But its contents are informative, enlightening and enjoyable. But beware. It is not something one would read in a day or a night. It is a definitive exercise in all that is good about the countryside and the sports to be found in it. It is a book to be cherished for at least a generation or even longer.

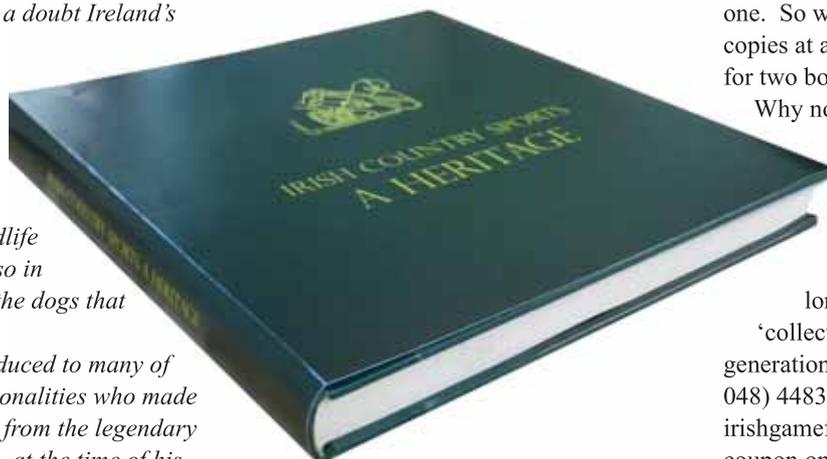
Michael Drake

THE LAST CHANCE to acquire copies of the 'Irish Country Sports – A HERITAGE' book at a reduced price – a real 'Collector's piece' at a bargain price.

The book including the cost of postage was launched at £40. Postage and packaging took up between £11 and €13 and those who have purchased the book have been amazed at the quality of the book compared to much lesser quality and more expensive books. This is because we felt that, at a time when our sports were under threat it was important to chart the changes over just one generation and stress what could be lost if we do not act in a concerted fashion now. The subject matter was so important that we took only a very small margin and we have been delighted to have sent most of the print run to enthusiasts throughout Ireland, GB and all over the world.

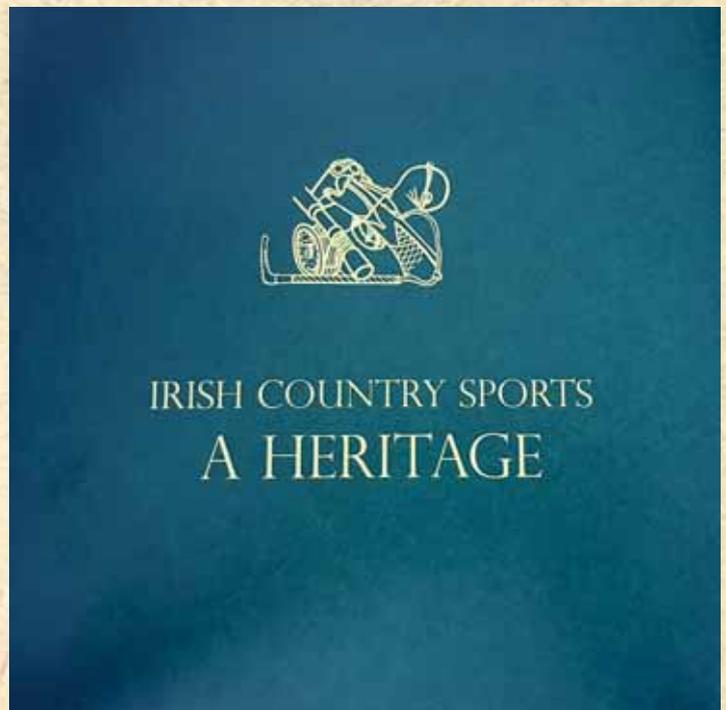
We have now bound the final copies and have managed to find a method of reducing the packaging/postage cost to be able to send TWO copies for the price of one. So we can now clear the remaining copies at a remarkable value price of £50 for two books including postage.

Why not purchase two as presentation copies or Christmas presents and if you haven't already got one buy one for yourself and one for a friend. They will never receive a better or longer lasting present and a 'collector's piece' for future generations. To order call 028 (from ROI 048) 44839167 or email irishgamefair@btinternet.com or fill in the coupon on the advert.



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The large format 30 cm x 30cm (2.5Kg) and 264 pages lavishly illustrated and printed and bound to the highest standards the 'Irish Country Sports A Heritage' book is the first major publication to chart and examine the traditions, history and development of country sports across the whole of Ireland. Anyone who has already purchased it is amazed at its sheer value for money

With country sports facing a variety of threats, this impressive volume is both a celebration of our sports and the contribution they make to Irish rural life. It also provides a warning of what could be lost through ongoing threats to our sports and that is why its production was heavily subsidised by our company. We feel it should be on the bookshelves of every Irish country sports person.

All of the major sports and organisations are covered: game shooting, angling, hunting, deer stalking and falconry, and, of course, working dogs with chapters on The Irish Kennel Club, springer and cocker spaniels, the retrieving breeds, pointers, setters and HPRs and even legendary Irish greyhounds, lurchers and terriers. Country crafts chapters include taxidermy and fish and game food heritage.

The book was originally on sale at £30/€40 plus P&P but having identified less expensive ways of postage/package, we are offering the remaining copies at the very SPECIAL PRICE of £30/€30 to include P&P or TWO copies for £50/€50 to include P&P. YOU simply can't get better value COUNTRY SPORTS CHRISTMAS presents!

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What are we doing about barriers in our rivers?

Inland Fisheries Ireland's National Barriers Programme aims to tackle issues related to barriers and works to reduce their impact on fish populations

The fragmentation of rivers is one of the biggest global risks to fish populations. Why? Because it disrupts fish migration upstream and downstream, it blocks movement within the channel and alters the flow of sediment within the body of water.

A healthy river is one long connected ecosystem. Fragmentation breaks up the continual flow of a river from source to sea. Irish rivers can be heavily broken up by barriers,

some of these barriers being natural, however most of them are man-made structures such as: weirs, dams, sluices, culverts, bridges and other artificial structures.

The Industrial Revolution

During the industrial revolution as far back as the 1830s, Ireland saw the collapse of specific salmonid stocks directly correlated to the introduction of dams and weirs to a river.

Along with the introduction of these instream structures, the 19th century was a period of rapid construction in terms of transportation such as roads, railways, bridges and other structures, much of which did not take into account facilitation of fish passage.

Today, our catchments are directly reflective of these works and historic pressures that continue to further impact our fisheries resource.

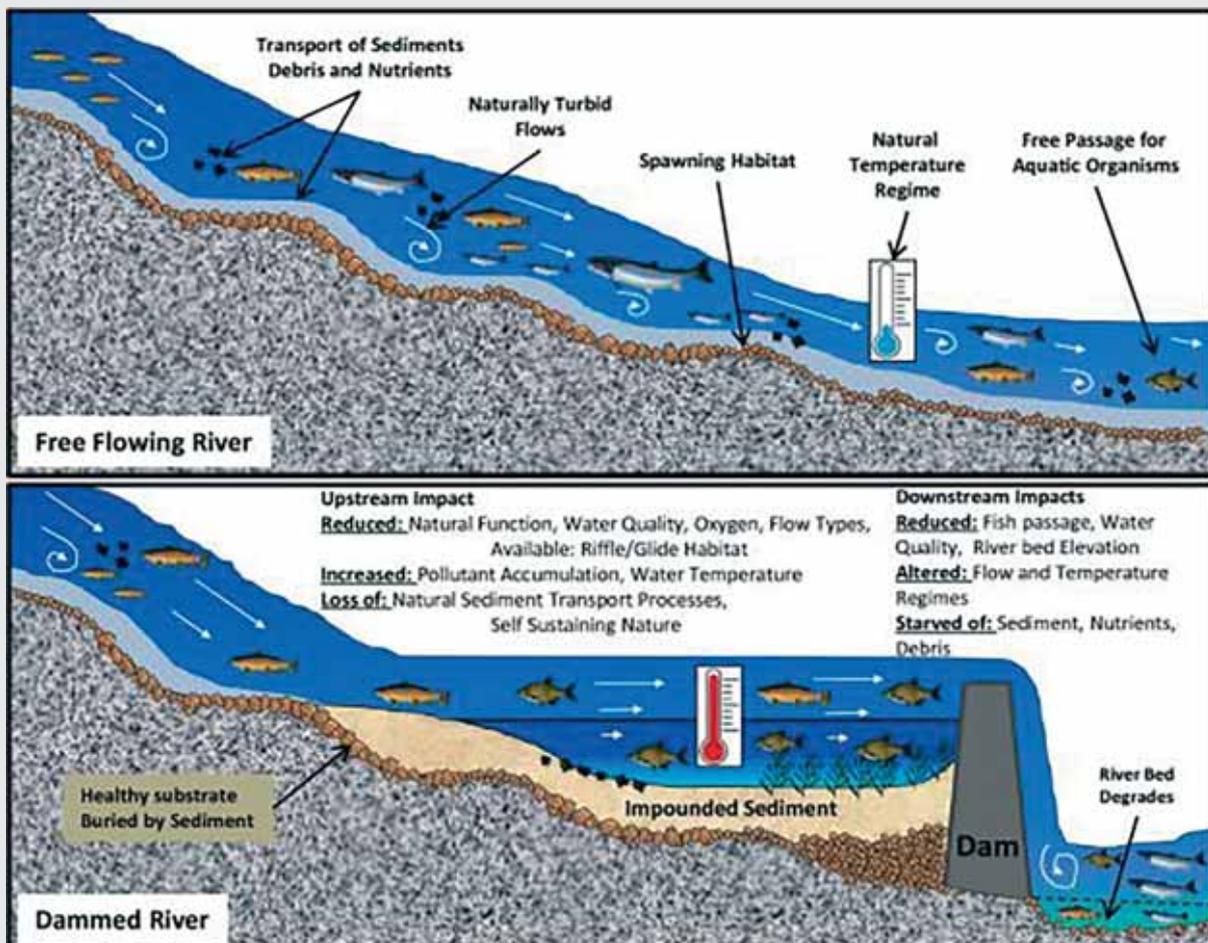


Diagram of the effects of barriers on rivers and fish movements

Man-made barriers negatively affect fish migration for both feeding and breeding and can lead to population declines and the elimination of migratory fish species from a catchment.

National Barriers Programme

Inland Fisheries Ireland with funding from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage developed the 'National Barriers Programme' to identify issues related to barriers and works to reduce their impact, within the context of the European Water Framework Directive.

To date, Inland Fisheries Ireland has surveyed almost 29,008 structures in Ireland using remote data and the I-BAST assessment, a

tool developed specifically for the programme, and a further 217 structures using a secondary more detailed assessment. Presently, IFI has classified 22,114 structures as not a barrier to fish passage, but unfortunately identified 7,111 structures as presenting a problem for the migrations of aquatic fauna. Along with data from other national organisations, the total "potential barriers" on the Irish river network has increased to 72,854. In the future, Inland Fisheries Ireland aims to

develop an interactive web application to help people use this information. Mitigation measures is a costly undertaking and projects must be prioritised by many different factors including amenity value, requirements for compliance with EU Directives, cost-benefit analysis and fish migration benefits. To find out more about the National Barriers Programme, please visit: www.fisheriesireland.ie/what-we-do/research/national-barriers-programme



Annacotty Weir on the River Mulkear, Co. Limerick



Attendees at the recent public meeting

**Example of a current barrier project:
The Annacotty Fish Passage Project in Limerick**

Annacotty weir, located on the River Mulkear, Co. Limerick, is within the Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and has been identified as a significant barrier to the free passage of fish. Atlantic salmon, sea lamprey, river lamprey, eels and trout migrate upstream and downstream of the weir and it poses a barrier to the movement of these important species.

In 2022, Inland Fisheries Ireland secured funding of €99,481 within the ‘Salmon and Sea Trout Rehabilitation, Conservation and Protection Fund’ and this money will be used to support the assessment and planning phase of this project.

Further assessment is needed as the Annacotty weir is located within a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) therefore the impact of any proposed works on the habitats and

qualifying interests of the SAC must be fully assessed.

Initial studies will also identify any additional ecological, engineering, or archaeological constraints that may impact the final choice of fish passage improvement option.

An Interagency Group for the Annacotty Fish Passage Project has been set-up which includes representatives from Inland Fisheries Ireland, the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Limerick City and County Council, the Office of Public Works (OPW), the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), the Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) and the ESB.

In August 2022, Inland Fisheries Ireland held a well-attended public information meeting in Limerick to make more people aware of the Annacotty Fish Passage Project and to highlight potential solutions to the

problems that the weir is causing to Ireland’s fish populations.

Attendees included members of the public, representatives from community groups, local angling clubs, Annacotty residents, government departments, state agencies and environmental organisations.

More information about the Annacotty Fish Passage Project is available at www.fisheriesireland.ie/annacotty

The works on Annacotty Weir are part of a pilot project to assist with the design and implementation of a national barriers restoration programme currently being progressed by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in collaboration with a range of State Bodies.



**Iascach Iníre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland**

LIFE ON A CHALK STREAM

Brought up in Hampshire I was lucky enough to have great (and famous!) fly fishing on my doorstep, but as I grew up, got a job and moved away I realised what a closed world the chalkstreams were unless you were in the 'know'. So, with little more than a germ of an idea, a telephone and the book of my fishing contacts, I set out to change that.

Back then taking fishing for the day, as people liked to term it, was a haphazard affair which involved tracking down obscure adverts in magazines or following up contacts gleaned in the local pub. If you needed a gillie you would soon discover that it was job description for someone filling the time between waking up and the pubs opening. And heaven forbid that anyone might have a professional casting qualification.

My mission was back then, and remains today, to make the best beats accessible and bring a new level of professionalism to the whole business, but never losing sight of the fact that the chalkstreams are some of the most precious and unique trout fishing rivers in the world. By building relationships with the river owners, I gained their trust to sell day rods on their behalf, the income helping to make the rivers pay their way. For anglers I knew that buying a day of fishing should be pleasure rather than a chore, with the prospect of that day something to look forward to. I introduced the term Fishing Guide to the chalkstream lexicon and demanded the highest standards of myself when I was a full time Guide and now from the team that make up Fishing Breaks.

For more information on Fishing Breaks UK please click here <https://www.fishingbreaks.co.uk/>

James Robertson Justice and a Royal connection

Last week I was sent this photograph of the actor James Robertson Justice

taken at Whitchurch Fulling Mill on the River Test in the late 1940's. For those of you who know Fulling Mill you might readily recognise the spot where it was taken, just below the mill race in front of the house that remains wood clad today as it was back then.

At this point in his life Justice was only just embarking on the acting career, which was to bring him fame, if not fortune (he died penniless in Romsey in 1975) as the demanding surgeon Sir Lancelot Spratt in the "Doctor" series of films of the 1950s and 1960s plus starring roles in Compton Mackenzie's *Whisky Galore!*,

Rob Roy, *Moby Dick* with Gregory Peck, with David Niven in *The Guns of Navarone* and as Lord Scrumptious in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. This really was as much as I knew of Justice, but as I researched his life it became apparent, he had quite some Royal connection with both our late Queen and her husband, Prince Philip and King Charles.

There is a great deal of smoke and mirrors about Justice's life. Bon vivant. Buccaneer. Adventurer. Fantasist. He claimed to speak 20 languages, though he was certainly fluent in a number. He claimed to have been born under a



James Robertson Justice at Whitchurch Fulling Mill

distillery on the Isle of Skye; in fact, he was born in southeast London. He replaced his middle two names Norval Harald with Robertson. He went to the posh English public school, Marlborough College in Wiltshire where he likely learnt to fly fish on the River Kennet which runs through the grounds. After that he had two unsuccessful stabs at university in both London and Germany.

Abandoning education, he became a Reuters journalist bedside Ian Fleming before emigrating to Canada working as an insurance salesman, taught English at a boys' school, became a lumberjack and mined for gold. Penniless (there is a theme here), he returned to England to try his hand at ice hockey and motor racing before he headed to Europe again to become a policeman for the League of Nations, before fighting in the Spanish Civil War and then World War II in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve.

It's unclear how Justice, the living embodiment of the term *bon vivant*, a man who invented his 'Scottishness', a serial womaniser (a young Bridgit Bardot starred beside him in three films) and with a love of fast cars became a friend of Prince Philip, but it was



Royal Honeymoon at Broadlands 1947



Whisky Galore

clearly a deep and extended friendship. By 1947, the year of the Royal wedding Justice was living at Whitchurch Fulling Mill, upstream of the Royal honeymoon destination, Broadlands House. In great secrecy, a few days after the wedding, the newlyweds headed the 24 miles to have tea with Justice, his wife Dillys and young son. Of course, the secret got out, the lane to Fulling Mill lined with well-wishers.

Justice, aside from his hedonistic lifestyle, had three great passions in life: shooting, he was founder of the Wildfowl Trust, fishing and falconry. This may have been what originally bought him in contact with Prince Philip who invited him to join his exclusive Thursday Club, an eating and drinking club, reportedly dedicated to 'absolute inconsequence' and sent his teenage son Prince Charles to stay with Justice one summer, to learn about falconry and country pursuits. It would be interesting to ask our new King what memories he has of that particular phase in his life!

But for all the adventure Justice's life seems to have been peppered with sadness. His young son drowned in the river at Fulling Mill, his marriage never recovering, dissolving into numerous affairs and soon after Chitty Chitty Bang Bang he had a series of strokes

that effectively ended his acting career to see him declared bankrupt in 1970.

In *Whisky Galore!*, as Dr Maclaren, Justice advocates the use of whisky as a tonic and delivers the famous line: 'It's a well-known fact that some men were born two drinks below par.' It is an accusation that no one could level at Justice himself.

The long reach of fly fishing

Kashmir, the northernmost region of India, butting up to the Himalayas and China, with governance divided between Pakistan and India, does not evoke visions of fly fishing but last week the Tourism Department in collaboration Kashmir Anglers Federation organised a competition on the Lidder river.

Roughly translated as the 'long bellied goddess' the Lidder is fed by water from the Kolahoi Glacier, with the bluish/grey water holding both brown and rainbow trout, the former I believe originally stock fish transported from a River Itchen hatchery in the late 1800's.

Judging by the fly box, and the evidence of the photos, downstream wet fly seems to be the method of choice though I think I spied a Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear.

The Irish HPR team at the UK Game Fair

So here we are already, summer is in the Departure Lounge and that most wholesome time of the year is upon us. A chance to get our stalwart four legged hunting companions refreshed again in the matters of all things game, introduce the novices to proper scent for the first time and, as a bonus, put the healthiest of food on our tables.

This summer was a special one for yours truly, having been asked to captain Team Ireland at the HPR Home International Tournament in Ragley Hall. It was an absolute honour to be entrusted with such a role at one of the most prestigious events in the Fieldsports calendar.

One of the first things I did after being appointed captain was reach out to The German Pointer Club of Ireland for assistance. This would prove to be a 'no brainer' as they were a wealth of knowledge and support to myself & Team Ireland throughout the whole process. A sub committee was formed to help select the team, three A Panel judges with leagues of experience between them (Stephen McManus, Robbie Doran & Gerry Devlin).

After two gruelling selection days held in Hopes Point, Mullingar and many hours deliberating we had a strong Irish team selected.

Next on the agenda were training days - if we were to make a proper challenge for the ultimate prize we would have to be prepared properly. A patriotic message of support from Matty Lambden of Tamrose Labradors was our next stroke of good fortune as he generously invited us up to his impressive training grounds in Mullingar to brush up on the finer points of retrieving. You see Irish HPR dogs don't usually compete in working tests, it's more hunting and field trialling we specialise in.

The end of July was fast approaching, we were working hard on obtaining sponsorship from anyone kind enough to donate. Our feeling on the matter was no one should end up totally out of pocket representing their country. Without our sponsors (listed below) none of this would have been possible.

My main goals before we went over were to:

1. Train & compete to win;
2. Represent our country with pride for the duration of the trip;
3. Showcase Irish HPR dogs & handlers on an international stage;

I never thought I'd see the day I'd be quoting Meatloaf but 2 out of 3 and all that!

Most of you know by now I'm sure we came a fairly respectable 2nd place to an English Team who were reigning champions competing on home soil with home Judges and a home crowd cheering them on - not a bad achievement for a bunch of amateurs when you dissect it in the cold light of day. The scores were: England 445, Ireland 393, Wales 339 & Scotland 311.

Alas we didn't win but more importantly the other 2 boxes are ticked and I am incredibly proud of my team this year, they deserve all the credit. All our dogs ran well, we improved on last years score and we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves especially in the Welsh Camp afterwards!

The Irish Team was as follows:

Ricky Roberts - FTCH Todlachie Black Tarquin

Ray Behan - Little Belle

Peter Begley - Look At Me

Damien McCabe- Birchwood Chloe at Commedagh

Derek O' Connor - Ardgroom Artemis

Denis Moloney - Bacchus Of Ardgroom.

(Denis Moloney unfortunately had to withdraw his bitch Offaly Grouse due to her coming into heat so he handled Ricky's second dog Bacchus of Ardgroom)

Team Selector - Stephen McManus

Team Assistant- Jake Vangrove

Team Photographer & Kit Man - Daniel O' Flaherty

Special mention to team member Denis 'Biffo Chef' Moloney who kept us foddered for the whole weekend. We were the envy of the campsite as his creative outdoor culinary skill was one of the highlights of the tour.

Also a special mention to the event organiser Howard Kirby and his hardworking team who made the huge effort to travel and support us on the day and to all who helped in any way

throughout the whole process. It was greatly appreciated.

Signing off personally I'd like to thank my wife and two young daughters for putting up with the sporadic absenteeism throughout the year, late night phone calls, zoom calls etc that ate into precious family time.

Finally, special thanks to all our sponsors for whom without their kindness and generosity none of this would have been at all possible: Nutrolin, Rovince Anti Tick Clothing, Curlew Mountain Outdoors, Highland Outdoors Ireland, Offaly Regional Game Council, Feedwell, East Coast Taxidermy, ACME Whistles, Barbour Estates, German Pointer Club Of Ireland, Tamrose Labradors, Kinnity Game Club, PDMC Building Services, East Coast Hunting & Shooting, German Longhaired Pointer Club, Steel Lintels Ireland Ltd., Down Window Systems, Carryduff Building Supplies, Islandview Canine Creche and the Great Game Fairs of Ireland.

Maybe next year will be our year !



Some sad footnotes:

We lost a dear friend in Ger Hurley (RIP) this year, who ran at our first selection day and sadly that was the last we saw of him. A great GWP man and an unforgettable character he will be sorely missed.

Our thoughts go out to our good friend Paul McAuley who lost his beloved wife Eilish recently. Paul has been of great help and support to myself and the Team from the very start. We wish Paul and his family well and may their dear Eilish Rest in Peace.

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Review of Autumn Trials 2022 for Setters and Pointers in Ireland

Caption Hugh Brady Ger Devine and Carol Calvert

The normal schedule of trials resumed for the autumn. Normal in almost everything save for the extremely hot weather and virtually no wind that characterised our summer. These two factors were to be the primary impact on the trials for August and the early part of September. Grouse were scarce and had obviously moved from their traditional spots to wetter ground. This obviously led to very little game at the trials with the obvious result of no awards. In fact, in my time trialling, I cannot remember being as disheartened attending field trials.

The weather also impacted the seasonal trips to Scotland and England, where training was limited due to the extreme heat, arriving at the moor at four in the morning for an hour or so, before temperatures became too hot for man and dog. Those of you meteorologically minded will

understand that sustained periods of high pressure contribute little wind. Wind is a critical element of working pointers and setters and vital for training younger dogs.

The first trial was the Irish Red Setter Open Trial held in Kilchreest on 6th August. The Confined Stake for Red Setters the week before was cancelled. Kilchreest is beautiful at any time of the year, but spectacular in brilliant sunshine. The success of the hen harrier project is laudable and a few pairs were seen and the thrilling spectacle of a peregrine falcon in flight, but it has an obvious impact on the indigenous grouse population.

The judges of Larry Quinn (Bansha) and Jason Benson (Concomroe), being fit and young, were extremely generous with their time for dogs, but unfortunately no game obliged. The judges commented on the excellence of the brace of Irish Setters of Pat Reape's

Lisdovoge Lilly and Joan McGillicuddy's Ballydavid Artemis.

The next day the English setter stake enjoyed a full entry and there were some memorable performances, but again no birds were met.

On the following weekend, the Irish Pointer Confined Stake took place on 13th August and after a third round – Michael Houston's pointer dog Koram Kendall obliged everyone taking a pair of grouse to be the first success of the summer circuit.

The following day's Irish Red and White Setter Open Stake was cancelled due to the extreme heat.

The next weekend was the Cill Dara Annual Summer Stakes on the Dublin mountains at Kippure, judged by Alan Bartley (Ballinahemmy) and Larry Quinn and while there were many noteworthy performances, and again game was elusive and no results could be made, even after a third round.

The Irish Grouse Championship for Pointers and Setters

The main event of the season is the Irish Grouse Championship for Pointers and Setters with its headquarters in Roundwood, County Wicklow. A very well-run event followed over the next two days that encompassed two rounds.

The judges of Alan Bartley (Ballinahemmy), Jason Benson (Concomroe) and Larry Quinn (Bansha) asked for seven braces of dogs for the second day. The following awards were made first and excellent to Laurent Hild's English Pointer Gerensary Pinot handled and trained by the very capable Richard MacNicol, second very good to Leslie Maher's Irish Setter dog Fraoigh Rock and Certificate of Merit to Gerald Devine's English setter Gortinreagh Jack Duggan. Joan McGillycuddy's Irish setter puppy Ballydavid Artemis was awarded the most stylish dog of the first day of the championship while Hugh Brady's Irish setter Int. F.T.Ch, Snipe Ch Malstabodarna Embla of Ballydavid was awarded Irish Kennel Club Dog of the Year for 2021.

The following weekend was the Irish Pointer Club's Open Stake in the Sally Gap and a damp, murky day greeted the competitors. While less pleasant for the humans, the conditions suited the dogs better than the dry heat of August. Thankfully grouse showed themselves but several opportunities were not taken.



Int. F.T.Ch, Snipe Ch. Malstabodarna Embla of Ballydavid winner of the Irish Pointer Club Open at Sally Gap.

A damp gallery returned to the motors before judges Bill Connolly (Ballyellen), Larry Quinn (Bansha) and Sean Hogan (Fawnlog) gave the result to trial secretary Pat Dooley. The winner graded excellent was Hugh Brady's Irish Setter Int. F.T.Ch Malstabodarna Embla of Ballydavid with a find on a covey.

The following day's Premier County was cancelled due to heavy rains but re-scheduled to 18th September.

The Irish Red and White Setter Confined Stake was held in the Dublin Mountains on 10th September and despite an abundance of grouse no awards could be made.

Judged by Hugh Brady (Ballydavid) and Larry Quinn (Bansha) it was great to see some many new faces including Ruth van Sway from the Netherlands who competed with her dogs.

The Irish Field Trial Association Trials, which had not run trial in a few years, returned to Kinnity with great anticipation as the National Parks and Wildlife Service have been flailing heather to the benefit of the grouse populations. Judges were Hugh Brady (Ballydavid) and Larry Quinn (Bansha) and secretary Joe O'Sullivan (Gardenfield) welcomed all.

Perfect conditions for the day with a slightly changeable breeze and satisfactory game numbers enabled the judges to have four awards. All dogs were graded excellent with first to Joe O'Sullivan's English Pointer

Gardenfield Sue, second to George Forbes English Setter dog Zico, third to Billy Grace's English Setter Capparoe Jao with reserve to Eugene Moriarty's English Setter dog Moonhill Ahiga.

The following day was also in the Slieve Bloom National Parks, being the re-scheduled Premier County Field Trial Association. There is always a great welcoming atmosphere at this stake with club secretary Alan Bartley pulling out all the stops. The ground is always challenging, but that is half the enjoyment and a hot stake was had. At the end, judges Aidan Dunne (Maodhog) and Pat Dooley (Wildfield) announced the winner as David Bells hard-running Irish Red Setter dog, Shenmel Dream.

This has given Dream his F.T.Ch status, subject to his show qualifier. In second place was Billy Grace's smooth running English Setter dog Upperwood Resolution of Capparoe who had a nice find on a running cock grouse. Third was Hugh Brady's fast running Irish Setter F.T.Ch The Morrigan who had a lovely find in the second round on a stationary cock grouse.

Cashel Field Trial Association held their trial on 24th September on the traditional Championship ground in Kinnity, under judges Larry Quinn (also club secretary) and Paraig Kiely (Tulrahan). Grouse were flighty and were not sitting well for dogs. However, the judges could make one award with first place, very good to Eoghan



At the Irish Red and White Setter Trial were Des Linton and Pat Reape

Marshall's English Setter dog Lisadobber Toby. This was a very successful year for Eoghan, who also had two wins in the spring.

On the same day in Ulster, the Northern Ireland Pointer Club held their pheasant trial in Glarryford. It is always a wonderful sporting day with an abundance of game and local gun club support. Judges Davy O'Neill (Shanrycon) and John Murray announced first, second and third to F.T.Ch Ballydavid Gaelforce, Int. F.T.Ch Ballydavid Starjet and Int. F.T.Ch Malstabodarna Idun of Ballydavid.

This win makes Gaelforce an International F.T.Ch. Certificate of Merits were awarded to Andy Law's Irish Setter Shanrycon Diamond and Des Linton's Irish Red and White Setter Craigrua Nevin. This is your scribe's

only triple crown ever (1st, 2nd and 3rd).

The circuit moved to the beet trials - a real sign of autumn. The Irish pointer club's trial had no awards despite some opportunities while the next day's English setter open stake was cancelled.

The Ulster Red Setter Club's Confined Trial was held in Slieveanorra, County Antrim, a weekend I was so disappointed to miss, as Slieveanorra has such tradition and is such challenging terrain. Judges for the day were Carol Calvert (Glynlark) and Anthony Mulhall (Mountbay).

The winner was announced as Bill Connolly's GB F.T.Ch Sheantullagh Djouse ahead of Andy Law's Cairnroe Osprey of Orra More with third to Gerald Devine's Ballyellen Berry and reserve to Brian Morris Ballyellen Owel. All awards were on snipe.

The next day was the Strabane and District Field Trials and, by comment of those that were in attendance, this was the trial of the year, and perhaps even one of the best trials in a number of years. It was held in Glenwherry, the keepered grouse moor in Antrim and this year it seems to have been an incredible year for the grouse. Game Keeper Merlin Becker must be extremely pleased with his progress. Judges for the day were Des Linton and Kevin Quinn and most dogs seem to have had an opportunity to meet grouse on their runs.

The winner was announced as Raymond Monroe's Irish Setter dog Ballydavid An Dagda, with second place to Bill Connolly's Irish Setter G.B. F.T.Ch Sheantullagh Djouse, third place to Brian Morris's Irish Setter Ballyellen Spider with Certificate of



Judges Davy O'Neill and John Murray with your scribe with Gaelforce, Starjet and Embla at the NIPC trials at Glarryford.



The winner of Strabane was Raymond Monroe's Ballydavid An Dagda (photo courtesy of Calum Campbell)



A study in B&W - Anthony Mulhall with Dr. Stephen Clarke's Gordon Setter at Glenwherry at the memorable Strabane and District field trials.



Grouse on the wing!



John Murray, Carol Calvert and Gerald Devine at Glarryford

(photo credit R. Monroe)

Merits to Brian Morris' Irish Setter Ballyellen Boris and Gerald Devine's English Setter Gortinreagh Orra.

The next weekend was the Ulster Gundog Leagues 100th year anniversary trials. What an incredible achievement for all involved and current club secretary Carol Calvert! Both trials on this weekend were to mark this amazing landmark, with a celebration dinner held on the Saturday night.

The UGL trial on Saturday 8th October in Glarryford was won by Bill Connolly's Irish Setter dog G.B. F.T.Ch Sheantullagh Djouse, while the next day in awfully wet conditions judges Daryl Edwards and Joe O'Sullivan (Gardenfield) put 27 dogs through their paces on the other beat in Glenwherry. The winner was Gerald Devine's English Setter Gortinreagh Jack Duggan, with Bill Connolly's Irish Setter G.B. F.T.Ch Sheantullagh Cormac in second and Des Linton's Craigrua Nevin in third place.

Also on the 8th October, Connaught field trial club held their Autumn Stake in Kilchreest, County Galway. Judges for the day were Billy Grace (Capparoe) and Paraig Kiely (Tulrahan) in what, barring the odd shower, was a splendid day for dogging. A plentiful supply of game, though some dogs were lost in

the second round after promising first rounds. The winner was Hugh Brady's Irish Setter F.T.Ch Ballydavid The Morrigan with Pat Reape's Irish Setter Lisdovoge Lilly in second place and Hugh Brady's Irish Setter Int. F.T.Ch Malstabodarna Embla of Ballydavid in third place. All dogs were awarded excellent. This was a particular landmark for your scribe, being my 100th open stake win - certainly something when I started, I would not have dreamt of achieving.

The following day's Munster Pointer and Setter trial was cancelled and the Irish Red Setter Open Stake scheduled for the 15th October, both planned for Kilchreest.

In the next issue, the remaining field trials in October 2022 will be covered and the Snipe Festival encompassing the Irish Snipe Championship in November, which yours truly is judging, but until then have an enjoyable Christmas until we return in 2023!



Keeper Merlin Becker and Jim Sheridan (Craigrua) and gallery at the UGL 100th anniversary trial
(photo credit R. Monroe)

A win for Ireland at The Home International 2022



Ireland were crowned the overall victors at the 52nd Home International competition at this year's Game Fair, held within the grounds of Ragley Hall, Warwickshire from 29-31 July.

The four home nations - England,

Ireland, Scotland and Wales - gathered together at the International Gundog Arena for two days of action-packed competition, which culminated as The Game Fair itself drew to a close.

The Home International has been held every year since 1969 (other than

2020 due to the pandemic). It sees the four nations compete against one another in a series of demanding tests designed to test each of the dog's abilities. Each team works five spaniels and five retrievers during the event, with their points contributing to an overall final team score.

Ireland, led by Declan Boyle, came



The Irish Gundog Team (courtesy Melissa Bastin of Polo Images)

first with a combined score of 903. England came second with a combined score of 886. Wales came third with a combined score of 854. Scotland came fourth with a combined score of 850.

Ireland were also the Top Retriever team with a score of 452, 36 points ahead of second-placed England. Scotland were the Top Spaniel team with a score of 480, 10 ahead of second-placed England.

Ireland's Simon Dixon's Spaniel FtCh Rytex Rapeds was named Top Spaniel Dog, Top Overall Dog and Top Hunting Spaniel.

England's Steve Richardson's Sothebys Choice of Wedgenock was Top Retriever Dog, while fellow countryman Brian Chesser's Birdsgreen Thembi of Spurgate was Top Marking Retriever.

Top Irish Overall Dog was Labrador Retriever Balleyvalley Riley, handled by John Dawson. The Top Irish Spaniel was Rytex Tie, handled by Travis Crothers. The Top Irish Retriever was Balleyvalley Riley, handled by John Dawson.

The chief steward for the spaniels was Mark Clifford, while the chief steward for the retrievers was Helen Goodwin.

Ireland captain Declan Boyle commented: "Our victory has meant so much to all the team, who have dedicated so much of their time to training their dogs. We all view The Home International as the summer championship and the competition is fierce, especially after The Scottish Game Fair results, so every team wants to train harder, learn from the past and

hopefully be the ones lifting the trophies.

"We knew we had to fight for every single point. And that's exactly what every member of my team has done. As a captain, I could not ask for any more. Our team is a mixture of new dogs, new handlers and a few who have been on winning and losing teams for other events. I feel this is important in order to keep team motivation up if things don't go to plan. I knew going into this competition that it was going to be really tough for every team. Luckily it was us that came out on top this year.

"I have to say a massive well done to all the organisers at The Game Fair, especially Lisa Harris, Francesca Prentice and Barbara Kuen for all they have done. The arena was definitely one of the toughest courses that I have seen at The Game Fair, with two different types of high cover crop and four fences, with one of them being a circle. There was a ditch, bales of hay and a lot of brashing. I thought it was excellent. Well done, ladies

"When running in a team there are always a lot of challenges which can affect us. Whether it's being nervous about running your dog in front of so many people, or knowing a simple mistake can make a difference to your team's score.

"This is also a completely different environment for our dogs with all the different noises, smells and the number of people at The Game Fair. When we usually train our dogs it's in the middle of quiet countryside, so this can sometimes affect their performance. I would personally like to congratulate all

the other captains and their teams for a brilliant weekend."

Lisa Harris and Francesca Prentice, Gundog Chairmen, commented: "We were privileged to be asked to organise the Home International arena at this year's Game Fair, under the overall guidance of Barbara Kuen, Gundog Adviser. With a very supportive team at The Game Fair, we were able to increase the size of the arena to allow for more challenging hunting and retrieving with a wide variety of cover and obstacles for all three competitions.

"Together with the wonderful support of knowledgeable stewards and arena volunteers, and sponsors, we are proud to have been able to deliver a challenging and exciting competition to showcase the four nations' teams of Retrievers and Spaniels."

For more information, visit: www.thegamefair.org.

All four teams pose at the conclusion of the 2022 Home International (courtesy Melissa Bastin of Polo Images)



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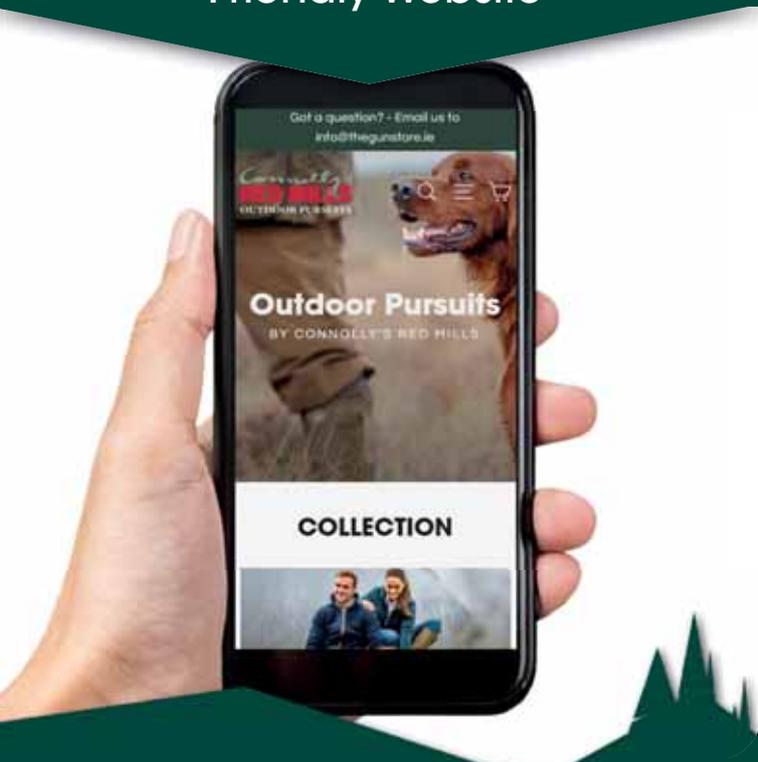


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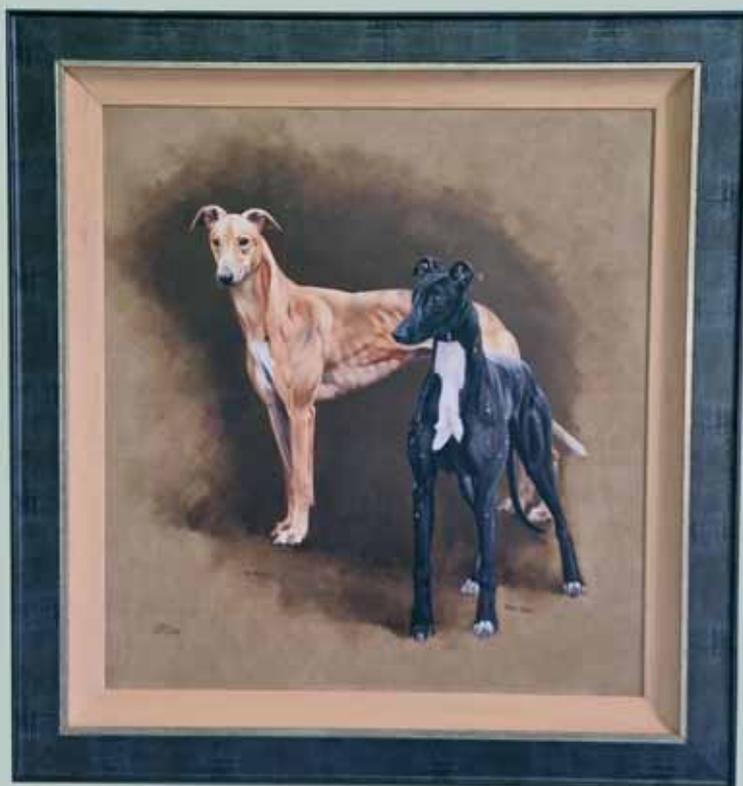
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The impressive oil painting of the two dogs was commissioned by the Great Game Fairs of Ireland to celebrate two of their prestigious races at the fair – the Master McGrath and Mick the Miller challenges.

The painting was unveiled by the acclaimed artist John R Moore at a press reception in Brownlow House, Lurgan, the home of Lord Lurgan, the owner of Master McGrath. It has featured on the cover of the Irish Country Sports & Country Life magazine and smaller limited edition prints were made available.

The original painting, tastefully framed by the artist, measures an impressive 26" x 27" image size including frame 34" x 35". It is now offered for sale at a realistic price.



For further details including price.

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Some Perspectives on the Irish Game Fair - from Albert Titterington - on behalf of the organising team with comments from the sporting organisations, the exhibitors and the many satisfied visitors

I've heard many different perspectives on the Game Fair: from real country sports people who were delighted to have the Fair back after three years; competitors who had the opportunity to compete in their chosen sport for excellent prizes; families who had a great day out; and traders who had a welcome injection of cash into their businesses from sales.

Unfortunately there were a few critics from within the country sports world, possibly on the basis of the odd visit to a bigger show in GB, who have unrealistic expectations of what can be done in Ireland,

So here's how I would sum up the Fair, along with views from interested parties:

1. It was not our biggest and best fair - we faced a lot of challenges in 2022 and in some ways it was like starting over again like we did at Clondeboye in 1979 - of course I was 44 years younger and not as cantankerous!
2. Many of my loyal team of country sports enthusiasts have been with me since then, with extra commitment and talent added along the way and without their 'full on' commitment there would have been no fair in 2022.
3. Our commitment is, as it was then, to totally promote and defend country sports - we consider the best way to do this is by attracting the public to the Game Fairs through a

range of country lifestyle experiences.

4. Every year at our Game Fair Press Breakfast we make Country Sports Commitment Awards to people who have made an exceptional contribution to the promotion and defence of our sports. This year, they all went South to Dan Curley, ex Chairman and current Vice Chairman of the NARGC, John Toal ex PRO NARGC and Owen Mulcahy, secretary of the Irish Working Terrier Federation.

My personal standout memories of the 2022 Fair

- The Living History Village with a Viking longship - I feared it might actually be swept back into the lough
- A good display of artisan food & drink - compromised a bit by the Protocol in terms of getting GB exhibitors in.
- It was good to see 'old friends' such as Paul from Angle Books, Paul from Edinburgh Clothing and Cedric from Duckdri demonstrating total commitment by rather 'jumping through hoops' to overcome the challenges of the Protocol. We were denied the Skinners big show wagon because they couldn't bring in food to stock it - thanks to the area manager for making the effort to exhibit even if he had no product to sell.

- We had the best ever fishing at the Fair with the addition of the Fly Fair run by Stevie Munn and Ray McKeeman. As usual Bobby Bryans, Paul Smith and their team made many memories at the Put and Take Fishery, while Arthur Greenwood and the other APGAI guys gave instruction to young and old in fly dressing & catching. A great photo at our press breakfast was Paul Smith dressed as a leprechaun with a donkey!
- Our competitions in terms of clays (Kenny), gundogs (Ken and Rickie) and terrier & lurchers (back under the direction of Kieran Young with the assistance of the McGraths) were strong;
- Chris Symonds & Shane Bisgood combined to offer anyone the chance to improve their shooting through free advice and instruction.
- 'Davey' Downey took over the Ferret racing and show and made a beautiful gesture of placing a posy of flowers at 'Harry's corner' to remember one of our late characters, the late Harry McCarroll, who for many years supervised the hub in the middle of the fair with a warm welcome and craic for everyone.
- Horse and donkey presences were strong and we had an excellent commentary by my brother Philip, plus we had excellent air rifle shooting and archery. We had a good



Good crowds on Saturday



In spite of poor weather the crowds turned out Sunday



Main Car Park Sunday



Clay Pigeon Car Park Sunday



Game Keepers Marquee & Displays



The Old Station was a great HQ for the Fly Fair



Some great tackle on display



Some excellent fly dressers

range of trade stands including dog food & accessories, country vehicles and clothing - there were a few gaps due to the Protocol and us clashing this year with the Royal Highland Show (this happens every few years).

- The falconry static and flying displays were the best ever with the 2nd generation John Carmichael and included a golden eagle.
- In spite of the rain we had continuous displays by Long Netter, Dog agility, muzzle loading including a personal delight was seeing the late Bill Parker's son taking his father's place in the team, gundog displays - spaniels and golden retrievers, Viking battles, bands & music all pulled together by Johnny McCoy.
- Charlie Jacoby setting up a Fieldsports Channel TV recording studio to focus on dealing with future threats to hunting.
- The Game Keepers marquee and game displays sited in the centre of the fair were coordinated by head keeper Bill Storer, and his exhibitors provided lots of advice and equipment for game rearing.
- The laugh we had at the critic who claimed he was 'round the fair in 20 minutes' - they should certainly be looking at trying out for the Irish sprinting team!

And something a little bit special for me and the crowds who turned out to support it in torrential rain, including those who retired to the Salmon & Woodcock Pavilion – our Pro Hunting Demonstration at the Fair.

- The torrential rain impacted on our pro country sports demonstration as many hundreds watched and cheered from the Salmon & Woodcock Pavilion and other marquees but around 300 hardy souls made their presence felt from the side of the arena. The Killultagh mounted pack were followed into the ring by Dan Kinney and his Glens of Antrim

Foxhounds (a foot pack serving the sheep farmers of the Glens). The threat to hunting and our sports from all sorts of pressures including economic pressures has been demonstrated by the sad news that as we go to press the Killultagh, thought to be the oldest pack in Ireland, has closed. Their demo at the fair was their last public display.

- Liz Brown of the Sunnyland beagles gave an excellent commentary on both packs before Paul Pringle gave an impassioned call for unity of all country sports people. I then had the pleasure of chatting to both Dan and Liz to camera (Field Sports Channel and our own film maker) and then to two people who summed up what we are trying to do to ensure country sports survive in NI.
- The first was young 5yo Conor Kinney just out of hospital braving the rain in his little tweed jacket acting as whipper in to his Dad and hoping to follow in the footsteps of his Dad and grandad. His grandad is the great DC Kinney of 'Rod & Gun' fame in the News Letter, who I was privileged to shoot with and see the massive conservation project he carried out in the Glens. The second was Bill Montgomery, one of the senior figures in NI country sports. Bill is best known for hunting but is an all round sportsman whose family have hunted, shot and fished in Ireland for 400 years.
- It summed up for me why I do Game Fairs - to try to ensure youngsters like Conor can be interviewed in 70 years time with his grandson to reflect on his hunting, shooting and fishing career. If hunting, shooting and fishing people do not stick together, the next volume of 'Irish Country Sports - A HERITAGE' could be a very slim volume indeed.
- People recognise that I prefer to give than receive but I was touched when at the prize distribution for spaniels on the Red Mills stand, The Antrim and Down Springer Spaniel Club presented me with a fine stick made

by 'Capt' Kelly and a bottle of wine for Irene. I shall treasure the stick and Irene and I will raise a glass to the club.

In 2023 our 'normal dates' would mean another clash with the Royal Highland Show so we are currently considering alternative dates – an announcement will be made soon.

Other Perspectives on the Fair from those who ACTUALLY attended or exhibited

The overall reaction to the fair was very positive from those people from all over Ireland and further afield who completed the survey, those who posted positively on social media and many of the exhibitors who were delighted to have a great trading opportunity.

Some positive social media comments from visitors:

“We had a great day yesterday Great to see the hounds parading Albert Titterington you should have left the child of Prague out on Saturday.”

“We had a great day on Sunday as always rain doesn't dampen your spirit it just gives you something else to talk about ,and an excuse to hit the bar lol”

“Went on Saturday, cheap day out £30 and the wife, daughter, and granddaughter all had a very enjoyable day, also picked up a few dummies at the sporting saint stall, got some insurance from Mr Gorman and of course always the burgers and dinky doughnuts lol”

“Was worth going to - rain didn't bother me i was wearing a poncho also seen someone there with a neatly dressed goat”

“Brilliant day, my son and daughter caught their first trout and the lad is home with a fly fishing starter kit and looking to take a few lessons, that's what's it's all about well done to organisers keep up your hard work”

This got a fantastic response from Gordon Roulston: “In the spirit of the Fair and all that Albert Titterington does for country sports send me your



Viking arena battles



Viking Longship in the Living History Village



The Pipe Band didn't let Sunday's rain deter



A fantastic stickmaking display



Hounds parading in the rain on Sunday



The rain didn't stop the children enjoying the hounds



A fishy character at the 'Put & Take' fishery



Ladies & lurchers - not only lad's who love their lurchers!

address I have about 20/25 trout flies I will give to the young lad to get him started.”

“Well done. The same lads whinging will be the first to complain when it's gone. Always thought Birr was a great weekend and it was. It's great to have a fair to go to.. Let's hope Birr comes back next year. Congrats on all involved in the great game fairs of Ireland....a lot of work goes into them.. Top marks.”

“I wouldn't worry too much about people that post hateful comments they don't really belong to the Shooting and Hunting fraternity and just hide behind their keyboard probably think their opinion about anything will change the universe. Get planning for next year.”

“I enjoyed it Albert and it was good to catch up with some old friends I haven't seen for a while. I wonder how many of the people with negative feedback don't take the time to speak with exhibitors or watch the displays in the arenas.”

These are just some of the several hundred positive messages on our own social media platforms. and on Shooting NI. John Wray , the Shooting NI Admin also posted his own opinion on the fair:

The Viewpoint from John Warrener Wray Admin of NI 's largest shooting social media site - Shooting N.

“Well folks that's it for another year well for those of us that are only visiting the fair because those that organise it are straight back to the hard work of setting up a fair for us next year so some can complain about again but I had a fantastic couple of days at the Great Game Fairs Of Ireland event held at Shane's Castle Co Antrim.

“I met old friends and made a few new ones got to see one of the now grown up pups of my lab Archie and Lucy's a lovely wee bitch, I bought myself a couple of new coats and boy did I need it today (Sunday) as it was hurtling down on several occasions, but even the heavy showers didn't

dampen the spirits of those I was chatting to at the fair.

“What I noticed mostly over the weekend was there were more family groups present on both days which is great to see, as I've always said countrysports is a family affair. I also noticed lots of wains taking part in the archery, air rifles, and fishing to mention a few activities available and again its good to see as the youth is our future after all.

“All the arenas were busy with displays on both days which I always enjoy watching. I got my Country Sports Ireland (CSI) membership renewed for another year. So now I'm home the dogs and reptiles are fed and it's time to put the feet up a massive big thanks to Albert Titterington and everyone else who helped in the organisation and running of Ireland largest and longest running game fair. Here's hoping to see you all again at Shane's next year. A special mention goes to a good friend Andrea who runs the Loughgall Hedgehog Rescue alongside her full-time job at Field And Stream in Moy and to her Mum, Mrs. Cowan, who helped her at the fair this weekend they are doing a grand job of helping orphaned and injured hogs and if you want any more information on how you can help them out they have a page on Facebook.”

Exhibitors spontaneously voiced their positive experience at the fair

Traders at the fair were delighted and here is just a taste of their unsolicited comments made about the GREAT TRADE done by traders at the fair. We wish to thank them for their support and also the people who purchased their quality products. (Country sports organisations views are carried elsewhere in the magazine)

From Gold & Brownes: I hope you guys have dried out after the weekend? No doubt you still have a fair bit of work to do on site though. Just wanted to touch base and say a quick thank you for letting us in at the last minute. We

thoroughly enjoyed the two days (despite the weather) and sold out of brownies on both days. So couldn't be happier. The good folk of the Game Fair obviously enjoyed our products. If at all possible, I would love to return in 2023 if there are any slots available.

From Ruby's Fine Foods: “Hi Albert, we had a great show our sales were very good, many thanks”

From Mac Ivors Cider: “Hi Albert, I just wanted to drop a quick line and say thanks for another fantastic event. Delighted to finally get back meeting our customers in real life. Everything ran so smoothly and the staff as always were so helpful. We actually sold out of some of our ciders so a fantastic weekend for us, much appreciated.”

From Ballylisk of Armagh: “Just a quick note to thank you for a great event recently. Superbly organised and an excellent set up, apart from Wi-Fi coverage ...! I would like to register our interest for next year's event.”

From Larry Taaffe CIC: “Albert, some words of thanks for my time at the fair. I personally enjoyed it. Getting up to speed info on the "state" of the spaniel infrastructure in NI- just an example. Meeting folks I knew from years ago and catching up on lost time. For a perspective of CIC, it was a resounding success. The concept of bringing a trophy to a game fair for Evaluation is getting a toe hold, it will only get better. The stand, was constantly alive with people from all walks of life, but generally they were from outdoor backgrounds. Visitors from Canada, Australia, Germany and parts of eastern Europe came to us. Questions of all shapes and from many angles associated with deer antlers, tooth wear, skull sizes, I had to dig deep to be on my game but it was entertaining and educational for them. Many, many children came to touch and feel the exhibits, a great experience for them. I had a great fair, I enjoyed all my time there and I will be back at the next one, if you are happy to have me there.”



A nice gesture from Davy Downey for the late Harry McCarroll



Some Spaniel prizewinners



Lurcher qualifiers gather for the 'Five Nations'



The Old Station hosted 30 international fly dressers



The Arena performers kept going in the rain including the muzzleloaders.



The donkeys from the Donkey Breed Society Ni



The team from the Whip and Collar Club



And Glandore Dog Training Club

From Ingrid Houwers (Houwers Taxidermy): “Houwers Taxidermy would like to thank the amazing team of the Great Game Fairs of Ireland for what has been an incredible weekend for us! It just goes to show that the organisers have not been sitting on their laurels these past few pandemic years, and have been dreaming up the return of the Great Game Fairs and Fine Food festival ever since it was delayed. What an incredible turnout and what a fabulous show!

“Sadly, due to Houwers Snr.'s absence it was a one-woman show and while Sr. was greatly missed by everybody it didn't stop me from doing my job. The Saturday was PACKED, and I did not even get a chance to come away from the stall. Luckily stall neighbours got me a bite to eat, and I had plenty of water with me, but it was certainly one for the record books.

“Despite the weather on Sunday, and the occasional biblical downpour, it just goes to show that you cannot keep outdoor people away. No such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing!

Many thanks to everyone who stopped by and showed their support. It's good to be back.”

Finally, a social media post from Steven McGonigal (Long Netter), Director of the Country Sports Arena at the Fair

“Over the last decade there have been many attempts to ban hunting with dogs among other attacks on the countryside. The Irish Game Fair has backed, supported and did what it could to protect, promote and defend hunting, shooting, fishing and the rural way of life - it has given platforms, sponsored and supported individuals, organisations and groups in many ways through its events, magazine and book publishing activities - no one has ever been turned down for anything that they needed help with.

With John Blair's recent attempt at introducing a hunting with dogs Bill which many felt was opening the flood

gates for more attempts to restrict many country sports. The Great Game Fairs of Ireland stood behind the country sports community as they always have, even working with Field Sports Britain to arrange interviews with John Blair, along with a probing interview with John in Irish Country Sports and Country Life magazine, and we had a show of support for hunting at the 2022 event.

If the attack was on shooting, angling or anything else, the response would have been no different, and I was very pleased that in the midst of the Bill hitting the media just as he wanted, country sports enthusiasts - thanks to the Great Game Fairs of Ireland - had the opportunity to stand on the steps of Stormont and show him that properly mobilised WE have the power and numbers to make a difference - every one of us with a spaniel, a terrier or even a teckel. I doubt this was the last appearance we will make on the hill.

The last few years have been somewhat unusual in many regards not least Brexit which has had a massive effect on businesses and made attending events outside the mainland UK a lot more difficult than before. I have been disappointed this week at some of the social media comments that have arisen over this year's event, an event that we have all been looking forward to for a long time. If someone isn't complaining about the price of ice cream, they are complaining about a lack of Gun dealers. (Editor's note: Someone said on Facebook that they wanted the dealers along so they could look at the guns. Note to LOOK at, not BUY the guns. Words fail me).

The 2022 event wasn't an easy one to pull together for the team, in fact any year is never easy to pull together and with something like a country sports event everything is against you, it's like pushing a car up hill to get to the top and everyone say you didn't push it well enough, and it probably rained while you were doing it.

Country sports are under pressure, we

all know and it doesn't matter if you hunt, shoot, fish or make sticks, the way of life we live and love is under threat of being snuffed out by uneducated fools and politicians. Some say that the same politicians would ban chess tomorrow if it got them a vote. Isn't it a bonus that we have an annual event, somewhere to meet up, shake hands and have a craic, somewhere we all come under one roof and have the camaraderie of a shared passion, whether its dogs, guns, fishing or falconry.

And most important to let politicians see that country sports is a way of life. We don't put what we do in a shed for a dry day, it's who we are and what we do, it doesn't stop. Importantly we know several politicians attend country sports events annually and this gives us all an opportunity to show things how they are, not how they are perceived.

It's all very easy to get wrapped up in the who attended and more often who didn't, usually by people who are never too quick to put their hand in their pocket and support those who do attend. But times are changing, the Internet, Brexit and increasing costs have all effected the man who loads the van and ultimately sets up a stand and hopes to have a busy couple of days.

Having worked within the Irish Game Fair over the last 12 or 13 years I know how difficult it is to steer the ship as Albert Titterington has done. It takes so much work and every time you get ahead a good wave puts you right back. It's a very arduous task, it's decidedly risky and often very thankless, I would challenge anyone to take on the task, because most would give it up very quickly. I'm glad most people can see far enough to understand that country sports events, and in particular the Irish Game Fair, do a whole lot more and mean a whole lot more than selling exhibition space, because it means a whole lot more to the people behind it.”

Northern Ireland hunting ban: battle lines drawn

The following text accompanied a broadcast report from Fieldsports Channel TV who had a recording studio set up at the Irish Game Fair to interview people about the proposed return of an anti hunting bill.

To see the full programme visit: <https://www.fieldsportschannel.tv/nihuntbanupdate/>

For a people who have seen more than their share of confrontation, the anti-hunting lobby is drawing up new battle lines.

In 2021, the Northern Ireland Assembly rejected John Blair's private member's bill which sought to ban hunting wild animals with dogs.

The Stormont Assembly has been unable to sit since the May election. It stalled as the DUP has refused to re-enter power sharing institutions over issues around the Northern Ireland protocol.

Once the executive is functioning again, which everybody expects it will, Alliance Party MLA John Blair says he will return to the battle and put up his bill again.

Speaking at the Irish Game Fair earlier in the summer, the Countryside Alliance says the bill may be the start of a vendetta against the country way of life. The CA's Gary McCartney adds that the fieldsports community cannot afford to be complacent, as the bill is a pledge in the Alliance Party's manifesto

'The bill is causing a divide between people in the country and towns.'

Gary McCartney Countryside Alliance Ireland

Gary says Blair is causing a divide between country folk and people in towns.



The anti hunting bill was the focus of Fieldsports Channel Channel Broadcast

He says: "We live and work in the countryside. We understand how nature works."

Gary is surprised that Blair, with his background in sport fishing, doesn't have a better understanding of how the countryside works. He believes Blair would defend angling if it were attacked. Gary says: "He hasn't engaged with the hunting community find out the facts for himself."

"So why would you attack somebody if you don't know the facts yourself? So, it's very disappointing."

Gary says the hunting community continues to pull together on the issue. He says: "We continue to strive to ensure that

there's a future for huntsmen and for hunting going on, for many years to come."

Gary says that if Blair wants to bring back the bill it will be challenged head on.

The bill was defeated by 45 votes to 38 last December.

Jonathan Buckley, DUP MLA, voted against the bill

He says it's still dangerous for Northern Ireland, Ireland, and the rest of the UK. He says that country sports supporters must realise that there's a bigger fight here ahead and it's not just about hunting.

He says: "It's where this bill could



Jonathan Buckley, MLA and Jim Shannon, MP being interviewed by Fieldsports Channel.

eventually lead to. Today it's the huntsmen and the hound. Tomorrow it could be the shooter and the gun dog. The day after that, it could be the angler and the rod."

He says country sports enthusiasts right across the United Kingdom and Ireland have to come together, stand together and work together for what is achievable. He fears if that doesn't happen there will be more difficult days ahead.

Kieran Young

Kieran runs the dog show at the Irish Game Fair and is a member of the Irish Working Terrier Federation.

He says the bill could make criminals of all dog owners. If their animals chase rabbits, hares, foxes or even a grey squirrel whilst they are walking, shooting, checking their livestock or engaged in any other activity they will be committing an offence.

He says: "It makes things we've done all our lives and using the natural instincts of animals to control other predators' criminal."

He says Blair may disagree with the hunters but there's a huge number of people who don't.

Jim Shannon, DUP MP for Strangford,

Jim believes the rural community needs to unite behind defeating the bill.

The new bill is a battle that will need to be fought. He says: "I think it's one that we all have to be united to oppose. So, if you love shooting and I love shooting, I will protect hunting and I'll protect fishing."

He says shooters and hunters will need to look out for each other.

He says: "I'm always encouraged when the pressure's on. I find that that makes us all a bit keener."

Jonathan says country sports is apolitical and classless. He says: "There are people that enjoy countryside sports in Northern Ireland and further afield that have political views and no political views. So, for me, that's not an issue. It's about pulling together like-minded people to ensure that we can preserve a noble profession and actually recognise

man's part within nature."

Jonathan is a keen conservationist. He says "For those who try to whitewash that from the history books and say man has no part to play in the animals under their jurisdiction, they're wrong. They simply don't understand the countryside."

'Stormont doesn't want the bill as it was rejected at second reading.'

Ronan Gorman Country Sports Ireland

Sinn Féin helped defeat the bill at Stormont, though the party has no formal position on foxhunting. Ronan Gorman, who runs Country Sports Ireland, says the assembly doesn't want the bill as it failed at its second reading without a full debate.

Ronan says country groups will be more cohesive in fighting the bill. He says: "We will address things like talking at the right times and not the wrong times. And it means that we will be speaking to the people who make the decisions politically."

He is confident that, as Blair's bill was defeated last time it will be again. He says: "It was rejected at the first opportunity, which actually is the first time, a bill to restrict any kind of country sport was defeated at such an early stage."

In Northern Ireland, there are 12 registered packs of hounds and around another 30 unregistered.

Patrick Headdon is a professional huntsman with the Killultagh Old Rock & Chichester Hunt, the oldest hunt on the island of Ireland.

He says there is sufficient support to defeat the bill if people stand up and are counted. He says: "If people sit back and wait, it will be too late. You have to put yourself out and let people know that you're not wrecking and ruining the countryside. Across the water in England when the ban came in there we were too late to stand up and be counted."

He fears the same could happen in Northern Ireland if they don't make voices heard.

There are voices of dissent within fieldsports

Angler Trevor Greene is unusual: he is a fly fisherman who is against hunting with hounds.

He is a member of the Association of Professional Game Angling Instructors. He says: "I think it's unnecessary. I know that culling the fox population is the reason given for killing the animals. But I do think it could be done more humanely than with dogs."

You will see from our film with John Blair that anglers are generally against the proposed ban.

Despite Trevor's views, foxhunting is a northern and southern Irish cross-community triumph. John Blair, like Tony Blair before him, is trying to drive a wedge into rural communities.

Gary McCartney says country sports are non-political. He says: "Everybody from all walks and background just gets on with it. It's one of the few opportunities in Northern Ireland where you can just set it to one side, leave your politics at the door and let's go out and enjoy a day's hunting or a day's shooting or a day's fishing." He says that, after the fun, people go back to their political divides. He says: "But while you're carrying out that activity, one of the few that we have, we just get on with it." He says that Blair seeks to divide communities, which will stir up unwanted tensions.

Ronan Gorman says the bill concept is influenced by extremists who see country sports as pastimes for toffs to do at weekends. He says that this is a misconception. He says: "John Blair appears not to understand what he's trying to do. And if you don't understand it, it's always going to look silly. It's not going to make sense. The community isn't going to buy into it. And the politicians and Stormont saw through it at the first stage and rejected it because it was didn't make sense to them either."

The battle lines are drawn. The fieldsports community is preparing for the fight when it comes. They are determined not to allow John Blair's bill to rob them of their way of life.

CAI at the Game Fair

For those of you who made it to the Game Fair at Shanes Castle, Countryside Alliance Ireland would like to say thank you to all who popped into our marquee to say hello and supported such a fantastic event. Even just having the opportunity to catch up with old friends, showcase our activities and highlight their importance to the maintenance of the countryside is wonderful. I'm sure it did us all the world of good just to get out, even if we had to duck between the showers.

The Great Game Fairs of Ireland event at Shanes Castle or any event, the main focus for CAI is to engage with you our members, listen to your feedback and update you on the work we are doing. Hot topics this year included lead shot restrictions, the return of Blair's Bill and delays within firearms licensing.

It is also our privilege at the Game Fair to support Gundog Rescue and Rehoming and the Mid Ulster Air Rifle Club. They both play a key role in changing perceptions of our activities and always prove extremely popular with those of all ages attending the Game Fair, especially those who are normally outside of the country sports community.

The Irish Red Grouse Conservation Trust (IRGCT)

On our stand this year we had the privilege to have alongside us the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the Irish Red Grouse Conservation Trust (IRGCT) this was IRGCT's first time at Shanes Castle with members travelling from across Ireland to attend. Thanks to Merlin Becker for putting on a great display including different types of mosses and various traps used for predator control to help protect the red listed Red Grouse and other ground nesting birds. I never knew how much fun children could have with a Larson trap and a rubber egg.

IRGCT formally came into being in 2011 with representatives from Countryside Alliance Ireland, IFA Countryside, National Parks & Wildlife Service and the Pointer and Setter Field Trial Clubs in Ireland. Coillte and Bord na Mona have also been involved from the inception of the Trust. The IRGCT is here to assist and support any group or person wishing to become actively involved in

the betterment of grouse across the island of Ireland.

The IRGCT is a purely voluntary organisation that is made up of a strong host of dedicated individuals with a shared vision for Irish grouse conservation and management. Without these people, our mountains and bogs would be in a far bleaker place than they are today.

CAI providing a valuable service

For those who didn't make it to our stand or for the many Virtual Game Fair readers from outside the UK and don't know much about Countryside Alliance, we aim to provide a valuable service. As all of our members and politicians know, Countryside Alliance is the leading rural campaigning organisation. Recent successes include defeating John Blair's Hunting with Dogs Bill and our campaign against Pet Checks between GB and NI resulting in the checks being suspended.

Our ability to campaign for the countryside, country sports and the rural way of life is unrivaled in many circles and our campaigning efforts continues to be at the forefront of everything we do.

The hard work by our current and past dedicated team members have been acknowledged with them and the organisation receiving various Lifetime Achievement Awards for defending country sports and the rural way of life. If you wish to keep up to date with our work, please register for our newsletter.

Our countryside and its people are one of Northern Ireland's most important resources. It is the backbone of our economy, is important in maintaining biodiversity and provides opportunities for recreational and social interaction for all. Its traditions are also becoming increasingly regarded as an important part of our culture and heritage. For these reasons, rural issues are important to everyone and will be a key feature in the coming years.

Impact on the countryside

Many of the people who live in Northern Ireland's rapidly changing countryside have to endure economic hardship, social deprivation, inequality

Countryside Alliance



and disadvantage in terms of opportunity and access to important services. These have only got worse with Covid-19 and the war in Ukraine.

It is only through empowering rural communities and removing obstacles to economic and social development that our fragile rural communities will be able to realise their full potential and contribute fully to the well being of the province.

Today, there remain many threats to biodiversity and to sustainable country sports in particular.

(These threats include the degradation of natural habitats, the disappearance of wild species due to climate change, ever changing farming practices, the negative impact of alien invasive species on fauna and flora and even the radicalisation of animal rights groups towards wildlife.

Interaction at the Fair

The Game Fair should therefore be seen as an opportunity not only to showcase our activities and the work we do to manage the countryside but also to interact with those from outside our community, using the event to 'bust the myths' and the perceptions claimed by our opponents.

We all must realise that it is only together we can defeat the many threats we face. We all have a responsibility to ensure that our countryside and our activities are there for our children and future generations. The first step in this battle is to engage with those who are not involved in rural pursuits. We must let them see who really are at the forefront when it comes to conservation and animal welfare and the Game Fair is the ideal vehicle to do that.

This means the Game Fair appealing to as wide an audience as possible through a mix of attractions and experiences for all the family. Not an easy mix to get right however the vast experience of the organisers always seem to get the right balance and there's no better proof than hearing of the queues backed up all the way to into Antrim from those in attendance.

CAI'S PHOTO PAGES FOR SHANES CASTLE GAME FAIR 2022



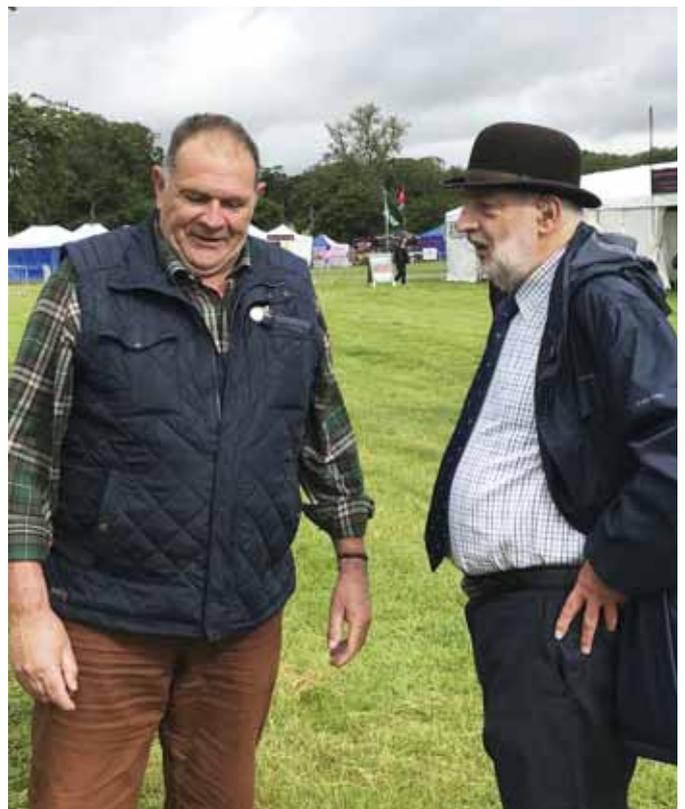
Gary McCartney presenting Jonathan Buckley MLA with a CAI walking stick with Jim Shannon



Brothers in arms Mark and Nathan enjoying all the sights of the Game Fair



Top shots in the making at the air rifle range run by the Mid Ulster Air Rifle Club



Catching up with old friends past CAI board Members Tom Fulton and Vincent Flannery

CAI'S PHOTO PAGES FOR SHANES CASTLE GAME FAIR 2022



Vincent Flannery discussing the work of the Irish Red Grouse Conservation Trust



Wonderful to see children getting to meet the horses and cuddle the hounds from the local hunt.



While kids play CAI are briefing MLAs and MPs on current issues.



Merlin Becker explaining the importance of predator control to help re-establish grouse in NI

Record Numbers Join Country Sports Ireland at Shanes Castle Game Fair

After a 3-year, covid enforced break, Country Sports Ireland was delighted to attend the Irish Game Fair at Shane's Castle on 25th & 26th June. It was fantastic to be able to meet so many members and supporters face to face, and we were heartened by the encouraging and complimentary remarks made by the many visitors to our stand.

A significant attraction to our stand was undoubtedly our £30 'Game Fair Special Membership Offer'. This Game Fair special offer has become a bit of a tradition over recent years, with many members renewing their membership and many others joining Country Sports Ireland at the Game Fair. Indeed, this year record numbers joined us or renewed their membership at Shane's



Castle, and we are truly humbled and inspired by such incredible support. Country Sports Ireland has always strived to provide members with the very best value for money and we know this is even more important in the current economic climate. Our £30 'Game Fair Special Membership Offer' is part of this 'value for money' strategy.

Leading provider of training & expertise

Country Sports Ireland is well known as a leading provider of training and expertise for those people involved in deer hunting throughout Ireland. Daniel Fryday, who is a leading member of the team that delivers Country Sports Ireland's deer stalker training programme brought a substantial collection of deer heads and antlers to the event and was in attendance to discuss any deer related matter with visitors to our stand.

Key issues discussed at the Game Fair

Some of the key issues on the minds of visitors to the Country Sports Ireland marquee were the substantial and unacceptable delays to firearms licensing and misguided attempts to ban hunting with dogs. The Shanes Castle Game Fair provided an ideal platform for Country Sports Ireland to speak to the country sports community about our work on these issues – and we are working hard on both these and other issues.

Engaging with the media & politicians

Of course, the Game Fair also provides an ideal opportunity to engage with the media and many political representatives, who often attend the event to learn about country sports and their importance to rural communities and the management of our countryside. Visitors to the Country Sports Ireland marquee included Jonathan Buckley MLA who played a leading role in the comprehensive defeat of the Bill to Ban Hunting of Wild Mammals With Dogs in the NI Assembly last December and



The busy Country Sports Ireland Marquee warmly welcomed a huge number of visitors on both days

Jim Shannon MP who has been an excellent proponent for country sports for many years.

Our support for clays & terriers & lurchers

Country Sports Ireland was also pleased to support the terrier and lurchers events and the clay target shooting at the Shanes Castle Game Fair. Event organisers Kieran Young and Kenny Thomas delivered well run, well

supported events, as always.

Praise for the Fair's organisers

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of the organisers of the Shanes Castle Game Fair. After a 2-year break and substantial new challenges to organising such an event, the organisers must be congratulated for delivering a remarkably successful event in difficult circumstances

The Shanes Castle Game Fair is the last remaining event of its kind on the island of Ireland. It provides us all with a unique opportunity to come together to celebrate all that is good in country sports and showcase country sports to the wider public. In this respect, the Shanes Castle Game Fair is an incredibly special and important event in the annual country sports calendar, and we should all continue to support this event as best we can.



Country Sports Ireland team at Shanes Castle Game Fair l-r- Niall Gorman, Ronan Gorman, Calum Teeling, Daniel Fryday & Paddy Gorman



Politicians at the Game Fair L-R Jim Shannon MP, Ronan Gorman Country Sports Ireland & Jonathan Buckley MLA



Ronan Gorman meeting the proud owner of this beautiful whippet



Daniel Fryday shows his winning dog to Ronan Gorman



Ronan is pictured with more of the successful whippet and lurcher owners

CIC Trophy Evaluation Board at the Irish Game Fair, Shanes Castle

After a number of years as the Virtual Game Fair, the real, actual Game Fair returned in June 2022. The Covid pandemic, yes it affected all of us. For some it was minor changes to their lifestyle, for others major changes.

For those who revolve around the outdoors, watching wildlife, involvement in field sports, fishing, hunting stalking etc it was a complete shut down.

Our means of communication became digital, video calls and the like. No longer were we meeting, having a pint, telling tall tales even white lies about our expertise.

Game fairs are where we meet each other, it's our own environment, this is where we meet old friends, make new ones, where we listen and watch others of greater knowledge, and it's never too late to learn.

Albert Titterington has been the driver behind the Game Fairs of Ireland for many years, Covid put a stop to that, but just for a while, but thankfully and



The magnificent Red Deer Gold Medal Trophy

with the determination of Albert and his dedicated team, the Game Fair returned in June 2022.

Our Stand, CIC, UK Trophy Evaluation Board, was back in the Woodcock Pavilion.

Our reason for attending is simple, we wish to educate and advise on the management of species that are harvested as mature to old age animals, as evidence of the positive and successful management of that environment and the animals there in.

The resulting trophies can then be evaluated and entered into different classes, Bronze, Silver and Gold. Over the two days we have a number of hunters bring their trophies for evaluation, the photos show prime examples of Red deer from Northern Ireland.

Our stand had a display of many species not native to Ireland, Chamois, Muntjac, Beaver, Mouflon and others. They provided points of discussion and visitors for various places, Ireland North and South, the UK, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Germany called to say hello.

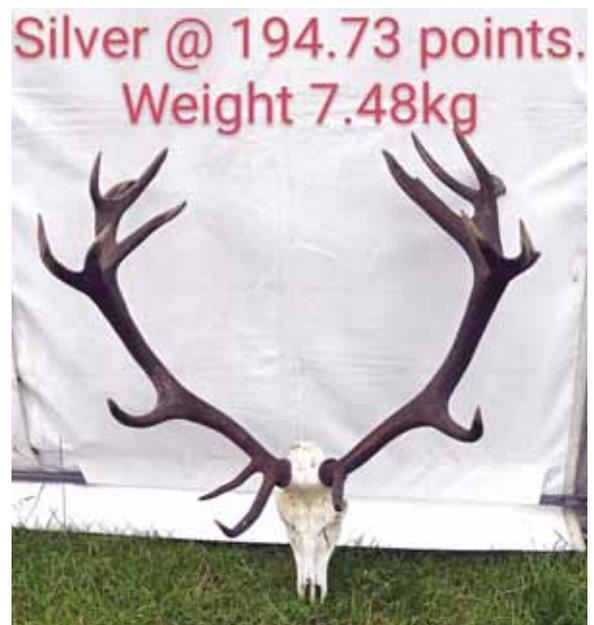
The pavilion, the Salmon & Woodcock Pavilion, also housed many other stands, stick makers, original wildlife paintings, a taxidermist, working terrier groups, Salmon and trout



CIC Trophy & Evaluation Stand at the Irish Game Fair Shanes Castle

experts and a gentleman tying his own fishing flies and explaining in detail how a steel hook metamorphoses into a beautiful fishing fly.

A Game Fair is all about meeting other people of like minds, investigating others fieldsports activities gaining knowledge. I certainly will be back, I enjoyed each day minute by minute and next year the rain might stay away but of course this is Ireland and rain plays a big part in the life of countryside enthusiasts and the animals that live therein.



A fine Silver Medal Red Deer head

Gundog Rescue & Rehoming Game Fair Success

We have been delighted to host Gundog Rescue & Rehoming and their scurry and other fund raising events at the Game Fair since the organisation was founded. We admire the selfless work done by Sam, Wendy, William and the rest of the team to offer such a professional re-homing service.

We were delighted to hear the rather unique re-homing story connected to the 2022 Irish Game Fair. Sam takes up the story:

“Another successful rehoming. Meet Goose. A young yellow Lab who found his way to us at Gundog Rescue on the Sunday of the Great Game Fair held at Shane's Castle. William collected Goose who was known as (Moose putting him over the Scurry course sponsored by Albert Titterington and the Team at The Great Game Fairs of Ireland.

“We found the boy had what it would take to be a picking up dog and maybe with a bit of work he could even become a Search and Rescue or Detection dog. After a few inquiries that didn't materialise for him, we decided to get him to the standard needed for K9 detection trainee intake.

“It has taken a number of weeks tweaking and correcting a few minor issues but we got there in the end. I contacted the detection training team who sent out an assessor to take a look at our boy.

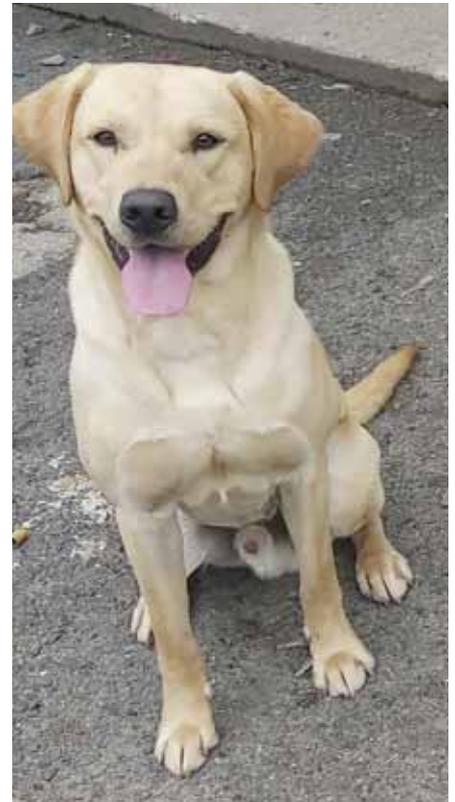
“During the visit, the assessor noted

how willing he was to search for a tennis ball. It was decided that Goose would go to the training centre for further assessment. Leaving our Rescue at 6:30 am Goose must have known that he had a ‘Golden Opportunity.’

“My phone rang at 9:30am and my heart sank. Like a nervous parent I answered the phone to be asked "Would it be OK if they held onto Goose for another day?" With the biggest smile on my face, I texted William Foster with the news.

“And the Gundog Rescue at Shanes has not only generated homes for dogs but helped encourage talented young handlers from the Corbett family.

“The Corbett family Mum, Dad and twin boys are amongst some of the greatest supporters of the Game Fair and Gundog Rescue. It has been a great delight that the two boys have



Introducing 'Goose'.



Goose takes a run over the scurry course.

developed into not only very competent handlers capable of competing at the

highest level against the very best ‘senior’ handlers but also exceptional trainers preparing dogs for work with search and rescue.

“Mum too plays her part in competing and training but also in generating much positive publicity for country sports and Gundog rescue. See report published in the Impartial Reporter.”

The report that was published in the Impartial Reporter



The Great Game Fairs of Ireland Game Fair Competitions

The Great Game Fairs of Ireland team have led the way in organising and sponsoring top sporting events at the Game Fair whereby anyone interested in the sports can compete on equal terms with the best in their sport and dream about performing above their normal level, become Game Fair Champion and win fabulous prizes.

Clay Shooting Results for the Country Sports Ireland Shoot

Some of the top prizes have always been for the clay shooting with in 2019 three guns were won including a Blazer shotgun jointly sponsored by Blazer, McCloys and the Game Fair team. In 2022, with many businesses suffering the after effects of Covid, sponsorship was a lot more difficult to acquire and the Great Game Fairs of Ireland team had to step up to fund the main prizes.

BASIC Prizes were: EACH CLASS EACH DAY 1st £150 2nd £75 3rd £50

BEST SCORES ON SATURDAY also won DUCK DRI COATS

FOR BEST SCORES OVER TWO DAYS Each class winner won £500 and top lady shot over two days won £50

Albert Titterington said: "We thank Ronan Gorman from Country Sports Ireland for providing insurance cover for the event. As usual the shoot was well run by Clay Pigeon Shooting Director Kenny Thomas who provided the following results shown below:

Results

Overall class Champions

A/AA Chris Gorman

B/C/UC Paul Mawhinney

SATURDAY RESULTS

A/AA

1ST Joe O'Donnell

2nd Richard Lightbody

3rd William Carroon

B/C & U/C

1st Declan MC Dermott

2nd Mark Dunlop

3rd Micky McCurdy

COMPACT WINNER

Richard Lightbody

DTL CHAMPION Eric Johnston

Top lady over the 2days S Bates

SUNDAY RESULTS

A/AA

1st Chris Gorman

2nd William Carroon

3rd Stewart Clydesdale

B/C & U/C

1st Paul Mawhinney

2nd S Lynne

3rd C Carrick

COMPACT Winner Chris Gorman

DTL CHAMPION Trevor Dunn

Kenny Thomas commented: "I have to say that this year was very enjoyable running the clay pigeon shoot at the Irish Game Fair, Shanes Castle and a big thank you from myself and all the participants for the overwhelming prize fund. I would also like to thank all of the shooters who took part including those who continued shooting during some very heavy showers on the Sunday."







Gundogs at the Game Fair

Once again the gundogs at the Game Fair proved to be a great attraction both for competitors and the general public. The Scurry organized by Gundog Rescue and Rehoming and sponsored by Feedwell was a hub of activity, the main arena demonstrations – Tim Crothers with Spaniels (sponsored by Feedwell) and Shauna McGroarty’s Golden Retriever Display Team sponsored by Red Mills drew great arena crowds.

The more serious gundog competitions Spaniels (sponsored by Red Mills) and Retrievers (sponsored by Feedwell) attracted great entries and a huge number of spectators. The Spaniel tests were organised by The Antrim and Down Spaniel Club under the direction of Ken Lindsay and took place on the Saturday in perfect conditions. The Retrievers were organised by Rickie Johnston and the Labrador Retriever

Club of NI and unfortunately faced horrendous weather, including heavy rain and the wind whipping up huge waves on the lough.

Spaniel Results at the Irish Game Fair, Shanes Castle 2022 from Ken Lindsay

The Open, Novice and Puppy spaniel tests were held at The Great Game Fairs of Ireland by the Antrim and Down Spaniel Club.

On behalf of the Antrim and Down Spaniel Club, I would like to thank Albert Titterington for inviting the Club to run the tests this was our fifteenth year in running them.

The Great Game Fairs of Ireland once again were most generous in the prizes and cheques which they donated to First, Second and Third prize winners of each Test. Red Mills who once again gave bags of Dog Food to First, Second and

Third we thank them for continuing to support not only the Antrim and Down but also Field Trials throughout Ireland.

Finally thanks to our Judges Ian Blair, Captain Kelly, and Pat Peppard and to our Secretary Adrian Doris who took the entries from over fifty dogs - a lot of writing!

Puppy Test

- 1st F Barry
- 2nd L Rice
- 3rd C McConville
- 4th D Lavery

Novice

- 1st L Rice
- 2nd L Rice
- 3rd P Cassidy
- 4th C Ryan

OPEN

- 1ST Leva Grigaite
- 2nd L Rice
- 3rd P Cassidy
- 4th K Lindsay

Spaniel Award Winners



Great Gundog Displays



Retriever Prize Winners



Tim Crothers



Joe McGivern



Terriers & Lurchers at the Game Fair

The first Terrier & Lurcher Show staged at the Fair at Clandeboyne in 1980 by Edwin Dash for the Ulster Game & Wildfowl Society was an auspicious occasion as it set in motion an event which is now replicated virtually every weekend in Ireland and Edwin Dash, originally a volunteer became a Game Fair director!

Seamus Erwin and Matt Lee took over running the show and in 1980 at a Game Fair in Slane laid the plans for the Feedwell All Ireland championships through the setting up of All Ireland Championships in racing and showing. Kieran Young took over when Seamus and Matt retired and then was replaced by Tom Barry, as terrier & lurcher director before Kieran coming back in 2022.

During Kieran's first stint the plans were put in place for more ambitious pre qualified championships with qualifications taking place throughout England, Scotland, Wales, ROI and NI. Thus the Five Nations showing

championships were born for whippets sponsored by Feedwell and the Red Mills championships for terriers and lurchers. Racing too had its pre qualified championships with the Red Mills Master McGrath final for elite lurchers and the Mick the Miller race for traditional 'hairy' lurchers.

This year the 'Terrier Maze' made its appearance and was a great success.

Terrier, Lurchers & Whippets at the Irish Game Fair, Shanes Castle 2022- Margaret McStay reports

After the long boring days of Covid out of the darkness a bright shining light shoots over the County Antrim countryside. Yes the news had reached the country sports fraternity that the Irish Game Fair 2022 was back in town. The Irish Game Fair and Fine Food Festival is not only Ireland's premier Game Fair and Country Sports Event, but also one of Ireland's most exciting and action packed 2 days out for the whole family.

It was a whole new world to be able to stop and speak to old canine friends I had not seen since 2019 like Concepta O Goan, Helen Hunter and Stevie Graham. All good friends and great Country Sports people.

As our legs got weary, and our money all spent, it was time to head back for the Master Mc Grath and Mick The Millar racing competition. For many doggie folk this is the yearly highlight of their canine world at Shanes Castle.

Some excitement on the course when Michael Mc Grath's dog Calypso won the Red Mills Master McGrath final and Adam O Riordan's dog Joey won the Feedwell Mick the Millar title..

Showing Results (courtesy of Kieran Young)

Feedwell All Ireland Champion

Lurcher: Johnny Hunter with Rex

Feedwell All Ireland Champion

Terrier: Paul Mc Keown with Mick

Feedwell All Ireland Champion

Whippet : Sean Burke with Jack

Overall Supreme and All Ireland

Champion, Shanes Castle 2022: Sean

Burke with Jack. Reserve Johnny

Hunter with Rex.

Five Nations Winners

Feedwell Five Nations Whippet

Champion Shanes Castle 2022:

Dermot Lawless with pip. Reserve

Suzanne Addis with Willow

Red Mills Five Nations Lurcher

Champion Shanes Castle 2022:

JP O Hagan with Tyson. Reserve

Maurice Mc Dowell with Bear

Red Mills Five Nations Terrier

Champion Shanes Castle 2022:

Chloe Mc Keown with Mick.

Reserve Aimee Agnew with Toby

Feedwell Overall Puppy

Champion: Suzanne Addis with Jax

Terrier Maze Champion Jed Donagh with PIP

Ferret Champion Lee Brooks with Bear and Rabbit

IWTF All Ireland Terrier Champion

JP O Hagan with Ronnie

Racing Results (Courtesy of Biddy McGrath)

Red Mills Master McGrath:

Michael McGrath with Calypso,

Reserve Jimmy Reilly with Jess (photo Deirdre McCoy)

Feedwell Mick The Millar: Adam O

Riordan with Joey, Reserve Michael

McGrath with Stella (photo Deirdre McCoy)

Over 25" Eddie Kane with Duke

Under 25" Conor Nolan with Jolie

Under 24s Shane Brett with Rose

Under 23" Elite Lindsay Gardner

Magill with Briar

Under 23" Non Elite: Matthew



Kieran Young with Jim Dalton, Lurcher Judge



All Ireland Champions with judges

Fennelly with Leela

Under 22" Yapper Hayes with Jess

Under 21s Patsy McCoy with Dallas

Bull Cross Heavy dog: Maurice McDowell with Bear

Bull Cross light Jimmy Reilly with Lady

Whippets Sean Burke with Jack

Tagged Greyhound Joyce Scott with Gypsy

Dogs that have never won a Race Maurice McDowell with Storm

Dogs that never won a race Under 23s Vanessa Lynn with Arthur

All too soon the Game Fair came to a close on Sunday evening. Despite the terrible weather, the books have shown record crowds again this year on both days at Shanes Castle. This Game Fair was run with and under the guidance of people who are passionate about country sports. And thank you Judges on the day for a job well done.

The highlight of my weekend came on Sunday when Kieran Young announced that our good friend of many years Errol Gardiner had been selected for The Colette Gannon Memorial Cup for a Lifetime in Country Sports and Country Sportsman of the year. Well done Errol and well deserved.



Five Nations Whippet Ch. Dermot Lawless with Pip & Reserve Suzanne Addis with Willow



*(Left)
Five Nations
Lurcher Ch JP O
Hagan with
Tyson*

*(Right)
Reserve Maurice
McDowell with
Bear*





Five Nations Terrier Ch. Chloe McKeown with Mick & Reserve Aimee Agnew with Toby



Owen Mulcahy presents the I.W.T.F. Trophy



Michael McGrath with Calypso, Reserve Jimmy Reilly with Jess (photo Deirdre McCoy)



Adam O Riordan with Joey, Reserve Michael Mc Grath with Stella (photo Deirdre McCoy)

Many thanks to the Mc Grath Racing team for a great day's racing at Shanes Castle on Saturday. Michael, Jack, Terry, Matthew, Paddy, and Anthony, you set the place alight with your professionalism at every stage in the racing.

Kieran Young was assisted by his partner Ellie O Connor, Alex and Joanne Young and their brilliant team of helpers in organising and running the Showing at Shanes Castle so effective and efficiently this year. A lot of hard work went in but it all paid off in the end, and was a credit to you and your team. Deidre Knipe Mc Coy, Billy Harpur, myself, and Jim Masson were there with our cameras and phones, recording every one's moment of glory.

The Great Game Fairs of Ireland team has seen the Fair at Shanes Castle

is unchallenged in the domination of its sector within the Irish Market place. It has impeccable credentials, and annually attracts many thousands of people to the region, delivering a timely boost to tourism and an opportunity for town and country to come together to

celebrate and enjoy the craic, along with some of our finest Country Sports and traditions.

Thank you Albert Titterington and your team for a weekend full of joy and excitement, and above all a great window for country sports.



Kieran Young and daughters presenting the Colette Gannon Trophy to Errrol Gardner

LURCHER RACING AT SHANES - A PHOTOGRAPHIC ROUNDUP BY DEIRDRE MCCOY



Mick The Miller and Master McGrath winners along with Billy Harpur winner of the Special tTrophy for Best Veteran





Terrier, Lurcher and Whippet Roundup

Laurecetown Dog Show and Race Day Saturday 28 May 2022

The venue was brilliant with the rings well spaced out, plenty of ringside parking and a racecourse to die for. The raffle as usual generated quite a lot of excitement, and many happy punters went home with some lovely prizes.

Racing Results (courtesy of Michael McGrath)

Elite Big Dogs Michael McGrath with Bob Reserve Michael McGrath with Stella Hairy Dogs Earl Gardiner with Chase Reserve Michael McGrath with Stella Bull Cross Jamie O Connor with Zeus, Reserve Rory with Blue

Under 24s Lindsay Gardiner Magill with Briar, Reserve John with Lass

Under 23s Elite Rose McCoy with Texas Reserve Lisa Beggs with Nina

Under 21s Patsy McCoy with Dallas Reserve Rose McCoy with Lexi

Under 23s Traditional Lurcher M J Fennelly with Leela Reserve Ned with Chase

Whippets Anthony McGrath with Mouse Reserve Lisa Beggs with Prydzy

Whippets Pups Anthony McGrath with Sally

Showing Results

Champion Whippet Pup Suzanne Addis with Jax Reserve John Mc Stay with Buster Champion Whippet Lisa Beggs with Prydzy Reserve Suzanne Addis with Willow

Champion Lurcher Stewarty Graham with Ace Reserve Earl Gardiner with Silas

Champion Terrier Sam Mc Cullough with Jock Reserve Tom Barry with Jabba

Champion Strong Dog Tom Barry with Shamgar Reserve Tom Barry with Sully (Handled by Thomas Coleman)

Overall Champion Puppy Reece Curran with Solo

Overall Show Champion and Best in Show Sam Mc Cullough with Jock

THE DWTC Dog Show Sunday 29th May 2022

As usual the field was in immaculate condition with the rings well spaced out.

The craic was mighty at raffle time. Some great prizes on offer and followed by a very successful auction. It was nice to see so many families, their children and dogs all out on a sunny Sunday enjoying a day out at the

sport we love. Our passion is showing and racing with our Canine friends in the summer and back to the field in the winter.

Showing Results

Champion Pet Nathan Dunlop with Rocko Reserve JO-Anne Smith with Gibson Champion Pup Naomi Chapman with Snatch Reserve Linzi Gardiner Magill with Milo

Champion Whippets Colin Tucker with Cooper Reserve Suzanne Addis with Willow

Champion Lurcher Stewarty Graham with Ace Reserve Shea Judge with Red

Champion Terrier Aimee Agnew with Toby Reserve Raymond Sloan with BOB

Champion Strong Dog Mark Eubanks with Bronze Reserve

Declan Mc Daid with Blade

Overall Show Champion and Best in Show Stewarty Graham with Ace

Tom Barry gave £920, the proceeds of the Raffle and Auction at his show, to the Hospice. Hopefully this donation, which all our brilliant country sports community contributed to by coming to the show, will help some individual to leave this world painless and with dignity.

Loud and Proud Dog Show and Race Day at the Field of Dreams, Sunday 24th July 2022

Harry John Digging, of North Down K9 Facilities, in conjunction with Barry Kelly, Drom Aluinn Kennells ran their Dog Athletics and Dog Agility all day alongside the show, imparting their knowledge on Dog Athletics and Agility and giving some helpful hints to our dog owners. This proved to be a very successful part of the show and the interest was phenomenal. Long may it continue.

Racing Results (courtesy of the McGrath Racing Team)

KC Whippet Pat McGovern with Musketeer

Non KC Whippet Sean Burke with Jack Under 21s Linzi Gardiner Magill with Beauty

Under 22s Rose McCoy with Texas

Under 23s Elites Linzi Gardiner Magill with Briar

Under 23 Traditional Lurcher Matthew Fennelly with Leela

Under 24s Colin Tucker with Fletcher

Over 24s (Master McGrath) Michael Mc

Grath with Welford

Hairy Dogs (Mick the Millar) Eddie Kane with Duke

Over 24s Lurcher Paul with King

Heavy Bull Cross Joyce Scott with Mabel

Showing Results

Champion Whippet Colin Tucker with Cooper

Reserve Milly Grant with Sally

Champion Lurcher Conor Doherty with Shaq, Reserve Jay Hara with Caneleno

Champion Terrier Richard O Callaghan with Sabour Tout, Reserve Peter Morgan with Fiddler

Champion Strong Dog Gail Ross with Harry

Champion Terrier Pup Terry Moore with Digger, Reserve Paddy O Lynn with Tess

Champion Strong Pup Danielle

McDowell with Loki

Champion Whippet Pup Tasha Treusdale with Pokka

Overall Champion Pup Tasha Treusdale with Pokka

Overall Show Champion Richard O Callaghan with Sabour Tout, Reserve

Colin Tucker with Cooper

Best in Show Champion Tasha Treusdale with Pooka

Field of Dreams Schooling Track Maghera, Mid and East Antrim Dog Show and Race Day Sunday 7th August 2022

Sunday's show was to be a very special day for the Hurley Family, but tinged with very much sadness as this show was in memory of the late Joseph Hurley a very dear son, father and brother and a very treasured member of the family. Joseph's heart was in the Field of Dreams and along with his father Joe senior, made this schooling track the success it is today.

Showing Results

Champion Lurcher John Reid with Axel

Champion Whippet James Mullen with Max

Champion Terrier Steven Maxwell with Stig

Champion Strong Dog Jamie Stafford with Zena

Joe Hurley Memorial Puppy Shield

Gareth Barnett with Hunter

The Christopher Hurley Memorial Adult Shield Tracy Taggart with Zena



Overall Champion and Best in Laurencetown Show Sam McCullough with Jock



JP O Hagan and Leioh Thompson wit their winning lurchers at the DWTC Show



Stewarty Graham with ACE Overall Champion at DWTC Show with show organiser Tom Barry



Rose McCoy with her winning lurcher Aria



Suzanne Addis with her winning Whippet Willow at the DWTC Show



Morris Thomas and Harry John Digging presenting Mark McCallion with proceeds of The Loud and Proud Charity Dog Show to go to the Kevin Bell Repatriation Trust



Champion terrier Steven Maxwell with Stig, Reserve Richard O Callaghan with Sabatooy and Terrier Judge Clayton Hastings



Champion Lurcher John Reid with Axel alongside Judge Lisa Beggs



Jamie Maxwell with Stig alongside Judge Gerald McKeown and show organiser Charlene Rafferty



Barry Holland with Finn and Reserve Champion Rose McCoy with ARIA and Lurcher Judge Michelle Rafferty. Also in the photograph is Morris McDowell



Rose McCoy with her winning lurcher at the Loud and Proud Dog Show



Champion Whippet James Mullen with Max



Overall Champion Whippet Sean Burke with Paddy and his son Conghal

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.

FISSTA - Back to the Country Sports Future at Shanes Castle Game Fair

Well, what a sigh of relief we all breathed as we made our way home from the first Game Fair since the pandemic commenced. Before we left, we thanked Albert and Team at Shanes Castle for the fantastic show that will be remembered, more for it happening, rather than it being cancelled that had left us all so disappointed since 2019.

So, the 2022 Irish Game Fair delivered once again as everyone had an enjoyable and rewarding time

exhibiting at Shanes Castle. The welcome to all, especially old friends and angling colleagues was memorable in that we were still in business despite the pandemic challenges and as Keith from the Rolling Stones once said at another castle in Slane, "It's great to be here. It's great to be anywhere."

Everyone really appreciated the support from the organisers of the Irish Game Fair at Shanes Castle as they got the fair going again, and it has revived our relations with all the



Federation of Irish Salmon & Sea Trout Anglers

Conaidhm na Slat Iascairí Bradáin agus Breac Geal

Chairman: PAUL LAMYON, 37 Connors Gardens, Ballyphethane, CORK City.
Secretary: NOEL CARR, Teelin Road, Carrick, Co. Downgal, email: fish017@gmail.com

F.I.S.S.T.A. Re: Update to all visitors to Shanes Castle Game Fair 2022

27th June 2022

Dear FISSTA member or Supporter of our wild Atlantic salmon,
It's great to be back! We welcome you to the first Shanes Castle Game Fair since 2019. We hope you are having a great weekend, which is felt early yet to have it your event is showing an improved return as efforts to general wean good. We address the third consecutive year of improved runs to the 2019 NASS / ASF buy-out agreement lacking in since 2020, and our campaign to put more pressure on state fishery bodies to stop their game on protection in having a positive impact as well. Our National Executive Council of FISSTA are still unable to meet due to pandemic reasons, but we all remain very busy as we continue to work on the legal challenge to the River Bar application for a salmon farm licence which was approved by AIA in September 2021 and would be in operation now only for three (3) to FISSTA as all Fisheries Review applications were lodged in the courts. We have made every submission to this government stating that NPOW formerly Marine Harvest salmon farmers have along with other fish farmers offered no new technology with their applications except to continue their 'pollute to produce' method that has led the sea fish that has decimated our salmon stocks. So, we have an alternative except to continue to lobby both national and international key decision makers to get our Government to change this failed policy which most international observers oppose. Fortunately, Minister Ryan TD is fighting a lone battle within Government to oppose this policy and his press continues to tell on the first day of FISSTA Minister Ryan TD's speech on 27th June.

We have engaged many new innovative ways down the years, in our campaign that has included marine, international lobbying at such salmon conferences such as NASS (it signed three cages with limited success). It is vital that we do not rest on the laurels now, so we are preparing for the first push of campaigning through the legal route before the salmon season concludes in September. Sadly, there are now over 100 rivers closed to taking a fish, and that is far too many especially for the clubs working hard to get their waters back to normality. There are now just 28 pristine river sites down from over 100 sites in the late 1980s. The number of seriously polluted river water bodies (the 'worst of the worst') has started to rise - from 6 to 9 - after many years of an improving trend and we fear the pandemic may have increased this number further in the past few years. We strive to improve these salmon river figures as state policy and management need our constant pressure to keep them short.
For more information on all our work, please find us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/fisstaofficial/> or on Twitter <https://twitter.com/fisstaofficial/>
PROPERTY LINK - FISSTA SUPPORTING THE PLANS TO THE HEAD FISH FARMING
PROPERTY LINK - OPENING OF WATERSIDE FISHING & CULMINE COMING SOON. MEETING NOW
For regular exhibitors, we have used the Hill Game Fair and also Galway 8th Fair to highlight our campaign and it is at these fairs that we raise great awareness and interest in what is being proposed by the state. We all know the pressures and so we ask you to make your club in supporting our campaign in whatever way you think will engage our angling way of life for future generations to enjoy. We thank you for your help and support and look forward to a return in abundance of our wild Atlantic salmon.
Yours sincerely, Paul Lanyon, Chairman.

President: Thomas O'Connell, National Field - Downpatrick, Downpatrick, Co. Down, Ireland. Tel: 01234 311111. Email: tom@fissta.com
Secretary: Noel Carr, Teelin Road, Carrick, Co. Downgal, Ireland. Tel: 01234 311111. Email: fish017@gmail.com
"Committed to Conservation"



The FISSTA stand before Game Fair opened its doors for business

various people who make our angling business so important to ensuring we all survive for each other.

What has made it more memorable this time has been the relief and resilience in people to overcome the horrendous stories some have had to endure. Business will return to normal eventually, but we are still a long way off from the great game fair times we saw pre Covid.

Our Federation issued this information flyer (see above) during the fair and got a tremendous response in that several visitors returned to the stand to find out more about the

changes in salmon angling down the line. Overall, it was a momentous occasion and one that, with gratitude, we can all build on for the future.

There are many who attend the show that not only own countryside, but fishing rights also. While they may not fish or manage their waters, they have for years met us at fairs to get updates in our campaigns to bring more salmon returning to their waters again.

It's not just a property valuation consideration but also a consideration to check what more can they do to avoid the wild Atlantic salmon species becoming further endangered.

That is why the return of the game fair allows us to foster the sport of angling and conservation among our vital few on the riverbanks.

And while Noel was at Shanes Castle, someone turned up this photo of Tommy Murphy setting out (on what looks like a nice rainy day) to enjoy some angling on the Reelin River, Donegal. And what better to bring with you than a great back number of Irish Country Sports & Country Life magazine

Dear FISSTA member or Supporter of our wild Atlantic salmon, it's great to be back!

We welcomed you to the first Shane's Castle Game Fair since 2019. We hope you are having a good angling season, albeit a bit early yet to know if your river is showing an improved return as reports in general seem good. We attribute the third consecutive year of improved runs to the 2018 NASF / ASF buyout agreement kicking in since 2020, and our campaign to put more pressure on state fishery bodies to up their game on protection is having a positive impact as well. Our National Executive Council of FISSTA are still unable to meet due to pandemic reasons, but we all remain very busy as we continue to work on the legal challenge to the Bantry Bay

application for a salmon farm license which was approved by ALAB last September 2021 and would be in operation now only for three (one by FISSTA et al) Judicial Review applications were lodged in the courts. We have made many submissions to this government stating that MOWI formerly Marine Harvest salmon farmers have along with other fish farmers offered no new technology with their applications except to continue their 'pollute to produce' method that has bred the sea lice that has decimated our salmonid stocks. So, we have no alternative except to continue to lobby both national and international key decision makers to get our Government to change this failed policy which most international observers oppose. Fortunately, Minister Ryan TD is fighting a lone battle within Government to oppose this policy and his pleas continue to fall on the deaf ears of DAFM Minister Charlie MacConalogue TD to date.

We have engaged many new innovative ways down the years, in our campaign that has included marches, international lobbying at such salmon conferences such as NASCO against these cages with limited success. It is vital that we do not rest on the oars now, so we are preparing for one final push of campaigning through the legal route

before the salmon season concludes in September. Sadly, there are now over 100 rivers closed to taking a fish, and that is far too many especially for the clubs working hard to get their waters back to normality. There are now just 20 pristine river sites down from over 500 sites in the late 1980s. The number of seriously polluted river water bodies (the 'worst of the worst') has started to rise – from 6 to 9 – after many years of an improving trend and we fear the pandemic may have increased this number further in the past two years. We strive to improve these salmon river figures as state policy and management need our constant pressure to keep them alert.

For more information on all our work, please find us on facebook @FederationofIrishSalmonandSeaTro utAnglers

PRIORITY ONE - FISSTA OPPOSING NEW PLANS TO INCREASE FISH FARMING

PRIORITY TWO - OPEN OUR CLOSED RIVERS & CLOSE COMMERCIAL NETTING NOW

As regular exhibitors, we have used the Birr Game Fair and also Galway Fly Fair to highlight our campaigns and it is at these fairs that we raise great awareness and interest in what is being proposed by the state. We all know the pressures and so we ask you to assist your club in supporting our campaign in whatever way you think



Tommy Murphy en route to the Reelin River

will retain our angling way of life for future generations to enjoy. We thank you for your help and support and look forward to a return to abundance of our wild Atlantic salmon.

Yours sincerely, Paul Lawton.
Chairman.

Non Government Observers at
NASCO - North Atlantic Salmon
Conservation Organisation

Founder Members -North Atlantic
Salmon Fund - European Anglers
Alliance – Save Our Seatrout – Cara
na Mara – Wild Atlantic Salmon Way

“COMMITTED TO CONSERVATION” THANKS TO OUR READERS FOR THEIR FEEDBACK

We must thank all the people who responded to our news items in the Spring edition of this magazine which helps us greatly to plan and direct all future campaigning work for our wild fish conservation. The list of nine issues which we outlined in the open article to the Minister has resulted in good progress being made in this first half of this season, with more to come as we will outline below. We were pleasantly surprised that the Dodder, a southside city centre river would have generated so many positive comments in response to the good news that Inland Fisheries Ireland has repaired the project problems which is encouraging.

BRAINWASH BUS BACK ON THE ROAD

FISSTA were surprised to realise that Bord Iascaigh Mhara put their Aquaculture Remote Classroom or ARC Bus back on the road to attend the Science Support event in Fitzgerald Park in Cork city to promote salmon farming among students as their school holiday beckoned. We registered our complete opposition to this as we continue to do, especially at a scientific promotion event. Our angling members in the region had left their fishing waters to mobilise at what FISSTA terms the ARC ‘Brainwash

Bus’ to advise bus visitors on our campaign to get BIM to admit that the practice they promote and finance is unsustainable. Once again, our protest was directed at BIM and not the venue organisers who did not realise the implications of what they agreed by giving permission to the vehicle to attend their event. We support any such initiatives to inform scientifically on all issues but must call out any exhibitors that potentially misinform the public as this bus is already financed with EU funding on our behalf. Local anglers have in the past mounted pickets and demonstrations wherever the bus appears. Many parents agree that nature lessons for the youth should be accurate and educational. FISSTA and GBASC have succeeded in getting the bus closed and moved on where parents have joined in our objections such as in West Cork and other venues. The bus, named the ARC contains a mobile classroom with interactive screens that presents fin fish farming in what we consider to be 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.

PINK PACIFIC SALMON THREAT ON THE WAY TO IRELAND

FISSTA attended the NASCO Conference in Scotland where there were serious worries concerning the massive influx of pink salmon in Scandinavia and especially Norway. The following Statement of the NASCO Council Regarding Pink Salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbusha*, in the NASCO Convention Area RECOGNISING that the pink salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbusha*, in the NASCO Convention Area is an introduced species native to the Pacific Ocean; AWARE that ICES advised in 2018 (CNL(18)08rev) that introductions to the White Sea basin in northern Russia in the mid-1980s led to the rapid establishment of

self-sustaining, odd-year populations in the White Sea rivers in the Murmansk and Archangelsk regions of Russia and that, despite cessation of these introductions, catches of pink salmon, at previously unrecorded levels, were reported in 2017 in various countries around the North Atlantic over a wide geographical area including all three NASCO Commission areas; RECOGNISING that ICES advised in 2013 (ICES CM 2013/ACOM:09) that pink salmon can pose threats to wild Atlantic salmon, *Salmo salar*, and ecosystems in a number of ways and potential threats were either not evidenced and unlikely or occurred for short periods of time, an explosive increase in numbers and spread over a wider geographical area may have the potential to increase the risk of adverse impacts on wild Atlantic salmon in some rivers; NOTING that, in an increasing number of rivers in the Convention area, self-sustaining populations of pink salmon have become established and there was explosive population growth and geographic spread from 2019 to 2021 to the extent that pink salmon have become the most numerous fish species in some rivers, increasing the risk of adverse impacts in the Convention area; ACKNOWLEDGING that the Steering Committee of the International Year of the Salmon Symposium held in Tromsø in 2019 recommended that NASCO should facilitate co-operation between Parties when there is a need for international collaboration to prevent or reduce the threat to wild Atlantic salmon stocks from invasive species; RECOGNISING the provisions of the Resolution by the Parties to the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean To Minimise Impacts from Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers, and Transgenics on the Wild Salmon Stocks, CNL(06)48, the ‘Williamsburg Resolution’; The

Council of NASCO urges each Party to take the following actions, consistent with the Williamsburg Resolution:

- co-operate to minimise adverse effects of pink salmon on wild Atlantic salmon. Such cooperation could include data sharing and exchange of information on monitoring and surveillance programmes, scientific understanding of impacts and best practice on methods to prevent the spread and establishment of populations of pink salmon without damage to wild Atlantic salmon stocks;
- initiate corrective measures, without delay, when significant adverse effects on wild Atlantic salmon stocks are identified, and that these should be designed to achieve their purpose promptly;
- encourage research and data collection in relation to pink salmon in the Convention area;
- develop and distribute educational materials to increase awareness of the risks that pink salmon pose to wild Atlantic salmon and the need for the measures to control their spread; and 2 The Council of NASCO agrees to establish a Standing NASCO Working Group on the threat of pink salmon with the aim to agree Terms of Reference for this Group at the Annual Meeting in 2023, taking into consideration the advice from ICES on pink salmon, expected in September 2022, and relevant recommendations of the External Performance Review.

FISSTA UPDATE OF NASCO 2022

FISSTA attended the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) Thirty-Ninth Annual Meeting, Edinburgh, UK 6 – 9 June 2022 Wild Atlantic Salmon Conference which agreed to Innovative Actions to Protect Atlantic Salmon and the Environment.

The international body responsible

for the conservation and rational management of wild Atlantic salmon met in a hybrid format in its home city of Edinburgh, Scotland in June and made important new commitments to enhance the conservation of imperilled wild Atlantic salmon populations and agreed on approaches for its future work aimed at reducing its overall carbon footprint. After almost two years of negotiations, a key outcome of the meeting was adoption of an innovative approach for the regulation of the salmon fishery at West Greenland that is very important to Ireland. This fishery has experienced overharvests of established limits in recent years. To address this, the evidence-based regulatory measure sets a precautionary upper limit that is well below the catch limit. At the latest, the fishery will be closed when the upper limit is reached. This is a dynamic process that will incorporate future fishery data and information to allow the upper limit to be refined for each year of the four-year measure. The President of NASCO, Arnaud Peyronnet, welcomed the breakthrough, stating, ‘This agreement is a real step forward in the management of the West Greenland fishery. Without the flexibility and cooperation of all Parties and the hard work of scientists and managers, development of and agreement on this innovative approach would not have been possible. This decision highlights the value of being able to work face-to-face to solve complex issues.’ In other actions, NASCO considered with alarm the threat that Pacific pink salmon, an invasive species spreading throughout the North Atlantic, is now posing to wild North Atlantic salmon. NASCO adopted a statement highlighting this threat and calling on its members to co-operate and initiate corrective measures without delay. The threats to the wild stocks posed by salmon farming and how to address them was high on NASCO’s agenda again this year. Finally, NASCO agreed forward-leaning approaches for

conducting its work in the future that includes expanded use of electronic meetings to reduce the carbon footprint of the organization. Said the President, “The totality of the decisions made in Edinburgh this week are important to protect the environment and to ensure the future viability of one of the most iconic species in the world. Salmon are an indicator species, and we must continue to take strong actions to ensure they will be around for generations to come”. NASCO is an intergovernmental organization formed by a treaty in 1984 and is based in Edinburgh, Scotland. Its objectives are the conservation, restoration and rational management of wild Atlantic salmon stocks, which do not recognise national boundaries. It is the only intergovernmental organisation with this mandate which it implements through international consultation, negotiation, and co-operation. The Parties to the Convention are: Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union, Norway, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States. Fissta are among the 45 non-governmental observers accredited to the Organization. The 2022 Annual Meeting was convened in a hybrid format, with 80 participants joining in person and 31 joining remotely. The participants included scientists, policy makers and representatives of inter-governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations who met to discuss the status of wild Atlantic salmon and to consider management issues.

PROGRESS REPORT TO FISSTA LOBBYING

In the last issue we appealed to Minister Ryan TD to address our list of issues now that he had returned from his attendance at COP26 in Glasgow. We offered our help to him with some of these issues by listing the following nine in order of priority

although many statutory bodies may not agree.

The following is the list and progress to date since the last quarter:

1. "Reject salmon farming as a coastal employment and economic Atlantic development policy and publish your letter to Minister Mc Conalogue of DAFM that states your reasons for such a change of government policy. Inland Fisheries Ireland has done this in their application to the High Court for a Judicial Review which we in FISSTA commend."
Result since Spring 2022: **Minister Ryan did eventually publish his letter reflecting our long held arguments to change policy that has become the subject of a conflict between both Departments which is being debated in the national press as we go to print. We think the Minister is being more naive than diplomatic when he states "that coexistence of wild Atlantic salmon populations and farmed salmon" is possible and sustainable. This is the time to redraft and plan a future without salmon cages in our bays.**
2. Publish your impending High Management Level Plan to IFI for our salmonid waters which will inform on the future application of bye-laws 806 and 809 of 2006 to the western lakes especially.
This has been done and we await the publication and public consultation to follow soon.
3. Reconvene National Inland Fisheries Forum which your predecessors and Department staff allowed to fall into a lapsed state for to avoid transparency and accountability reporting to the members.
This has been done and the first meeting convened in Athlone in May.
4. Publish a policy document on the evaluation of Hydro Power Plants in view of the promise of "so called" green energy that causes massive mortality of migrating smolts – can we afford such salmonid and eel

losses? We await the outcome of the cross border inter agency workshop on the Erne in March which will clarify if this government is serious about confronting the ESB dominance (which is under your brief) of power generation at the expense of the fishery potential of not just the Erne, but also the Deel, Clady, Liffey, Shannon and Lee.

This has not been done as yet and we urge Inland Fisheries Ireland to enforce the law that is being flouted by the ESB for many years.

5. Review and increase investment in IFI Protection and water quality policies in view of the recent changes in management where mobile support units have resulted in increased seizures of poaching equipment and prosecutions arising out of poaching reports from FISSTA. Approve an increase in investment to IFI on staff expansion into habitat and water quality development which has long been campaigned for by FISSTA and our colleagues in salmonid fisheries.
This has been done to an extent that there has been an increase in MSU – Mobile Support Units which is a step in the right direction.
6. Approve an increase in investment to IFI on staff expansion into habitat and water quality development which has long been campaigned for by FISSTA and our colleagues in salmonid fisheries. **This is a budgetary issue for decision in October.**
7. Convene a workshop to review the follow up to the public consultation on the tagging and licenses charges which has impeded development potential of our angling tourism for many years.
This is an issue which needs to be processed through the NIFF as there are many salmon anglers will no longer the sole sector to keep paying the piper so they are seeking progress urgently.

8. In the wake of the Derrybrien judgement last month in which over 70 turbines erected in 2003 may have to be removed now, we ask you as Minister to announce a new policy that bans the erection of any turbines on upland areas causing mudslides such as the Meenbog one has done in Donegal Tyrone and Kerry.

Our FISSTA/ FASTA campaign to oppose the continuance of this development has succeeded as the developers of the wind farm development company have been fined a paltry €1,500 for the Meenbog mudslide. However, further restoration costs will have to be paid later after evidence was given by the Loughs Agency, Donegal County Council, EPA and Northern Ireland Environment Agency in the Letterkenny District Court last in June. The bogslide in November 2020 saw hundreds of cubic metres of peat and debris entering a stream and on to the Mournebeg River from the site of the wind farm, near Ballybofey on the Donegal-Tyrone border. This should clear the way now for the Minister to devise a new policy that prohibits such developments on upland peat areas in the future. A cross-border investigation into the impact of the landslide continues.

9. While the Gweebarra River issue remains tied up in the courts at the pace of a snail, since 2006, many anglers are asking the same question time and time again as to what the Minister is doing as distinct from his DECC staff who have managed to keep the legal advisers engaged in such a futile exercise that deprives the fishery of development and badly needed revenue to the local and organised clubs of Fintown and Rosses Anglers who will assume the management of this great river eventually.
This judgement on this court case is still awaited.



Our letter to Secretary of State Ranil Jayawardena on the Woodcock Petition

Dear Secretary of State,

Firstly, please can I extend my congratulations to you in your new position as Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. I am writing to you with regards to the Wild Justice petition to limit the woodcock shooting season.

The GWCT has led research into woodcock conservation over the last 40 years, much of which has been funded by the shooting community, and our research is ongoing. We devised an appropriate survey method for breeding woodcock and pushed for national surveys with the BTO in 2003 and 2013, to quantify the size of the population and change in numbers. We have studied their migratory patterns, habitat requirements and response to cold weather. We work closely with the Woodcock Network, a group of passionate volunteers who help ring woodcock each winter and who assisted with our tracking studies. We believe therefore, that we are in a good position to inform discussions on Wild Justice's Petition to limit the woodcock shooting season.

Using the national survey data from 2003 and 2013 we were able to explore habitat relationships for breeding woodcock. At large landscape-scale breeding woodcock abundance was positively correlated with total woodland area and woodland heterogeneity. Woodcock

were less abundant close to urban areas. On a within-wood scale, tree species composition and open areas within the woodland influenced woodcock abundance. No evidence was found for an effect of cropping outside woodland or roe deer abundance. This work indicates that area of suitable habitat, woodland management and possibly human recreation or disturbance affect breeding woodcock. The study was not able to assess the contributions of predation and shooting to woodcock abundance or trends.

Changes in woodland management over the last 50 years have been implicated in the decline of other woodland birds and trial management has now been demonstrated to be beneficial. From GPS tracking of breeding woodcock in Sherwood Forest, Nottinghamshire and near Andover, Hampshire we have a clearer understanding of which woodland features are heavily utilised by woodcock and we are ready to initiate trial management.

Woodcock shooting

Owing to the decline in our resident woodcock population and the lack of any studies examining the impact of shooting on woodcock populations, as a precautionary measure GWCT advises shoots in areas where there are breeding woodcock to delay the start of their season until 1

December. By this time large numbers of migrant woodcock have arrived, and any impact from shooting on residents will be reduced. There is a high level of compliance with GWCT advice not to shoot woodcock before 1 December. In a recent survey (winter 2017/18), 75% of respondents said that they had delayed their shooting season.

Most of the shooting pressure on woodcock is in western regions of the UK because this is where we have the highest densities of migrant woodcock but where no resident woodcock breed.

Shooting pressure on our UK breeding woodcock is very low. A GWCT-Oxford University study using stable isotopes to determine breeding origin showed that less than 6% of a sample of c.1,200 woodcock shot across the UK in the early 2000's were from our resident population.

A paper recently published in the Journal of Applied Ecology, examines the sustainability of shooting on populations of UK quarry species. It indicates that there is a very low probability of unsustainable harvesting of resident or migrant woodcock.

Why continue with voluntary restraint rather than change the close season?

Given the available evidence we

do not believe that a statutory change in the season will have any beneficial impact on our resident woodcock. There is already an indication, at a national scale, of a reduction in hunting pressure over the last 20 years. This suggests that another factor, such as change in habitat quality or predation pressure, is primarily responsible for driving the decline. Based on our current understanding of breeding woodcock, conservation effort would be better devoted to restoring suitable habitat.

GWCT and BTO will be conducting a repeat national breeding woodcock survey in 2023. This will provide an up-to-date population estimate and enable regional assessments of change in breeding woodcock numbers since 2013. It is our advice to wait for the results of this survey before a change to the close season is considered. The season for woodcock could be reviewed later next year, by which time there will be more published science from GWCT on the effect of shooting and current data on the status of our breeding population. The breeding population is not so critically low that waiting a year will make a difference.

At a time of such major changes in policy on land management and agriculture, we believe that Government should spend its resources on making law changes that will make measurable differences to biodiversity.

If we really want to see an increase in our woodcock population we should manage our woodland better, not only for woodcock, but woodland biodiversity overall – and better carbon capture. GWCT has promoted and advised on woodland management to landowners for decades.

Educating practitioners and demonstrating best practice can be

more effective than compulsory measures. Conservation works best when land managers are motivated to drive it themselves. There is a risk of complacency about addressing woodcock habitat if a change in the close season is promoted as the solution to halting the breeding population decline.

Eighty one percent of respondents in a recent survey of shoots said that they conduct woodland management. Hence, it is likely that shoots could play an important role in positive woodland management. Coupled with predation management this might have prevented a greater decline in our resident woodcock population.

Parts of western Britain have no history of breeding woodcock, but host large numbers of migrants, so shooting in these areas does not put residents at risk except during cold spells when residents might move south and west. Businesses that have no impact on resident woodcock would be adversely affected.

Further work and proposed actions

In addition to the 2023 breeding woodcock survey, GWCT staff are currently writing scientific papers which will provide better information on the effect of shooting on woodcock populations and inform habitat management for breeding woodcock. Papers are in preparation on the following topics and will be submitted in this order between November 2022 and June 2023.

1. Woodcock origins based on stable isotopes – this will quantify regional variation in the proportion of resident woodcock in shooting bags.

2. Wintering woodcock survival rates – a comparison will be made between a site with high and sites with low shooting pressure.

3. Regional and temporal

variation in woodcock bags, harvest rates and what constitutes a sustainable level of shooting.

4. Characteristics of woodland favoured by breeding woodcock, based on GPS-tracked birds, including a comparison of resident UK breeders and birds breeding in Scandinavia and Russia.

We suggest that policy for declining species should be adapted according to the latest science. Changing the woodcock season now does not make sense when there will be much better evidence about the current status of the breeding population, the effect of shooting and influence of other factors on breeding woodcock numbers in a year's time.

Mechanisms for delivering better habitat such as the Nature Recovery Network, woodland grant schemes and ELMs should be promoted and measures likely to benefit woodcock should be highlighted.

We are looking to initiate woodland management trials to provide better evidence on the most effective measures for improving woodcock habitat and recovering breeding numbers.

Poor breeding success, largely owing to predation of nests and chicks, is a driver in the declines of almost all the other red-listed ground-nesting birds in the UK for which there is good data on population dynamics. It is quite plausible that predation has an important influence on woodcock populations and this needs investigation. If poor breeding success owing to predation is a factor in declines, shoots would be well placed to help with recovery.

We would be delighted to discuss any of the points above in more detail with you if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Roger Draycott

Director of Advisory, Education & Gamebird Policy

GWCT letter to The Guardian in response to Calls to ban gamebird release to avoid ‘catastrophic’ avian flu outbreak



Written by Dr Roger Draycott, Director of Advisory and Gamebird Policy

The RSPB’s position (‘Calls to ban gamebird release to avoid ‘catastrophic’ avian flu outbreak’, 10.02.2022) is not based on scientific evidence and the tone of Jeff Knott’s comments is alarmist.

There is already a ban on releasing gamebirds in all avian flu control zones, and any game shoot releasing outside the control zones should be following rigorous biosecurity measures as standard good practice. In

addition, research shows that gamebirds tend to stay within close proximity of release sites and are therefore less likely to pass on the virus to wild birds.

If the RSPB’s demand for a moratorium were enacted, it would unquestionably lead to a reduction in activities carried out by shoots, including habitat provision and management, supplementary feeding and targeted predation management, which our scientific research has proven to deliver significant

biodiversity benefits to the British countryside. By not following the science, there is a risk that what the RSPB is calling for could be counterproductive by leading to diminished survival rates and productivity of songbirds.

(Thank you for reading this item. The GWCT team work hard to undertake leading research, challenge misinformation and promote what works in the countryside. You can help us continue our vital work by donating as little as £3 (the average price of a cup of coffee).

September stocking of Departmental waters

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has stocked the following waters with takeable fish in September 2022:

12 September - Achork, Brown Trout, 500.

12 September - Castlewellan, Brown Trout, 1,500.

13 September - Lough Braden, Brown Trout, 1,000.

13 September - Keenaghan, Brown Trout, 500.

14 September - Stoneyford, Brown Trout, 1,500.

15 September - Lough Brickland, Brown Trout, 1,000.

20 September - Lough Money, Rainbow Brown Trout, 1,300.

21 September - Craigavon, Rainbow Brown Trout, 1,300.

22 September - Bellanaleck, Rainbow Brown Trout, 1,300.

23 September - North Woodburn, Rainbow Brown Trout, 1,300.

26 September - Lower South Woodburn, Rainbow Brown Trout, 1,300.

27 September - White Lough, Rainbow Brown Trout, 1,300.

28 September - Brantry, Rainbow Brown Trout, 1,300.

29 September - Hillsborough, Rainbow Brown Trout, 1,300.

1. Details on recent fish stocking can be found on the nidirect website at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/2021-fish-stocking-figures

2. Further information on all aspects of angling is available on the nidirect website at: www.nidirect.gov.uk/angling

The GWCT Welsh Game Fair secures its place as an annual fixture after inaugural event attracts more than 10,000 visitors

Organisers of The GWCT Welsh Game Fair are delighted to report that more than 10,000 people visited the inaugural three-day event held at Vaynol Hall in Gwynedd, 9-11 September 2022

As well as showcasing fishing, clay shooting, gundogs, game cookery, falconry, horses and hounds, rural crafts, food and drink, visitors were treated to a wide range of attractions. Displays, live debates, shopping at hundreds of trade stands and family entertainment, all with a countryside theme. The event was also an important fundraiser for the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT), a charity that conducts vital research into Wales' most vulnerable species such as woodcock and sea trout.

"The Welsh Game Fair came to life with its own personality and nuances delivering a special event from which to build," commented Stable Events' managing director James Gower, adding: "The location was outstanding, the perfect blank canvas on which to showcase the best of Welsh countryside and tradition. We look forward to next year and have some future surprises in store so watch this space!"

The chairman of GWCT Cymru, Owen Williams, added: "We are



The GWCT Welsh Game Fair opened with a gun salute in memory of HM The Queen followed by a two minute silence.

delighted that our close collaboration with Stable Events over the past year has produced a great game fair for Wales. At a time of significant instability and change in the countryside it is vital that the rural community comes together to celebrate and showcase the many interdependent strands of life in the countryside. We are very grateful to the wonderful Vaynol estate for hosting this inaugural GWCT Welsh Game Fair which we are sure has secured its place in the calendar of the Welsh countryside."

Owen added: "In addition to a

celebration of fishing, shooting, farming and habitat management seen over the three days, the wide and varied debates held at our 'GWCT Nick Williams Theatre' demonstrated the willingness of all sectors of the rural community to engage in meaningful and constructive dialogue. We look forward to working with our partners to build upon the success of this first show and to secure a lasting event that the Welsh countryside can be truly proud of."

Vaynol Hall owner Keith Jones concluded: "From start to finish, Stable Events have been fantastic to partner with, which is unsurprising when you look at their incredible portfolio. I have received nothing but positive feedback and I'm delighted the event went so well. The atmosphere all weekend was upbeat and buoyant. The people of North Wales have wanted their own game fair for a long time." More information at www.welshgamefair.org



Visitors resting their legs and enjoying the sunshine at The GWCT Welsh Game Fair at Vaynol Hall



Have-a-go at shooting area



Gundog competition - sponsored by Dog & Field



John Islwyn Jones from Pen-y-Bryn Falconry



The Flint And Denbigh Hunt meeting visitors



Two-year-old Charlie and his spaniel Bruno visited from Abergele



The Welsh Springer Spaniel Club

Adventures of the Famine Diver, William Campbell by Roy Stokes

This is the story of man who lived two lives. From his birth, in 1813, he spent the first fifty years of his life in Scotland and Ireland. To this day, none of his descendants have ever understood why he travelled to and spent the second half of his life on the other side of the world – down under.

However, the first half of the 19th

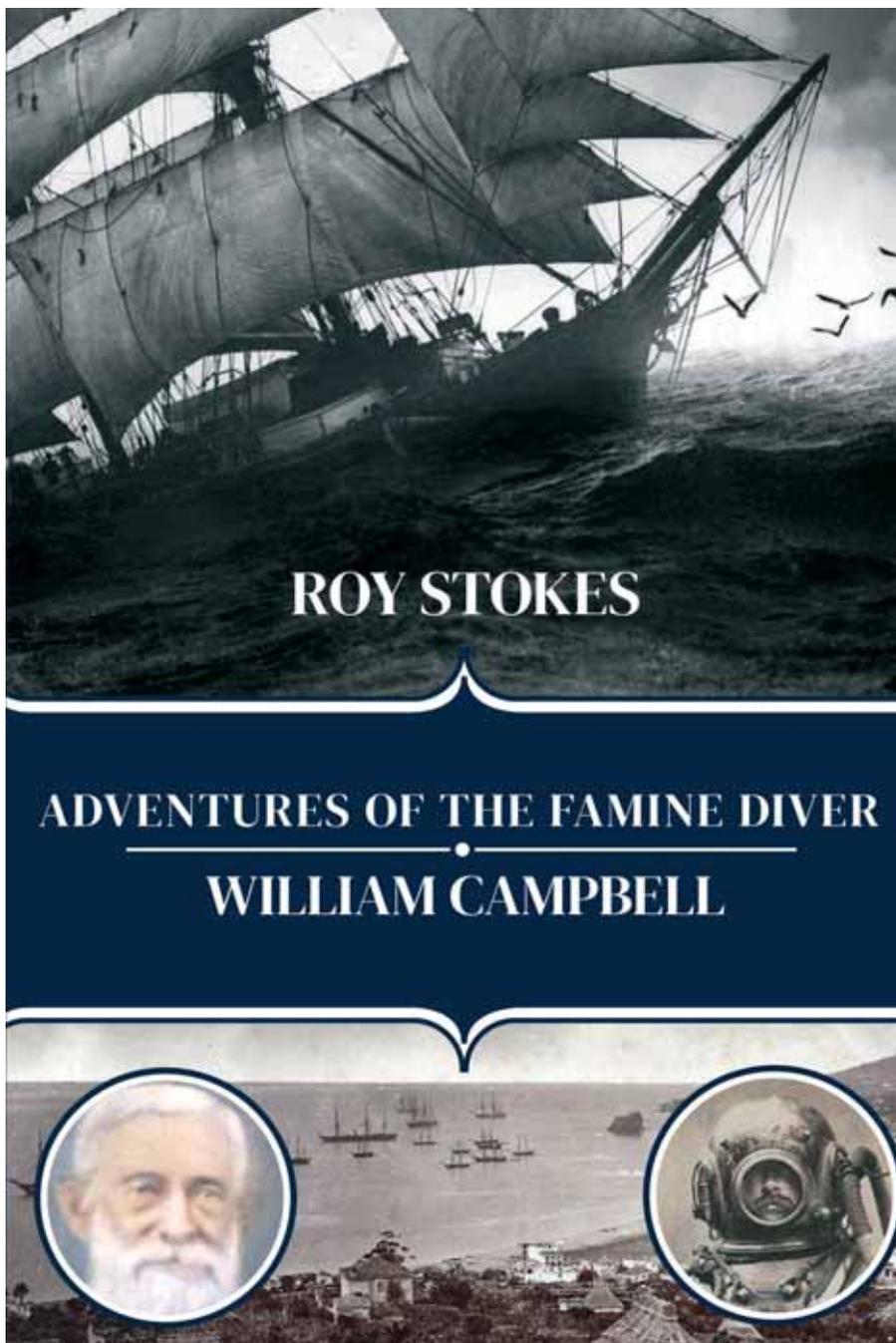
century was also a period during which millions were on the move, crisscrossing the globe in emigrant ships in search of fortune, which for many simply meant a job and a life.

William Campbell would remain an obscure contractor until the Press began to flatteringly describe him as an ‘Accomplished Diver’ or ‘The Talented Diver’ and even as ‘The Celebrated

Diver’. A salute to his abilities and profession, they were glowing compliments afforded to few divers of the period but, Campbell was more than just a diver.

Crossing paths with historical and well-known public figures of the time, and working first hand with technological innovations of the Victorian period, William Campbell experienced more than a fair share of danger and adventure. Travelling throughout Ireland during one of the darkest periods of its history – the Great Famine – and eventually becoming the Superintendent of Works at one of the biggest harbours in Europe, Kingstown Harbour, is Mr Campbell’s story: the first half of it at least.

The second half of Mr Campbell’s life began after the whole family, quite suddenly, upped stakes in Ireland and travelled, by various adventures, to the other side of the world. Although they were amongst the founding fathers, little personal history of this Campbell Clan and Streaky Bay, Adelaide, South Australia survive. Nevertheless, Campbell’s latter life is now well known, having been documented by his family, friends and by the communities in which he and his family lived.



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FISHING FROM THE ROCK OF THE BAY - NEW BOOK BY JAMES BATTY

After spending his early years in the Sudan, Tanzania, the UK, and Ireland, James 'Leakyboots' Batty became headmaster of a small primary school in the Gambia. He then moved to Botswana, before spending fifteen years in New York, where his job enabled him to travel widely and fish regularly in his spare time. He now lives near the tip of Cornwall and fishes even more regularly.

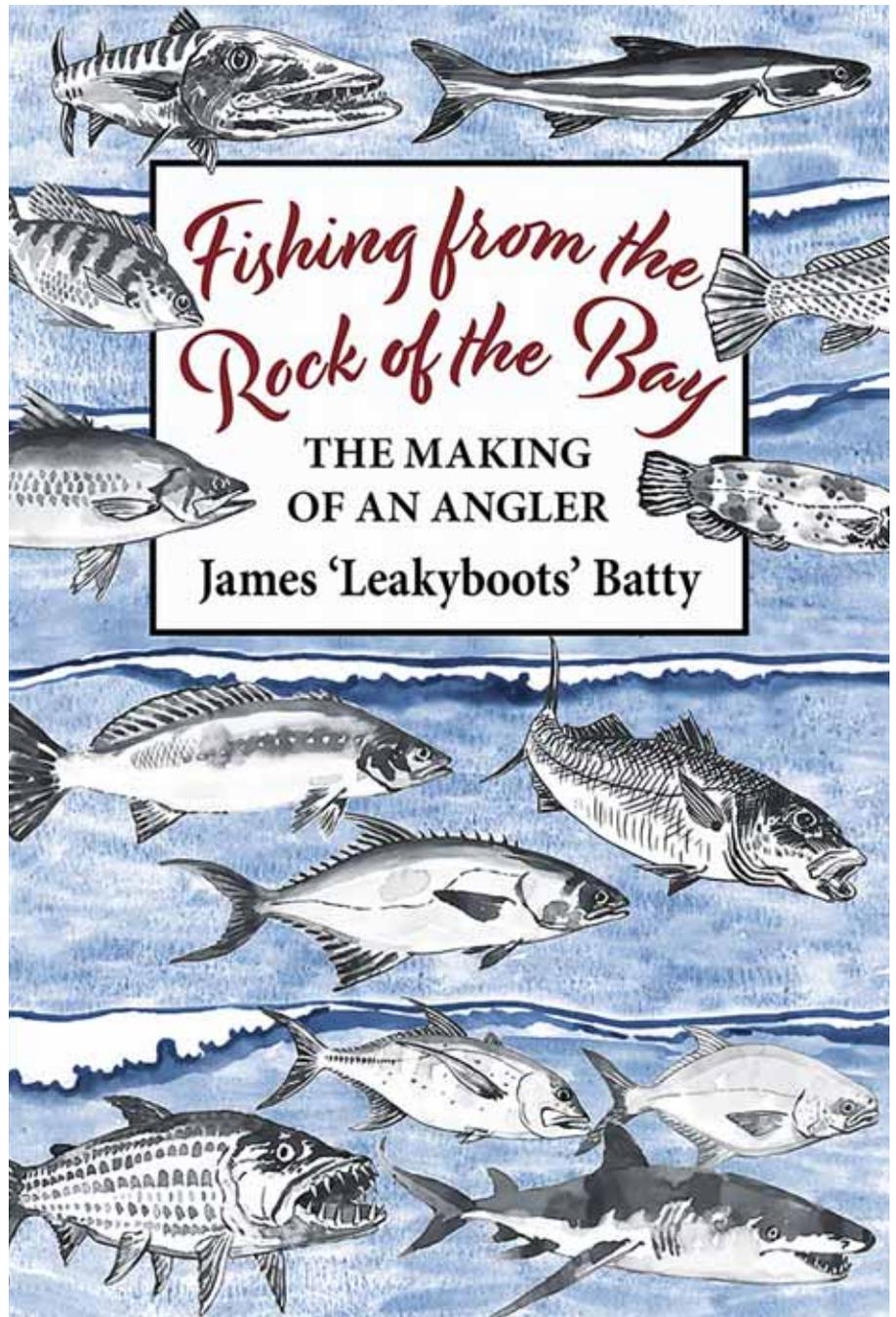
With one book to his name already, 'The Song of the Solitary Bass Fisher,' in his new work James takes us on a very personal fishing expedition. This autobiography is very much in his own personal style of writing - think a mixture of John Gierach and Bill Bryson. And without doubt James gives us a wry, amusing, and incisive insight into what he freely admits is his total love and commitment to fishing.

Batty is best-known as a bass fisher along the Cornish coast and he is known for his modesty, his ability to catch bass in all conditions and by his nickname of 'Leakyboots'.

This witty account is James' tale of his obsession with the sport of fishing, wherever his work took him around the world, seeking out a range of fish, including tilapia in the Sudan and Botswana, lemon sharks and tarpon in the Gambia, striped bass in New York, chinook salmon in British Columbia, bass and trout in the UK and Ireland.

I was absorbed by his writing from start to finish and to give you a flavour here is a little extract to whet your appetite:

"There are lots of lure fans who lust after plugs. One website has a thread called 'Retail Porn,' and it's aptly named. Reading the posts you can imagine people peering at their screens, cross-eyed with lascivious concentration as they wonder how to justify blowing twenty quid on a diver that accounted



for three six-pounders from a reef in Hampshire. And should they go with rainbow smelt or ghost sardine? What the hell, better have them both. Save the money that was going on those trousers, the old ones are fine, a few holes in the seat just mean better ventilation.

"Now I'm sure we fish better when we're confident in our gear. If you clip on something you reckon's as attractive as an albatross gizzard you won't be ready for a take, your mind will wander,

and you'll miss that unexpected pull. I suspect we catch more when we have full tackle bags as well. We stay longer."

Fishing from the Rock of the Bay by James Batty is published by Merlin Unwin Books in jacketed hardback, Price £20, ISBN 978-1-913159-34-4

THE ACCIDENTAL DUCHESS

By Emma Watkins, the Duchess of Rutland

Life in a castle isn't always a fairytale, as the Duchess of Rutland vividly illustrates in her fascinating, revealing and funny autobiography.

When Emma Watkins, the pony-mad daughter of a Welsh farmer, imagined her future it was as the wife of a younger version of her father. But then she fell in love with David Manners, having no idea that he was heir to one of the most senior hereditary titles in the land. When David succeeded his father, against all the odds Emma became the chatelaine of Belvoir Castle, ancestral home of the Dukes of Rutland.

She had to cope with five boisterous children while faced with a vast estate in desperate need of modernisation and staff who wanted nothing to change - it was a daunting responsibility. Yet with sound advice from the doyenne of duchesses, 'Debo' Devonshire, she met each challenge with optimism and gusto, including scaling the castle roof in a storm to unclog a flooding gutter; being caught in her nightdress by mesmerised Texan tourists; and disguising herself as a cleaner to watch filming of *The Crown*. She even took on the castle ghosts . . .

At times the problems she faced seemed insoluble, yet with her unstoppable energy and

talent for thinking on the hoof, she won through, inspired by the vision and passion of those Rutland duchesses in whose footsteps she trod, and indeed the redoubtable and resourceful women who forged her, whose homes were not castles but remote farmhouses in the Radnorshire hills.

Vividly written and bursting with insights, *The Accidental Duchess* should appeal to everyone who has visited a stately home and wondered what it would be like to live there.

About Emma Manners

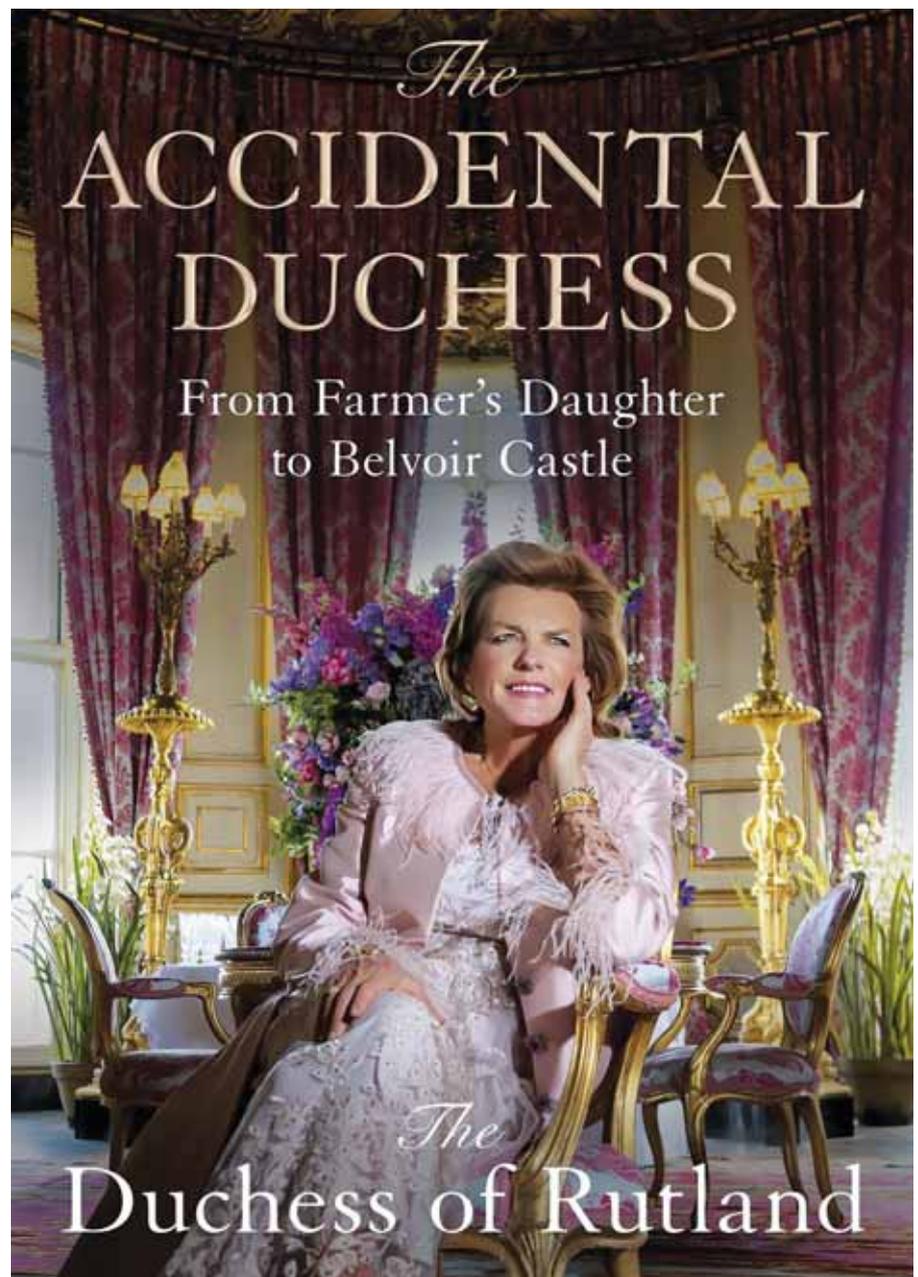
Born Emma Watkins, the Duchess of Rutland is the daughter of a farmer from

Knighton, Powys. She worked as an estate agent, marketing properties in London, and later as an interior designer. Today, the Duchess runs the commercial activities of Belvoir Castle, including shooting parties, weddings and a range of furniture. She has presented on various television programmes, including ITV's *Castles, Keeps and Country Homes*, and has produced a book about Belvoir Castle.

In 2021, the Duchess created a

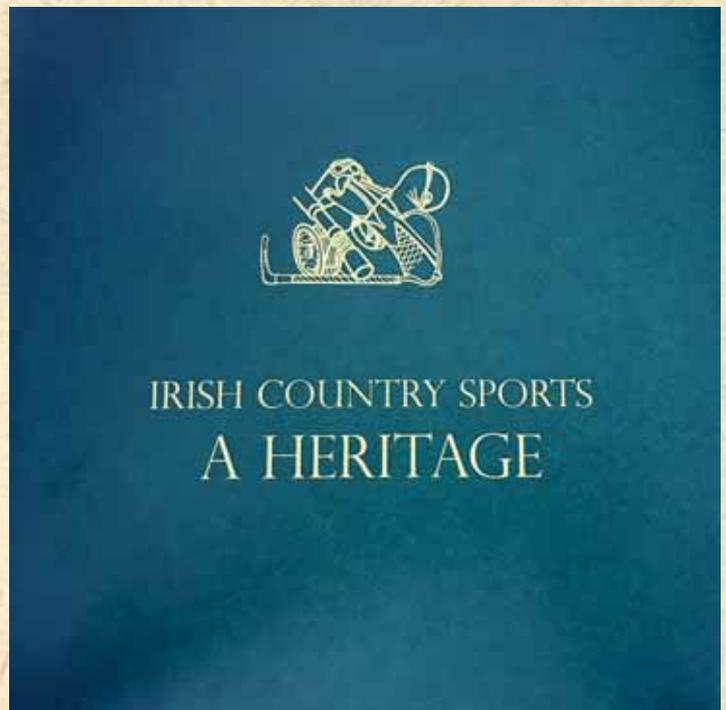
podcast titled *Duchess*, where she interviews chatelaines of castles and stately homes throughout the United Kingdom. In her podcast's first season, her interviewees included Lady Henrietta Spencer-Churchill of Blenheim Palace and Lady Mansfield of Scone Palace.

The Accidental Duchess by Emma Manners Duchess of Rutland is published by Pan Macmillan, £12.99



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The large format 30 cm x 30cm (2.5Kg) and 264 pages lavishly illustrated and printed and bound to the highest standards the 'Irish Country Sports A Heritage' book is the first major publication to chart and examine the traditions, history and development of country sports across the whole of Ireland. Anyone who has already purchased it is amazed at its sheer value for money

With country sports facing a variety of threats, this impressive volume is both a celebration of our sports and the contribution they make to Irish rural life. It also provides a warning of what could be lost through ongoing threats to our sports and that is why its production was heavily subsidised by our company. We feel it should be on the bookshelves of every Irish country sports person.

All of the major sports and organisations are covered: game shooting, angling, hunting, deer stalking and falconry, and, of course, working dogs with chapters on The Irish Kennel Club, springer and cocker spaniels, the retrieving breeds, pointers, setters and HPRs and even legendary Irish greyhounds, lurchers and terriers. Country crafts chapters include taxidermy and fish and game food heritage.

The book was originally on sale at £30/€40 plus P&P but having identified less expensive ways of postage/package, we are offering the remaining copies at the very **SPECIAL PRICE of £30/€30 to include P&P or TWO copies for £50/€50 to include P&P. YOU simply can't get better value COUNTRY SPORTS CHRISTMAS presents!**

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