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**The online version of the magazine will be updated monthly.  
Visit [www.countrysportsandcountrylife.com/Magazine](http://www.countrysportsandcountrylife.com/Magazine)**

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

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



**I**t is with some trepidation that I am writing this first editorial for ICS&CL because I am following in the footsteps of Philip Lawton, who was so highly respected not least by everyone involved in country sports. However, it is a great honour and privilege to do so and I look forward to working closely with the whole editorial team.

## *Microchipping - fears need to be eased*

I was in contact recently with the Hunting Association of Ireland and they told me of a few issues which are currently dominating the landscape in the realm of Irish fieldsports. The HAI told me that a major new feature in the landscape is the recent announcement of compulsory microchipping of all dogs by Minister of Agriculture Simon Coveney TD, in the newly enacted Animal Health & Welfare Act.

Nearly all of us in the hunting community support reasonable measures to enhance the welfare, security and traceability of our hounds, but many are concerned that this new policy will become a pretext to load unsustainable costs on to hunt clubs and working dog owners. The Minister needs to ease people's fears here. He should tell us that microchipping will be applied in a cost-effective way which will acknowledge the voluntary and not-for-profit nature of our field sports.

Microchipping is a simple and straightforward procedure and does not require yards of red tape, permits or exorbitant payments to ensure it is done correctly.

Another concern is that the data harvested will not be used for any purposes other than those defined in the legislation. Groups or individuals with stated anti-hunting agendas should not be given access to data that might include the personal details of those in the

hunting community. Robust data protection controls must pertain at all stages.

## *Hunt Clubs*

On a separate and more upbeat note, hunting lovers have been encouraged by the increasing popularity of dog shows and family fun days run by hunt clubs as annual fundraisers. Chairman of the HAI, Philip Donnelly, told me that he attended just such an event in Kilkenny recently, at the fabled kennels of the Kilkenny Foxhounds in Mount Juliet. It was well organised with lots of competitions for foxhounds, beagles, lurchers, terriers and pet dogs. "With the sunny weather," commented Philip, "the hum of the burger vans diesel generators and the happy laughter of children on pony rides, this scene presented itself as an idyllic reminder of times past in Ireland when life was less complicated, the mobile phone had yet to be invented and Sky Sports was something you did in an aeroplane. What better way to spend a Sunday afternoon than in the company of ordinary country folk with a shared love of field sports? I am sure the shades of Ikey Bell and Major McAlmont were gazing down in approval." (Ikey Bell was Master and huntsman of the Galway Blazers from 1903 to 1908. He was one of the most renowned Masters and breeders of hounds in the 20th Century. Major McAlmont was an acclaimed huntsman of the Kilkenny Hunt).

Congratulations are also due to the Irish Masters of Foxhounds Associations, the Cosby family of Stradbally Hall and the Laois Foxhounds' David Lalor for organising an outstanding renewal of the National Hound Show in July this year. A record number of foxhound packs showed on the day, which coincided with the start of the heatwave. There were lots of exciting equestrian events too. Well done to all and sundry.



## New Faces

A warm welcome to my old friend Derek Fanning who is already well known to readers of this magazine. As some will know, Derek is a larger than life character who is as at home on a horse or following on beagles as he is with a shotgun at clays or rough shooting. A man of prodigious writing talent he is unafraid to tackle issues affecting country sports head on and I have no doubt we all look forward to seeing in his perception of many of the crucial matters pertaining to countrysports in the Republic of Ireland, as well as continuing to enjoy his articles.

I am also delighted to welcome top Scottish writer and photographer Linda Mellor as a contributor to Irish Country Sports & Country Life. Linda is a real country sports enthusiast who is as enthusiastic with her 12 bore on the moors, as she is photographing and writing about the Scottish countrysports scene which she knows so well.

Readers of some other quality fieldsports magazines will have seen her work before and it I know that our readers in Ireland and throughout the world will be delighted with what she has in store for us.

Another first for the magazine is an article with a difference on goose shooting in Scotland, by the Reverends Stephen & Jennifer McWhirter. The term 'sporting parson' is part and parcel of countrysports down the years and many will remember with fondness the inimitable Canon Dermot Griffiths from Killyman of international English Pointer fame. I met the couple at the Shanes Castle Press launch in June and was immediately taken by their deep knowledge and love of the countryside and countrysports. They were representing Stephen's brother Simon from the Scout Shop which with Countryside Alliance Ireland had sponsored an excellent competition for Scouts in archery and airgunning at Shanes and I was delighted to learn that Stephen has been attending the Game Fair since back in the days of Clandeboye as a child with his Dad. Stephen and Jen both played an active part on the Scout Shop stand at Shanes and said that they hadn't enjoyed any fair as much.

We have a huge readership online and with Irish readers travelling increasingly to sample Scottish countrysports and Scots reading both hard copy and online versions, so we have decided to include a regular



Scottish section. There's a taste of what's to come in this issue with our new contributors and we can promise more articles and features in future editions.

## Big Brother - not in Northern Ireland it's confirmed

Now there were some disturbing reports in the media around the start of August regarding the relationship in GB between

the ACPO Criminal Records Office (ACRO) and the RSPCA, which allowed the RSPCA to access information held on the Police National Computer (PNC). The PNC holds large amounts of information about people who have been convicted, cautioned or arrested but also holds information on vehicles, the registered keeper of a vehicle and firearms licensing.

Countryside Alliance (CA) were very quick to act with the Executive Chairman, Barney White-Spunner writing to the Information Commissioner who deals with issues of information sharing, making it clear that he believed there was no legal basis for agreements between ACRO, the police and the RSCPA.

The CA said the RSPCA was neither a public body, nor a statutory prosecutor and was unaware of any primary legislation naming the RSPCA which allowed for data sharing for purposes of criminal investigation and prosecution. CA added that they considered it sinister that a campaigning charity, which has shown itself to have a clear and politicised animal rights agenda, increasingly used against members of our community, could have such access to such information. In CA's view, this access could pose serious risks to individuals about whom information is gathered and we await urgent advice from the Information Commissioner.

Now the good news for Northern Ireland. CAI has confirmed that in fact the law is different here under animal welfare and the USPCA cannot act as sole authority on investigating animal welfare reports, having actually lost the contract when new laws passed. And I have no doubt that CAI will continue to monitor the situation closely to ensure that the GB model does not occur here. Well done to all concerned.

**Paul Pringle**  
Northern Editor



## Derek Fanning appointed ICS&CL Republic of Ireland Editor

**D**erek Fanning, a regular contributor to the magazine, is 42 years of age and lives in Birr, County Offaly where he puts the bread on the table by working as a journalist for local paper *The Midland Tribune*.

He has been a keen hunting man for many years, since his early 20s. He foxhunts on horseback every weekend usually with the Ormond Foxhounds (who are based in North Tipperary and South Offaly) and is also a keen beagler venturing out most Sundays during the season often with the Balgarrett Beagles in Westmeath. During the summer he goes mink hunting in County Cork and he also loves falconry, heading out to hunt pheasants and rabbits with friends who own peregrines and goshawks. He enjoys clay pigeon shooting and occasional rough shooting.

Unlike the NI Editor, he isn't a regular angler but, as he is fully aware of the campaigning stance this magazine takes on angling and water issues, is more than keen to liaise with the angling community. In summary, he has a keen love of all country sports and enjoys reading and writing about all field sports and will be a huge asset to a team of country sports people who produce a magazine for country sports people.



*In the saddle - New ROI Editor Derek Fanning.*

## A warm welcome to top Scottish author and photographer Linda Mellor

**L**inda was born in Fife and has a lifelong passion for fieldsports. As a child she accompanied her father when training his gundogs, pigeon shooting, beating and picking up on local shooting estates. As an established professional photographer Linda considers herself very fortunate to be able to unite her passion for shooting and photography by specialising in Scottish fieldsports.

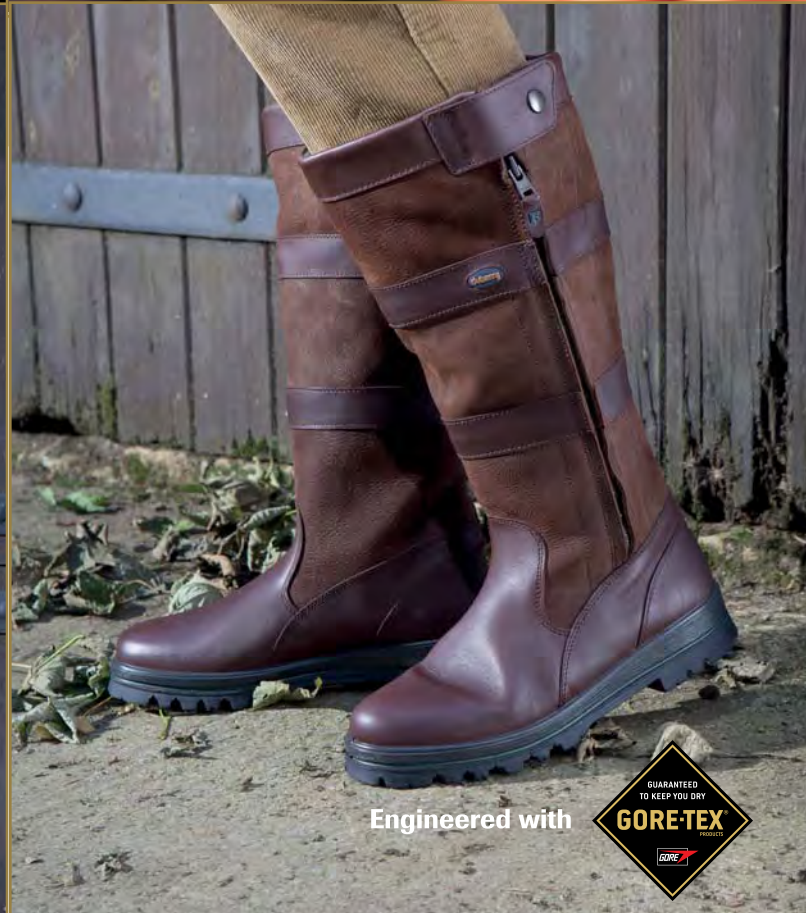
During the summer months Linda enjoys clay shooting and dawn roe buck stalks. And as you will read in her Scottish sporting feature in this edition, she shot her first grouse over pointers high up on the hills of Drumochter. During the shooting season Linda is kept busy with her camera out on driven and walked up days and also plans to do some red and roe deer stalking and shooting pheasant locally in Fife.

She really enjoys sharing her passion and respect for the countryside through writing and by using her photography to positively illustrate countrysports. As she says herself: "After all, how empty would our lives be if we couldn't experience the joy of our wild open spaces, a fine day's sport and tasty locally grown organic food?"

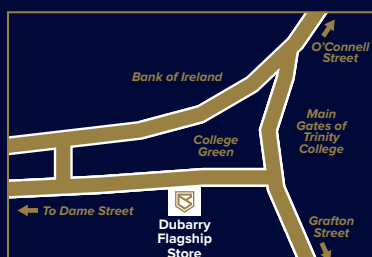


*A real coup - Linda Mellor joins the team.*





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CL Pocket binoculars offer unique optical quality of the highest order in the compact range. When folded up, CL Pocket are compact binoculars, but, open them up, and you have 100% binoculars with no compromise. High-contrast, sharp, colour-true images provide unforgettable viewing experiences, while the large field of vision and 100% suitability for eyeglass wearers ensure comfortable observation. The CL Pocket

binoculars are perfect for hunters who particularly appreciate a compact size, a lightweight design, and considerable viewing comfort, but who are unwilling to compromise on optical quality when observing their prey or attempting to sight it properly.

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An ergonomic, robust design with aluminium housing ensures stable operation and optimum viewing comfort. CL Pocket binoculars are intuitive to use, which, along with their outstanding optical and mechanical performance, was the key prerequisite when developing them. They are also an ideal spare pair. CL Pocket binoculars can even be an aid for driven or safari hunts. They are also the perfect companion for the whole family for leisure activities outside the hunting season, for instance, while hiking, walking or traveling. They are also a natural gift choice for hunting enthusiasts.

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## Barbour Extends Its Sporting Collection This Season



### Men's Sporting Collection

Firm favourites, the Sporting Featherweight and Sporting Ultimate 3 in 1 are joined by last season's newcomer the Sporting Featherweight Climate for Autumn Winter 13 as Barbour ensures continuity in their sporting offering. Innovation and newness comes with the Sporting Allrounder, designed to be multi-functional.

The Sporting Featherweight is Barbour's lightest shooting jacket ever, offering complete protection from the elements. Ideal for early season shooting because it is so lightweight, it also works well in the colder months when used in combination with a fleece waistcoat. Shoulder stitching prevents slippage of the gun and the articulated shoulder ensures plenty of freedom of movement. Large bellows pockets offer easy access to cartridges. Versatile and practical, it's the one jacket you don't want to be without.

The Sporting Ultimate 3 in 1, Barbour's signature shooting jacket, offers the best protection against any weather. Designed to give completely unrestricted swing, it has a removable microfleece waistcoat which can be worn separately or underneath the jacket making it truly a jacket for all seasons. Large bellows pockets, fleece lined hand warmer pockets and spandex lycra cuffs and a drawstring for foul weather protection make this a good all round jacket.

The Sporting Featherweight Climate, first introduced in 2012, offers an alternative shooting jacket. Made from a tough and robust GORE-TEX® Ripstop outer, this is an extreme weather coat. Lined with a soft and warm fleece for warmth, the jacket is very lightweight while still retaining excellent freedom of movement. It has the added bonus of being machine washable – perfect after a muddy day in the field.

New for the season is the Sporting Allrounder – multi functional in purpose, it's a smart, cleanly designed waterproof jacket with large bellows and hand warmer pockets and adjustable Velcro cuffs. For those looking for a practical no nonsense jacket that does the job, the Sporting Allrounder fits the bill.

With the unpredictable British weather, layering is key and this season, Barbour offers a choice of quilts, gilets, knitwear in co-ordinating colours and practical Tattersall and check shirts to suit all occasions.

The stand out quilt is the new Sporting Quilt. With a sporting raglan sleeve, four pocket zip through front quilted jacket, the Sporting Quilt

comes with hand warmer and large pockets and lycra wind cuffs. It offers an excellent choice to those who want an all round versatile quilt.

The Sports Fleece waistcoat and Sports Wool waistcoat, offer new layers designed to be worn on their own or underneath a jacket in chillier weather. Smart enough to wear over a shirt or sweater, both fleeces come with neat alcantara binding around the hem and armholes and two handy pockets.

Tweeds continue to be a popular choice and this season, Barbour retains its refined Sporting Tweed and Houndstooth tweed in a choice of jackets, breeks, waistcoat and trousers. Lightweight, warm and waterproof with all the functionality you would expect from Barbour, these garments are also machine washable - very useful during a busy shooting season.

### Ladies Collection

This season, Barbour focuses on shooting outfits for the stylish lady who not only wants functionality but insists on style. Complementing this collection is Barbour Country – outfits designed for those who enjoy the outdoors and spend their time spectating at events such as point to points or a day at the races.

### Ladies Sporting Collection

The ladies Sporting collection offers functionality in tweeds, wools and warming layers. There's a new sporting tartan and co-ordinated knitwear that takes its colours from the tweeds.

New to Autumn Winter 13 is the Dentdale jacket and matching Teesdale breek. The Dentdale is a waterproof breathable tweed with smart leather trims. With large bellows pockets, it comes with articulated sleeves for excellent freedom of movement. The matching breeks have comfortable elasticity to the cuffs and leather trim to the pockets. The Weardale waistcoat accompanies the set with leather gun patches and neoprene removable pads for extra comfort when shooting.

In the same British Mallalieu tweed as its shooting counterparts, the Dentdale jacket and Teesdale breek is the Clover blazer, waistcoat, trouser and skirt. Simply designed and tailored, these garments can be worn together or separately for an elegant sophisticated look that is ideal for any sporting occasion.





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The Coverdale waistcoat and breeks are in Barbour's new sporting tartan in rich greens, blues and reds. Tailored and smart to wear, the waistcoat and breeks are beautifully made and add a touch of elegance when combined with co-ordinated knits or shirts.

Knitwear picks up the colours from the tweeds in soft merino wool and cashmere adding a fine layer of warmth and style under a gilet or jacket. The Dentsdale and Birkdale shirts are purposefully designed for shooting with articulated sleeves for easy freedom of movement. The Dentsdale with grandad collar and feminine detailing with pin tucks, picks up the sporting tartan in the collar and cuffs. The Birkdale in crisp white cotton comes with a classic sit down collar and again takes the tartan to cuffs and collar.

## Barbour Country

New to Autumn Winter 13 is Barbour Country. Designed with the outdoors lady in mind, Barbour Country is full of stylish outfits to be worn at country events or just out dog walking. The Beagle jacket, designed by Head of Barbour Sporting, Helen Barbour and based on her own research of what dog walkers require from a jacket, is packed with features. It includes a whistle pocket, removable pocket linings and d-rings to attach your lead. Belted with large pockets, it's the ultimate dog walking coat.

The Iris Quilt is a smart, country inspired quilted jacket trimmed in tweed and lined in classic tartan. In a very flattering shape, it is both practical and stylish.

Tweed is represented with the Thornton blazer, waistcoat and trouser which offer a smart well cut tailored outfit that is timelessly classic and will never be out of place. For a longer coat that goes well with boots and trousers, the Foxglove coat is one piece every wardrobe should not be without. Beautifully cut in British Wool Mallalieu Tweed, it comes with leather welted pocket flaps and mock horn branded buttons for an ultra sophisticated look.

The Lavender shirt with a new all over print picks up the colours of the collection and accessories include a country silk square scarf and daisy leg warmers in lambswool.



## Northern Ireland Red Kite News - Summer 2013

### Northern Irish-reared kite breeds for first time

Big news coming from County Down this spring was that, for the first time, a red kite which has been born and reared here has been confirmed breeding. Although red kites have bred successfully in Northern Ireland since 2010, up until now, all breeding birds have been from the 80 wild-born kites which were brought over from Wales and reintroduced between 2008 and 2010. It hasn't been until this year, when Brown / White 34 was found to have bred at a site on the southern edges of the Mourne, that this milestone has been confirmed.

### First wild WTE chicks in 110 years!

Great news from our project partner, the Golden Eagle Trust. Two wild White-tailed Eagle chicks have successfully fledged in Ireland for the first time in over 110 years. Three pairs of WTE attempted to breed in Counties Kerry and Clare this year. One pair failed during incubation and another, which nested in Killarney National Park, hatched at least one chick. Sadly, shortly before it was due to fledge, the chick died as a result of the nest collapsing, most likely due to the nest material (vegetation, sods and dead branches) dried out and shrinking during the long, dry spell of weather in July. The third, and successful pair, nested at Mountshannon in Co. Clare. This is the same pair which made history in 2012 when they nested for the first time, although they failed to hatch chicks during that attempt.

### Summary of 2013 breeding season

In stark contrast to last spring when we basked in warm, summer-like conditions, this year we experienced an extremely cold spring, with average temperatures for March barely hitting 2.5°C. These conditions were exacerbated by south Down experiencing the heaviest snow fall in living memory; 4 to 6 feet of snow created a white blanket across the countryside and drifts of up to 18 feet were commonplace in 'Kite Country' for several weeks.

By mid-April, 10 of the 13 pairs from 2012 had been recorded back on their respective territories, with seven using the same nests as last year. Three pairs moved, namely Black I and Black S, relocating back to the nest they used in 2010 and 2011; Pink n and Blue 12 shifting 3km from a nice oak-wood valley to a larch at the edge of Castlewellsan Forest Park and Black G and Pink w moving for the third year in a row



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from the grounds of an old Victorian house to a conifer plantation. Three new nests were located in 2013, with a nest being found north of the Dromara Hills and south of the Mourne Mountains for the first time, expanding the known nesting range north and south by 5km and 14km respectively. The third new pair was found to be nesting right under our noses, less than a kilometre from the original holding pens. Unfortunately, all three new pairings failed, with the female from the pair near Castlewellsan being recovered dead on two eggs. PSNI officers attended the scene and seized the carcass for toxicology, which confirmed the presence of the banned substance, alphachloralose, in the stomach contents. The nests which were ultimately successful were all established pairs from previous years, with three of them being from the pioneering nesting cohort of 2010. Even though the number of successful nests has fallen from ten to seven, thankfully this year the number of chicks per successful nest has increased to 2.0 (2x1, 3x2 and 2x3), which has resulted in a similar number of chicks fledging to last year.

In total, 18 territorial pairs were recorded across Co. Down, with 14 nests being located. Half of these failed and the remaining seven hatched 14 young, all of which were tagged, including the young from a nest which had been unreachable in 2012. The first fledged young were recorded on 8 July, when I saw Yellow 1N and at least one of its siblings taking their first, tentative flights. Although this brood were not the oldest, I suspect having three large chicks in a relatively small nest, in very warm conditions, led to these birds being the first to confront the big, bad world.





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## Fionn mac Cumhail's 'Bran' is centre piece at Anthony Scott exhibition

**M**argaret writes to say that Anthony Scott is one of our most important and influential sculptors and whose pieces are outstanding in simplicity and scale. But don't be mislead by this simplicity for behind the scene is a mind that delves deeply into our Celtic roots and can speak eloquently and with great knowledge about Irish mythology, she adds.

Scott was brought up in tranquil, rural surroundings and belongs to a generation who crossed fields, climbed

stiles and walked long roads with grassy centres in order to get to school. After graduating from Art College in Belfast he completed an MA in Cardiff. With experiences from his childhood and college behind him, the confidence came to pursue an artistic career and digging into his particular strengths he feels he is still only 'scratching the surface of my potential.'

With the use of bronze he can explore expansive pieces and would envisage his work gaining monumental scale. Nearly all of his work is inspired by Celtic mythology although they are viewed from the perspective of the animal kingdom rather than the human. Animals play a central role in Celtic myths with ancient tales of how animals often changed their form and shape. The Celt's believed that the spirit of the world of animals often impinged on and influenced the human world. Anthony has tried to convey this in his work.

The story tells how Bran and his twin sister Sceolang were puppies of Fionn's aunt who, in pregnancy, was transformed into a bitch and thus gave birth to dogs. Fionn loved his dogs, Bran in particular, they were never separated and with a communication between them that was virtually unbreakable. They have been portrayed as either Irish Deer Hounds or Wolfhounds, but Anthony chooses to capture Bran in the light of a lean, leggy, grey hound.

When the dogs were young, they and Fionn were out hunting deer and the pack was on a scent, brought a deer to ground but Bran and Sceolang being of human heritage were able to discern that the trapped deer was really a woman named Sadbh who was under the spell of a druid. They protected her from the other dogs and later Fionn married Sadbh and their son Oisín became a hero of note. While with Fionn she could retain human form, however she was lured away from his protection and once away returned to deer form to run the forest. Fionn often went out with Bran and Sceolang who were the only ones that could recognise her in the hope of finding her again.

Late in the life of the dogs Fionn, against advice, decided to search for his lost love. In bad weather and on a final cast out, Sceolang could not muster anymore energy and sank. Bran could not encourage her and set off alone on his final hunt into the craggy hills of Ceantlea. Bran caught the scent and gained strength, Fionn followed out of the undergrowth onto the open summit of the crag overlooking a small lake.

Silhouetted against the dying sun, on the cliff edge stood a red deer. Fionn called out her name, she turned, looked at him then whirled round and jumped from the cliff. It is said Bran looked once at Fionn, then willingly followed the deer. Fionn's man Caurag and a group went in search of him, Sceolang was near death and in the place her master told her to wait. When they finally were close to Fionn Sceolang demanded to be put on the ground and slowly made her way to where he sat staring into the lake. Sceolang licked Fionn's face and waded into the lake and howled mournfully. Fionn carried her home, when several



*Anthony Scott with the life sized sculpture 'Bran'*

years later she died in her sleep Fionn had her buried and a cairn erected over her body. The tale of the love, devotedness, intelligence and loyalty of the dogs and Fionn lives on.

Anthony's 'Bran IV' is the centre piece of his forthcoming exhibition at Beaux Arts, Bath in England, opening on the 12th October 2013 and the marquette can be seen at the Darren Clarke Charity Golf Classic on the 20th September 2013 at Rockmount Golf Club, where it is up for auction and would exude the stature, power and strength of his namesake in any private collection.

*The marquette will be on view at the Darren Clarke Charity Golf Classic*







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## SUPERB AUTUMN OFFERINGS FROM JACK MURPHY

### Make it a fashionable shooting season this year!

The shooting season is upon us once again and with its arrival comes the anxiety for many about whether or not you have time to get your eye in before a public display! With Jack Murphy you can make sure that even if your shooting skills are a bit rusty you'll look the part. At least you will impress with your dress if not with your shot! The season spans from early autumn through to the middle of winter and as many will attest, the unpredictability of the weather often goes hand in hand with the luck you have on the day. You could have a gloriously sunny day or a cold, wet and wild experience. Making sure you are suitably dressed will not only help you to enjoy your day whatever the weather but ensure you uphold tradition as well.

Jack Murphy's irresistibly Irish Country and Lifestyle clothing and accessories provide all members of the shooting party with a range of stylish solutions to take them from the first drive to the shoot lunch. The Jack Murphy Autumn/Winter 2013 collection is inspired by the rugged Irish landscape and the country way of life, which is reflected in its range of textured fabrics, sufficiently robust to withstand the punishing Irish weather yet tastefully cut in warm muted earthy hues with attractive and clever detailing to appeal to the most style-conscious on the field. Always synonymous with style, quality and durability, this latest Jack Murphy collection has something for everyone this shooting season.

### Jump the gun with these Ladies' and Men's coats

Jack Murphy has a range of stylish and pragmatic coats for both ladies and men this season. To make your day enjoyable you must be comfortable, warm and dry. Shooting is about having fun and you will not be happy if you are soaked on the first drive and nor will you be good company.

Among the key pieces in the new ladies' collection is the Aurnia II Tweed Jacket (RRP €249.99), an effortlessly elegant and quintessentially country style, which is available in two beautiful tweeds and features delectable detailing such as fabulous quilted satin lining, patch pockets with moleskin tabs, detachable faux fur collar and front princess seam piping.

If you don't want to commit to tweed, the Jack Murphy Haley Quilted Jacket (RRP €99.99) is perfect for versatility - stylish, warm and also practical. Available in rich maroon and true black, you won't look out of place wherever you stand in the field and it can be worn not only in the country but in the city too.

For the boys; the Tomas Tweed Shooting Jacket (RRP €359.99) is a distinguished style that comprises stylish sophistication along with practicality. Waterproof, windproof and with breathable lining- the Tomas jacket offers both hand warmer pockets and poachers pockets along with intelligent detail; making it a must have for any country gent.

If you are fashion conscious and only find yourself on the shooting field occasionally, a smart and practical country classic is the Jack Murphy Hogan Quilted Jacket (RRP €104.99). Perfect for the country gent who wants to be well turned out and well prepared, no matter where he is invited and what the day holds in store.

### Be ahead of the game with the right hat

Jack Murphy offers a range of stylish, yet practical hats. Whether you are looking into the winter sun, ducking the driving rain, Jack Murphy's hats are traditional, distinctive, classic and smart proving that protecting yourself from the elements can put you ahead in the fashion game. For the men the Jack Murphy Alfie cap (€32.50 pictured) is a 'must have' key piece this season to keep the elements at bay. For the glamorous practical ladies in the field, look no further than the Jack Murphy Belclare Tweed Hat (€32.50 pictured).

To view the full autumn/winter collection and for more information visit [www.jackmurphy.eu](http://www.jackmurphy.eu) or tele-phone +353 (0) 1841 4200



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## Summer's Game Fairs Draw to a Close

Birr Castle in Birr, Co. Offaly, played host to the last game fair of 2013 with the Irish Game and Country Fair being held over the weekend of 31st August and 1st September. The weather was kind for the whole weekend and the sunshine brought the crowds out, with a large crowd present on both days. The arena was busy from the morning late into the evening and provided many spectacles to keep the crowd entertained, along with educational displays, such as fly casting, taking place.

CAI members, Harbour House Sports Club, were showcasing the fun that archery has to offer. In the picturesque garden area, beginners were encouraged to try their hand at the sport and the more advanced got a chance to improve their skills further.



Jenny with Harbour House — CAI's Jenny enjoying the fantastic archery layout

Jenny, from CAI, called in and tried archery for the first time under the expert supervision and tuition of Harbour House. It took a little practice, but eventually the tuition kicked in and the bullseye was becoming more approachable. Jenny thoroughly enjoyed the experience and would recommend it to anybody hoping to try a new challenge.



There was no mistaking the CAI flags at Birr.

CAI once again had a large presence at the fair. Within the CAI marquee were many diverse approaches to country sports, from Rathcormac Gun Club, the Wild Deer Association of Ireland, the Irish Red Grouse Association, BADA UK (Borreliosis and Associated Diseases Awareness), Lindsay Carlisle with his large collection of intricately

# COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE IRELAND

## Love the countryside

handcrafted sticks and David Hogan with a superb taxidermy display.

Once the game fair season draws to a close, the shooting and hunting seasons begin. CAI would like to wish all our members, and indeed all country sports enthusiasts, to a safe and successful season.

## 'Operation Wild Deer' Launched

Countryside Alliance Ireland recently attended the launch of 'Operation Wild Deer,' a PSNI-driven initiative to tackle the problem of deer poaching in Northern Ireland. CAI has been working extensively with the PSNI and other organisations, in the hope of raising awareness of deer poaching and to inform the public of the correct procedures, should they have any information or suspicions. Deer poaching leaflets and posters have been produced for distribution throughout Northern Ireland. The initial focus will be on Davagh Forest, where the operation was launched.



CAI's Lyall Plant pictured with the PSNI Deputy Head of Firearms and the PSNI Wildlife Liaison Officer at the launch of Operation Wild Deer

CAI's Chief Executive Lyall Plant commented: "Deer poaching is a cruel and barbaric practice. The deer may suffer a slow and painful death due to wounding by a bad shot or a gun of unsuitable calibre. In addition, poaching threatens public safety through illegal gun use and also the sale of contaminated, unregulated meat. Venison can be a healthy and tasty alternative to other meats, however, it is important the consumer knows it is bought from a trusted and regulated source."

"CAI are extremely pleased to be involved in 'Operation Wild Deer' and we also work with many deer societies throughout Ireland, including the British Deer Society NI, the Wild Deer Association of Ireland and the Irish Deer Society, to try to combat the horrific and illegal practice of deer poaching."

The PSNI are urging anyone with information on deer poaching to contact the PSNI on 0845 600 8000 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

## The Celtic Challenge 2013

The second annual Celtic Challenge was held in Mullingar, Co.



Westmeath, by kind permission of landowner Mr. Martin Dibbs. The Leinster team, in conjunction with the Gaelic Gundog League, hosted the event and insurance for the day was provided by Countryside Alliance Ireland. This was an especially joyful and exciting occasion as it was the Gaelic Gundog League's first hosting of an event since its recent affiliation with the IKC. The Gaelic Gundog League's primary focus is to embrace all gundog sections and to ensure that trials are efficiently run and prove sporting, enjoyable occasions.

Four teams competed in the novice and advanced tests, which were the Munster, Irish Select, Leinster and Ulster Select team. The trials were held in large open inclined fields with rushy bottoms surrounded by a bordering canal. Weather conditions for March were extremely cold with a stiff easterly wind to contend with. This event was judged by stalwarts Mr. Michael Hoey, Mr. Pascal Clarke, Mr. Declan Boyle and Mr. Tony O' Hare. Chief Stewards on the day were Mr. Alan Nolan and Mr. Mattie Lambden.



Members of the winning Irish Select Team.

## Results:

1st Irish Select - 616 points, 2nd Leinster Select - 610 points, 3rd Ulster Select - 560 points, 4th Munster Select - 549 points.

The Gaelic Gundog League kindly sponsored trophies for top dog in the Novice and Open and Vincent Flannelly, from Countryside Alliance Ireland, proudly made the presentations. Top Novice dog was awarded to Harry Gillanders with Copperbirch Finn (94 points) and Top Open dog was awarded to Roy Griffin with Astraglen Baptiste (91 points).

The organisers would like to take this opportunity to thank all the sponsors that contributed to a very successful Celtic challenge event. This year's winner, the Irish Select team, will host Celtic Challenge in 2014 and we wish them every success in the hosting of this and look forward to a thoroughly enjoyable event.

## Countryside Alliance Ireland Awards Open to Nominations

The Countryside Alliance Ireland Awards, nicknamed 'The Rural Oscars' have opened to nominations, so please nominate today and help us sing the praises of those who work so hard for rural life. You can nominate online - visit [www.caireland.org](http://www.caireland.org) and follow the link, or by phoning +44 (0) 207 840 9340.

The Awards celebrate communities, produce, enterprise and rural heritage. Voted for by the public across four categories, they applaud those who routinely go the extra mile for their community and help to promote rural life.

### The Countryside Alliance Ireland Award categories are:

- Local Food Award
- Daily Telegraph Village Shop/Post Office Award
- Butcher Award

Start-up Award, for new rural businesses that have been trading for less than 24 months and are already making their mark.

Irish nominees will be judged and the winners announced in early 2014. Those winners will then be on their way to Westminster to



Jim and Muriel, from Cloughmills Incredible Edibles seen here being presented with their Enterprise Award last time from Paul Cran.

represent Irish businesses against winners from across Britain. Ireland's high quality produce and love of our landscapes and communities gives us a really good chance.

In 2011, Ireland had two overall winners, with Michael Martin from County Antrim and Nolan's of Kilcullen in County Kildare taking top honours in their categories. Both parties travelled over for the awards ceremony in London and were absolutely delighted to be named as the best in the UK and Ireland.

James Nolan, from Nolan's of Kilcullen, commented on his win: "Winning the Countryside Alliance Award for the Best Butcher's Shop in the U.K. & Ireland was one of the highest accolades that my business has ever received. It is a customer nominated award and rightly acknowledges and rewards rural traditions and enterprise. The spin off from all the media attention, good will and positive publicity that we have gotten was simply incredible and this has genuinely given our business a massive boost."

The Awards belong to their communities rather than just one business, so the morale boost and sense of achievement they engender to everyone in the running is something rather special. Countryside Alliance Ireland would urge everyone who supports our farmers, businesses and communities to have their say and nominate their favourites. Those who live and work in rural Ireland face unique challenges and it is our privilege to honour them. Nominations will be accepted until 1st November 2013 - so don't delay, nominate today!

## Guidelines for Deer Hunters

Below are some basic guidelines for deer hunters, from BADA, to help protect themselves against Lyme Disease and other related diseases.

While shooting - consider wearing permethrin-impregnated clothing or treat your own clothing with permethrin-fabric spray (available from the BADA-UK online shop). Use a repellent that contains DEET or Citriodiol on your skin (always follow directions on the label).

Transport - it's best to carry the carcass outside the vehicle or, where appropriate, use a body bag or fine cloth to contain any ticks from spreading around the vehicle.

After transport - you could hang a Vapona insect killer in the vehicle over night or spray the vehicle with a pyrethrum spray and leave it shut up over night. Air the vehicle well before travelling in it again. Hoovering the vehicle will also help to collect any stray ticks.

At the storage facility - in the 'cool room' you could consider placing a large sheet under the carcass to collect any ticks that fall off. The sheet could be impregnated with a pyrethrum insecticide, or just use a clean cloth that can be removed.

Clothing - it is advisable to hang hunting clothes outside or in a shed where it can be de-ticked with an insecticide. Where manufacturer's instructions allow, the clothing can be placed in a hot dryer to kill any ticks (ticks have been shown in scientific evidence to survive a full cycle in the washing machine).

Check yourself - check all over for ticks, paying special attention to the hairline and scalp, bellybutton, groin, armpits and the back of the knees. If you find one, use only a plastic tick twister or fine nosed tweezers to remove a tick. All other methods increase the risk of back flow of germ filled fluids from the tick and therefore your risk of contracting a disease.



## FURTHER BUZZARD ATTACK WITNESSED ON OSPREY NEST

**S**cottish Land & Estates write to say that conservation fears have been raised for a second time at a rural estate in Aberdeenshire as more dramatic footage emerged showing an osprey chick being attacked by a buzzard. Lochter Estate owner Euan Webster was shocked as one of only two chicks hatched this year on the estate's osprey nest, which is filmed for tourism purposes, was targeted and snatched by a swooping buzzard before falling, injured, to the ground. Last year a chick from the same nest was grabbed by a buzzard and carried off before being dropped to its death.

Mr Webster commented: "This footage is clear evidence that last year's buzzard attack was far from being an isolated incident. It is a sign that working to conserve one iconic bird of prey while more common species which predate it breed unchecked is just not working. There were two healthy chicks until ten days ago when one chick "mysteriously" fell out of the nest – we have no video of its fall. Then on Sunday the remaining chick was attacked as can be seen in the video. One chick is with the SSPCA with a broken part of its wing while the other has been safely returned to the nest and is doing fine albeit the parent birds are constantly fighting off the pair of buzzards.

"This cannot be passed off as simply nature taking its course as humans have managed all types of bird for hundreds of years, we must now surely have a responsibility to continue this management in a way that is logical. Throughout the year we see buzzards prey on other birds, many of which are in steep decline.

Lapwings, oystercatchers, curlews and grey partridges, are now frequently absent from our farms here in the north east of Scotland. Any farmer or shepherd will tell you about the threat from buzzards and this incident should sound alarm bells among those who care about the conservation of our rarer wild birds such as ospreys in Scotland." The osprey chick is still alive and being cared for by the SSPCA; meanwhile Euan Webster has written to the Minister for Environment Paul Wheelhouse to express his concerns in full.

### Survey: fewer buzzards would result in other wildlife benefits

Buzzards numbers have been growing steadily since the 1980s and are now at record levels in Scotland. The latest official BTO Bird Atlas Survey demonstrates a more than healthy population which is no longer of conservation concern. In a survey by the Scottish Farmer magazine in June, 100% of respondents believed that fewer buzzards would result in other wildlife benefits.

As buzzard numbers have grown, clearly there is a need for increasing amounts of prey for them to eat. Whilst smaller populations may at one time have been able to survive mostly on carrion, rabbits



*A screengrab from the footage shows what happened.*

and small game, there are growing numbers of reports of buzzards preying on other wildlife such as red squirrels and wild birds, some of them being rare species of conservation concern such as osprey. The competition from buzzards is thought to have an impact on smaller raptor species also.

Even conservation organisations such as RSPB recognise that predation is a problem when trying to look after rare or declining species and they control predators in and around their reserves.

Douglas McAdam, Chief Executive of Scottish Land & Estates, reiterated his concerns after last year's incident: "While previous reports of such predation have been brushed off by those who do not like the reality of what is happening in the countryside, this second video provides the sad but clear and conclusive evidence of the serious impacts of the growing population of buzzards. There are gaps in scientific knowledge about these impacts and some conservation groups have tried to discourage the licensed research which would inform a pragmatic approach.

"At the same time, the conservation status of the buzzard itself must also be protected. A rational debate is urgently needed in which evidence from land and wildlife managers, such as Euan Webster, can be taken into account. They are the people who see what is actually happening on the ground rather than simply what is documented in the press and policy papers. We believe it is the duty of Government to promote a factual consultation as this is a serious issue for Scotland's wildlife."

YouTube footage can be found here:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzONs5PyfY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzONs5PyfY)

## Against the odds - a salmon!

**B**rian Howard, Chief Executive Officer, Mental Health Ireland writes to express his thanks to all the staff at Mount Falcon for a very happy stay by the Spanish fishing party at Mount Falcon last weekend.

Against all the odds one of the party caught a 6lb salmon on the fly on the Ridge Pool before we left yesterday. The first this year on the Ridge and it was released.







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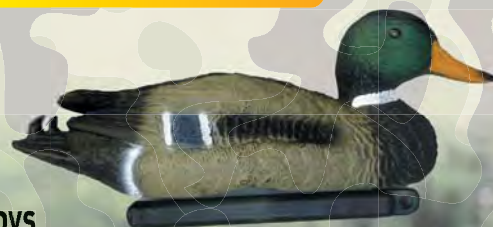
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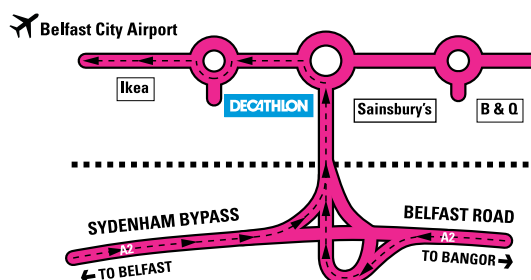


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## BRITISH DEER SOCIETY WELCOMES PSNI ANTI-POACHING POSTER INITIATIVE

**D**eer poaching is illegal. It is a wildlife crime and positive action to combat it can make a real difference not only to wild deer but also to people living in the countryside who may be affected by rural crime in general, Greg Kane, Chairman of the British Deer Society's Northern Ireland Branch, said today.

Speaking at Davagh Forest, near Cookstown, at the launch of an anti-poaching poster and leaflet campaign organised by the PSNI in support of its Operation Wild Deer initiative in the area, he said: "The indications are that wild deer poaching has been on the increase throughout Northern Ireland for a number of years. In addition to being illegal, this activity raises potential public safety issues and concerns over deer welfare because of the way it is undertaken. Operation Wild Deer, in which a wide ranging group of organisations joined in partnership with the PSNI to combat poaching in the Cookstown area, has already made a valuable contribution to help address this form of rural crime in the Mid Ulster area. The posters and leaflets being launched today will serve to reinforce this anti-poaching message with the aim of ensuring that Operation Wild Deer's momentum is maintained."

Operation Wild Deer was begun by the PSNI during 2012 in response to reports of deer poaching in the area around Cookstown and particularly in the Davagh forest complex. By working in partnership with stakeholders representing interests ranging from country sports to environmental issues and food safety, the initiative set up by PSNI has delivered a united front against deer poaching.

Greg Kane continued: "Wild deer have no natural predators and their numbers must therefore be controlled to ensure they can continue to live in sustainable balance with their habitat. This requires deer to be managed by ethical and humane means. The British Deer Society is at the forefront in



*Wide support for the anti-poaching poster launch.*

promoting best practice deer management and provides comprehensive training leading to internationally recognised qualifications for those involved in this work. For example, while a legitimate deer stalker will use a rifle and ammunition of a calibre and performance specified in the legislation to enable a humane result to be achieved, there is evidence to suggest that some poachers are using firearms of smaller and therefore entirely unsuitable calibres, which can often result in serious wounding rather than a clean kill. This is not only illegal, wounding creates significant welfare issues for the deer concerned. Poaching often, although not always, takes place at night, which is also illegal in Northern Ireland and carries a risk to public safety.

"However, poachers are unlikely to show regard for the legal or best practice requirements observed by legitimate deer stalkers. They are instead motivated by the prospect of making a quick sale of the resultant venison, some of which may find its

way into pubs or restaurants keen to buy carcasses relatively cheaply to boost their own profit margins.

He added: "The message from Operation Wild Deer and this associated poster campaign is clear. By working in partnership, people in rural communities can help combat this crime by reporting suspicious activity which may be associated with poaching. Pubs, restaurants or other establishments should also be alert to the risks posed to both their business and customers by buying venison from a questionable source. Wild venison is a superb food product so long as it is obtained from a legitimate and sustainable source, has been culled using best practice and its handling throughout has met the rigorous food hygiene requirements which are in place to protect consumers. By its nature, poaching completely disregards these basic requirements which is why it must be dealt with using a zero tolerance approach."

For more information visit [www.bds.org.uk](http://www.bds.org.uk).

## Poaching on the agenda for WDA/IDS meeting

**A** joint meeting between the Wild Deer Association of Ireland and the Irish Deer Society recently took place at Garda HQ, Phoenix Park, Dublin. The meeting was chaired by Chief Superintendent Fergus Healy (Crime, Policy and Administration) on behalf of the Garda Commissioner and attended by Sergeant Paul Greene. Firearm Policy Unit. The Wild Deer Association of Ireland were represented by Dominic O'Hea & Larry Ryan, the Irish Deer Society were represented by Liam McGarry and Jim Daly.



*Delegates pictured at the meeting.*

The only item on the agenda was that of poaching which encompassed discussion on the Wildlife and Firearms Acts. The meeting proved positive and productive. It is proposed to have further meetings with the relative stakeholders in the near future. All developments, decisions and any proposed policy changes will be reported on conclusion of those meetings.

## Illegal Netting in Lough Neagh

**T**he Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure was asked for an update on the amount of illegal netting found in Lough Neagh; and the work ongoing to prevent such illegal netting.

The Minister said that for the period 1 April 2012 to the end of March 2013, 22 nets with a total length of 23,000m were seized in Lough Neagh by DCAL Fisheries Protection Officers. There have been a total of 111 boat patrols on Lough Neagh during that period. The Department will seize illegal nets from wherever they are detected including boats, commercial premises, quaysides, vehicles etc.

DCAL Fisheries Protection staff continue to carry out intelligence led operations, often in conjunction with other enforcement agencies, to detect, disrupt and deter those involved in illegal fishing activities on Lough Neagh.



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## The West of Ireland Spaniel Club Working Tests

The West of Ireland Spaniel Club held its annual Working Tests on Sunday 28th July 2013 at Mountbellew, Co Galway in conjunction with the Mountbellew Vintage Clubs' Annual Vintage Rally. The day's events were kindly sponsored by Mr Gerard Kelly of Outdoor Ranger, Shooting and Fishing Supplies and Registered Firearms Dealer/Gunsmith, Unit 50 – N17 Business Park, Galway Rd, Tuam, Co Galway ([outdoor.ranger@hotmail.com](mailto:outdoor.ranger@hotmail.com)).

The Tests were judged by Mr Pat Cox from Co Mayo and Mr Louis Rice from Co Down. Pat Cox is an A panel judge and is a regular on the trialing circuit competing with both Springer and Cocker Spanie and has judged the Irish Spaniel Championship in recent years and has judged Spaniels in the UK and Sweden. Louis Rice is a C panel judge and a very successful spaniel handler. He is very active in the trialing scene at the moment and has come second in the Irish Spaniel Championship in the last two years, with Sliabh Treasure in 2012 and Wyndhill Shona of Sliabh in 2011. Hopefully third time lucky for Louis in 2013. The Steward of the beat was our own hard working Clubman, Mr Declan Mitchell from Co Galway. There were four tests run on the day which were A/V Puppy, A/V Novice, Confined Cocker Open and A/V Open. Between each test, Labrador demonstrations were conducted by Mr Lorenzo Hynes and Mr Kevin Coyne of the Midland Retriever Club. Lorenzo was still beaming from his 2012 Irish Retriever Championship Triumph with his fantastic black Labrador Dog Trumpetaker Ash. A total entry of 55 dogs was received, another huge entry for the Club at our second year at these grounds.

The day started with the Puppy Test and a field of 16 Springer Spaniels and 1 Cocker Spaniel. The standard of those puppies set the bar very high, there were some great displays of power hunting and smart retrieving and the judges gave each Puppy ample time to show themselves



Puppy Test (L/R) James Shippam, Shane Gainley, James Casey and Enda Jennings.

### Puppy Test Results:

- 1st Blackguard Ivy – Mr James Casey, Co Limerick.
- 2nd Hunterslodge Meg – Mr James Shippam, Co Limerick.
- 3rd Garrisoncullen Pio – Mr Shane Gainley, Co Mayo.
- 4th Sandford Kathleen – Mr Enda Jennings, Co Mayo.

Following the presentation of prizes which were presented after each event, we were straight into the Novice dogs with and a brilliant entry of 18 dogs. The Springer Spaniels were out in force again with just two cockers in the mix in what was another stunning display of quality dog work. There were some really nice dogs that had a little bad luck on the day and ended up just missing out on the prizes.

### Novice Test results:

- 1st Maesyronan Hurricane – Mr Allan Mitchell, Co Galway.
- 2nd Blackguard Ivy – Mr James Casey, Co Limerick.
- 3rd Owenwee Comet – Mr Enda Jennings, Co Mayo.
- 4th Sallywood Dancer – Mr Shane McManus, Co Donegal.

Next in were the cockers and again the quality dogs that came to the top. A difficult course ensured the dogs had to be top class to shine. The winner had a great run and really showed her class to pip those that were hot on her heels.



Novice Test (L/R) Enda Jennings, James Casey, Allan Mitchell, and Shane McManus.

### Cocker results:

- 1st Abbylara Smarty – Mr Des Elliot, Co Armagh.
- 2nd Nederscot Trinity – Mr Domhnall Creamer, Co Dublin.
- 3rd Cheweky Gigges – Mr Domhnall Creamer, Co Dublin.
- 4th Wetlands Jack Snipe – Mr Eoin O Meaghair, Co Cork.



Cocker Test - Des Elliot (L) and Domhnall Creamer.

Finally came the A/V Open and a field of 10 dogs were entered. Quality again was everywhere and such was the testing layout of the course that those that came to the fore had to be top class. All dogs hunted with real purpose and drive and there was some spectacular retrieving. A real treat for the many spaniel connoisseurs that stood bravely to the end of what was a very enjoyable and successful day for The West of Ireland Spaniel Club. Our Clubman, Mr Christy Murphy showed us that retirement from the top table is the way to go as he took the top spot in the A/V Open for the second year running.

### Open Test results:

- 1st Churchview Chunnel – Mr Christy Murphy, Co Mayo.
- 2nd Maesyronan Hurricane – Mr Allan Mitchell, Co Galway.
- 3rd Drumreenagh De Vitry – Mr Roddy Culleton, Co Laois.
- 4th Sprucehill Rhoda – Mr John Butler, Co Cork.



Open Test (L/R) John Butler, Roddy Culleton, Allan Mitchell and Christy Murphy.





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## Willowbreeze Net £2,500 For Children's Heartbeat Trust



Allan Reid presents the cheque for £2500 to the Children's Heartbeat Trust.

**O**n Saturday 6th July, Willowbreeze Fishing Club held their annual fly-fishing charity championship final on Straid Fishery Co. Antrim for the Children's Heartbeat Trust. The day was a huge success having raised £2,500 for this well deserved charity. Willowbreeze would like to give thanks to every prize donator for their kind contribution to this worthy cause and would also like to give great thanks to the fishery owners of Turnface, Woodford and Straid fisheries for hosting our competitions. They thank Harry McAteer and Alan McCartney for giving up their time to take control and look over this event. Our final thank you is for the department of culture, arts and leisure for supplying us with 200 beautiful trout for the competition.

The competition was a 6 fish bag limit where we measured our first 3 fish. At 10:30am all boats left the jetty on the whistle. With anglers spreading evenly throughout the lake it wasn't long before the anglers had tightened up and were hooking fish with Steven McSherry, Ian Rowan and Gary Crothers all recording fish on their scorecards. By 11:00am most anglers had either caught or lost fish. By 12:30pm the pace had been set as Ian Rowan and Gary Crothers were both on five fish each, with Hugh Morris and Gary McFadden on four fish each and both desperately trying to net their final two fish. At 1:15pm, Andy McClelland eagerly slipped his net under a 2lb beautiful Brown Trout, but unfortunately it was not counted as it was a Rainbow-only competition. By 3:00pm most anglers had caught fish, with Gary Crothers and Ian Rowan still in the lead with their 6 fish each. A few more anglers had been recorded along with Steven McSherry, Harry Moffet, Andy Craig and Chris Dickey. With the final whistle being blown at 4:30pm, it was time for Alan McCartney to fire up the BBQ for some hungry competitors.

The score cards were tallied up and the final count had been done. The top eight in the prizes were:

- 1st Gary Crothers. 6 fish. 2760
- 2nd Ian Rowan. 6 fish. 2550
- 3rd Steven McSherry. 4 fish 2020
- 4th Hugh Morris. 4 fish 1880
- 5th Gary McFadden. 4 fish. 1480
- 6th Derek Cooper. 3 fish. 1390
- 7th Harry Moffet. 3 fish. 1290
- 8th Andy McClelland. 3 fish. 1250

Willowbreeze Fishing Club would also like to thank Andy Cooper for taking photographs of the event and also to Robin Swann MLA UUP for the presentation of the cheque of £2,500 to the Children's Heartbeat Trust. final round at Straid fishery Turnface fishery Woodford fishery overall winner Gary Crothers.

## Wild Hunter start to distribute ATA including the new Over & Under



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## The Irish Spaniel Championship 2013

Details are as follows:

**VENUE:** Shanes Castle Estate, Co. Antrim by kind permission of Rt. Hon. Shane O'Neill

**DATE:** Friday 27th & Saturday 28th December 2013

**Judges:** Mr. Victor McDevitt & Mr. Dermot Cahill Referee: Mr. John Dowling.

**CHAMPIONSHIP HEADQUARTERS HOTEL** - Dunsilly Hotel, 20 Dunsilly Road, Antrim, BT41 2JH Phone: 0044 (0) 28 9446 2929 From Ireland: 048 9446 2929.

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


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## Bangor hotshot wins £2,000 gun at Shanes Castle Game Fair!

**C**ompetition was red hot for some of the biggest clay pigeon shooting prizes in Ireland at the Irish Game Fair over Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th June at Shanes Castle.

And County Down's own hot shot Les Lupton from Bangor was bang on target at Shanes winning an amazing shotgun worth £2,000. Despite being a relatively recent convert to clay shooting, Spectator reader Les took advantage of a discounted ticket and set his sights on the big prize.

The amazing Caesar Guerini gun was on offer in the Pool Trap competition at the Irish Game Fair and Fine Food Festival, traditionally one of the most popular have-a-go attractions, with around 600 shooters over the two days of the Fair and never more so than this year with such a top prize up for grabs.

Game Fair Director Albert Titterington said: The competitors were shooting under the supervision of one of the world's leading talents, British Trap Shooting Coach, Kevin Gill and was a rare opportunity to try out the extensive range of Caesar Guerini shotguns and try their luck for this fabulous prize.

"Competitors simply selected a gun from the Caesar Guerini range to shoot in the Pool Trap competition and, even if they missed all 10 clays, they still went into a draw for the £2,000 Caesar Guerini gun. Les scored 6/10 in Pool Trap shoot, not enough to get into the prizes for that, but he scooped the big one in the draw the gun. It just goes to prove that if you



*Les Lupton was bang on target winning a stunning Caesar Guerini shotgun at Shanes Castle Game Fair from Tommy Beattie Guns & Ammo, Moygashel, Co Tyrone.*

were game to 'have a go' at Shanes Castle, then literally anyone could have walked off with this amazing prize.

"We are very grateful to well known gun dealer Tommy Beattie and his colleagues in the Anglo Italian Arms Company ([www.gueriniguns.co.uk](http://www.gueriniguns.co.uk))

for donating this fine prize and for sportingly helping us add to our amazing clay shooting prize fund, which is unmatched by any other fair in the country.

"This year top shots in the 30 Bird Game Fair Sporting Championships, the Flush and the Pool Trap competed for a dazzling array of prizes including two guns sponsored by Donal Mc Cloy Guns Unlimited, Toomebridge along with quality watches, country clothing and cash," said Albert Titterington.



*Guns & Ammo proprietor Tommy Beattie (left) presents Les Lupton with his Caesar Guerini shotgun watched by Shanes Castle Game Fair Director Albert Titterington.*

## Urbalshinny Sporting Lodge 30 bird Invitation Sporting Shoot

**O**n Saturday 17th August Urbalshinny Sporting Lodge held a 30 bird Invitation Sporting Shoot for local shooting syndicates at Urbalshinny a total of 5 teams took part those being Gortnagarn, The Kilkeel Men, The Monaghan Men, Baronscourt/Cavan Select and Urbalshinny.

After the 30 targets, the winners by a long shot were the Baronscourt/Cavan select team counting 81 points, with the Gortnagarn team second counting 74, the overall Individual High Gun was Jason Sproule from Baronscourt, shooting an excellent 28/30.

The prizegiving was conducted by Simon Monteith from the Urbalshinny Syndicate. Simon thanked all the teams for participating and presented The Artie Monteith Memorial Trophy to the Baronscourt/Cavan Select team captain Jason Sproule along with a pair of wax chaps for each team member. Jason was also presented with the individual prize a pair of binoculars which was sponsored by A.A. Monteith & Sons Registered Firearms Dealer, Beragh. Second prize was then presented to the Gortnagarn Team which was a bag of Feedwell dog food for each team member, very generously sponsored by Feedwell Dog Foods. In closing Simon advised all present that this was now going to be an annual event and hoped to see them all attending next year.



*The Baronscourt/Cavan team of Kyle McIlwaine, Declan Connolly, Jason Sproule, Donal Corr and Eugene McClements.*



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# Philip Lawton Passes Away Tragically Early After Brave Struggle With Illness



**T**he Republic of Ireland Editor of Irish Country Sports And Country Life Philip Lawton passed away tragically early during the summer after a brave struggle with an illness. Philip was undoubtedly one of the great personalities of Irish country sports and he shuffled off this mortal coil on Friday the 7th of June, to the sadness of many friends and fellow fieldsports enthusiasts. His life was celebrated at his funeral in All Saints Church, Grangegorman, Dublin on Wednesday the 12th June, when the Rev David Pierpoint commented on how Philip's life had touched so many people in different walks of life, and the huge number of his friends who were there to bid him farewell.

Rev Pierpoint gave a touching and humorous sermon during Philip's funeral in All Saints Church. He pointed out that 'as a member of the guild of All Saints here in this parish Philip kept his faith very public and he was never afraid to wear his faith on his sleeve, so to speak. And it is therefore most fitting that we celebrate his life in this requiem eucharist here today. Philip is known to many here today for different things. Some of you may not know that he was a keen woodcarver and carved the memorial case and inscription at the front of this church.'

Rev Pierpoint said: 'He is also remembered for his involvement with the magazine Irish Country Sports and Country Life and with the Irish Game Fairs organisation. He co-edited Irish Country Sports & Country Life, which is a quarterly magazine, and every issue submitted an editorial and a very entertaining article under the pseudonym of 'Plus Twos.' He also wrote for Countryman's Weekly as 'Midlander.' As a Director of the Great Game Fairs of Ireland he travelled the country attending country fairs and shows usually dressed in his tweed suit, chequered shirt and countryman's tie, and on occasion also wearing his plus twos just to impress! He was seldom without a fag or a pipe in his mouth and he cut quite a dash walking around with his cane, stick or whatever he could find to make him

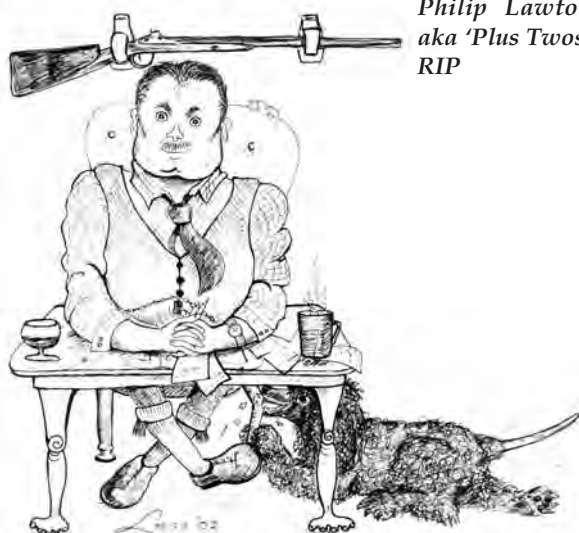
more like the country gent he really was. His fishing and shooting exploits are legendary among those who dared venture out with him and his regular sidekick Geoff.'

Irish County Sports & Country Life publisher and Great Game Fairs of Ireland Director, Albert Titterington, said that while there was obvious sadness at the funeral, many of the large crowd present could not help thinking that Philip, a very talented musician and very able actor, would have loved the rousing hymns, the choir singing a hymn with an arrangement by himself, the well organised ceremony and the excellent address by the minister, Rev Pierpoint. Albert Titterington described him as 'a real character, an able raconteur and talented writer who had a rapier wit and a fund of humorous stories many of which he shared through his writing as 'Midlander' in the Countryman's Weekly or as 'Plus Twos' in the Irish Country Sports and Country Life magazine.'

'We, in the Great Game Fairs of Ireland,' said Albert, 'were delighted to utilise Philip's warm personality and talents and take them to a wider audience by giving him possibly his 'greatest stage' as ROI Editor of Irish Countrysports & Country Life and as Director of the Great Game Fairs of Ireland. When we were starting our Game Fair at Birr in 2007, I invited him to be part of the team and a Director of the overall brand the Great Game Fairs of Ireland, and this role included being Arena Director at both fairs and MC at our Game Fair PR functions. He fitted well into the existing team some of whom have been involved since 1979. He also took part in the Victorian Poacher longnetting act where he acted

the befuddled 'Constable' who never caught the poacher! 'With his massive personality he was simply superb in all of these roles and will be missed. This is why we have dedicated the success of this year's Great Game Fairs of Ireland Fairs to his memory.'

Philip lived in Glasnevin. He was born in Dublin in 1952 and educated in King's Hospital. He worked in the insurance industry specialising in engineering underwriting and risk management. Philip had an involvement in, and was a great



*Philip Lawton  
aka 'Plus Twos'  
RIP*



defender of, virtually every countrysport and pastime in Ireland, from stick making through to angling and he was passionate about angling.

He was very good friends with fellow Dubliner Geoff Payne and they had known each other for 30 years, first meeting when serving in the army and navy in the Middle East and they sometimes met for a few drinks and a chat. 'I am ex-army,' said Geoff, 'and Philip was ex-navy and we enjoyed a bit of banter about the failings of the army and the navy. Philip was a very knowledgeable and skilful man who was an accomplished musician. He told me that he played on about 500 organs throughout Europe and was due to play in Londonderry. He loved his music and lived for it. He was Church Organist at St Audoen's near Christ Church in Dublin and he played there every Sunday.

'While Philip lived in Glasnevin, I lived on the opposite side of the city and I made it my business to see him most days. We sometimes jokingly referred to the Grave Diggers Pub, where we met as 'The Office.' We shared a great love of the outdoors. He was a member of a shooting syndicate on the north side of Dublin in the Malahide estuary and whenever he went up there I'd tag along as a sort of batman. Philip would do the shooting while I did the driving and general chores. He also fished all over Ireland and recently did a lovely ten day fishing trip in Norway.'

Charlie Cullen also lives in Dublin and was a good friend of Philip's as well. He is Vice President of the Leinster Coursing Club and he recalled attending coursing meets around the country with Philip. 'He loved a good cigar and so do I,' recalled Charlie. 'We used to meet from time to time in The Halfway House, a pub near Phoenix Park in Dublin, where we'd enjoy a meal, a few drinks and a chat. I greatly enjoyed his company and we often engaged in banter. For example, I'm from Cavan and we have an unfair reputation of being tight with our finances. On one occasion when I paid for something at the Game Fair in Shane's Castle Philip joked that when I opened my wallet the moths flew out, implying that my wallet was rarely opened! When we met in The Halfway House we'd chat about shooting and fishing and while I would enjoy a soft drink, Philip would enjoy a drop of Jameson or Crested 10. We'd put the wrongs of the world to right. He was a very pleasant person to have a few drinks and a chat with. He had a good sense of humour and plenty of common sense. He was a very good organist and he played at Ann's, my wife's, funeral two years ago in Blanchardstown. Charlie recalled going out pigeon shooting with Philip but he never went fishing with him. 'Fishing was something I never took to. Shooting and dogs were my thing and I used to train shooting dogs.'

Another close friend of Philip's Pat Byrne, also from Dublin, who said he first met Philip at a fishing show several years ago and they often manned a Countryside Ireland stand at shows. Pat said that Philip would be greatly missed. They used to meet fairly often in the Breffni Inn in Ashtown Dublin for a few drinks and a chat. 'We would chat about fieldsports, about any impending legislation which might affect fieldsports and we'd chat about the challenges facing our beloved pastimes. It's great to feel

solidarity with someone else when you're chatting about a hobby you love; it's great to be in an environment where you are not being judged for what you love doing.' Pat said Philip was good natured and easy to chat with. As well as being colourful he was a down to earth person. 'It was very sad that he was taken so early from us,' said Pat, 'but when the Man above says it's our time to go then we just have to calmly and philosophically accept it.' 'Philip lived for a number of years in Edenderry,' remarked Pat, 'and he did a lot of shooting down there. On a number of occasions I joined him for pigeon shooting in Dunshaughlin, Meath.' Pat added that he had some humorous and interesting anecdotes featuring Philip but he joked that they couldn't be revealed!

Another good friend was Tom Fulton, a keen hunting with hounds man and was a friend for 12 years.

'Philip was a great man to have a chat with,' recalled Tom. 'He was often the life and soul of a gathering, replete with endless anecdotes. As well as being an accomplished musician he loved gadgets and tools. Philip was an excellent organist and also a very good woodcarver. He had a number of talents. He was musical; he was good with tools and was a woodcarver; and he was a very accomplished writer. He was also a good actor. When I saw him portray the Constable pursuing the poacher I was impressed. He really got into an acting role but didn't overdo it. 'He was a man of considerable knowledge. For example I remember when he was MC at the Game Fairs he displayed a lot of knowledge about many subjects, such as the art of musketry. He was a real people person. I regard him as being a country gent without any unpleasant pretentiousness of character. Philip was a very warm and humane person, with a great sense of humour. He wasn't set in his ways. He was very adaptable.'

Tom pointed out that Philip's strong artistic streak showed itself in his handwriting and letter-writing which sometimes looked like calligraphy. Tom admired as well the way in which his friend dealt with the hard knocks and setbacks of life. He added: 'When it came to the hard knocks of life he showed himself to be philosophical and resilient. Another aspect of his character that I liked was that he was always himself no matter in what company he happened to be. He didn't modify his behaviour to ingratiate himself with people. But that didn't mean he was jarring or unpleasant when in people's company. He was always a gentleman. Philip possessed a tremendous interest in all countrysports.'

Philip is survived by his wife Margaret, son Stephen and daughters Naomi and Catherine. The family were greatly touched by the presence of so many people at the funeral and the heartfelt messages of sympathy they received from all over the sporting world and to them we send our condolences.

Having chatted to five very good friends of Philip's what emerges is a genuine fondness for someone who added colour to our lives, and a sadness that he should have been taken away from us prematurely. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

**Derek Fanning**





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# Soul Searching

**I** am writing this article shortly after taking a walk over a once great grouse moor in North Antrim. I knew from personal experience just how prolific that moor used to be. And the late Lord Glentoran told me that the annual grouse bag on the adjoining Cushleake moor, between Ballycastle and Cushendun, would be around 150 brace, walked up over pointers or setters. Needless to say I saw no evidence whatever of the presence of grouse, either young or old. Now, I would imagine that some readers might shrug their shoulders and say 'so what.' Others might say 'good,' that means more room for our raptors and predators like peregrine falcons, hen harriers, buzzards, hoodie crows, foxes and badgers'

But would the dissenters be right? How could organisations like the National Trust, which now owns the game rights on Cushleake moor, and the RSPB be happy with a situation where raptors and predators are more prevalent than grouse, lapwing, curlew, larks, meadow pipits or hares?

I think such organisations have some soul searching to do if they ever wish to see a return to the days when the environment was alive with the species that country dwellers loved - like game birds, larks, hares and butterflies of all descriptions. And no one raking in thousands of pounds every year.

You might think otherwise but I do not blame either the RSPB or the National Trust for all or even the bulk of the damage done to the environment over the past 50 or 60 years. It is just that they might stop promoting the wrong species and do more with vast budgets to strive for a level playing field for our own indigenous species. Incidentally, I was delighted to see that Environment Minister Alex Attwood made the correct decision about the proposed golf course on the North coast which the National Trust, among others, opposed.

And I have said before that the most insidious species of predator is the two-legged one with the powerful lamp at night able to make simple souls believe that he was lamping foxes instead of bagging live grouse for sale to people who seem not to have much integrity or concern for the damage he is doing. The chief suspect is a pathological liar and semi professional conman who will tell the truth only if he cannot think of a lie.

The number of clever, well paid people he has suckered over the years runs into many hundreds.

But to get back to my hill walk today. I was checking on an area where heather beetle or winter blight had done a lot of damage in the winter of 2010-11.

## ***Burning was the only remedy***

You might recall a previous article where I said a considerable area of once prime heather had been badly affected by one or other of these disasters. In the autumn of that year all seemed well on the area where I was walking today and on out over Cushleake moor. But in a very short period of time the heather had died, with hundreds of acres looking grey and for all the world like old burned whins. I checked with the very best brains on moor management and was told that whether it was blight or beetle the only remedy was to burn affected area. I and my helpers spent several days burning off the grey vegetation on the Cushleake side of the Ballycastle to Cushendun Road.


It was hard work and necessitated the burning of 12 foot-wide strips of what used to be heather for several hundred yards so that a fire could not cross up into the moor above. Then we noticed that a lot of heather was dead on the other side of the road. To burn it in safety would be extremely difficult for the dead heather stretched up to within feet of the forest above. It was now into lambing time and help was hard to get. But we managed to get well over a hundred acres burned in safety.

Imagine how I felt when I walked that same area today and found new, fresh heather had sprung up on the part we had burned. But surprise, surprise, the diseased part we had not managed to burn before the burning season ended, had reverted to the very same condition as it was in before it died and turned ashen grey. Inside two years when not a match was lit in the lifeless area, the heather was back, seven or eight inches long exactly as it was before the farmer asked me to burn it off. Were we wasting our time? I do not think so. The new heather on the burned bit was fresh, green and highly nutritious while the unburned bit, although the colour healthy heather should be, looked fairly old and straggly - just like it was before it turned grey and lifeless. Come to think of it, a man who might not regard himself as an authority on heather management told me two years ago last April that the dead heather would come back to life if I left it alone.

*We need prime heather to be re-established*







As someone who has attended and enjoyed her fair share of both walked up and driven shooting, Emma Cowan thoroughly enjoyed her tour of the shoot at Mountstewart, even though it was out of season, in company of James of The Wildfowler Inn in Greyabbey. She explains how game gets from field to table

## MOUNSTEWART GAME FROM FIELD TO TABLE

**T**he strange thing about compiling seasonal recipes is that you've got to work ahead of the season. So it was that, on a warm, dry Summer's day, I took to the road with James from The Wildfowler to visit the shoot at Mountstewart Estate.

One of the great things about shooting as a sport is that you find yourself in some truly beautiful places and, even better than that, you get to go 'behind the scenes' into the very heart of those places. We went through the public entrance to the well known Mountstewart (home to the Temple of Winds) but within a minute we had crossed the boundary into the private part of the estate.

Up in the yard, our tour guides for the day awaited, Mountstewart gamekeeper Drew Heaslip and one of the beaters and sometimes picker up, John Leyton.

Shooting is also wonderfully awash with traditions and etiquette and John was suitably attired in full shooting gear, graced by a very fine side-by-side shotgun. Well met, we were ready to get into the belly of the estate.

The next stage, a trip up to one of the drives, required leaving cars behind and jumping into Drew's

ATV. Now, most shoots I've ever been to, I've been there as a journalist, usually doubling up at a beater. In such a role, rides on ATVs are not on offer, so already I was feeling special as we bumped over the track up to the drive. On the way, we passed by a massive field of potatoes in purple flower – Mash Direct Home Guard I was told.

### Roy's Drive

Our destination was Roy's Drive, a magnificent setting to simply gaze at the scenery and, of course, a perfect shooting drive. From the top of the hill, a large field of ripening barley spread out before us, dipping down to a backdrop of coniferous woodland and surrounded on all sides by a generous field margin left to run riot as nature intended. To the right, lay a field of cover crop for the pheasants and, looking across, was a magnificent view over Strangford Lough. I could well imagine standing here on a crisp Winter's morning, the field reduced to stubble, the conifers giving a luxury of green backdrop and that marvellous view over the lough, waiting for the drive to unfold.

I mentioned the field margins

and the cover crop – things you don't see on every farm. That is because the gamekeeper takes conservation just as seriously as the shooting days. Drew Heaslip's job of rearing and nurturing the pheasants also creates a wonderful haven for all sorts of wildlife. It's often said that the shooting man puts much more back into the countryside than he ever takes out and I, for one, subscribe to that view.

From a Gun's perspective, Roy's Drive has to be as close to perfection as it gets. Standing in line at the bottom of the field, the conifers behind, the birds will come high over the crown of the hill, offering testing shooting and the chance for that magnificent high bird. Drew and John took us down to see how it would work and, standing at an imaginary peg, I could see at once how spectacular this drive would be.

The beaters would be working the ground on the far side of the barley field; the Guns would be positioned at the bottom of the hill. Some Guns would have their trusty Labradors sitting to heel waiting, others would rely on the pickers up, men or women with retriever type dogs,

who would be standing behind the guns waiting for the drive to be over. The birds would break cover and come sailing high over the hill, the Guns would shoot and some (in my experience only some) of the birds would come down. The whistle would call the end of the drive, shotguns would be broken and then the retrievers would set to work, collecting the fallen game.

### To the kitchen

Shoot over, this is where the Wildfowler Inn comes to the fore. The birds that are shot are genuinely wild game for the tables at The Wildfowler and Mountstewart is one of the places where their game is sourced.

Of course, game is not the sole focus at The Wildfowler, which has a wonderful fish menu celebrating its coastal location and, indeed, meat, pork and chicken that reflects the best of local produce to be found in the area. Nevertheless, in the season, you will always find game on the menu at The Wildfowler and patrons have come to love and expect such treats. And, if you want good, honest, healthy food, it doesn't get much better than this.



# Serving Great Game!

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*After our trip to Mountstewart, back at the Wildfowler Inn, chef Paul Heron had a mouthwatering array of game dishes ready for the camera. Game features regularly on Wildfowler menu in season, as well as fish and seafood, beef, pork, chicken and lamb, always served with the finest seasonal vegetables.*



# Ballotine of Pheasant

## INGREDIENTS

### FOR THE BALLOTINE

- 1 small lemon, finely grated zest only
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 pheasant breasts, skin removed
- 25g butter
- 6 rashers bacon
- 1 tbsp olive oil

### FOR THE SAUCE

- 6 shallots, peeled, chopped
- 25g butter, cold and diced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- sprig fresh thyme, leaves only
- 1 fresh bay leaf
- 75ml red wine
- 75ml Madeira
- 250ml demi-glace sauce or brown chicken stock

### FOR THE MUSHROOMS

- 25g butter
- 100g wild mushrooms mix, wiped clean
- flat leaf parsley
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled
- 1 shallot diced

### FOR THE CARROTS

- 3 carrots shaped into spires
- 200ml chicken stock
- sprig of thyme
- knob of butter

### FOR THE CONFIT PHEASANT LEGS

- 4 pheasant legs
- garlic, thyme, rock salt,
- 500ml duck fat

## METHOD

1. Butterfly the pheasant breast then sandwich between cling film, flatten with a sauce pan, remove cling film.
2. Sauté the mushrooms, garlic and shallots in butter, season and finish with parsley.
3. Spread a layer of mushroom mix in the middle of the pheasant, roll into a sausage shape, wrap in bacon, then roll in cling film and tie at both ends, poach in simmering water for 20 minutes. Unwrap from film, fry in a hot pan until golden brown, slice and serve
4. For the carrots: Place in a saucepan and simmer for 8 – 10 minutes.
5. For the sauce: Sauté the shallots in the oil over low heat, to soften without adding colour. Add the thyme, and fresh bay leaf and fry for one minute. Add the red wine, Madeira and chicken stock and boil to reduce. Remove the bay leaf. Whisk in the butter to thicken and glaze the sauce.
6. For the confit pheasant legs: Place all ingredients in a deep pan and cook in the oven for 2 hours at 90C/200F/Gas ¼.
7. For the pie, cut a 7cm circle and a 6cm circle of puff pastry, egg wash and bake for 10 minutes at 180C/350F/Gas 4, shred the cooked pheasant leg meat, add 3tbsp spoons of sauce, heat through and fill the pre-cooked pastry case.
8. Serve with the braised carrots and chateau potatoes.





## Roast Duck Breast

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 duck breasts
- salt and pepper

### FOR THE SAUCE

- 6 shallots, peeled, chopped
- 25g butter
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- sprig fresh thyme, leaves only
- 1 fresh bay leaf
- 150ml red wine
- 200g mixed wild berries
- 250ml demi-glace sauce, or brown chicken stock

### METHOD

1. Lightly score the skin of the duck, season well. Place a non stick pan on medium heat, lay the duck skin side down on the pan, cook until the fat begins to come from the duck. Turn the heat down cook for 10 minutes. Pour off excess fat during cooking to ensure a really crispy brown skin. Turn the duck, cook flesh side down for 2 minutes until browned. Remove from heat, leave the duck in the pan to rest.
2. For the sauce: Reduce the wine with shallots, thyme, bay leaf by 2/3 add stock reduce by 2/3 strain to a clean pan whisk in butter and finish with wild berries.
3. For the fondant potato: Place all in a heavy bottom pan and cook until most of the stock has reduced. Finish in the oven until golden brown and tender.
4. For the cabbage: Fry bacon and chestnuts, blanch the cabbage, drain, add to bacon and finish with cream.

### FOR FONDANT POTATO

- 2 baking potatoes, peeled and cut to shape
- 50g butter
- 200ml chicken stock
- garlic, thyme, salt and pepper

### FOR THE CABBAGE

- ½ head savoy cabbage, cored and shredded
- 100g smoked bacon lardons
- 100g cooked chestnuts, sliced
- 75ml single cream



## Pan seared wood pigeon

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 pigeon breasts
- 4 slices Clonakilty black pudding

### FOR CRISPY POTATOES

- 2 potatoes
- 100ml clarified butter

### FOR THE SAUCE

- 6 shallots, peeled, chopped
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- sprig fresh thyme, leaves only
- 75ml red wine
- 75ml port
- 250ml demi-glace sauce, or brown chicken stock

### METHOD

1. Grate the potatoes and wash off the starch, dry on tea-towel. Mix with melted butter, shape in to circle on grease proof paper and bake in the oven for 10 minutes at 180C/350F/Gas 4.
2. Reduce the port and wine with shallots and thyme by two thirds, add stock and reduce by two thirds again. Strain to a clean pan.
3. Heat a non stick frying pan, sear the pigeon breasts and black pudding for 1 minute on each
4. side, remove for the heat and rest for 5 minutes.
5. Serve with crispy potatoes and port sauce.



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# The CLA Game Fair 2013

*The Team with sponsors Tourism Ireland, test ground behind.*

**T**he Country Landowners Association (CLA) Game Fair is a Mecca for country sports enthusiasts and this year the event was held at Ragley Hall, Alcester, Warwickshire from 19th to 21st July 2013. A vital component of the CLA is the renewal of the challenge between the Home Countries Gundog Teams, made up this year of five spaniels and five retrievers. To say that the competition is fierce is a massive understatement, everything is keenly contested and anything achieved is hard won.

I had the privilege of travelling with the Irish team this year, my first visit to the CLA for five years, and it was wonderful to experience the buzz and excitement as we approached what is the biggest event of its kind. But all is never plain sailing. An arduous journey in severe heat had to be negotiated after the team assembled in the Port of Dublin. I left Bangor on Wednesday evening at

6.00 pm, and after a brief sleepover, courtesy of Tom and Maeve Hughes, boarded the bus in Camlough at 5.00 am Thursday. We all arrived after

many stops at our base Hotel in Redditch at 7.00 pm Thursday.

The first dog ran at 10.00 am Saturday with the temperature above 30 degrees. The team this year was selected by Ken Lindsay and Tommy Hughes who also captained and generally chaperoned the team. Very generous sponsorship was received from Tourism Ireland, represented by Margaret Mellor, and members were resplendent in emerald green outfits, totally appropriate for the occasion, and from Irish Country Sports & Country Life magazine. Several training sessions had taken place under the tutelage of the captain and Willie Edgar (many thanks to dummy throwers Eddie Moore and Ronnie Humphries).

The team looked relaxed, if apprehensive, as we made our way to the Fair for our first glimpse of the Arena. Fronted on one side by a grandstand and by a lake on the other, the course ran for about 180 metres, was planted with game crop and bisected by two fences. A wood closed in one end of the crop. The area was used for an International on day 1, and for several demonstrations, thus the cover became flattened in parts. Despite the intense heat and humidity, a pleasant, light breeze blew across the arena from the water, providing reasonable



CLA GAME FAIR 2013  
HOME INTERNATIONAL  
OVERALL TEAM WINNER  
IRELAND

*The big screen says it all.*



*Sean Moriarty top overall Spaniel.*



*Tommy McMinn best marking lab.*



*Sean Diamond with the Joe McGrath trophy for top Irish dog.*

*(Below) Willie Edgar, runner up in the spaniels.*



*Hats off to the winners!*





scent for those dogs handled to take advantage.

The Spaniel course started with a hunt up, followed by a marked retrieve over a fence. A water retrieve and a blind followed by a walked up rabbit flush and a long blind over both fences completed the run. There were 80 x 120 points for hunting pattern and style. The judges were Alec Coutts and Dave Rayner.

The retrievers started with a double mark over a fence, then a water retrieve followed by a long blind. The fourth was a tricky blind close to a fence, and finally a crowd pleasing, length of the course mark. The judges were Tess Lawrence and Alan Schofield. All retrieves for both breeds were saluted by a shot.

I am pleased to report that our team was very well supported. We swelled the ranks in the grandstand and willed our team to success. Chief cheerleader Barbara Hynes ensured that we were vocal and animated, vociferous and raucous were the accusations, but we were not to be outdone by other partisan groups. There is after all something special about a shamrock fuelled: "Get on ya boy!"

Spaniels started both mornings and Willie Thompson with Clanicker Oliver Hardy opened our account with a creditable 91. Immediately following were Tim Crothers with Scroggswood Cobber with 99.

Tommy McMinn with Apollobay Apocalypse of Astraglen had the unenviable task of being first over the retriever course. What a job he did, posting a score of 115 with some exquisite work. Sean Diamond, a CLA first timer, followed with Doohooma Lad and his running mate was John Halsted. No pressure there then. Gasps and amazement filled the grandstand as Sean scores 100x100 going to the last. Sean finished a wonderful debut with 116. Current Irish champion Lorenzo Hynes with Ir. FTCh Trumptaker Ash made a brilliant start but had wretched luck on a blind, which saw him finish with 91. The team had started very well, but clever strategic placement of handler and dog combinations by our competitors, meant that all was still to play for on the Sunday.

Debutante Sean Moriarty led the team on day two with spaniel Tersol Flash, and promptly posted a not to be equalled score of 115. He was followed by the ever reliable Willie Edgar with Int FTCh McGwyn Deallus who accumulated 114 points.

Mick Walsh with IrFTCh Hollydrive Theo rounded off two mornings of fantastic work with a score of 107. The spaniels had finished clear by 20 points, and most importantly 46 clear of England, who we knew had a very powerful retriever team.

Hope, as well as blood pressure, was rising when, after lunch, Captain Tommy Hughes entered the fray with Int FTCh Apache Joe and finished with a worthy 111 points. One more to go - what was our margin? Calculators and the best available mathematical brains were summoned to work out a strategy as, true to form, the scores of the last four dogs were not released. The fate of the national gundog team rested on the shoulders of Richard Johnston with Shimnavale Excalibur, who performed well to post a score of 104.

We thought, hoped and dared to believe that maybe the team had done enough, but it was not until thirty long minutes later that commentator Martin Deeley confirmed that Ireland were overall top team with a total score of 1063 points.

We were magnanimous in victory and boy did we enjoy the moment. The team had achieved a wonderful victory, under the most stressful of conditions. The dogs had endured tremendous heat, had travelled, rested and lived in a cage on a bus for many hours and days, but had come out and convincingly beaten the best the home countries could muster. The whole team deserve our congratulations. Thanks are due to sponsors Tourism Ireland, the CLA and everyone who contributed to this epic victory.

The journey home in the wee small hours of Monday morning was not just as bad as we expected, that is, after we found a wheelbarrow to help us carry all of our trophies!

## ***Individual Awards***

Best Spaniel	Sean Moriarty
Runner up	Willie Edgar
Best Hunting Spaniel	Eddie Scott, Scotland
Best Retriever	John Halsted, England
Runner up	Sean Diamond
Best marker	Tommy McMinn
Best Irish Dog	Sean Diamond
Best Irish Retriever	Sean Diamond
Best Irish Spaniel	Sean Moriarty





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# Inaugural English Setter Breed Stake to be held In Ulster

*The last Int FTCh English Setter Dog - Gerald Devine's great International Field Trial Champion Gardenfield Warrior.*

**T**here is much to anticipate in the upcoming season for Pointers and Setters in Ulster. Over the last few years our dogs have enjoyed considerable success across these islands and, as we prepare to begin our new season with the first trial in mid-August, but the majority in September and October, we have several new features this season to look forward too.

The most exciting, I think, is the introduction of a new Breed Stake. We have had two very successful breed clubs in Ulster for many years: the Ulster Irish Red Setter Club was formed in 1908 and the Northern Ireland Pointer Club was founded in 1948. Both these Clubs have run a Stake each year dedicated to their breed. The Red Breed Stake, which has been run at Murley Mountain for over 40 years, is the one all red dog people want to win and it is certainly a desire shared by the pointer fraternity when they get together in Co Antrim for the Pointer Breed Stake on the last Friday in September each year. However, there has never been an English Setter breed club here and so no stake dedicated to them. We do have the very successful English Setter Club of Ireland, which is affiliated to the Irish Kennel

Club and which runs two successful breed stakes each year, one on grouse in the Dublin mountains early in August and one in on pheasant in the beet fields of Co Carlow in early October (more details on their activities can be found at [www.escofi.wordpress.com](http://www.escofi.wordpress.com)).

But, given the success of English Setters from Ireland in recent years in all of Ireland and the UK, we thought it was high time we gave the breed the recognition they deserved through holding a stake for them here in the north. As we do not currently have an Ulster English Setter Club, the Kennel Club gave the Northern Ireland Pointer Club permission to run an All Aged Stake confined to English Setters. This will be run on Sunday 22nd September at Glennoo Shoot near Fivemiletown in Co Tyrone. It is interesting to note that the N I Pointer Club first felt the inclination to run a stake for English Setters early in its existence, the question was discussed at its AGM in 1951, but unfortunately it was deemed not to be viable. We are particularly hopeful that 52 years after it was first thought of, this September will see us run a stake that will celebrate the best of this fantastic breed. We would encourage anyone with an English Setter or an interest in English Setters to come along and spectate - or even better - participate. Dogs must be





*FTCh Ballyellen Cody - the Tower Bird Trophy winner for best Pointer or Setter in the UK 2012 season.*



*Paddy Peoples with his Open Stake winning ESD Castorrock Glen.*

registered with the Kennel Club in London in order to be able to enter. Forms for this can be downloaded from their web-site: [www.thekennelclub.org.uk/kcforms](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/kcforms)

### ***The best running ground for our dogs in Ireland***

The venue is the fantastic Glennoo Shoot ([www.glennoo.com](http://www.glennoo.com)) positioned on the northern edge of the Monaghan mountains, near Fivemiletown. This range of ground is perhaps the best running ground for our dogs in Ireland, but what makes it particularly special for us is the range of game available. The Shoot is the result of the vision of Tom Woods, who has welcomed the Setter and Pointer fraternity to the ground for the last two years, when we have had some fantastic Trials. The partridge have given us some great sport on our visits and Tom cannot do enough to ensure our trials are a great success. For those of you who have never attended a Setter and Pointer Trial, game is not shot, the dogs are judged on their speed and style and their ability to find and produce game. A blank shot is fired as the bird is flushed. However the abundance of game Tom produces for us can really make us appreciate what a



*Gerald Devine with three of the winning members of the 2009 Ballyellen Litter - Ballyellen Colleen, FTCh Ballyellen Cody and FTCh Ballyellen Cara.*





*FTCh Gortinreagh Aztec of Glynlark achieving his FTCh title in Scotland in August, 2012.*

great place this is for any shooting man. Glennoo has had a long association with Pointers and Setters as its previous tenant was Canon Dermot Griffith from Killyman who was a lifelong pointer man and Chairman of the Northern Ireland Grouse Council. I remember some fantastic trials here in the eighties and nineties until lack of game made us look elsewhere to run the Trials. With Tom now at the helm, it's great to return to the venue where so many legends of our sport have enjoyed success and see it restored to greatness.

2013 seems a timely moment to launch this stake as Ulster English Setter success has just been crowned by the announcement that an English Setter from Ulster is the winner of this year's Tower Bird Trophy. This is an award made by the BASC to the best dog under four years of age in each of the four gundog sections throughout the UK. The winner of the Trophy for Pointers and Setters was Gerald Devine's FTCh Ballyellen Cody who had an exceptionally successful season last year. Cody was bred in Kilkenny by Red Mills' Bill Connolly and Cody's success together with that of his sisters FTCh Ballyellen Cara and Ballyellen Colleen and his brother Ballyellen Moss show what a successful mating this has been. However, as I see it, this mating continues the evolution of the English Setter in Ireland which has been

ongoing since the use of the import Moka de Salle Verte in the sixties produced some excellent dogs who were successful in their own right and also enhanced the lines which are still being developed today by other careful introductions of new blood such as Johnny Geoghegan's two Norwegian dogs FTCh Storeskars G'Snorre and FTCh Storeskars II Odin and more recently John Quirke's kennel of new blood including Heegard V Kody, who sired the Ballyellen litter.

The English Setter breeders from this island, the men who have worked and trialled their dogs extensively and really know the characteristics of the breed and what matings are likely to work, have proved time and again that they are very forward thinking when it comes to developing this great breed and we very much hope that the establishment of this stake will prove a success and be a great showcase for one of the most effective bird-dog breeds we have.

Further details can be got from NI Pointer Club Hon. Secretary Carol Calvert at [cecalvert82@hotmail.com](mailto:cecalvert82@hotmail.com)

*Joe Dobbin with his young hopeful Falconstooop George.*





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*Alan C.M. Rountree casting Int FT Ch Waterford Edward of Tasco in the recent IK Champonship. They finished 2nd adding to Alan's illustrious handling record in the championship - one that is unlikely to be equalled.*

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**John Wilson**



# The GREAT GAME FAIRS of IRELAND reject hype and deliver 'Ireland's Leading Game Fairs'

## *The Irish Game and Country Fair at Shanes Castle*

**I**t wasn't just the amazing birds of prey that soared to new heights at the Irish Game Fair at Shanes Castle. Record numbers of the public poured through the gates to see what had been billed as the 'biggest and best ever Irish Game Fair.'



Game Fair Director Albert explained why the thousands came despite the odd touch of drizzle: "We simply deliver what the public wants and expects from the Great Game Fairs of Ireland's fairs. This year we worked hard to make sure that Shanes was extra special, we told the public what was on offer and the public responded.

"We had the best ever range of competitions and the biggest prize fund, a huge tented village of trade stands with a real country lifestyle theme and, for the first time, three arenas operating with action packed programmes: The Main Arena; the 'Countrysports in Action' arena where the public could interact with the stars of the show and the Living History arena set in the midst of the re-enactors' Living History Village with a timeline from

the Vikings to the Georgian period in the lee of the ancient Shanes Castle."

"Shanes also catered for the public's fascination with fine food, especially with locally sourced produce and at Shanes we had the best ever Fine Food Festival - the largest ever seen at any Irish Game or Country Fair - and some really exciting top notch game and fish cookery demonstrations.

"We had Ireland's largest and most varied range of canine competitions and displays with international gundogs, while Ian Openshaw - the most successful handler in the world - held the packed Arena audiences spellbound along with the CLA international team and Dog Guru Keith Mathews who includes Shanes in his busy schedule of international dog training masterclasses."

"The widest range of Irish hunting, shooting and fishing organisations exhibited and also the Kennel Club from London, not to mention the display vehicles old and new

including horse & carriages, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, a De Lorean; old military vehicles, fire engines etc to the latest 4 x 4s there was simply so much to see and do that many of the public decided to come for both days of the fair.

Commenting on the economic boost which the game fair makes to the local area, Albert said: "The record crowds at Shanes Castle, Antrim meant a vital economic boost for the whole area. I know that hotels and guest houses were fully booked over the weekend and understand that some have even taken repeat bookings for next year. The economic boost is significant for the local economy given these tough economic times." A video of the fair can be seen at:

<https://vimeo.com/70935716>



## ***Ireland's Leading Game Fair?***

With Shanes over, final touches were made for the Irish Game and Country fair at Birr, Co Offaly on 31st August and 1st September and the Great Game Fairs of Ireland team were truly up for the challenge from the team organising the country fair at Borris who had boasted that the Carlow Fair was 'Ireland's leading game fair.'

When asked by the media at the event for his reaction Albert Titterington simply stated: "We have a track record since 1979 of organising super fairs at Shanes and a fantastic fair in the most beautiful grounds of Birr Castle. With the 2013 Irish Game and Country Fair at Birr Castle, being our 53rd Irish Game Fair – I was more than happy to put up our successful track record of delivering fairs and especially those at Birr up against the history of the ROI fairs organised by others. It's a no-brainer really – the 2013 Fair at Birr Castle was the largest game or country fair staged in the ROI and with the fair at Shanes, also being successful, without doubt the Great Game Fairs of Ireland brand delivered the two leading game or country fairs in Ireland in 2013!."

Albert's confidence was fully justified as the fair at Borris, after a few modest years at both Clonmellon and Borris appeared to go back rather than forward, while Birr attracted record numbers of visitors, record numbers of stands, a fantastic prize structure, huge numbers of international competitors and a great economic boost for the region. After the 2013 fairs the only topic for many as to which was Ireland's leading fair was which of the two Great Game Fairs of Ireland was 'Ireland's leading Game Fair' – Shanes Castle or Birr Castle!

## ***Fantastic weather and Birr sets records***

While the fair at Shanes Castle had mixed weather the fair at Birr Castle had great weather and dry ground and dust were the largest problems. Every aspect of the event had been stepped up with a truly massive prize fund for all of the events; new arena attractions, a great turnout of trade stands and super presentations put on by the major country sports organisations. The estate played its part by having the grounds in superb condition and a brand new attraction for the public – a 39' tree house. As part of the Gathering celebrations the fair really did make a major contribution with Mid Ireland Tourism reporting that accommodation in the area to a radius of nearly 40 miles of Birr was booked up. Trade too was excellent with both local and international traders reporting excellent business. A video of the fair will be available soon on our facebook page.

## ***Gundogs at the Fairs***

After 2013 there is absolutely no argument about

which fairs in Ireland deliver the best gundog weekends – it is of course the Great Game Fairs of Ireland! At Shanes Castle there were visiting teams from Wales, England and the ROI in the Feedwell International Retriever Tests and the Red Mills International Spaniel Tests and record numbers of retrievers and spaniels taking part in a range of novice and open tests. Top prize in an imaginative run off for 'Top Dog' between the two top retrievers and the two top spaniels was a KM Trailer worth £2,000 with the best opposite breed handler winning a pair of Dubarry Boots. The gundogs were also greatly enhanced by a visit by Ian Openshaw arguably the world's most successful gundog handler ever. A special Shanes Castle Gundog programme can be seen at <https://vimeo.com/69578781>.

The gundog events at Birr were sponsored by Red Mills and also attracted record entries for any fair in the ROI and once again a KM Trailer and Dubarry boots were available for the run off for 'Top Dog'. Both trailers were won by ROI spaniels : Sean Moriarty at Birr and Barry Caffrey at Shanes Castle, so for 2014 there are very big challenges ahead for international retriever handlers to redress the balance.

## ***Terrier & Lurchers at the Fairs***

Once again the top Irish terrier, whippet and lurcher events were staged at the two Great Game Fairs of Ireland. Shanes Castle hosted the 26th Annual All Ireland Terrier, Whippet and Lurcher Racing and Showing Championships sponsored by Feedwell which drew a huge entry and Ireland's top international racing challenge the Red Mills Master McGrath Challenge with dogs qualifying from all over Ireland and the UK.

Birr Castle hosted the Red Mills ROI Terrier, Whippet and Lurcher Racing and Showing Championships and the two Red Mills Five Nations International Championships for Terriers and Lurchers. The latter championships had qualifying events throughout Ireland and the UK and honours were split with a top English terrier winning and a top Irish lurcher retaining its title.

And of course there was the final of the Mourne All Ireland Digging Championships organised by Kieran Young.

## ***Clay Shooting at the Fairs***

Once again both fairs hosted events with unrivalled prizes with three shotguns and a range of prizes to be won at Shanes and four shotguns and a truly massive range of prizes to be won at Birr. In each case there was a novel competition where all shooters went into a draw for a £2,000 gun sponsored by Tommy Beattie at Shanes and a €2,000 gun sponsored by Francesco Morelli (Casale) at Birr.



## **Irish Countrysports and Country life Lifetime Commitment Awards**

Every year ICS&CL makes several awards for people who the magazine staff consider have made a major contribution to country sports in Ireland and who are prepared to commit to even more of a contribution. This Year the Brownlow Award for the person making the most important contribution in 2013 went to Noel Carr for his work on salmon conservation. A special award for his work on promoting stick making went to Lindsay Carlisle.

Other Awards went to : Kieran Young (for organising the best specialist terrier, whippet and lurcher show and the Mourne Digging Championships) Margaret Mc Stay (for her promotional work on terrier, whippets & lurchers); Dorothy Park (for her organising of dog shows at the game fair, her dog breeding and her work with setter rescue); Simon Devereux and Chris Gavican (for their magnificent work for country sports with the NARGC); Willie Thompson (for his work with the international Springer Spaniel teams); Roy Rankin (for

his contribution to gundogs in terms of judging, breeding and competing); David Lalor (for his contribution to hunting in Ireland) and Oliver Russell (for his work as chairman of FACE Ireland) and John Holmes from Moyola Estate and Robin Magee, Rademon Estate, for their contribution as game keepers to the preservation of the countryside and their contribution to country sports.

Paul Pringle and David Riordan received the presentation of Lindsay Carlisle sticks for their contribution to Irish country sports in 2013.

## **Great attractions for the family**

There were a large number of events and attractions at both fairs for the huge family attendances at both events including the magnificent range of shopping opportunities in the huge tented village; the Fine Food Festivals; action packed arena programmes; living history re-enactments; lots of have a go opportunities and animal galore. AND we understand that negotiations are nearly complete for even more new attractions for 2014.



**N.B. Fuller details of all competition winners will be published in the Winter edition of the magazine.**

**For further details of the 2014 fairs bookmark [www.irishgamefair.com](http://www.irishgamefair.com)**

**and [www.irishgameandcountryfair.com](http://www.irishgameandcountryfair.com)**

**follow us on facebook [www.facebook.com/pages/Great-Game-Fairs-of-Ireland/366710296491](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Great-Game-Fairs-of-Ireland/366710296491)**





## Pictured at the Great Game Fairs of Ireland



1. Arena crowds loved the Dog Guru at both Shanes & Birr Castle Events.
2. Rabbits were on the menu at the two Flavour Food Festivals - here the Victorian Poacher shows Food Festival organiser Emma Cowan some of the tools of the trade.
3. The Poacher has a new adversary - the Keeper 'Fast Hands' Eddie Dash
4. Chef Emmet McCourt and Flavour Food Festival organisers Kathy Jensen & Emma Cowan try a rabbit dish.
5. Bunny Girl - Ingrid Houwers says 'this rabbits not for eating!'
6. Paul Pringle presents Mayor Roderick Swann with a fine stick by Lindsay Carlisle
7. Jill Pringle admires the superbly carved stick by Lindsay Carlisle that Paul was presented with for his campaigning work with the magazine.





1. Countrysports and Country Life Lifetime Commitment award winners at Shanes. (photo Cook)

2. Simon Devereaux receives his Lifetime Commitment Award from Marcella Corcorain-Kelly TD, Lady Rosse and Des Crofton.

3. Chris Gavican receives his Lifetime Commitment Award from Marcella Corcorain-Kelly TD, and Des Crofton.

4. David Lalor receives his Lifetime commitment award from David Wilkinson and Lady Rosse.

5. Lindsay Carlisle receives a special award from Tom Fulton for his contribution to stickmaking in Ireland.

6. Albert Titterington and Lindsay Carlisle present Ian Openshaw with a special Lindsay Carlisle stick.

7. Carriage driving proved popular with the arena crowds at Shanes & Birr.







1. Seeing how its done - hospitality trainees from World Host visited the fair and are pictured with their trainer, the Mayor of Antrim and Karen Steele events manager Antrim Council.
2. Hounds at Shanes.
3. The Muzzle Loaders are a regular attraction at both Shanes and Birr Castle Fairs.
4. Straight out of a history book!- Andrew Dineley from the Best of Times Worst of times is always very well turned out in clothes of various periods.
5. The future- one of the youngest gundog handlers at Shanes Caitlin Thomas.
6. Antrim has a historical connection with wolfhounds through the Massereene Hound legend - here three took part in the dog show at Shanes Castle.
7. Some of the massive crowd that thronged the aisles at Birr.







1. A busy Food Festival at Birr.
2. The Late Philip Lawton's daughter Naomi presenting the Celtic Stickmakers Philip Lawton Memorial Shield for the best fancy stick.
3. Liz McCracken presenting the John McClelland Memorial cup to the winner of the All Ireland Stickmakers Championships.
4. Catherine Lawton presenting the Philip Lawton Memorial Cup for Clay shooting (donated by Albert & Irene Titterington) to Seamus Glennon and Seamus Pierce of the Derrinsallow Shoot.
5. Rachel, David and Martin Brennan from Ardee Sports with the Sulmi shotgun they put up for a prize at Birr.
6. Francesco Morelli (Casale) presents Seamus Pierce with the gun to be used as the prize for the shoot draw.
7. Ormonde Foxhounds parade at Birr.





1



2



3



4



5



6

1. Crowd watching the attack on the castle at Birr.

2. Defenders sally forth from the castle to repel attackers.

3. Attackers and defenders clash.

4. Game Fair Director Albert Titterington is always delighted to see the Bowers family at Shanes.

5. Kids enjoy mixing with the hounds.

6. Canine endeavour to win the Master McGrath Challenge.

7. Manual endeavour Game Fair Director Albert Titterington and organiser Kieran Young with the gentlemen and lady competitors in the Mourne Digging Championships.



7





1. Barry Caffrey winner of the Top Dog Award at Shanes Castle and the KM Trailer with Keith McLoughlin of KM trailers.
2. Sean Moriarty winner of the Top Dog Award at Birr Castle and the KM Trailer with Brendan O'Kane of KM trailers.
3. Albert Titterington presents the prizes in the Feedwell International Retriever Test at Shanes to the ROI team.
4. Jenny Crozier from sponsors Red Mills with the two top spaniel handlers at Shanes Castle.
5. The international judges with the English captain at the Red Mills international spaniel event at Shanes Castle
6. Two very important ladies at the fair - Ingrid Houwers model, taxidermist and presenter and Director Irene Titterington who says she does all the work that husband Albert doesn't like doing.
7. Irene says Director Albert Titterington likes talking about the future fairs while she deals with the current ones!





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*A flavoursome feast for the senses - sight, sound, smell and taste - is how I would describe the Flavour Fine Food Festival at Shanes Castle Game Fair overall. For all of those who attended, we hope you enjoyed and to those of you who didn't, as you can see from our pictures, you missed a fantastic event!*

# A flavoursome feast!

by Kathy Jensen

## THIS PAGE

Above: Charlie Cole's cookery demonstrations using cabrito kid goat meat from the family's Broughgammon Farm were a big hit with visitors, many of whom went home armed with a cut of goat to cook themselves after tasting how sweet and tender it is.

Below left: Clare McEnteggart's Bia Blasta's Bang Bang marinade was another 'must have' on my shopping

list - the Oriental flavours are right up my street... mind you, the Caesar Dressing was hard to resist too. Centre: Visitors were definitely enticed by DJ's juice and cider, especially their Tempted? Strawberry Cider - a perfect marriage of Armagh's finest bramleys and strawberry wine.

Right: I generally steer clear of ready-made sauces, but Aruna's curry sauces are incredibly delicious. My favourite's the korma - I could just sup it out of the packet it's so nice!

## FACING PAGE

Top left: Geterbrewed's kits for making beer, wine and cider at home were very popular with visitors and, based on the samples of the wines Deborah Mitchell has made herself, I could be tempted to follow in mummy and granny's footsteps and get brewing myself!

Right: Flavour's Rebecca and Una with the fabulous hamper of treats from our exhibitors, which was





won by Eric, who ironically lives just down the road from Shanes Castle and was probably tucking into all his goodies within an hour of the show closing! Winner of the Calor Mini BBQ was Irene Jeffers from Stewartstown, who enjoyed the whole event so much on Saturday she came back again on Sunday! Congratulations to you both from everyone at Flavour.

Second left: I could usually walk past cakes all day without a glance, but I couldn't do so with the Diana's Treats stand! Diana Milligan's cakes and cookies are just the tastiest ever! Better still, if you are coeliac, they are all gluten and wheat free!

Right: A really good knife or three are essential tools for anyone who enjoys cooking and the range from Michael Chance of Flint & Flame comes highly recommended in the shape of the number of celebrity chefs who use them. I would just love the complete set.

Third left: The new Strawberry & Lime and Raspberry flavours of Crabbies Ginger Beer were flying out of the chiller cabinet all day.

Centre: Chef Emmett McCourt with just two of the dishes he presented over the weekend. Rebecca, Emma and Una from Flavour are in the background.

Right: Glenisk's organic yogurts are rich, creamy and packed full of flavour. Mary Mullins (right) and daughter were handing them out free all weekend!

Bottom left: Every time I stopped for a chat with Jenna Stevenson, my right hand took on a life of its own, reaching out for a piece of bread to dip in her divine Pukara Estate extra virgin olive oils and balsamic vinegars! Centre: Not only do they look gorgeous, but I can assure you that Ferdia Fine Foods artisan chocolates taste gorgeous too. The only problem with them is that you want to eat them all!

Right: This colourful display of Tupperware from John and Annette Keane just begged to be taken home to brighten up the kitchen. It's not just a pretty face though - the Tupperware range has practical uses for just about everything to do with food.





# Troy The Bionic Dog

**T**his is the story of how Troy, a beautiful black Labrador, got Lyme disease from a tick bite while out hunting. The Lyme disease gave him heart trouble that ended with him having a pacemaker fitted to the back of his neck. Last summer I took a stand at the Birr Game Fair, thanks to the support of the Countryside Alliance Ireland. I was there to encourage people to protect themselves and their animals against tick bites and the diseases they carry. While there, I met Martin Rigby and he told me the story of his dog and the dramatic effect a tick bite had on him. Though this story takes place in the UK it could just as easily have been in Ireland, on the continent or anywhere in the world bar the North and South pole. This is what Martin said and it certainly gives food for thought for dog owners.

"It was early July 1998, another morning and the sun was shining – a great day I thought. As usual, I walked out of the house across to Troy's kennel to take him for his morning walk. Troy was my black Labrador gundog. I had bought him as a fully trained two year old, five years previously from a top class field trials trainer. Troy was just what I had been looking for to replace my eleven year old black Labrador Dan, who had become crippled with arthritis, no doubt not helped by plenty of wildfowling in Scotland and the East Anglian fens, both very wet and cold places in winter. For me, Troy was perfect and I just knew he would have no trouble with heavy Greylag geese, the stone walls and 5 bar gates that were so often encountered on the way!

"So, one morning, it was to be the normal walk before breakfast, but I noticed that, unusually, there was no excited Troy bounding around in kennel run, he must be asleep I thought. As I opened the kennel door, a very sad looking Troy stuck his head out and slowly emerged from the kennel. I had noticed he had been a bit stiff in the mornings over the past week or so but I had just put that down to age. Today was different though; Troy was definitely not well. Later, when I got home from work, he looked decidedly worse so we went straight off to the vets I used in Hardwick, which is on the outskirts of Cambridge.

"The vet quickly discovered that Troy's temperature was very low and he had a very slow heart rate and a weak pulse she said. At best his heart was just about



*A very worried Martin Rigby with Troy before his operation* keeping him alive. What had we been up to, where had we been and could he have picked up some poison she asked? I explained that we had been doing very little shooting other than a few rabbits in Scotland, a couple of months earlier and there was certainly very little chance of poison around my home or the land I owned around it, which was where he was exercised daily. Laura, the vet, said she wanted to do an X-ray and some blood tests and she would keep him overnight for observation, so I was to call back the following evening for the results.

"The blood tests showed no signs of poisons but there was an indication of Lyme's and she had found signs of tick bites. Laura explained that her examinations had shown there was a neurological problem, which meant Troy's heart was not getting signals from his brain to go faster and so it was beating slowly which wasn't sufficient to keep his blood pressure high enough. She went on to explain that Lyme's disease was known to give heart problems. I asked what could she do and she said very little, and warned me that Troy would not survive for long in the state he was in. I asked were there



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*Back in action - Troy delivers a partridge*

any possible options other than putting him to sleep and it was suggested he could be fitted with a pacemaker. Can you do that to dogs I asked? Laura explained that the nearby Cambridge University Veterinary College could and she would call them to see if they would consider Troy for the operation.

"She explained the device would be put under his skin at the back of his neck and a lead containing the electrode would be passed down through his jugular vein into his heart. This then provided the electrical impulse which would make his heart beat faster. So the operation was done and when I went to collect Troy I was told they would be very sorry to see him leave. He was such a character the students had actually kept him in their room rather than let him sleep in kennels!

"I was a happy man and Troy was back to his old self - a bouncing bundle of energy and just the way I remembered him before the ticks had done their damage. Troy's skin healed quickly and the hair grew back so well that you could only tell he had a pacemaker fitted if you felt around at the back of his neck. It felt like a hard box about the size of a small box of matches and Troy didn't show the least bit of concern, quite the reverse, as he enjoyed all the fuss as people wanted to feel it in amazement that a dog had a pacemaker.

"Troy lived and worked another four years before it was time to retire him. I had had a fantastic dog for all

that time, he was definitely one in a million. He lived another 18 months before he eventually suffered heart failure which meant I had to sadly call Laura to come and put him to sleep, another sad day, but we all know those days eventually come. The most noteworthy thing about all this, was that something as seemingly insignificant as a tiny insect bite could have been so devastating.

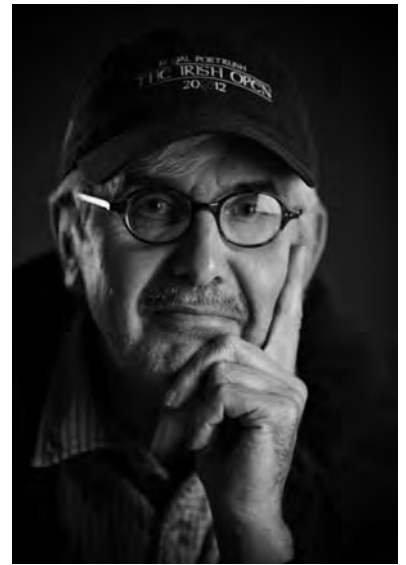
"Protecting your dog from ticks makes sense for both them and you. By using something like 'Spot On' or a chemical collar, the dogs will be less likely to become ill and bring ticks home. There is a good choice on the market now, so have a chat with your vet and see what they find best. It is a good idea, even if you are using a preventative, to do a regular inspection for ticks. It is extremely important to remove ticks correctly. If you use any substances directly on the ticks or squeeze it with a tweezers or your fingers, you can cause the tick to push any infections directly into the blood stream. There by increasing the risk of illness."

Borrelia or Lyme is only one of several nasty diseases that the ticks can give you or your dog, cat scratch (babisia) or red water (bartonella) are a couple of others. So check out [www.bada-uk.org](http://www.bada-uk.org). for all the diseases and symptoms, like fever arthritis loss of appetite and organ problems. Take precautions, inform yourself, from the pet section of the website, and.... happy hunting!



# A Year in the Life

Some time ago I was asked by Albert Titterington, Director of the Great Game Fairs of Ireland, if I would write a short piece on what a film production company does. I had already produced some films for Albert, about the Game Fairs which he organises, but he was interested to know what a typical year involves, just what exactly goes on behind the scenes and so, with that in mind, we now step back in time.



*The author Harry Cook.*

## *The Dog Guru, August 2012*

About a year ago there was a long term project on which I had been working with Keith Mathews 'The Dog Guru.' Keith and I had been filming a DVD production on gun-dog training for the previous three years and it was now coming to a conclusion. 'Retriever Training - Guru Style' was about to be launched. Keith, had been involved with his BBC programme series 'Good Dog, Bad Dog' and together with his appearances on the BBC's The One Show, he had seen at first hand what went into programme production.

But why did it take three years you may ask? The answer is a straightforward one: factual training - as it actually happens - or how to take a puppy and train it to be a champion takes time.

Over the years many DVD's have been produced on training gun-dogs, but the detail was sparse and all the trainers used fully trained dogs. Keith wanted to be factual, he wanted to train the dogs in real time, showing and correcting problems as they arose and more

importantly, how to prevent problems arising.

## *A learning curve*

Having owned Labradors for some thirty years I was intrigued to see how these puppies would be trained and to view at first hand how Keith was going to achieve what he maintained was possible; put simply, he wanted to create the best Gun Dog training DVD set of all time.

Because of the time scale involved this was a major challenge. Not only was it going to be time consuming, but it would also involve a massive amount of 'continuity' work and that can be a very boring and repetitive process because you have to check everything as to how things appear on screen. We had to check how Keith would be dressed, how he would appear on screen, which dogs would be used and how they also would appear on screen, plus, which exercises each would undertake and if we had to revisit for any additional filming, which locations were used for each particular exercise. Scripting took an age, but the breakfasts were good and we enjoyed constructing the programme, the detail of which was colossal; no one had attempted anything like this before and it would set a standard that would never be equalled.

'Retriever Training - Guru Style' was completed in November 2012, three years had flown by and we were able to sit back and view our handiwork. To say that we were both delighted is an understatement. The journey had been a long one, we filmed in Norway, Sweden, and  
*On location at Gisselfeld Estate in Denmark.*





Denmark, as well as here at home in Ireland, meeting some wonderful people and making many friends with whom we communicate to this very day.

The filming in Ireland was special, as we were able to show how beautiful our country really is. We filmed on Torr Head, Benone Strand, the Mourne Mountains and many other spectacular locations and the final retrieve in the mountains at Slieve Gallion, County Armagh, where 'Ross' made a four hundred metre retrieve was simply unforgettable. Keith always maintained that it could be done, I wasn't so sure, but I was proven to be wrong and the knowledge, which Keith imparts, enables anyone to train a dog - even I can do it.

The big question that Keith posed to me was this: if he were to give me a Copperbirch Labrador, Keith's own kennel breed, would I be able to train it from the DVD. My answer was immediate: yes, I could and not only that but probably beat him in any test he would set up. Sadly we have been unable to put that to the test, as I cannot devote the time and dedication to take up the challenge, but we have learned that others have indeed succeeded in doing what we set out to achieve, namely, to train a puppy or dog to be a Champion. We are both right chuffed!

### **Christmas comes but once a year**

Even while 'Retriever Training - Guru Style' was being filmed, other work had to be produced and a little known part of what I do revolves around rugby, namely at Ballymena Rugby Football Club, where I film all the matches for post match analysis. This work involves assisting the coaches with all the aspects of filming and postproduction to enable a constructive critique of all that went on during a game, how they played, number of tackles made, or missed, etc. Throughout the season we filmed games for RTE, which would be broadcast in their Rugby slot programme 'Against the Head.'

The rugby led me into a very different aspect of filming and one which I had steered clear of for a very long time, that was, filming weddings. A player at Ballymena asked me to film his wedding for him; he wanted a unique and memorable production. He and his wife to be were Australian and their respective families were flying to Northern Ireland for the

wedding.

I was reluctant to get involved in this because it can have a very negative image, wedding video, does not have a 'television broadcast' image and I try very hard to keep everything which we do to the highest possible standard. Image is everything, as they say.

The player who asked me to film his wedding was none other than Tom Court, who would go on to play rugby for Ulster, Ireland and ultimately make the British and Irish Lion's team. What a wedding that was and since then wedding filming for friends and friends of friends has continued.

The standards are of course to 'television broadcast' because that is what people are accustomed to seeing and what they want to see. Wedding filming is a challenge, but I enjoy challenges and it is very nice when a couple send a thank you card, or send flowers as a thank you for a job well done.

### **Windmills**

Christmas 2012 was a very busy time for Image Media Films. A very big customer, Michelin, had commissioned me to film the building of two gigantic wind turbines, Mitch and Elin as they were Christened by a local school. The project had been in planning for a long time and a shooting schedule was already in place, as 'Retriever Training - Guru Style' was in the process of finishing.

Shooting began in January 2012 and continued for thirteen months, it concluded in February 2013 and the final film was ready for viewing one month later in March. Thirteen months of work was condensed into two films, one running fourteen minutes and the other five minutes. Hundreds of hours of footage edited to nineteen minutes - who said editing was easy?

The filming covered all aspects of the build, from the moment the JCB digger went through the hedge, to laying roadways and creating platforms for the 1,000 tonne crane which would lift the individual sections. They even had a 500 tonne crane to build the 1,000 tonne crane!

This project not only involved different camera crews but an aspect which is used as an almost throw away line, Health & Safety. The site was a dangerous one and close liaison with all the agencies involved was

paramount. I am pleased to report that there was not one incident during the filming, although there was a close call. On the final day of filming I was

*(Far Left) The editing desk at a 'live' outside broadcast event. (Left) One of the camera crews at a 'live production in the Waterfront Hall.*







*A view from the top of the Michelin wind turbine.*

invited to join one of the building crew in the basket and be taken to the top of turbine one. We began our ascent facing away from the turbines, I looked out over Ballymena as we were slowly raised vertically. At a point where I thought we were nearing the top of our climb I asked my minder how high we were. His reply was to be the 'close call' I mentioned earlier. "We are not half way yet," he said. I thought my knees were going to buckle underneath me, this was terrifying and these guys do this for a living! My only way to defuse the situation was to ask if I might turn around and face the turbines. When I did so, the view was so beautiful, majestic even, that I forgot my fear and the film and photographs were simply out of this world, as one of the Michelin people said: "It was worth the money for those shots alone."

### **Top customers**

Over the years, my company Image Media Films has acquired many well-known customers. These customers have their own particular needs and demand a service and standard, which must be met. They have their own image, which must be protected, and messages to deliver to all sorts of people. These may be for television or for internal 'corporate' viewing.

Another of my customers is JTI, better known as Gallaher Ltd and I have produced two 'corporate films' for them. Both were for internal viewing, they would not be seen outside the factory, just the same in fact as Michelin with the wind turbines. The Michelin films are for company use only and are on Michelin TV.

### **2013 - a big year for us**

We have filmed many, many, events and it is quite remarkable how things take turns and how strange things can happen. Many years ago we filmed in the Highlands of Scotland at a private estate at Altnaharra. We filmed stags in the wild and had our own gamekeeper, Hamish, who would guide us daily on our treks through the wilderness in search of our quarry. Hamish was the most immaculately dressed person I have ever met. On a daily basis he would turn out like he

was a male model. But that is only the beginning of the story.

On this trip we took our ageing Land Rover, a Defender 110 County, a V8, I must add. That led me to write a story about my Land Rover, from it's own point of view of course It was entered in a competition organised by Land Rover and low and behold it travelled through their selection process until we were invited to the Land Rover factory at Solihull to see the new Range Rover being built.



*The Defender makes an ideal camera car.*

Now that was quite something in it's own right and there was no one more surprised than me, but what happened next could never have been planned. We filmed a short piece at the factory, on their Xperience jungle trip, a little memento for us on our trip to the factory. The clip was sent to Land Rover for their approval before being put onto our Vimeo website. Vimeo is similar to You Tube but has a higher quality picture. Land Rover approved the video clip.

### **Royal Windsor Horse Show**

About three weeks after the trip to the Land Rover factory, I received a telephone call asking if I'd be interested in going to the Royal Windsor Horse Show as guests of Land Rover. I considered the invitation for about ten seconds; it took that time to get over the surprise, and said yes.



*Royal Windsor Horse Show, the new Range Rover shoot.*

The Royal Windsor trip was very special and Land Rover and indeed the organisers of the Royal Windsor



have accepted the resulting film, to such an extent that we have been invited back to film next year and all this came about from going to Altnaharra to film an event for a friend.

### **Strange things happen**

It is strange how a lifetime hobby can turn into a small business, but strange things can and do happen. I mentioned the rugby earlier and it was through rugby that I met and filmed with Her Grace the Duchess of Abercorn. Her Grace formed The Pushkin Trust in 1987 to help children in Ireland, giving them an opportunity to be heard and to develop their creative skills.

Each year, many hundreds of children get the opportunity to take part in the Pushkin programme, which incidentally is named after Alexander Pushkin, the Russian writer and part of that programme is the annual summer camp where about fifty children and their teachers spend a week at Baronscourt Estate in County Tyrone. This is a very special time for the children and their creative skills are enhanced by the surroundings, peace and tranquillity is at every turn during the week and the children have a lot of fun. Friendship making is at the heart of the Pushkin Trust.

My involvement with Pushkin was to make a short film about what the Pushkin Trust does and that film may be viewed on their website at [www.pushkintrust.com](http://www.pushkintrust.com). But the filming here has now taken a very different road and a documentary about Pushkin, is being made for television. The pilot will be shot throughout Ireland and we will be going to film in Pushkin's own country, Russia. We will travel the roads which he travelled and see the sights and hear the sounds which helped form his character, as he grew up. We will show what made him so special, and what turned him into one of the world's great writers.

### **At the end of the day**

At the end of the day people want to watch things on television that interest them, which educate them, things which amaze them. We watch many things on television,

we think, that were good, but were they really?

Few programmes have that wow factor, that something, which makes the programme stand out from the crowd, something that is different. Why do programmes, to mention just one The Frozen Planet, have the ability to capture our attention and more importantly, hold our attention? Storytelling is the key, storytelling is at the heart of a programme, images must flow and images also tell the story. Filmmaking is about telling a story and, if we look back to the days of the silent movies, we see how the Directors were able to tell stories without a spoken word. They captivated us, they drew us into their world and we became immersed in the story. What applied then applies to this very day, but how did they do it? They did it through storytelling! Camera angles, looking for the right shot, thinking about how the audience will view the film, thinking outside the box, thinking differently, taking opportunities when they arose, filming a great sunrise or sunset which may be used in a film at some future date, all of these things go to make the movie.

I must mention one other very special ingredient in the filmmaking mix, the ability to listen and learn on a daily basis; no one knows everything and we have to be able to listen, to look, to learn and to adapt, as someone once said: "We are what we think." Think positively and you can achieve anything to which to apply your mind.

By the time you read this we will have filmed at Birr Castle for the 2013 Great Game Fairs of Ireland event and that film may be viewed on their website. At the end of the year we will be filming the Irish Retriever Championship and that will be available on DVD through our web channel [www.dogandcountry.tv](http://www.dogandcountry.tv) where incidentally you can view the 'Retriever Training - Guru Style' trailers and purchase the 4 DVD set if you wish and on that note I must end. I trust you enjoyed this article and, if you did, please get in touch with the Editor and maybe in another edition I can arrange more in-depth information such as how you can improve your own photography and filmmaking; you may even have

your own project which might be worth filming or indeed have an idea for a programme and, if so, please get in touch - don't sit on it, just do it.

For more information on Image Media Films please visit [www.imagemediafilms.com](http://www.imagemediafilms.com) or [www.harrycook.tv](http://www.harrycook.tv)



*Wow factor - the Model T film shoot on the top of Ben Nevis!*



# D-Day - Seventy Years Later

**6**<sup>th</sup> June 2014 heralds the seventieth anniversary of D-Day. On that fateful date in 1944, allied forces invaded Normandy in France by air and sea, leading to the eventual liberation of Europe. This event of seventy years ago when many thousands of fighting men from both the old and new worlds landed on French soil will be talked about into the next century and those that follow. At this juncture plans to highlight and celebrate next year's anniversary are well advanced. The few remaining D-Day Veterans, Heads of State, Government and Military representatives and many thousands of relatives of the men who participated in the invasion will attend to honour and remember all those who participated in that momentous event. So too will countless thousands of Europeans who wish to do likewise.



*Band of Brothers trooper Babe Heffron returns to Normandy - 2009.*



*Arromanches today, with remains of the Mulberry Harbour still evident.*





*A tank-busting RAF Typhoon aircraft in the Memorial Centre, Caen.*

Each year the number of veterans decreases as time and age take their toll. Students of the period feel almost cheated as these larger than life figures quietly fade away. Thousands of Irishmen from North and South volunteered to serve in the Allied forces; my family was one of the many that produced citizen soldiers from both sides of the border. A lot of ordinary people became household names after the war through recorded heroic deeds, memoirs, speaking at functions, or being thrust into the public realm via the many film productions about those days. The fiftieth anniversary in 1994 attracted huge TV coverage informed a generation that previously had but a vague idea of D-Day with an insight into the invasion and the men who had participated in it. Hollywood and the movie industry presented many versions of the Normandy invasion, most of which appear to have concentrated on the cellulose exploits of famous actors rather than the actual hard facts. Stephen Spielberg broke that mould with his portrayal of US paratrooper Fritz Niland's story when he produced "Saving Private Ryan" in the late 1990s. He presented a version of D-Day that was close enough to the real thing to upset veterans and shock cinema audiences.

For the record, Fritz Niland was a trooper in the US 101 Airborne who parachuted into France early on 6th June 1944. Within a matter of days he was located by a Chaplain who had orders to bring him back to a rear headquarters where he was told that his three brothers had been killed and he was being withdrawn from combat on explicit orders from Washington. Two or three sentences in the late Dr. Stephen E. Ambrose's book "Band of Brothers" described that event and those few

words inspired Spielberg to make the Private Ryan movie. Filming took place in both Ireland and England, with the D-Day sea-landing sequences being shot on our local beach at Curracloe, Co. Wexford. I was fortunate to meet both Stephen Spielberg and Tom Hanks when visiting the set during filming. At that time it was not common knowledge that the inspiration for the movie came from the Niland story and I recall asking both gentlemen what they proposed doing afterwards with all the hardware strewn around the sand. This comprised much of the impedimenta of a seaborne invasion including a number of Sherman tanks that did not feature in the completed film. Hanks smiled as he said that they had definite plans for the future. Several years later these plans came to fruition in the form of a blockbuster mini TV series 'Band of Brothers.' In a very short space of time the world became familiar with the exploits of E Company, 506th parachute infantry of the 101st airborne division of the US Army. This series once again highlighted the sacrifices and horrors experienced by people of many nationalities that fought World War 2 and while it concentrated on one specific American Army unit, it brought home to millions what had been endured by an entire generation in order to buy the peace that we enjoy in Europe today.

### ***I recognised him instantly***

The men portrayed in the series became household names world-wide and I don't mind admitting that I watched the story of those ordinary people - spellbound. The series came to life for me one afternoon in 2008 as I was checking into a hotel in Bayeux in Normandy. A touring coach had stopped outside and I saw a sign on



the windscreen that read 'Easy Co.' The man sitting next to the driver was in WW2 uniform and I recognised him instantly from the veteran's interviews conducted at the end of the mini-series. It was Edward 'Babe' Heffron, accompanying a group from the US that was touring European battlefields. They stayed for two nights in the hotel and Babe spent both evenings deep in conversation with me, which didn't impress the people on the tour too much. He related several stories about the exploits of Easy Company in Europe and some specific to the Battle of the Bulge in the Belgian Ardennes during December 1944. He also answered questions about the deaths of two Easy troopers (one was Irish) in the Foy area that had previously caught my attention. At the time I was actually attempting to unearth information about Frankie Mellet who was shot in a field outside Foy. Babe, whose parents were Irish, supplied the answers, insisting that the information should remain confidential until after his own death. Frankie Mellet's family originally hailed from County Meath. Babe does not travel these days, he's in his late 80s and his daughter Tricia kindly keeps me up to date by e-mail on how he is keeping. Fans of the mini series might like to know that Heffron actually played a cameo role in the production. As the E company men enter Eindhoven during Operation Market Garden in Sept 1944, the camera swings over to highlight an old man sipping coffee outside a café as he watches the American soldiers pass by. Babe Heffron plays the old man!

Back in 1989 the late Major John Howard, the man who led the first action of D-Day in a glider landing at the now famous Pegasus Bridge over the Orne canal outside Caen turned up one May afternoon at the scene of his 1944 action. Colleagues and I were in the nearby Gondre Café when someone said that Major Howard had arrived and was on the bridge. He was a regular visitor to the area and this particular trip had been arranged by a French publication whose accompanying female photographer was less than amused when he opted to spend time with us. During this time a number of old soldiers turned up, many of whom in 1944 had marched from the beaches to this very bridge to relieve the Major and his men on June 6th and all were anxious to shake hands with him, renewing old acquaintances. Irish-born film actor Richard Todd (a Captain) parachuted into Normandy on the morning of June 6th and linked up with Major Howard at the Pegasus Bridge. Their combined forces beat off a number of German counterattacks later that day. Todd went on to



*The author with the late Major John Howard on Pegasus Bridge in 1989. (photograph G.M. Murphy).*

play the part of Howard in Darryl F. Zanuck's 1962 movie *The Longest Day* which was based on a book of the same title by Irish author Cornelius Ryan. The Gondre family's café was the first French home to be liberated on D-Day and is definitely worth a visit. Aside from the memorabilia on display, hardly a day passes without someone interesting turning up. The Pegasus Bridge of 1944 has been replaced and the original has been re-erected outside a new museum just a few metres away. Intending visitors should be aware that theft from cars in the nearby car park is rampant. All five landing beaches – Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword – are easy to access and contain countless pieces of memorabilia from the those far-off days. Almost every village and town in Normandy boasts a D-Day museum and the ones that are a "must see" are in Ste. Mere Eglise, Bayeux, Arromanches and the Memorial Centre in Caen.

Despite current unrest around the world, it's a sobering thought that so many young men of a previous generation were required to make the ultimate sacrifice so that we can live in relative peace and comfort. We should never forget that! With the 70th anniversary of D-Day on the horizon, hotel accommodation, guest houses and coaches are being booked even now. Anyone planning to visit Normandy in June 2014 should consider securing their accommodation well in advance.



# LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR ADRIAN CARTON DE WIART VC, KBE, CB, CMG, DSO - THE MOST DECORATED WAR HERO OF OUR TIME

**We reported in the last edition of the forthcoming sale by Holt's, Auctioneers of Fine Modern & Antique Guns, of a gun once owned by Lt.-Gen. Sir Adrian Paul Ghislain Carton de Wiart, V.C., K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. Well, at the auction the small bores section opened with the Purdey 20 bore sidelock ejector which had been built for this remarkable man. It was described thus: the 20-bore self opening sidelock ejector, serial no. 25956, 27in. nitro reproofed chopperlump barrels, narrow raised rib engraved 'J. PURDEY & SONS. AUDLEY HOUSE. SOUTH AUDLEY STREET. LONDON. ENGLAND., 2 3/4in. chambers, bored approx.1/2 and 3/4 choke, treble-grip action with hidden third bite, side-clips, removable striker discs, manual safety with gold-inlaid 'SAFE' detail, cocking-indicators, articulated front trigger. But before telling you of the final result at auction, here is what was written by Roland Elworthy of De Wiart.**



*Sir Adrian Carton De Wiart.*

"As our language evolves or is changed, it seems we have a good number of words which are either over or misused. One of those words must surely be 'hero'. Most Oxford English Dictionaries define the word as "A person, typically a man, who is admired for their courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities." The man who commissioned Lot 1500 in this sale, however, is thoroughly deserving of the accolade. Lt.-Gen. Sir Adrian Paul Ghislain Carton de Wiart, V.C., K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. was possessed of all the qualities required by that noun and, as we shall read, was the stuff of legend. His exploits and injuries were legion, and his career in the British Army must surely be one of the most illustrious it has known.

"Carton de Wiart was born into the Belgian aristocracy on 5th May 1880, the eldest son of L.C.G. Carton de Wiart and Ernestine Wenzig who, although her name suggests otherwise, was of Irish descent. He lost his mother aged six, and soon after his father moved the family to Cairo where he enjoyed useful connections in government circles. Here his young son learned to speak Arabic before being sent by his new English stepmother in 1891 to The Oratory School; a Catholic public school in Oxfordshire. Following this he went up to Balliol College to read law. However, his determination and mettle came to the surface after only one term when he left Oxford in 1899 and enrolled in the British Army to fight the Boers using a false name, and without the prior knowledge of his father. It wasn't long before "Trooper Carton" saw action and he was invalided home after being shot in the groin and stomach. His actions could no longer be hidden from his father who, reportedly, was furious at him 'dropping out' of university, but agreed that he should stay in the army.

"After a period of convalescence he returned to South Africa in 1901 having gained a commission in the Second Imperial Light Horse, and later the same year received a regular commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 4th Dragoon Guards. His qualities were quickly recognised and by 1904 he had been promoted to supernumerary lieutenant and appointed A.D.C. to Sir Henry Hildyard, the Commander-in-Chief. In his memoirs he describes this period leading up to the Great War as his "heyday" and his relatively 'light' duties as A.D.C. enabled him to indulge his love of sport and hunting.

## **War looms**

"While Europe girded its loins for war, de Wiart was sent to fight the 'Whirling' Dervishes in the Somaliland



Campaign, having been seconded to the Camel Corps. It was here in 1914, during an attack against the fort at Shimber Berris, that de Wiart was shot twice; losing an eye and part of an ear. For his actions he was awarded the D.S.O. in May the following year. In February 1915 he went by steamer to France to re-join his regiment on the Western Front where he fought with great vim; providing the perfect example of an officer who would never demand that his men should do something he was not prepared to do himself. This was aptly demonstrated during an attack on German positions at La Boisselle on 2nd and 3rd July 1916, when de Wiart's quick thinking and bravery saw-off the need to retreat. His valour was such that he was awarded the Victoria Cross, the citation reading: 'For most conspicuous bravery, coolness and determination during severe operations of a prolonged nature. It was owing in a great measure to his dauntless courage and inspiring example that a serious reverse was averted. He displayed the utmost energy and courage in forcing our attack home. After three other Battalion Commanders had become casualties, he controlled their commands, and ensured that the ground won was maintained at all costs. He frequently exposed himself in the organisation of positions and of supplies, passing unflinchingly through fire barrage of the most intense nature. His gallantry was inspiring to all.'

"All this from a man who was no stranger to injury; Carton de Wiart was shot seven times and lost his left hand during the Great War but returned from hospital each time to lead his men with renewed vigour. He had been promoted steadily during his time in France and ended the war with the temporary rank of Brigadier-General. His inter-war years were spent mostly in Poland where he inherited command of the British-Polish Military Mission from General Botha. Poland was fighting, in turn, the Bolsheviks, Ukrainians, Lithuanians and the Czechs and was sorely in need of help. The then Prime Minister, Lloyd George, was not overly sympathetic to their plight and he and de Wiart had a difficult relationship. The latter's tales of derring-do were numerous during his time there and included having his train being machine-gunned by Ukrainian troops, acting as a second in a duel involving Baron Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim; later President of Finland, and having his position compromised during a gun-running operation from Budapest using stolen Wagon-Lits (sleepers). Perhaps most notably, and soon after he had been appointed A.D.C. to The King with the rank of brevet colonel, he was acting as an official observer in August 1920 when the Red Army was threatening to engulf Warsaw. His train was attacked by Russian cavalry and he fought them off from a carriage running-board with his revolver, at one stage falling on to the track only to pick himself up and re-board.

## **Legacy of injuries**

"The year is now 1939 and as Polish resistance crumbled against the German onslaught, de Wiart took the decision to evacuate his mission together with the Polish government and make for the Romanian border, where that country's leader was an allied supporter. The car convoy was strafed by the Luftwaffe and de Wiart fled Romania under a false passport on the same day that the Prime Minister, Armand Calinescu was assassinated. He was soon re-called to the army and initially saw action during the early Norwegian campaign when he was tasked with safeguarding the city of Trondheim with the help of the Royal Navy. The mission was not a success and he and the whole force were evacuated to Scapa Flow on 5th May 1940, de Wiart's 60th birthday. After a brief period in Northern Ireland spent bringing the 61st Division up to full strength and ability he was sent (by now as an acting major-general) to Belgrade for talks with the Yugoslav government who were in imminent threat of invasion. However, during the journey his Vickers Wellington lost both engines and was forced to ditch a mile off the Italian controlled coast of Libya. In spite of the legacy of numerous injuries, he swam ashore in the company of the surviving crew but all were captured and sent to Italian P.O.W. camps.

"De Wiart was sent to the camp at Castello di Vincigliata where he formed friendships with a number of senior British officers who had fallen victim to Rommel's early successes in North Africa. He made several escape attempts with his comrades and once evaded capture for eight days disguised as an Italian peasant. The scenario is quite remarkable; he had one hand, a patch over an eye, numerous scars and injuries, and spoke not a word of Italian. Not particularly true-to-type of the genre. He didn't spend long back in the camp though. He was taken to Rome in August 1943 for talks with the government who wanted to surrender and throw their lot in with the allies, and they wanted de Wiart to contact Westminster. The talks were arranged and took place in Lisbon under great secrecy. Carton de Wiart was told he must wear civilian clothes but announced that he would only wear properly made gentleman's clothing and not some "bloody gigolo suit." In his memoirs he describes the resulting suit as the best he'd worn in his life! Once in Lisbon he was released and made his way home to England (he had long been a naturalised British subject), arriving on 28th August 1943.

"De Wiart was not a man given to inactivity. This was just as well; within a month of his return he was summoned by Churchill and informed that he was being posted to China as his personal representative. He was promoted to acting lieutenant-general and flew out via





*The 20-bore self opening sidelock ejector, by Purdey serial no. 25956.*

India on 18th October. He stopped en-route to attend the Cairo Conference before spending some while in India where he became close with Sir Claude Auchinleck and the wonderfully eccentric Orde Wingate, creator of the 'Chindits'. He arrived at China's wartime capital, Chongqing, in early December and for the next three years was involved in senior diplomatic and reporting duties. He formed a good relationship with China's nationalist leader, Chiang Kai-shek, and once his job in the Far East was done he was offered a position by Chiang. This he declined, but did return to China during the final months of the Pacific war and was then asked to stay on by Clement Attlee, who had come to power in the 1945 General Election.

"Carton de Wiart formerly retired in October 1947 holding the honorary rank of lieutenant-general. Three years later at the age of seventy-one he married for the second time (his first wife died in 1951) and settled in

County Cork. He was now free to return to his love of sport and was soon amongst the snipe and salmon in the surrounding countryside. By his standards he led a relaxed life in Ireland and died, aged eighty-three, on 5th June 1963. He is buried in Caum Churchyard which backs on to his old house in Killinardish.

Adrian Carton de Wiart was unquestionably a great man and deserves to be remembered as such. Always a military man at heart, he wrote in his memoirs, "Governments may think and say as they like, but force cannot be eliminated, and it is the only real and unanswerable power. We are told that the pen is mightier than the sword, but I know which of these weapons I would choose."

### **Postscript**

The gun sold at Holt's auction and was secured for the nation by The Royal Armouries. A fitting result indeed.



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# Edward's First Dog

**'Is she really mine, Dad?' Edward had just turned fifteen and his gift was a twelve week old Labrador bitch. Edward's Dad Harvey was a regular beater on the local estate for over two decades. During the summer months, Harvey helped the estate keeper Jonathan with pheasant and mallard rearing. As a city of London investment broker, Harvey welcomed the diversion from his business lifestyle. He made it abundantly clear to Jonathan though that he expected nothing in return for his voluntary labours. However, despite Harvey's protestations, Jonathan typically offered him three end of season walked up days.**

Two summers previously, Harvey had spotted signs of mink in the main release pond. Since three hundred mallard were due to be put into this pond at the weekend, Harvey immediately phoned Jonathan. "Totally impossible, Harvey," an incredulous Jonathan replied. 'I've been putting ducks into that pond for over twenty-five years and I have never encountered a single mink there. I fear that you are mistaken.' Harvey gently reminded his friend that he was the son of a Dorset gamekeeper.

Jonathan eventually relented and arrived at the pond twenty minutes later with mink traps in hand. The signs were indisputable and the traps were immediately set. A

huge dog mink was discovered by Jonathan and Harvey the following evening. Both men were acutely aware of the havoc this single mink could have wreaked. "I owe you one," muttered Jonathan. Harvey assumed that an extra walked up day would be offered; no such offer was ever made. Jonathan had simply forgotten the promise he had made, a perplexed Harvey surmised.

Two years later, Jonathan arrived at Harvey's house for their regular Friday evening brandy. Entering the kitchen, he was charged by a litter of seven eleven week old and very noisy Labrador puppies. Their mother Judy now in her sixth season enjoyed a rare moment of peace. "If one of those little ones is only half as good as their mother, you will have another treasure in your kennels," Jonathan uttered. Guns, beaters and all the estate staff agreed that Judy was a truly special dog; whether it was a diving mallard or a barely pricked cock pheasant, Judy invariably delivered the goods.

Jonathan could point to many special retrieving moments. The evening Judy crossed two drains and swam almost one hundred and fifty yards to retrieve a winged drake teal shot by the estate owner Sir Henry stood out for starters. On the evening in question, Jonathan could do no more than give Judy the signal for a long go back retrieve. She was a strong swimmer and he knew that as she plunged into the water her nose might, just might pick up a scent. Listening to her cross the first drain, Sir Henry wagered that the bird must



*Which one of these lovely Dropper puppies would you choose?*



have glided into the next field. Listening to her cross the second drain, Sir Henry fretted that the brave bitch had taken on too much. Jonathan advised him not to worry as the field after the second drain was dotted with tiny dry spots which would give her a rest from the arduous swim.

"All we can do is wait, Sir Henry," Jonathan sighed. Not a sound was heard for five minutes. But then a flock of curlew was disturbed at least one hundred yards in front of Sir Henry and Jonathan. Another long interval followed. Then they could hear snipe taking to the night sky near the first drain. A splash indicated Judy was crossing the drain and three minutes later a near exhausted Labrador arrived at Jonathan's feet. A winged drake teal fell into Jonathan's hand. Too tired to wait for the 'dead' command, she lid down putting her head on Jonathan's wellingtons. Jonathan handed the drake teal to Sir Henry.

Strolling back to the jeep no further words were exchanged. Sir Henry's diary read as follows: Date: 12/12/1999. Quarry Bagged: One teal (drake). Other guns: Jonathan Cameron. Conditions: Flooding at lower end of estate. Gentle breeze, cloudy but no moon. Comments: Jonathan and I feel strangely subdued this evening. We witnessed Judy pull off the retrieve of a lifetime.

"You have the pick of the litter, Harvey. I did mention that I owed you one." Both men smiled. "Edward is fifteen next week. I notice that he has a special way with gundogs." Harvey bent down and started playing with the litter. Memories of his late father came flooding back as he sat on the kitchen floor. His trance was suddenly broken by a sharp tug on his woollen cardigan. A determined puppy kept dragging and pulling. "Ah she is definitely the one. Edward will adore her."

Returning home, Harvey was in reflective mood. His father had died just eight months previously. And as each day went by he saw more and more of his father in his only son. A recent sideways glance at Edward working on retrieves with their youngest Springer turned him inside out.

Harvey had also been presented with his first dog at age fifteen by his father, but three years later Harvey was an LSE student. This was followed by a two year period at both Oxford and Harvard. Ten years later he was a city highflier with a posh house in Buckinghamshire. Apart from professional success, Harvey had excelled in both rugby and debating. Harvey had surfed on wave after wave of success, but the trouble with waves, as Harvey was reminded by his wife Kate, is that you cannot control them.

"Yes, she is really yours, Edward. You now have sole responsibility for training this dog. Jonathan thinks you are ready and I agree with him." "Thanks Dad, I will not

disappoint you!" an overwhelmed Edward replied. "Just do your best and remember that your first task is to give your new charge a name." The new arrival was named Sally after Edward's best friend in school.

Harvey and Kate were somewhat concerned about Edward as he approached fifteen. Kate felt their son was crumbling under the weight of being the son of highly successful self-made father. Henceforth, Edward was to be afforded some space. Sally's arrival was the ideal starting point. Edward would be allowed make his own mistakes and Harvey would help only when requested.

Edward had the distinct advantage that he was by no means starting from a blank slate. Harvey and Kate kept a kennel of six working Springers and two Irish Setters were kept to satisfy Kate's predilection for setting and pointing breeds. During the summer holidays, Edward spent most of his time in Jonathan's company and much of this time was devoted to training Labradors. There was also an assortment of dog training books in the library. In overall terms, Edward was very well equipped for the task in hand. At least that is how it seemed.

In truth though, Edward was greatly lacking in self-confidence. The young man was terrified of failure. The mechanics of dog training could be followed by a novice, but Edward knew that there was more to dog training than following steps from a training manual. The relationship with his dog would be paramount.

Edward reckoned though getting Sally's trust was the essential bedrock upon which his efforts would either succeed or collapse. Wisely, he allowed her be a pup. He played with her, rather than trained her. And when she chewed slippers and socks admonishments were rare. He did draw the line though when Sally dug up an array of newly planted flowers in the front garden. The puppy stage passed without major incident and Sally was even bringing a tennis ball to hand from the bottom of the garden path to the kitchen door.

As the months progressed, Edward was perplexed by his father's detached approach. Apart from an occasional "How is the training going?" Harvey remained detached from the entire process. Harvey noticed that the bond between Jonathan and Edward grew daily. Concerned, he consulted Kate. She urged patience reminding him that both father and son were on a learning curve.

Edwards's long term plan was that Sally would be in the field proper for the Boxing Day driven shoot of the following year. Wisely, though her initiation would begin on a few of the quieter walked up days. But there was a lot of work to be done before that point was reached.

Training progressed through the various stages and it became a common site to see the young man rushing to



Jonathan's lodge after school. As Edward celebrated his sixteen birthday, he could look back on a successful year. The year was not entirely without incident though. From chasing rabbits to running away with a young rook that fell from her nest Edward experienced moments of frustration. Edward made mistakes too. Falling into the trap of giving her too many retrieves, she began to play with the dummy.

Nevertheless, Sally was ready to make the transition from Dummies to dead game. The transition was achieved with ease. As both, Edward and Sally matured, the relationship was solidified. But Edward resented the comments he overheard on the estate.

Sally was constantly being compared to Judy. The general consensus was that Sally had excellent potential but would never be in the same league as her mother. On the other hand, Edward was being constantly compared to his Dad. The gardener, for example, was heard saying that Edward was far too lenient with Sally. He added that Sally would lack the necessary discipline for the driven days. Edward wrote an ostensibly fictitious essay in school about a boy and dog that were both fed up of being compared to their parents.

Sally's first walked up day eventually arrived. Performing well, she even picked one runner. As the day progressed, Sally was being compared more and more to her illustrious mother. The straw that broke the camel's back though was a foolish intervention by Harvey. "Great dog son, but not a patch on Judy." To which Edward replied "You are right Dad, but Sally is Sally." With a stiff face, he added "Can you imagine what it must be like for Sally to be constantly compared to her successful mother? It must be very hard on her."

A shiver went through Harvey's entire body. Belatedly, very belatedly the penny had dropped. Two weeks later, Edward asked his father for advice on how to get Sally sitting steadier during evening duck flights. The advice worked. Three weeks later Harvey was in the field with his son for a blind retrieve training session.

Sally retrieved on the estate for another decade. The guns considered her very reliable but accepted that she would never possess her mother's flair. Harvey received a life peerage. Edward became Jonathan's under keeper.

*Mink can cause havoc in release ponds like this one.*







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# Art and Antiques

**W**hile there may have been some doubts earlier in the year about anyone having money for the acquisition of Irish art, these doubts were fairly and squarely nailed as untrue at ADAMS Spring time Irish art sale in Dublin. For a painting by Northern artist Paul Henry, 'The Potato Diggers,' fetched €400,000, which set an auction record for this artist, the previous high price achieved was €300,000 in December 2007.

After the sale Auctioneer James O'Halloran, well pleased, not only with the record breaking price for a Henry but also with the overall success of his sale, told me: "Yes, the Paul Henry certainly drew out the money. There was interest from all over in it with no less than five parties chasing it from 100k and several that didn't even get a chance to bid on it. It has gone to an Irish family living abroad who are thrilled to have acquired it against such stiff competition including a major international gallery.

"The whole sale was a very successful with 80% sold and 1.4m euros hammer prices achieved. The demand for high end examples of every artist is very comforting as it appears there are a good number of bidders for virtually all works that have the basics - quality, rarity, freshness to the market and good condition. There are many more bidders coming from abroad but with an Irish interest or family connections and internet bidding is actively encouraging this. However, it is fair to say that the number of successful online bidders is still dwarfed by other bidders on the telephone and in the auction room." He added: "As for Paul Henry's 'Potato Diggers' the quality and level of both international and Irish interest in this iconic painting left us in no doubt that it



Frank McKelvey's 'The Clinching Bid Camlough Fair' (sold by Adams)

was going to do well. It was well shown and when we brought it to the AVA Gallery at Clondeboy Estate several patrons told us it would be a winner." Having viewed 'The Potato Diggers' at the AVA gallery, I must admit to having being impressed with Henry's portrayal of an Irish couple engaged in a backbreaking but necessary labour on an Achill Island holding. The painting was executed at the old post office in Keel where Henry lodged in 1910 and 1911 and is, without a doubt, one of his most accomplished works.

The second highest priced painting in ADAMS sale was another Henry, 'Thatched cottages with lake,' which sold for €130,000 to be followed by Walter Osborne's 'Breton farmyard' which went at €100,000 and Sean Keating's 'I gave him a smoke' which made €52,000. Another Paul Henry, 'Mountain landscape with cottages, more his familiar style' went at € 47,000, while another, 'Connemara bog' had no trouble hitting a hammer prices of €40,000. Richard Thomas Moynan's 'Haymaking' sold for €35,000, a fine Frank McKelvey oil on board, 'Camlough fair' made €30,000 and among other top lots were Louis Le Brocq, €30,000; and Jack Butler Yeats €26,000. While William Conor's 'The Benediction', a crayon may have appeared a tail ender at €6,000 for me it was one of the most emotive paintings of the sale. It portrayed with great strength a congregation of women at prayer once again illustrating how Conor throughout his life had been completely absorbed with the activities of the Belfast people whether at play or at prayer.

Earlier in May ADAMS also staged a successful Sunday Interiors Auction, during which a unique Irish Charles II ginger pot, Dublin 1680, the lid decorated with chinoiserie and exotic birds sold for €11,000 while an



Paul Henry's 'Potato Diggers' (sold by Adams)





*'I gave him a smoke' by Sean Keating (sold by Adams)*

exceptionally rare Irish James II trefid spoon with rattail bowl sold at €9,000 and a Johann Anton Eismann, portrait of a young man realised €6,500. Other lots included a rare Irish Wm III dram cup, €6,000 euros; Heywood Hardy oil on panel, €5,600; Irish William III small silver circular bowl, €1701, 5,000; Wm Shayer oil, €4,500; Irish George III reading chair, €3,600; set of eight George II silver dinner plates, €3,600; and a rare pair of Irish George II chamber chair candlesticks, 1740, €3,200.

May was a busy month for ADAMS who also staged a fine jewellery and watches sale towards the end of the month. A diamond three stone ring made €38,000; a diamond single stone ring went at €26,000 and another

diamond single stone ring, the diamond approximately 4.95 carat sold for € 25,000. A lady's 18 carat gold and diamond Tank Americaine by Cartier with 18 carat gold bracelet sold for €8,000.

Dublin based WHYTE'S held an exciting spring sale too towards the end of May when a top price of €29,000 was paid for a pair of 19th century equestrian paintings by William Brocas (1794-1868) while William Conor's 'Bringing in the turf' went to an American buyer for €21,000. A London collector snapped up an early Paul Henry, a Connemara landscape, for €13,000 which must be a sound investment for the future in any person's money.

By all accounts the sale was considered a successful one grossing 450,000 euros with 73% of the lots on offer sold. Lots were said to have sold above estimate by 24% and within estimate by 51%. The ever important facility of Internet bidding was said to account for 25% of bids and for 20% of the lots sold. Bidders were not only from Ireland and the UK, but also from France, Netherlands, Switzerland, UAU, USA, Canada, Hong Kong and Australia.

Up north again, there was strong interest in Irish art when Belfast based ROSS's held their June sale. A James Humbert Craig oil, 'Connemara' sold for £5,500 while another oil by Hans Iten made £4,100 and a Colin Watson £2,500 with a similar price going to a Julian Friers oil, 'Shelducks'. Another Craig oil, 'Unloading the catch' sold at £2,100 while a Charles McAuley oil made £1,600. A George Campbell oil went for £1,500 while another McAuley realised a similar amount as did a work by Julian Friers.

Among other lots were Brian Ballard, £1,300; Markey



*Colonel Westenra's Freney' and 'A bay Hunter With Hounds' by William Brocas (The pair sold at Whyte's Important Irish Art auction)*



Robinson, £1,200; Colin Watson, £1,200; Colin Davidson, £1,200; Letitia Marion Hamilton, £1,100; Neil Shawcross, £1,100; George Callaghan £1,050; Basil Blackshaw £1,050.

## TAILPIECE

One of the highlights of the Irish art scene had to be the Gerard Dillon, Art and Friendships, loan exhibition mounted by ADAMS. After a successful run in Dublin it moved to the AVA Gallery Clondeboye, one of the most picturesque areas of Ireland where it was much enjoyed. This was ADAMS fourth summer Loan Exhibition drawn exclusively from private collections, north and south of the border. The exhibition featured premier works by Dillon and almost thirty others including, Gretta Bowen, the Campbells, George and Arthur, Dan O'Neill, Father Jack Hanlon, Nano Reid, Markey Robinson and many others.

I was particularly pleased to see a fine work by the late Leslie Zukor (1921-2004) featured in the exhibition.



*James Humbert Craig's 'Connemara' (sold by ROSS'S)*

Born in Belfast of East European parentage, his father was Polish and his mother Lithuanian, Leslie first exhibited with the Ulster group of artists in the 1950s, including the Campbells, O'Neill, Dillon and James McIntyre. While well accepted in an earlier age Leslie's works which reflect his Jewish background and recurring Old Testament themes are now ripe for an appreciation by a younger generation of art lovers. His is a distinctive style, underscored by vibrant colour and also features domestic still life, Belfast's 'gentlemen of the street' and even jazz performers.



*'Shelducks' by Julian Friers' (sold by ROSS'S)*





# What's the point?

**A**ngling in Ireland is one of the country's natural sustainable resources that has been undervalued in recent times. In the 1970/80s, angling was seen as an essential part of the tourist package, providing valuable business and income in areas of the country attracting less 'normal' holiday traffic. Then Ireland had a world-wide reputation for much of the fishing it offered.

Unfortunately, the late 1990s and early 2000s saw a decline in visiting overseas anglers, from 173,000 in 1999 to 103,000 by 2006. It is believed this decline was driven by a combination of factors. Changes in UK angling trends, increased competition from other angling destinations, new products/markets, foot and mouth, cheap easily available air travel and both real and perceived declines in Irish fish stocks were all outside the control of the state.

## Anglers Surveys

Historically information is available on the value and size of the angling tourism sector but of late there has been a dearth of research regarding both domestic and overseas recreational anglers. So to try to rebalance this Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) commissioned two surveys.

The first has been completed the second is ongoing. The first study was the 'Social-Economic Study of Recreational Angling in Ireland,' which was carried out

by Tourism Development International in 2012. The aim of the study included:

Estimating the volume of domestic, Northern Ireland and overseas anglers both in terms of overall volume and volume by angling category (Game - Salmon / Trout / Sea Trout, Coarse, Pike, Sea angling, Bass);

2. Estimating the angling expenditure by category (domestic, Northern Ireland and overseas); and

3. Looking at anglers' attitudes and participation patterns

This information will allow those involved in the promotion and marketing of angling in Ireland to know our customers, to plan angling development and where best to direct our marketing spend into the future. The survey would not have been possible without the participation of our domestic and visiting anglers and angling businesses and IFI sincerely thanks all those who took part.

## Outcomes

The product of this research was a report, launched on the 18th July 2013 (which can be downloaded from [www.fisheriesireland.ie/AnglingStudy2013](http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/AnglingStudy2013)). From the study it can be estimated that:

€555 million was the total direct expenditure on recreational angling in 2012;

€ 121 million was the direct expenditure on angling by out-of-state anglers;

€ 755 million was the overall impact of angling;



Tourist angling expenditure was about € 280 million; and Angling is estimated to support approximately 10,000 jobs in Ireland.

Launching the report, the Minister of State with responsibility for Natural Resources, Fergus

O' Dowd T.D., welcomed the findings revealing an angling/angling tourism dividend of €0.75 billion for the Irish economy every year. "The results contained in this report are significant," he said. "Angling, as a recreational pursuit, is a major contributor to the fabric of Irish life in all parts of the country, particularly in rural and peripheral areas. From the industry perspective, the strategic development and marketing of our angling product is essential and has been given new impetus considering what we now know about the visiting and spending patterns of anglers and what is important in drawing them here. It is equally clear to me that maintaining a strong focus on the protection and conservation of this vital resource into the future, is absolutely key if we are to properly sustain and grow these benefits to anglers, angling businesses and the Irish economy."

### **Methodology**

The study was carried out by putting in place three primary surveys augmented by desk research analysis. These were a 'Survey of Recreational Anglers,' 'a Household Survey' and a 'Survey of Angling Stakeholders.' The 'Survey of Recreational Anglers' consisted of a sample of 903 domestic, Northern Ireland and overseas recreational anglers. Running from March to November in 2012 it was designed to profile the trip, traveller characteristics, attitudes and opinions of



*Smiles all round - a lough caught Irish salmon.*

recreational anglers. The 'Household Survey' comprised a sample of 2,011 Irish adult's representative of the Irish population (aged 15 years+). This was to estimate the overall number of anglers in the Republic of Ireland. It produced an estimate of the adult population who have ever fished and those who fished in the last 12 months. The proportion of the population claiming to have fished in the last 12 months was 7% or 252,000 individuals. The sample achieved for the Survey of Angling Stakeholders, at 102, was robust and representative of the 767 angling enterprises in the country as identified by IFI.

### **So who is fishing?**

The research showed that up to 406,000 individual's participated in angling in 2012. Of these 252,000 were Irish adults (62%). Northern Ireland accounted for 10% (41,000 visits) with 28% (113,000) from the overseas markets. The belief for some time has been that the age profile of anglers is getting older. This survey showed almost half of the anglers (49%) to be in the 35-54 age cohort with 37% of anglers older. Domestic anglers who participated in day trips took an average of 13.6 trips. 22% of domestic anglers took part in overnight fishing trips with a mean number of 5.25 trips. Overseas anglers made on average two angling trips (1.97) to Ireland in the past 12 months, with those from Europe averaging 2.35 trips. Overseas anglers were shown to be loyal, returning on an annual basis to the same fishery. This pattern was evident across anglers from all overseas markets and categories of anglers.

### **Anglers attitudes**

In the 'Survey of Recreational Anglers,' participants were asked to rate aspects of the angling product on a five point scale. Using this, mean scores were drawn up.

*A salmon from the West.*





Outstanding scenery and friendliness/hospitality of the Irish people were the most appealing aspects of Ireland as a destination. The restful/relaxed ambience was mentioned as either 'good' or 'very good' by 94% of respondents; quality of accommodation (82%) and the reputation of the angling product (82%) were also well thought of. 'Friendliness' is an attribute particularly appreciated by British and European anglers. 77% of anglers considered the overall quality of the angling product to be 'very good' or 'good.' Amongst those not satisfied, a perceived general decline in fish stocks was cited as the main reason for dissatisfaction. The improvement in water quality was cited as the most positive development in angling in recent years followed by the abolition of drift nets. Over two-thirds (67%) rated the quality of angling information available as 'good' and 'very good.' Over half (53%) rated fish stocks as 'good' or 'very good.' Just under a third (31%) rated biosecurity as good or very good, (however 27% of respondents didn't give a reply to this question). The least appealing aspects included costs associated with participating in angling (permits, tackle, bait, etc.), illegal fishing and bad weather, cost being a particular issue with British anglers. The bad weather and perception of the decline of certain fish stocks were cited as the least appealing aspects for Europeans (albeit a minority of 17% and 13% respectively). Notwithstanding the fact that a majority of anglers express satisfaction with the value for money of Irish angling, more than one in five (22%) were dissatisfied with the angling experience for this metric. Particular concerns relate to the cost of food, drink and accommodation allied to the fact that Ireland is seen as an 'expensive' destination. This survey has provided vital information as to the



*A Mask 20 pounder photographed and released.*

state of angling in Ireland and how the product is viewed. To further drill down into angling trends and moods (and expenditure patterns) a second survey is underway.

'The Socio-Economic Impacts of Angling Festivals and Competitions on Local Communities in Ireland.' This study is being carried out as a joint project between the Cairns School of Business & Economics, NUI Galway and IFI. This will be completed and the report published by September 2014. Its aim is to estimate the value of Irish angling events to the towns and rural communities who host them.

Every year Ireland plays host to dozens of large competitive angling events and literally hundreds of smaller club run competitions. Competitor numbers generally range from 30 - 100 individuals. Larger events can attract many more for example the 'World Pairs' coarse angling event brought over 260 competitors to the lakelands of Cavan, Monaghan, Leitrim and Fermanagh in 2012 while the World Cup trout competition on Lough Mask, Co. Mayo, attracted over 570 anglers in August 2013. The typical duration of the more prestigious festivals is up to 5 days and early results have shown that anglers tend to stay in the locality for a week or more when competing, contributing considerably to the local economy. This study is based around a non-market valuation tool called the 'Travel Cost Method' (TCM). It was devised in the U.S.A. in the 1940s to evaluate the recreational use of national parks where there was no admission fee and, hence, no method with which to gauge a market price for the utility of visiting such parks. TCM



*Fishing the Silver Strand.*



is a survey technique where a questionnaire is prepared and administered to a sample of visitors at a site to ascertain their place of residence, demographic information, frequency of visit and trip information such as length, associated costs and so on. From this data, visit costs can be calculated and related to visit frequency so that a demand relationship may be established. This demand function can then be used to estimate the recreational value of a site or event.

### ***How you can help***

If you participate in Irish angling events and wish to help with this study the questionnaire can be accessed through Inland Fisheries Ireland's Facebook and Twitter pages as well as through the websites of some of the larger angling federations (ITFFA, NCFEI, SAI , etc.). For further information or to request paper copies of the questionnaire contact paul.oreilly@fisheriesireland.ie or phone 018842635.

Commenting on the studies the CEO of IFI, Dr Ciaran



*The 'World Cup' held annually on Lough Mask.*

Byrne said: "IFI will now review the results of these surveys in conjunction with our stakeholders. Clearly fish stocks and fish habitat must be conserved, protected and developed. Angling businesses must be given every opportunity to win business and secure and grow the jobs within the sector. IFI is committed to these goals and together with our stakeholders and the support of Government, state agencies and a new angling marketing and development plan we will achieve them."



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## NATURE TRIUMPHS AGAIN AS SALMON AND SEATROUT RETURN AGAINST THE ODDS

Although somewhat in reduced numbers on certain rivers, we again welcome our salmon and seatrout returning as they leap our waters into their spawning grounds. This sight is the stamp of achievement that drives all our federation members into doing everything possible to ensure as many impediments are cleared for an easier path to and from our 200 natal salmon rivers on this island.



*Andrew McDonnell's 15lbs salmon on the Glen River in Donegal.*

Some fine day when the madness of our campaigning stops and, if or when, hopefully we will still have some reasonable quality fishing left to enjoy, we will take stock of all that has been achieved. Some may call this 'resting on our laurels' but it is important to take time out very soon to express our gratitude to all who gave us the support to continue at times such as right now. Over this season, our National Executive Council embarked on an enormous workload, as event after event demanded such time and professional commitment that is well beyond our voluntary status. But again all was undertaken as planned with some great help from our very valuable friends such as the Great Game Fairs of Ireland, National Association of Regional Game Councils and FACE Ireland.

The best news by far is that Minister Coveney has not yet announced the granting of the license to BIM for the Galway Bay fish farm. Every day, more news emerges that confirms that the ten fish farm plan would be scientifically, economically and

environmentally foolish to grant the license. Our members have been lobbying extremely hard in partnership with Galway Bay Against Salmon Cages and other groups and our ongoing research proves that only onshore closed contained farms will succeed. At present, the sealice levels in Mulroy and Loch Swilly are understood to be the highest ever due to a repeat epidemic of Amoebic Gill Disease attacking the farmed fish. The high temperature of the water triggers the disease and only massive supplies of fresh water transported from Killybegs to Fanad (round trip of 240 kms) can treat the disease for a short while. With such a high carbon footprint it is evident to all including the Minister that the figures no longer stack up for putting fish farms in Irish bays.

In 2003 Scottish freshwater angling was valued at £117 million, to which game angling contributed £93 million, by Glasgow Caledonian University, in a project commissioned by the Scottish Government. FISSTA questioned the methodology and findings at the time as it did not include some very relevant aspects, and despite our intense lobbying of the then Minister John Browne TD, sadly it took until January 2012 for a new study to be conducted to find out that angling now makes a massive €750m sustainable contribution to Ireland's economy. This follows the announcement from the Minister O'Dowd that the Tourism Development International study found the value of angling to the economy was €750m. and not the €150m. valuation that was estimated by the state tourism bodies in recent years. Thankfully, the FISSTA proposal over four years ago to undertake this study was finally taken up by IFI in January 2012 following our €300m estimated value was dismissed as 'overestimated' by the fish farming industry. FISSTA attended the launch of this groundbreaking study on July 18th in Kildare Street where national radio and press quoted our welcome of the results that firmly establishes the important economic contribution of angling to the Irish economy and the role it plays in supporting employment across the country.

The most important North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation meeting in which the nineteen salmon countries from around the Atlantic, was held in Drogheda in June. Minister Fergus O'Dowd TD home town is to be congratulated in providing excellent facilities on the banks of the Boyne and while the organisation of event was well managed by all concerned, the outcome was far from encouraging for the salmon. The post NASCO feedback from our clubs reflect the concern as to what will happen if the North Atlantic nets off Greenland and the Faroes are not bought out next season. We are keeping very close contact with Chairman of North Atlantic Salmon Fund Orri



Vigfusson who keeps us informed of the developments and frequently seeks help and advice regarding EU and Irish matters.

## FISSTA AT BIRR GAME FAIR CONCLUDED OUR BUSIEST SUMMER PROGRAMME EVER OF SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGNING ON BEHALF OF SALMON AND SEATROUT CONSERVATION

The Great Game Fairs of Ireland brand delivered on their promise once again with fantastic crowds at Birr and Shanes Castle Game Fairs. The weather was kind large crowds at both fairs surely made it the most successful events that Albert and Irene's team have organised to date. On the eve of the Birr Game Fair, history was made when FISSTA and NARGC signed up closer cooperation between the rod and gun sports for the first time. FISSTA were glad to welcome and answer all angling queries and much was discussed regarding the ten mega salmon farm plan as we were the only stand displaying anti Galway Bay fish farm banners which left nobody in doubt what the greatest threat to angling was at the fair. New contacts were established and follow up at the Galway Fly Fair in November will be made to update all who sought more information on the campaign to date.



Our Treasurer Donal O'Doherty seated with Pat O'Flaherty NEC member a just before the hordes descended on the stand at Birr.



Local angler and former Chairman of the Camcor Anglers, Finbar Spain, meeting our Chairman Paul Lawton.

## THE SIGNING OF A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND CO-OPERATION BETWEEN NARGC AND FISSTA WILL BENEFIT OUR RESPECTIVE ROD AND GUN SPORTS - CHAIRMAN PAUL LAWTON

The signing of our memorandum of understanding and cooperation on the eve of this Birr Fair is the culmination of many years' hard work and cooperation between FISSTA and NARGC. It made good sense to agree an understanding that sets out the basis on which FISSTA and the NARGC will co-operate for the good of our respective country sports with particular regard to administration, conservation, promotion, lobbying, campaigning and planning in compliance with our respective constitutions. It will place our two organisations in the best possible position to apply our individual strengths for the common good. Down the years we participated in many countryside events in which we built up a strong relationship as a force for good for our respective sports. There are many challenges and threats common to both the rod and gun in which we can face together for the benefit of our members.

Both organisations share the conservation and habitat management ethos and recognise sustainable angling and shooting as important and irreplaceable components in Ireland's countryside and very much part of the economic and social fabric of rural life. They are important sources of recreation for several hundred thousand people, good for the rural economy and a vital component in conserving game, fish and the natural resources upon which they depend.

When we say in our memorandum that we see angling and shooting as a unique bridge between urban and rural communities, we can stand over this statement as our clubs and voluntary members foster and promote our sports to one and all who wish to participate. Everybody who appreciates and respects nature are welcomed and are warmly introduced to our respective sports in line with our constitutions. That is why the increased cooperation offers greater opportunities for promoting greater understanding of often-complex rural issues that unites countryside lovers from all over this island and indeed the entire world as our recent angling data proves.



(LIR) NARGC chairman Sean Doris with John McGuinness TD chair of the Public Accounts Committee who performed the launch alongside Paul Lawton.

From an angling point of view we are living proof that we do not have to depend entirely on inward investment for factories or call centres to deliver the jobs to this country. Good sustainable jobs are already established and being maintained in our countryside and many more could be created if the angling tourism product was better maintained and enhanced. Out of 406,000 anglers who participated in the sport in 2012, 113,000 came



from overseas, 32% coming from UK, while mainland Europe accounted for around 10% visitors that benefited Ireland's recovering economy.

Sadly, instead of promotion, our Federation spends more time defending our sport from government created threats such as the imposition of ten mega fish farms off our western coast which will wipe out our entire salmonid angling resource. Such lack of joined up thinking does not take into consideration the impact on our wild fish resources, and the task falls as always, for FISSTA to mobilise the lobby and fight back harder by the month. FISSTA's fight back involves many options, but our greatest weapon of all, is the international lobby. We are founding members of North Atlantic Salmon Fund who assist us along with FACE to challenge the state mismanagement of our resource. Our government in compliance with the EU Habitats Directive is obliged to protect all European salmon passing through our migratory channels along our west coast. If the ten fish farm plan is approved our salmon habitat will be confronted with increased sea lice unless they are land based. FISSTA, in vehemently opposing this application, is accused of being a group of disgruntled anglers with a vested interest. But now we have a valuation on this vested interest and it is worth €750m and supports 10,000 jobs (source TDI study) to the state. That is treble the value of our sea fisheries landings including the subsidies with all of this €750m revenue being spent in the rural areas of Ireland where the angling takes place predominantly where the new fish farms are planned. In contrast most fish farms are owned by global fish farm companies that send their money home to the wide acclaim of the Oslo stock exchange, while Ireland is left with their environmental debris of pollution and disease to clean up.

It is time for An Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD, to join up the individual thinking of his Ministers by further developing all salmon river economies like the Moy Valley angling model which is the jewel in the crown of Irish angling. To protect our long established angling industry and sport he must jettison any idea of this ten fish farm plan now before we ruin any more of our wild salmon habitat that underpins over 10,000 angling jobs. This sustainable job industry is achieving this success with only 62 of our 152 salmon rivers fully open. This is a time for leadership, and there is no better investment in job creation than diverting all fish farm investment allocations into another 10,000 jobs to fully reopen those 90 salmon rivers now.

Our new cooperation with NARGC will teach us much more about each other and together our combined expertise will guide us on to new challenges already on our horizon. From the early days of our relationship, we were fortunate to have our former Chairman Edward Power on the NARGC board to assist and advise both organisations and much was achieved during his terms of office and it is important to acknowledge his contribution then and now to our success to date. While his mobility impedes him somewhat from attending meetings such as these, I can assure all members of both NARGC and FISSTA that he supports and encouraged this initiative, as he still holds a strong and influential hand on the tiller, much to the appreciation of our FISSTA National Executive Council. The never ending job of promoting and defending angling and game shooting is our major task that we can now undertake with a more focused and united force that will make politicians and government listen and act more urgently than ever before. We will move forward with renewed and confident steps to succeed in overcoming the many obstacles with the efficiency and professionalism for the benefit of both rod and gun sports in Ireland.

## FAMILY FUN DAY

The best ever Family Fun Day on the Glen River in Donegal took place on June 22nd when Eargail Eisc Teo at Meenaneary celebrating their 51st year in business, entertained the families of the factory area. The staff put a lot of time and thought into the games and attractions in what was the one of the best free children's treats of the summer. A wide range of safe playgroup games such as Circus Bounce, Lazer Zone and Bungee Run along with a Duck race to raise funds for local good causes.

The competition for the salmon of the season at that time was awarded to Michael Rabbite from Derry and the trophy was presented by Aodh O' Domhnaill CEO of Eargail Eisc Teo.



*The CEO of Errigal EISC Teo Aodh O Domhnaill presents Michael Rabbite with the Errigal Trophy for the largest fish of the season.*



*Every good fishing competition should have a hog to eat - Errigal fun day on the Glen River*

The day commenced with a large group from both factory and angling club members cleaning up the river with the assistance from An t-Aisce who provided the gloves and plastic bags.



*Excellent results from the clean up.*

Cumann Iascairi Shliabh a' Liag would like to thank the staff and board of directors for their help and cooperation in our task of managing the river.

## TIME TO DELIVER ANGLING PROSPERITY VIA CONSERVATION

This column has always reminded that our governments north and south, in compliance with the EU Habitats Directive, are



obliged to protect all European salmon passing through our migratory channels along our coast zone and particularly our west coast where all EU salmon smolts use as a channel to the North Atlantic. If the ten fish farm plan is approved our salmon habitat will be confronted with increased sea lice unless they are land based. The recent media reports stating that Marine Minister Simon Coveney is being urged to investigate the Marine Institute's scientific expertise in the wake of a new Toronto University study suggests that game, set and match must be awarded to the wild Atlantic salmon for a clean marine in Galway Bay. The new paper demonstrates that the impact of sea lice on wild salmon causes a much higher loss (34%) of those returning to rivers in the west of Ireland, than the 1% loss suggested previously in the Jackson paper. This hopefully will end the scientific ping pong being played out in academia, while our valuable wild salmon smolts become infested with sea lice and die in vast numbers every season. The new study demolishes the Jackson et al. that our Minister and the EU relied upon to support open pen salmon farming until now. This is good news for Ireland in that a complete withdrawal of the ten mega farm policy must be ordered if he is to protect the more productive angling sector that is already delivering the jobs and revenue in a most sustainable way. To avoid further cost and tourism market damage, BIM must immediately announce their withdrawal of their ill thought out application for the world's largest ever fish farm in Galway Bay. There is already evidence that the Marine Institute has cut loose from the Jackson et al. if they are to succeed in recovering their remit in "providing independent scientific advice to the Minister."

FISSTA, in vehemently opposing this application, is accused of being a group of disgruntled anglers with a vested interest. But now, we have a valuation on this vested interest and it is worth €750m and supports 10,000 jobs (source TDI study) to the state. That is treble the value of our sea fisheries landings including the subsidies with all of this €750m revenue being spent in the rural areas of Ireland where the angling takes place predominantly where the new fish farms are planned. In contrast most fish farms are owned by global fish farm companies that send their money home to the wide acclaim of the Oslo stock exchange, while Ireland is left with their environmental debris of pollution and disease to clean up.

It is time for An Taoiseach to further develop all salmon river economies like the Moy Valley angling model by jettisoning this ten fish farm plan now before we ruin any more of our wild salmon habitat that underpins over 10,000 angling jobs. This sustainable job industry is achieving such success with only 62 of our 152 salmon rivers fully open. This is a time for leadership, and there is no better investment in job creation than diverting all fish farm investment and BIM budget allocation into another 10,000 jobs to fully reopen those 90 salmon rivers now.

In a recent report in the Financial Times when they visited Inver Bay the most notable quote was as always: "We can't go on fishing forever," says Catherine McManus, technical manager at Marine Harvest, the Norwegian company that owns the Inver bay farm and has captured almost a third of the global salmon and trout farming market. "Farming offers the most sustainable way to feed a growing population while protecting wild stocks." The word 'sustainable' is again used to justify a world food problem while polluting the very bay they farm. We can no longer allow offshore farming to ruin our wild stocks. Like all agricultural farming, fish farming must comply with waste management regulations or we face further disease and pollution.

## WILD SALMON IN DANGER OF WIPEOUT AFTER NASCO FAILURE TO AGREE CONSERVATION PLAN

FISSTA are extremely disappointed that the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) has been unable to stop factory sales of wild Atlantic salmon in Greenland and has also failed to put a limit on Greenland's subsistence fishery. The salmon harvested in Greenland originate from rivers North America and some from EU including Ireland.

FISSTA were honoured by Sue Scott, Chair of the Non Government Observer (NGO) Group and our international colleagues as to be the NGO chosen to deliver their statement at the opening session of the NASCO council held in Drogheda on the 4th June which stated: "The future for Irish salmon appears especially bleak in the face of new policy that will allow unbridled development of offshore open pen salmon farms to increase production from 14,000 to 150,000 tonnes in the salmon's migratory channel off the west coast. The first mega farm is planned for Galway Bay, a Mecca for domestic and international tourists. The NASCO NGO Group, on behalf of millions of people around the North Atlantic who value their wild Atlantic salmon, urges the Irish Government to stop this destructive expansion of open net pens. The Irish Government must develop alternative industries and employment opportunities such as expansion in tourism and fisheries, which depend on a pristine environment and abundant wild fish populations. It's time for government to rethink its obsession with open net pen salmon aquaculture, which contributes to declining salmon populations, and displaces fishermen and tourists wherever it operates. The advice of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) is very clear, there should be no harvest at Greenland where stocks from North America and southern Europe feed. An essentially unlimited fishery at Greenland is totally against ICES advice. Paul Lawton from the Lee Salmon Anglers in Cork and the Chairman of FISSTA said: "We are facing wipeout from both sides of the North Atlantic now as Greenland refuses to tolerate any more lecturing from the EU and Norwegian parties who continue to allow sea lice to run out of control and permit over-harvesting of salmon on their own mixed-stock fisheries." Canada is amongst the other parties that currently harvest Atlantic salmon.

At the meeting, when Canada raised objections to Greenland's factory sales, the representative from Denmark reminded Canada that its harvest was six times greater than Greenland's. They also expressed concern at the failure of Norway, Scotland and Ireland to protect their migrating smolts and criticized their plans to site new fish farm cages in the migratory corridor off the west of Ireland which would infest and prevent the eventual return of our salmon. This was a sobering thought which the Irish government delegation will take back to Minister Simon Coveney. FISSTA says it's easy to understand Greenland's position, because in Canada, anglers and First Nations killed 135 tonnes of salmon last year, which is equivalent to 63,000 fish. The Greenlanders are unwilling to continue to bear the burden and sacrifice of conserving salmon while other countries like Canada, Norway and Ireland and Scotland in respect of the EU allow the killing of several times more salmon than they do. Here was a golden opportunity for the NASCO meeting to deliver a strong message of conservation for our wild Atlantic salmon but failed. The United States tabled a proposal at the West Greenland Commission but it did not receive unanimous agreement by the Commission as required by its rules. NASCO's inability to control the Greenland fishery is disastrous for US salmon, where stocks are at their lowest levels in history and protected under the Endangered Species Act.



When Greenlanders begin fishing in August, a season that generally lasts three months, there is now potential for an unlimited amount to be caught. The failure to agree means we could be looking at double the catch of last year. This will be devastating to endangered populations in North America, which in most years comprise about 80% of the Greenland harvest and a terrible blow to all populations of wild Atlantic salmon in Canada, the US, and southern Europe, driving more populations towards threatened and endangered status.

At the NACO meeting the Greenland representative believed that the internal harvest will be controlled by market demand within Greenland. The North American Atlantic Salmon Federation and North Atlantic Salmon Fund (NASF) of Iceland have long historical relationship working directly with Greenland and its fishermen outside of NASCO, to discuss the possibility of another private sector agreement that would result in more conservation-oriented measures. ASF and NASF had a private-sector agreement with Greenland's fishermen from 2002-2009 which kept our salmon returning to Ireland and EU. Controlling the Greenland fishery is fundamental to conserving and restoring wild Atlantic salmon runs in North America and southern Europe. FISSTA will continue to urge ASF and NASF to remain committed to doing everything reasonable and possible to negotiate an agreement for this season that conserves salmon, while respecting Greenland's international rights.



Clodagh Dodd from Co Sligo was awarded a prize by Arthur Greenwood for the best fly tier in her class.

## FISSTA EU CAMPAIGN TO LABEL FARMED SALMON SUCCEEDS AT LAST

At our FISSTA AGM of 2001, a motion was passed to seek the labeling of farmed salmon on retail sale to avoid confusion with wild Atlantic salmon variety, including demersal and pelagic seafood. Throughout the past ten years we extended the campaign to inform many restaurants and food producers using farmed salmon of the threat posed by sea lice and pollution to our wild stocks. Some responded positively by withdrawing their farmed salmon from their menus or product ranges while some continued to ignore the implications which we pointed out, which was their right. However, it did raise awareness of the problem and we continued to campaign on this issue to date with limited success. In one case, a 1,270 page Environment Impact Statement of last October from BIM cited Slowfood as supportive of their application, and we complained to the Slowfood members at that time. Darina Allen of Slowfood assured our Federation that BIM unreservedly accepted suggested corrections to the EIS reference and agreed to edit the EIS publication as soon as possible. Slowfood assured us they would follow up with the member in question Ms Birgitta Hedin-Curtin of Burren Smokehouse to get further clarification. Slowfood admit that the reference we referred

to was made by BIM without permission from Burren Smokehouse (albeit current information that was on their website) and does not represent her views or the view of Slow Food Ireland. The sad fact remains that many food producers including Slowfood members use farmed salmon as a base product to smoke, bake without labelling it as farmed. Thankfully, our long labelling campaign which we first started with European Anglers Alliance and more recently through FACE EU has borne fruit and we are delighted that from December next all fish products must comply with the EU directive and be labeled more accurately if it is of the farmed variety. Our appreciation is extended to Minister Alan Kelly from Tipperary who now serves as Minister of State for Transport but assisted us in our campaign during his years when he served as an MEP in Brussels when others with a commercial fisheries agenda ignored our requests for help in this matter.

## FRIENDS DEPARTED

Since our last issue, we have lost some great friends to our wild salmon in the sad passing of FISSTA NEC member Fred Coffey from Fergus Anglers, Mick Mc Cole from Ardara and Donegal Game Anglers Federation and our beloved ROI Editor Philip Lawton.

### Fred Coffey RIP

Fred Coffey was a renowned angler from Ennis County Clare and raised on his beloved Fergus River. He campaigned for the conservation of trout, salmon and seatrout through his club, the Fergus Salmon Anglers for many years and was a serving member of FISSTA's National Executive Council at the time of his death on July 25th 2013.

His busy angling life was supported with a career as a civil servant in the Customs & Excise at Shannon Airport and such was his popularity throughout the entire country that there were many walks of life represented in the very large crowd at his funeral. FISSTA were honoured to carry his coffin past his home in Market Square to his final resting place where his old FISSTA colleague and friend Richard Behal gave a fitting graveside oration in which he quoted the words of famous salmon conservationist George Haig Browne: "If the wild salmon no longer returns to his own native river man will know that he has reached the final stage of his own disappearance." Fred served us all for many years by guiding our federation through many obstacles and his experience and impatience with failed authority ensured that progress would follow valued advice on many occasions.

### Mick McCole RIP

The Angling and shooting community of Donegal lost a great friend on the death of former Garda Sergeant Mick Mc Mick RIP. Mick was an enthusiastic member of the Ardara community right until his death, chairing many local initiatives including the Parish Council and the Ardara Angling Association there in recent years even as his health failed.

Glowing tributes were paid to Mick and condolences extended to his wife Irene and his daughters Tanya and Michelle and his son Shane. Originally from Kilmacrennan, Mick was first stationed in Co Kerry before his transfer back to his native Donegal and to Ardara where he retired in 1990. He served for many years on the board of Donegal Game Anglers Federation who fought the downgrading of the local angling and damage to the environment. His frustration at the lack of progress in various campaigns always drove the federation to adopt new ideas and the angling community is the poorer for his passing.



# Amazing Argentina

*Argentinian sunset*

**O**n the 4th May 2013 I travelled from Dublin to Rome where I met two Italian friends, before boarding our connecting flight to Argentina. It was my first visit to South America and, having heard numerous stories about the region, I was anxious to experience it for myself. The Pampas are fertile South American lowlands covering more than 750,000km<sup>2</sup> and it was there we were to hunt in the province of Buenos Aires. The area is mostly grassland with some crops such as Soya and the ground is level and firm underfoot making the walking easy, especially for those who may not be particularly physically fit. The smallest estate we were on was more than 2000h and the herds of cattle were 300plus and were 99% Aberdeen Angus. We visited a different area every day and never shot the same place twice.

The 14 hour flight from Rome initially seemed daunting, but I arrived remarkably fresh at Buenos Aires' Ministro Pistarini Airport. On arrival, we were met by our guide Sergio and after a three hour drive we arrived at our hotel in the town of General Lamadrid. It was excellent with single rooms with large double beds, en suite etc. there was free wi-fi was available and the staff were very friendly. In the town there were some good shops, restaurants and a market to browse around in the town if time permits.

We shot for five days with two outings per day and

each session lasted between three to four hours. Please remember that the shooting for pigeon and dove is almost constant even though in this region they are not present in such plague proportions as elsewhere but are still regarded as pests. All game is totally wild with no rearing and the areas are un-kept. The game is treated with the utmost respect and after being collected is given to the local people. It is reassuring to know that even when large bags are shot, the population of birds is such that the numbers are undiminished. All shooting takes place from hides except for the Perdix which are walked up over pointers and there are guides always available to help in any way required.

Anyway, at the hotel, with no time for unpacking, we left our suitcases in our rooms and after a quick bite to eat it was off to the doves to get our eye in. I must admit I found them difficult - very high and challenging as they flighted into tall trees to roost with a stiff breeze on their tails and they were also smaller than I had imagined. We'll pull a veil over the results and not talk about cartridge to kill ratio at this juncture.

That evening we dined on some exquisite Argentinean cuisine and after a quick nightcap it was off to bed as we had a 4.15 am kick off in the morning for my personal favourite, ducks.

Under the cover of darkness, we donned chest waders and were escorted by our guide to our hide in the reeds where I was placed with my friend Tony. No light pollution here, as we were treated to a fantastic display of shooting stars, with one seeming to race across the sky every few minutes!





*Walked up Perdix - guide Roberto with 'Ocho' and 'Bab' and Author in background.*

As the night sky started to give way to morning, the first ducks quickly appeared in front with paddles down heading straight for our decoys. Four shots rang out followed by three satisfying splashes. It was the start of what proved to be the most exciting duck flight of my life. Discretion prevents me from saying how many ducks we shot, suffice to say the flight lasted over three hours and we were treated to every shot imaginable. It is possible to shoot 13 species of duck in this region and on that morning we shot 7, including the beautifully named Cappuccino. The sheer number of ducks in Argentina is



*A gaucho about to ride out to check the herd.*

mind boggling. Also the estancias, large rural estates, possess an unforgettable charm and the trip to and from the duck marsh is full of unique sites that reminded me of the more simple and laid back lives of yesteryear. Flight over, it was back to base for some more prime Argentinian beef and 40 winks.

Having shot well at the ducks I was full of confidence going to the pigeon that evening and thankfully I gave a good account of myself. Again it was roost shooting at its best with an endless supply of birds streaming in from all directions.



*Tony and the Author - sunshine, Perdix and happy faces.*



After a welcome lie in the next morning until 7.30 am we breakfasted before heading to the Perdix which were walked up over English/German pointers. Again it was exciting stuff with excellent dogs and testing targets. The hunting area encompasses vast fields stretching for miles. One of my most endearing memories of the trip was a single gaucho with three dogs rounding up and corralling more than 400 cattle in less than 15 minutes, quite a feat!

As well as superb hunting, Argentina is a fantastic country to visit with great scenery, friendly people and superb food

and wine. The weather was also great 25c or more by day and 12c or over at night, however I was told it was unseasonably warm for late Autumn.

The rest of the week was a combination of duck, Perdix, doves and pigeons and while hares were also on the menu, I chose not to shoot them. The quality and quantity of game is impressive and all hunting is carried out in a sportsman like manner with the utmost respect being shown for the quarry.

If you like good food, as I do, Argentina is the place to be with steaks, salads, pasta and much more. Please note that Argentina has the highest level of meat consumption per capita in the entire world by far. The local wine, which I am also partial to, is also very agreeable indeed.

On the final day, after another brilliant duck flight, we had an Asado, a traditional Argentinian barbecue,



*Happy companions - Tony, the Author, Giovanni, Luca, Bruno and Mario kneeling.*

which was superb and therefore it was with a heavy heart - and a slightly sore head - that we boarded the car for our return to the airport. I was sad to be leaving this wonderful country and my many new found friends but I vowed that if I am 'living and spared' as they say, spared I will return next year.



*'Ocho' rock steady on another Perdix.*

## SHOOTING FOR SALE LOCAL AND OVERSEAS SHOOTING PACKAGES

### **Argentina (May – August 2014)**

Ducks, Perdix, hare, dove, pigeon – LIMITED AVAILABILITY

### **Romania (September – December 2013)**

Snipe, quail, geese, duck, grey partridge, roe deer

**ONLY TWO WEEKS REMAINING**

### **Ireland (2013 – 2014 Season)**

Holyhill estate driven – semi driven pheasant

November – SOLD OUT December – SOLD OUT

January – LIMITED AVAILABILITY

### **Ireland (2013 – 2014 Season)**

Driven – walked up woodcock/snipe

November – SOLD OUT December – SOLD OUT

January – LIMITED AVAILABILITY

**If interested in any of the above please contact**

**Michael McGlynn at:**

**[mmmjmcglynn@googlemail.com](mailto:mmmjmcglynn@googlemail.com)**

**Mob: 07747738787**



# The socio-economic study of recreational angling in Ireland by Tourism Development International

*In Edward Fahy's opinion the study is timely, persuasive - even compelling - and its analysis should prove influential.*

**When the first Programme for Economic Expansion was published in 1958, Ireland embarked on a new course. Primary sector industries, agriculture, forestry and fisheries would, over future decades, be industrialised and their productivity enlarged. Employment would be displaced into manufacturing and, in time, society would trade goods and services rather than remain entirely dependent on the land for the creation of wealth.**

The foundation of a modern tourist industry was part of the development strategy. Bord Failte's first angling initiative coincided with the publication of the first economic programme. Strongly associated with the traditional rural economy, tourism would hover uneasily between the old and new Irelands in the years ahead. Maintaining the qualities and ambience of the countryside and the environmental and natural qualities associated with recreational angling, referred to in the most recent account of the industry as "bio-security," proved challenging. The consequences of heavier industrialisation and increasing personal wealth and mobility eroded the qualities on which Irish tourism depended.

The property bubble which inflated in the wake of the Celtic Tiger and culminated in the banking collapse of 2008 punctured the illusion of indefinite growth in prosperity. And the ensuing recession has persisted. Meanwhile, the world is changing at a faster pace than hitherto. Resources are declining while population rises. It is time to review accepted economic development strategies.

## ***Documented background***

A quarter of a century has elapsed since the first economic evaluation of recreational angling was published. There have been many minor accounts of aspects of this valuable source of national income (such as the Bauer report in 2010 and the annual market appraisals of tourist traffic by Bord Failte and its successor) since, but an in-depth reappraisal was

overdue. Undertaken by Tourism Development International, on behalf of Inland Fisheries Ireland, the succinct and professional analysis was launched in Dublin on 18 July.

The data assembled in the course of the work are impressive and the conclusions are compelling. Among its many strengths is the brief timeframe in which the facts were assembled: between March and November 2012, nine months devoted to covering all significant sectors of the industry. The window enables precise comparison with other relevant aspects of the economy. Such comparisons are apposite: the marine fish resources on which recreational angling depend are also exploited by the commercial catching sector and, although they are renewable, they are also finite and diminishing. Recreational anglers, of course, also fish freshwaters, whose commercial fisheries have been almost extinguished (some commercial harvesting of salmon is still possible) but there is sufficient competition between the two sectors in marine and estuarine waters to justify examining their respective wealth generation in greater detail.

## ***The value of recreational fisheries dwarfs commercial landings***

In 2012, an estimated 406,000 recreational anglers pursued their interests in Ireland. They spent €555 m directly of which some €121 m was generated by out-of-state sportsmen. These sums were spent on goods and services (among them the purchase of fishing tackle, travel and accommodation) to which indirect expenditure added an additional sum incurred by those supplying services (such as boat hire) to anglers. The total for all of these in 2012 was €755 m. Total out-of-state revenue (direct and indirect) earned from tourist anglers is estimated at €280m. In 2012 the total first sale value of commercial marine produce (fin and shell fish landed, excluding processing), which is the most straightforward measurement of wealth generated by the industry, was €270m (source: Sea Fisheries Protection Authority) and some 2/5 of that figure consisted of subsidy from Irish and European taxpayers!

The value of any tourism product is dependent on two criteria: the first, the disposable income of the



purchasing population, the second the attractive value of the item in question. From 2003 to 2007 there was an increase in the annual influx of overseas visitors. In 2007 some 7.7 m visited the Republic but, following the financial crash in 2008, numbers dwindled and in 2010 only 6 m entered the state.

Numbers of visiting anglers reflected the trend. Over the past decade the greatest number registered was 173,000 in 1999; 136,000 made the journey in 2007 and these had further reduced by 17% five years later. Every category of tourist is of value to the economy but anglers may be worth more than many; they often visit in groups of friends or family. They also display strong fidelity to their interest and loyalty to particular fisheries, frequently visiting more than once a year.

Participants in Irish angling in 2012 were 62% from the Republic, 10% Northern Ireland and 28% from overseas (the actual number from overseas was 113,000). A quarter of a century before, 2.7% of overseas visitors were recreational fishermen; in 2012 that percentage declined to 1.7%, a reduction which could, however be explained in a number of ways, not necessarily a reflection on the quality of the product.

Analysis in 2011, by Fáilte Ireland, indicated that some 50% of overseas visitors came from the UK and 50% from mainland Europe. The customary checks on the quality of the tourist experience yielded reassuring responses. Ireland is still a relaxed ambience proffering comfortable accommodation for the holiday maker and the angling product was considered, by the majority, to be of good quality. The usual grumbles were aired of course: prices are high, recent, pre-2013 summer weather put a damper on holiday-making. But there were other, more intractable problems too.

## The downside

The TDI survey reiterated a finding which has surfaced in a number of recent studies of angling: the market consists largely of older enthusiasts; younger anglers are a disappearing species. One explanation is lack of a disposable income. Another, the perceived paucity of fish. A successful recreational fishery does not have to provide fish for every angler but it must possess fish to catch if it is to be an effective lure to recruit juvenile anglers! The quality of the product also assumes greater significance when the availability of discretionary spending declines, as has happened over the past five years.

Some of the most attractive of our recreational species have moved off the recreational angler's list of options. Salmon, sea-trout, bass are no longer as plentiful as they once were. Nor is a much longer list of marine species which have been relentlessly pursued by commercial fishers over past sixty years.

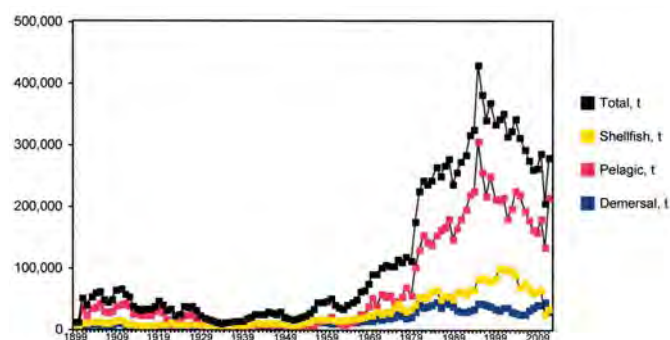


Fig 1. Landings of marine produce (demersal, pelagic, shellfish and total) by Irish vessels, 1899 – 2012.

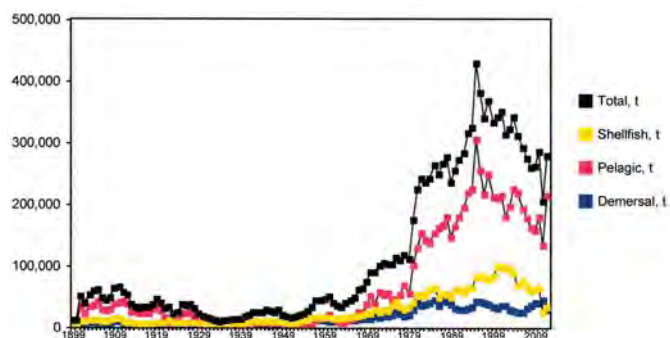


Fig 2. Values of seafood landings (demersal, pelagic, shellfish, deep water and total), standardised currency adjusted for inflation, 1950 – 2012.

In Figs 1. and 2. I have set out the tonnage and values (adjusted for inflation) of the principal categories of marine animal produce landed by the industry. Peak values were achieved in 2001 and they have tumbled since, the value of marine landings having halved by 2012. These values are, currently, just above what they were in 1973 when Ireland entered the E.E.C.

A perceived decline in the availability of fish was expressed as a cause of dissatisfaction. Indeed, it was a disincentive for visiting anglers from Europe. Greater policing and enforcement, curtailing illegal fishing and effective protection of fish stocks were all identified as necessary. Possibly significant was the fact that both Norway and Scotland, countries in which conservation of fish resources is taken seriously, emerged as major competitors for overseas anglers with Ireland.

Recreational angling was divided into the customary five sectors for the purposes of analysis: salmonids, coarse fish, pike, bass and sea angling generally. Useful information is available on all, although there will be critics who lament there is not enough to provide a sufficiently comprehensive account of any. An acquaintance of mine was curious to know how many bass were captured in 2012. An estimate might be arrived at but the data would have to be specifically sought. But, on this topical species, other relevant facts and figures were provided.

The TDI report stated that bass, along with salmon and sea-trout, were species on which anglers spent more



money than on any other category of fishing. The percentage of British anglers seeking bass (39%) was greater than for any other species. As a general rule, the length of stay on an angling holiday increased with the distance travelled from out of state and the average sojourn by bass anglers (5.4 days) was greater than for other types of fishing.

## **A worthwhile market**

Recreational angling is not to be lightly dismissed as a source of national revenue. Although its appeal has diminished in recent years it is still potentially very valuable. Throughout Europe some 25 m people practise the sport, on which they spend \$ U.S.A. 25 billion annually, according to the European Anglers' Alliance. As many as 12-15% of the population of some nations participate; in Ireland some 6.5% do, according to the same source. The TDI study reported 7%, a figure in close agreement.

Nowadays, employment is the holy grail of all economic endeavour. An up-to-date, comparative analysis is not available from the commercial sector but the Cawley Report<sup>1</sup> estimated that wild fisheries and aquaculture in 2004-5 supported 11,600 jobs of which 3,600 were part time. The number had fallen by 22% from five years previously. It is very unlikely to have expanded since, in the context of declining landings. The same analysis specified that almost €600 m should be invested in wild fisheries and aquaculture over the following seven years; this would originate mainly, if not entirely, from Irish and European taxpayers! It should be

reiterated that the income of some €0.25 billion, generated by seafood landings in 2012, approximately 2/5 had been invested by the taxpayer and that, as the plight of our wild fisheries worsens, they require injections of ever more cash to survive. Contrast this depressed scenario with the more optimistic situation of recreational angling. Every €1 m spent by tourists generates 36 jobs, so tourist expenditure of €280 m in 2012 accounted for 10,000.

It might be possible to consider the two pursuits, recreational angling and commercial fishing, separately, were it not for the fact that they share and compete for a common resource. And there is no doubt that the fate of certain marine fin fishes will be a significant factor in the future of tourist angling. Weighed dispassionately, policy should favour angling more strongly than it does and the TDI report should contribute significantly to the direction in which policy evolves. But life is not that simple and some say vested interests, particularly those which operate the largest commercial vessels, have a disproportionate share of influence on the manner in which decisions are taken.

Edward Fahy is a journalist and consultant, working on marine, particularly fisheries matters. His book *Overkill! the euphoric rush to industrialise Ireland's sea fisheries and its unravelling sequel* was published earlier in 2013 and is available from Amazon.

<sup>1</sup>Cawley, N., J. Murrin and R. O'Bric (2006) *Steering a new course: Strategy for a restructured, sustainable and profitable Irish seafood industry 2007-2013*. Pp 196.

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# **Irish Fly Fair and International Angling Show 2013 Galway Bay Hotel 9th & 10th November**

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# Hydro Schemes

*In the Spring edition of this magazine William Marsden wrote about his concerns about a small hydro scheme that had been rebuilt at Broughshane. Andrew Frazer who is chairman of the Northern Ireland Branch of the British Hydropower Association and owns two hydro schemes on the River Maine has written in a reply that lays out a set of facts and different conclusions to that of Mr Marsden.*

It is a matter of fact that there used to be a lot of water turbines in Northern Ireland. In 1903, there were 90 hydro sites on the River Maine catchment, all abstracting water for power and some of them polluting the watercourses with flax effluent. The same was true on all the other tributaries flowing into Lough Neagh; the creation of wealth in C19 and C20 Ireland depended almost entirely on water and the Textile Industry was responsible for putting bread on the table for 1000s of families. These installations used all the water they could and they had no concern for continuous residual flows or fine screens or cumulative impact. Most sites were in the middle and the upper reaches of the river where there was more head but also where there were spawning grounds and nursery waters. Under these circumstances you might not expect to find any fish here at all but as many people will tell you the fishing was much better in the old days. However, the decline of the textile industry after WW2 meant that by 1963 there were 9 turbines in operation and by 1993 only two sites using water power survived on the River Maine.

During this same period, The Honourable The Irish Society kept a continuous record of the number and weight of fish trapped at the Cutts on the Lower Bann. It shows that after a long period of stability, numbers reached a peak in 1962 with nearly 35,000 salmon and grilse being caught; but from 1970 on, something changed and there was a steep decline in numbers until the fishery closed down finally in 1995. It is, therefore, impossible to attribute the decline in salmon numbers to hydro power when it itself had become almost extinct through the collapse of the textile industry.

Since the Non Fossil Fuel Obligation, there has been a resurgence in interest in hydro power and a number of schemes were refurbished at this time; in 1994 this produced a violent reaction from some angling organisations, "Salmon Face Extinction" and "River Power will destroy fishing" and "25% of young fish will be killed", were some of the headlines in the newspapers. The difficulty with statements like these is that, if they don't actually happen, they destroy the credibility of the argument and of those that made such predictions. But it was evident that if more schemes were redeveloped and they operated for a long period of time

without making salmon extinct or destroying fishing, anglers should be able to have confidence in the strength of this evidence.

There are now some 90 water turbines in operation all of which have been subject to the Abstraction Licensing system and scrutiny by Department of Culture Arts and Leisure and Northern Ireland Environment Agency and other environmental consultees.

Earlier this year a written question was lodged by an MLA with the Stormont Assembly asking for details of all instances over the last twenty years where water turbines have been found to have been responsible for killing fish, including the (i) location; (ii) date; (iii) estimated number of fish involved; and (iv) the action taken by her Department. In Written Answer AQW 20777/11-15 - Water Turbines: Killing Fish - 3rd June 2013 it said: "The Department has no record of any incidents where water turbines have been responsible for killing fish over the last twenty years."

A similar request to the Environment Agency in England and Wales confirmed that there had been only three instances since 1993, two involving eels and one involving trout.

These are two similar conclusions based on evidence taken over a long period during which some angling organisations have attempted to persuade Government of the damage that hydro power causes to fish; these conclusions do not agree with the views expressed by Mr Marsden.

But it is well known that salmon stocks have been in decline, not just in Northern Ireland and not just on rivers where there are hydro schemes. Despite this, the summer of 2012 produced a lot of salmon in Northern Ireland rivers. The extent of this migration and some of the successes of anglers are documented on Saturdays in the Newsletter with headlines like:

"Loughs Agency report that salmon numbers are the highest for 10 years. On the River Mourne, fish were coming in on every tide with 30 per hour ascending the weir at Sion Mills." - 14th July 2012.

"For every fish landed there were many more lost. Fish are taking the Weir at Sion Mills with ease... Many summer salmon in double figure were caught...Red Letter Days of catching fish - this great summer for





*Typical C18 weir in use today in Northern Ireland.*

anglers is expected to continue – 28th July 2102.

“Fishing was fanstastic with one angler catching six salmon in one hour and another catching 18” - 22nd September 2012.”

This is welcome news to anglers and from the hydro operator’s point of view, it can only substantiate the argument that the use of water by the 90 schemes now operating in Northern Ireland is having no effect on fisheries and that all the hard work protecting smolts, keeping screens clean and adhering to the requirements of Fishery Legislation have been effective. On the other hand, some of the reports - 25th August 2012 - have started to recognise the effect angling has on salmon stocks and how their activities should now to be regulated.

In December 2012 the Minister for DCAL introduced a series of measures to protect salmon stocks:

- so that anglers may kill only one salmon in 2013
- thereafter they may not be able to kill any salmon until stocks improve
- the policy of catch and release has been made compulsory
- in addition, she is concerned about the mortality in salmon caused by catch and release and intends to introduce further restrictions on certain baits and fishing methods that anglers can use.
- and finally, to counter the opportunities for the increasing number of anglers to catch fish, she may restrict the length of the angling season.

It is unlikely that the Minister would be introducing these regulations if anglers did not have an effect on salmon numbers.

But the plight of the salmon is more complicated than just hydro schemes or anglers. Just recently North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation have confirmed that marine survival is the major factor affecting abundance of salmon populations and this confirms the work carried out at the Salmon Research Station at Bushmills where scientists have been reporting a drop from 30% marine survival down to 6%. Smolts should grow rapidly when they get to sea because of the abundance of food but examination of scale

samples now reveal that this growth is much slower than before and that smolts at sea are being starved by the lack of food. This may explain why smolts from the River Bush, normally destined for the Norwegian Sea, have been found at distant Bear Island. In corroboration, the data kept by The Irish Society shows that the average fish in the 1920s was 9lbs while the average in the 1980s was 6lbs.

The British Hydropower Association promotes good design and good operational practise for hydro schemes and runs courses for new owners. Of course, Fishery protection and fish passage are of paramount importance; the Fisheries Act requires protection for both upstream and downstream migration and facilitation of fish passage is also necessary as brown trout, eels and dollaghan migrate. Modern control and alarm systems allow water levels to be maintained accurately; scientific knowledge about salmon migration and what water flow triggers migration may allow computer programmes to be used to maximise the opportunities for fish passage. The result should be that fishery protection and fish passage is now better than at any time in the past and there is no reason why a hydro scheme should not be “100% fish friendly.”

Hydro operators are mindful of their obligation to protect the environment and it is no less than the role that anglers have to play in ensuring salmon survive for future generations.

*The full version of this article was given in a paper at Energy Now Expo at Telford in February 2013 and is available on the BHA Website [www.british-hydro.org](http://www.british-hydro.org)*



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# Summer's Silver Ingots

**O**nce the fishing season begins in earnest the time seems to fly and we march through the weeks and months at an alarming pace. We start with the Duckfly and Buzzers, on to the Olives and Terrestrials, Black Gnats and Hawthorne flies, and then the queen of them all, the Mayfly. But once we reach the summer solstice the season seems to come to an abrupt halt. The last falls of Spent Gnat are dwindling away and all the excitement of long balmy nights, with Mayfly Spinners making their way out from the wooded shores onto the open Lough and the noise of large trout slurping their way up the side of a wind lane, focussed on the banquet laid on the water to help their bodies recover from the stresses of spawning during the previous winter and regaining pristine condition. The excitement of watching such trout approaching and finally engulfing your artificial becomes etched in the memory and it's a sad time when the Mayfly draws to a close for another season.

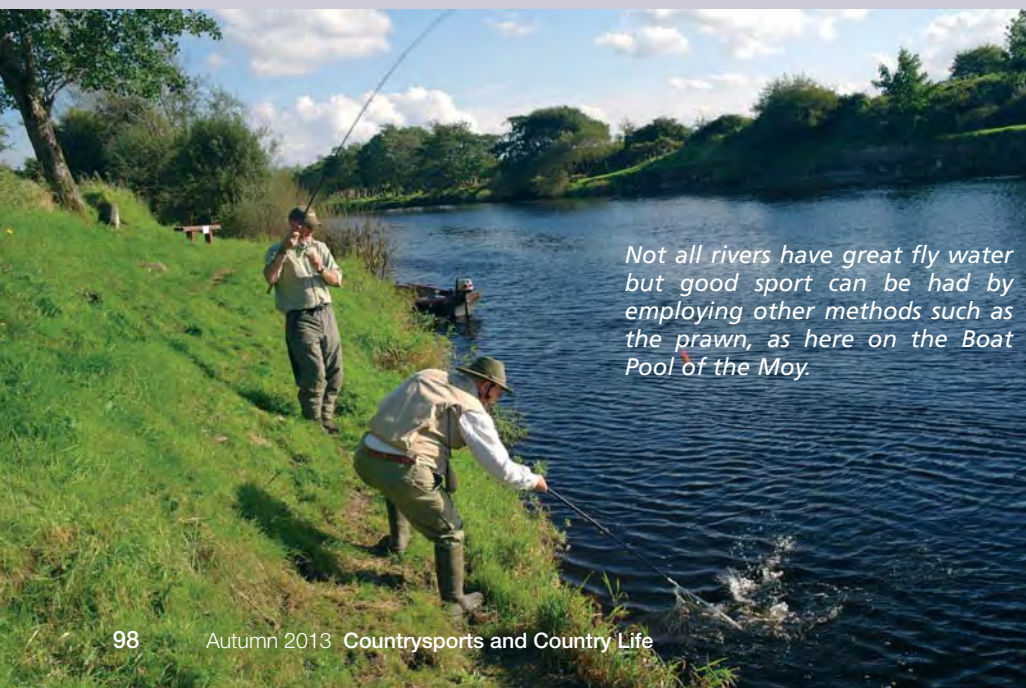
However, the end of the Mayfly is by no means the end of the fishing and for those who like to travel West it's really only the beginning of another chapter in the Irish fishing diary. While we are casting our mayflies on the Corrib, Mask or Arrow, far out at sea things are stirring within the migratory fish population and the urge return to the natal rivers is stirring within our salmon and sea trout as they feed hard on the oceans plentiful bounty and pile on the weight for the long journey home. The irresistible urge to return becomes stronger as the weeks go by until, eventually, these

nomads of the tide begin to gather in the estuaries and bays near their native rivers and streams to await unsettled weather. Heavy rains and floods will be the signal to rush upstream, back to their place of birth to continue the cycle of life. Their fantastic condition and physique after months and possibly years of hard feeding at sea allow them to leap obstacles and forge through strong currents and this great condition is betrayed by the beautiful bright silver sheen of their bodies.

The angler also awaits these rains, and the first flood after a period of dry weather at the end of June or start of July will bring a wave of silver grilse and salmon surging into the rivers in their hundreds or in larger rivers such as the Moy, in their thousands. When the word goes out that the fish are running, anglers converge on towns like Ballina from all parts of the country to take advantage of the great sport on offer and the guest houses, hotels, pubs and tackle shops get a welcome surge in business. Years ago, before the recession, I often wondered if there was anyone left in Belfast when the salmon run happened to coincide with the twelfth fortnight as everyone seemed to be in Ballina! In those days huge hauls of salmon could be made by fishing the worm in the receding flood but now, thankfully, anglers are realising that such slaughter is no longer sustainable and are investing in the future of angling by being more responsible with the number of fish taken. Sale of wild salmon is now illegal in Ireland and there is no place for greed in today's angling community.

## ***Conditions largely dictate the method***

For me one of the best things about the summer salmon is the number of angling methods which may be employed in their capture. Depending on the condition of the water and the type of river we are fishing they may be caught on fly, spinner, worms or prawn and shrimp. Conditions largely dictate the method: during the high, dirty water of a flood the worm reigns supreme; as the water fines down and clarity improves the spinner will catch a lot of fish; and as the water drops closer to normal level and becomes clear then it's time for the fly. When the water is low and fish are hard to stir then the



*Not all rivers have great fly water but good sport can be had by employing other methods such as the prawn, as here on the Boat Pool of the Moy.*



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*Little shrimp flies with lots of mobility work well for summer salmon in spate rivers.*

prawn and shrimp come into their own and provide sport when nothing else would work. People often talk about methods being unsporting but I think that it has to be the angler who is responsible for unsporting behaviour. Provided that strict bag limits are adhered to then this should not be an issue. Methods such as fly and prawn, generally, are suitable for catch and release, especially prawn as the bait is rarely taken far into the mouth and the hook is easily removed. Unfortunately the worm is generally swallowed and spinners such as flying C's are often engulfed and the fish must be killed.

The type of river also has a bearing on the method used and some rivers, again the Moy as an example, are not suitable in many places for fly fishing so bait has to be employed. It's only my opinion but I think that reaches with good fly water should be reserved for that method; this is not snobbery its only my opinion but really good fly water is not often encountered and those who enjoy that method should be

given peace to enjoy it; I don't know how many times I've been quietly working my way down a pool on the Finn or the Mourne when some ignorant so and so steps in front just as I get to the best water and chucks in a flying C inches from my fly! These ignorant louts destroy other peoples enjoyment in a sport that can provide enjoyment for everyone.

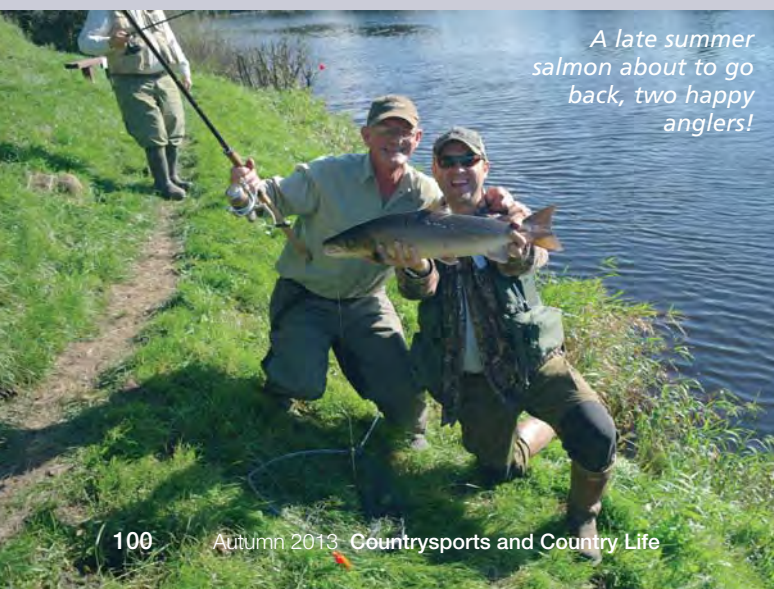
The summer salmon can provide great sport for the holidaying angler and no special tackle is required, just the normal Lough fishing kit, possibly a sinking leader and some salmon flies. Many rivers have run of fish and if there is wet weather the West Coast has a plethora of small streams and rivers which can provide sport for the visitor. Grilse can be frustrating as they can nudge & pluck at flies and its better not to strike but to continue the retrieve until everything goes tight, then wait for the fireworks as generally they fight energetically and frequently take to the air. The time to strike is when fishing the prawn as the salmon generally take it, crunch a few times and spit it out. Prawn fishing with a little float



*Little tide fresh grilse can provide great sport on light tackle.*

can be a heart stopping business as the fish frequently play with the bait before taking it and you will see the little float bobbing and moving but you can't strike until it actually gets pulled under then you've only got a split second to set the hook before the prawn comes back minus head and legs which have been crunched off. I find a single hook presents the prawn well and is very easy to remove from the salmon's mouth for a careful release.

So there we have it, another chapter in Ireland's busy fishing diary and a very exciting time it can be though anglers won't be popular for praying for rain while the whole population wants the weather to be sunny! The water brings all the little streams and rivers to life as our iconic game fish rush into the pools, surge through the rapids and leap the falls. When storm clouds threaten then it's time to dust down the rods and the salmon fly boxes and get ready to go search of Summers' Silver Ingots, good luck!



*A late summer salmon about to go back, two happy anglers!*





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# DCAL Salmon Conservation update – June 2013

**W**ild Atlantic salmon are in decline in rivers across the north of Ireland. At the beginning of 2012 the Department of Culture Arts & Leisure (DCAL) outlined ongoing steps to tackle this worrying problem. A voluntary catch and release policy for anglers, and a voluntary cessation of commercial netting of salmon were agreed in 2012

Now, in the middle of 2013, as we move to the next stage of measures, it is important to begin by reiterating the situation. The threat to one of our iconic species is very real, and may be terminal. That is why DCAL have a wild Atlantic salmon strategy, which was approved by North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) six years ago and has been rigorously implemented since. But the latest figures show numbers are still low. This is a complex issue that years of intensive research is still getting to grips with. It is not unique to the north of Ireland. There are numerous other examples of declining salmon stocks around the Atlantic. Internationally, investigations are ongoing, to better understand why and the issue has been discussed at the recent NASCO Annual Conference, which took place in Drogheda in June 2013.

For some, salmon fishing is a leisure activity, for others it was part of their livelihood. While there are things DCAL can and must do to address the decline in salmon stocks, there are many factors which are outside the Department's control. A major problem is very low marine survival. It is perhaps easy to forget that salmon are essentially sea fish. Rising sea temperatures push feeding grounds north as ecosystems are drawn to cooler waters. This means the fish simply have to swim further to feed, therefore lowering their chances of survival to return to our rivers too spawn. There is an eagerness to tackle this issue and this has been seen in places from Northern Ireland rivers and waterways through to the Assembly chamber at Stormont. The Department has been encouraged by the enthusiastic support for conservation measures and the responsible approach being adopted by commercial netmen and recreational anglers across the board. The continuing momentum to conserve and protect salmon is something that DCAL welcomes.

## Same side

We were all on the same side on this and together aim for the same outcome, namely the survival and sustainability of our salmon stocks. Some anecdotal evidence from river banks during the 2012 season may give cause for optimism. But it is important to recognise this is set against the backdrop of an ongoing, downward decline in overall salmon numbers. Measures such as catch and release and a cessation of commercial net fishing, which were introduced on a voluntary basis, should now be backed up with legislation. As the Department moves towards this, it will be consulting on proposals with key parties in the coming months to ensure their views are reflected moving forward to find an agreed approach to conserving salmon stocks.

Further steps, such as the recent ban on the selling of rod caught salmon and proposals to offer sea trout the same protection as salmon, will underpin these measures.

The Department will continue to clamp down on all types of illegal fishing activities in partnership with other agencies. There have been many successes in this area right across the North. These send out a message that poaching will not be tolerated in any form and DCAL will work to support the vast majority of fishermen who operate within the law.

Put simply, DCAL asks all anglers to continue practice catch and release on a voluntary basis when angling for salmon. It is anticipated that legislation will be in place for the 2014 fishing season that will make this mandatory and bring about a mandatory cessation of commercial salmon netting. The ongoing momentum to conserve and protect salmon is welcoming and DCAL asks that anglers continue this for as long as is necessary to achieve sustainability of stocks. DCAL realises the solution will not be quick or easy and a positive outcome is not guaranteed. But our collective endeavour should continue and the best chance we have of tackling this problem is by acting together. We must all do what we can and hope that it is enough to save this species.

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# My First Salmon

**My** third year at school was almost over when Dad and I took four days off to go down south on a fishing holiday. After the six hour car journey, we arrived at Shean Lodge, at Ballycroy near Bangor Erris. We were welcomed by Michael, the famous gillie, and Robert his son, who were excited to see us back. After unpacking our bags, Dad and I headed out to try to catch a salmon. The fishing conditions were hard, as the water was low and the wind was very strong coming from the west making it hard to cast our fly out a big distance. We fished hard until ten but had no luck on that first evening.

The second day was much the same with hard conditions and again no luck. Then Dad had a good one on and roared at me to come back and wind it in. Robert and I dropped our rods and sprinted up the riverbank towards him with our big waders on. I could see his rod bent and the tip poking away and the big salmon jumping all over the place. When I got to about ten yards from Dad he held the rod out to me and then, gently, the fly floated out and the salmon had escaped. Dad said not to worry but we had fished so hard for this one chance and he said that there was a huge difference between one and zero and I knew how hard we had tried to get one fish to bring home. Maybe it has just not going to happen for us this year.

One of our fishing companions, Tim, was taking one of our two rods the next day on the River Moy to fish the famous Ridge Pool, so Dad and I agreed to go with him to fish the other one. After an early start waking up at 4am so that we arrived at the River Moy at 5am, we found the fishing conditions here were also very poor. This really was desperately bad luck, as low water on the

River Owenduff should have meant ideal conditions on the Moy. Our friends had got the tide levels all wrong, and the tide was still coming in so the river was far too high to fish; also it was very muddy coloured. We talked about going home without even trying to fish this new place. Then John, the gillie for the Ridge Pool, turned up on his motorbike. He said there was no point fishing until 10am when the tide would be going out and anyway there was nowhere to buy breakfast that opened until nine.

Our early start had been wasted; Dad and I slept uncomfortably in the car until nine, but at least we both managed to sleep. We then went to the big hotel looking onto the Ridge Pool to get some breakfast. Afterwards, we took our rods and waders and went to the fisherman's hut to get ready. Dad told the gillie that no matter what or how, he should try his best to get me to catch a salmon because I'd fished and tried so hard for the previous two days. The big gillie smiled and agreed and said that he'd get me one for sure. Then I put on my new chest waders for the very first time and, with my new great friend, gillie John and I waded out through the fast flowing streams, over to the weir. The water was up to our thighs and the current was strong and some of the rocks were slippery. I started to fly fish with a double handed rod for the first time but, after half an hour we realised neither us nor anyone else that day, would catch anything on the fly.

Gillie John changed our strategy and took out worms as bait instead of the fly fishing. He put three big, wriggly worms called blackheads all on a hook at once and used a lead weight as a sinker called a 'bouncing Betty.' I was sure he was kidding me. We both laughed and we started to fish again. I could cast out by myself and felt I was getting loads of knocks on the rod from something down in the depths. John said that the knocks were probably from eels and I always felt the worms swinging around in the fast current. Wind in and cast out to the side again and again and I knew a salmon would eventually make the right connection with the worms and it would be mine.

With only 20 minutes left before two o'clock when we had to go, I got a sudden, vicious, hard tug on the rod and, without thinking, I immediately struck the rod up into the air. I was into a fish! It jumped into the air and I saw it with my line coming out from its mouth. The rod nearly bent into two before line started zipping out. All I had to do now was to play it in.



14 year old author John Smyth at the Ridge Pool.





*John playing his first salmon on the River Moy.*

The gillie ran to get the net while I was playing the fish, I was holding the rod high in the air knowing that if there was one mistake the fish would get off and I would not live up to Dad's legacy. In the current it jumped lots of times and kept pulling line off the reel, but no matter what it tried to do it couldn't get off. I was very surprised how quickly a salmon could spurt off and swim all over the place and for ages and ages it didn't want to come in.



*Big gillie John races over with the net.*

Eventually the salmon was about to come in - then it put on one last surge to get free. But I had remembered



*Safely netted and everyone is delighted.*

everything that Dad had taught me. The salmon came in head first, all over on its side and I could see its eye watching me and with one smooth motion the fish was safely netted. Big gillie John and my Dad both let out a huge shout. All the fishing we had done for the past three days from ten in the morning until after eleven at night had finally paid off. When everyone looked at it, Dad showed me that there were six wee sea lice near its belly.

Dad said it was so fresh that the sea lice still had their tails, like tadpoles with tails. He said this was the very best fish that you could catch because it was so fresh and was like a bar of silver. I was very proud and happy and Dad and all his friends were as well. We put a tag in the fish's mouth and soon I will take it over to my grandparents in Romania who love cooking and eating fish from Ireland.



*Happy fishermen - Stephen Smyth with son John.*



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# Mink Hunting With A Friendly Pack In North Cork

**O**n the 28th of July last, driving through County Cork, I came across a beautiful castle gateway near the small town of Doneraile. I love old castle gates with their highly skilled craftsmanship and their sense of fairytale. These silver iron gates were surrounded by imposing, impressively cut grey stone surrounds and they stand guard at the head of a track leading to Creagh Castle (also known as Castlesaffron) and another track leading to Doneraile Park Demesne. The Demesne is well worth a visit because it is four hundred acres of prime land which was set aside by its owners for the creation of a landscaped park; beauty was the overriding consideration in its creation. If only we could say that more often when writing about contemporary building projects! If we could, then we would surely be living in a better, because more beautiful, world. The Demesne was created by the St Leger family who owned extensive landholdings in North Munster. The St Legers were landowners in the region since 1636. One of them, the 4th Viscount Doneraile, met a really unpleasant end. The 4th Viscount lived during the Victorian era and foxhunting was one of his pastimes. He kept a pet fox which was housed near a gate at the side of the demesne's house. This fox became rabid and bit its master. The

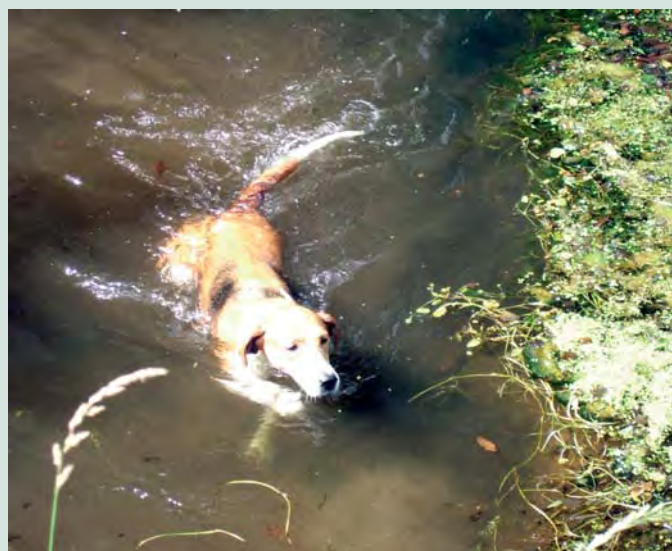


*A couple of followers keep an eye out for the quarry on the bank of the Awbeg River near Doneraile, County Cork.*

**Viscount contracted rabies and he was smothered with pillows by the housemaids to spare him suffering and prevent the disease spreading to others.**

The demesne's house is known as Doneraile Court and it was restored by the Irish Georgian Society and is open to the public. Before the arrival of the St Legers, the land was owned by the Synan family who lived in Doneraile Castle also in the present day demesne. The famous poet Edmund Spenser lived nearby in the late 1500s in Kilcolman Castle, which no longer exists, and wrote about this district in his celebrated epic poem 'The Faerie Queene.' The Faerie Queene is an allegorical work which follows several knights in an examination of several virtues. In Spenser's 'A Letter of the Authors,' he states that the entire epic poem is 'cloudily enwrapped in allegorical devises,' and that the aim of publishing The Faerie Queene was to 'fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline.'

I was down in County Cork because I was meeting up with the County Cork Mink Hunt whom I met at half-ten



*A black and tan hound wades through the waters of the Awbeg River in North Cork in quest of mink.*





*The hunt is on! And this determined hound swims hard to catch up with the rest of the pack.*

beside a pub at a crossroads. We chatted for several minutes and then about 30 of us drove off at 11 and started hunting quarter of an hour later. As we walked through the fields I chatted to the friendly hunt secretary Aiden Kearney. "We were formerly the Cork City Otter Hounds," said Aiden. "Some years ago we changed to the Cork City Mink Hunt. About a year and a half ago we changed our name to the County Cork Mink Hunt because we felt that having the word city in it didn't represent the situation anymore. When it was formed in 1928 they were all city people. Now we are spread out all over the county so a name change was appropriate. We hunt a number of rivers throughout Cork and part of Kerry. We also hunt in other parts of the country, by invitation. For example we have hunted the Nore near Durrow; the King's River in Kilkenny. We hunt every Sunday from May to September and occasionally byedays. Next week there will be a full week's mink hunting. The Desmond are out on Saturday, Monday, Friday, Monday; we'll be out on Sunday, Wednesday, Saturday. We work our holidays around our hunting. We are not sun people. We hunt. That's what we live for."

Aiden also looks after the South Union Fox hounds and looks after their kennels. "I'm the Kennel huntsman of the South Union Fox Hounds. I've a day job as well. The South Union hunt on horseback on Tuesdays and Saturdays, but I follow on foot. I used to beagle with the Blackwater under Jackie Connors, and also beagled with the Maryboro Beagles, and the Riverstown Beagles." He added that he's travelled over to England several times for hunting events. "This October I'll be travelling to Newcastle in Northumberland for the Newcastle Fieldsports festival. The Newcastle & District Beagles are one of the best packs in England. If you are into hare hunting it is a fantastic festival. I know people in the West Somerset pack quite well and I'll be meeting them at the festival."

Aiden pointed out that the number of followers out for the County Cork's hunts varies. "It could be anything from 10 to 40 people out. Today is a good meet so there are quite a few followers present. There is of course a

core membership who turn up every Sunday. The vast majority of the followers present here today either beagle or foxhunt during the main hunting season. The huntsman of County Cork is Brian McDonagh and this is Brian's 31st season in the role. "Brian is based in Grange, Ovens and he looks after the bitches," explained Aiden. "John Roche looks after some doghounds and I look after the other doghounds," added Aidan.

### ***A day out normally lasts five hours***

A typical day out mink hunting consists of unboxing the hounds between 11:00 and 11:30 and walking down to the river where the huntsman will draw and it's up to the hounds after that. "We are normally out for five hours, but if we find at 12 o'clock and have a really good three hour hunt, that's fine and the huntsman will call for home. But you mightn't find until four o'clock and therefore we carry on hunting until six." He told me that they follow the bank of the river and frequently cross the river and wade through it. "Today we are hunting the Awbeg River. The Awbeg was formerly hunted by the Bride Valley Otter Hounds. They disbanded about seven or eight years ago. When they were formed there was an agreement between the Cork City Otter Hounds and the Bride Valley that they had this river and some more. But since they have been disbanded we are hunting it."

Shortly after Aiden and I had finished our conversation we crossed a few fields and came to the Awbeg, which was quite a narrow, small river; it comes from the Irish An Abhainn Bheag which means 'the small river.' It was a lovely day, sun-kissed, with a bit of thunder and a few showers; fluctuating from a little bit nippy to very warm. The huntsman had brought 13 and a half couple of hounds. It was a mixed pack and, as Aiden had explained, the hounds had come from three different kennels. Many of these hounds hunt as well during the foxhunting season. The pack included a Welsh long-haired hound, black and tans, harrier hounds, and foxhounds. Aiden explained that many hounds don't make good mink hounds. The afternoon was great fun and the County Cork were a very welcoming club. There were a wide variety of ages amidst the followers, young to old; and they were all men.

Brian McDonagh proved to be a very determined huntsman. The scent was a bit patchy and the mink was proving difficult to get, in the sense that the scent was often being lost; but while other huntsmen would have given up Brian kept on at it. The day lasted for about five hours, so it was a long outing. Often we were standing on the bank, unmoving for considerable periods,



perhaps chatting or perhaps spacing out. When you are stationary on the bank the concept is that you are looking at the river and are watching for the mink, and for much of the time you are doing that, but occasionally one can't help but space out; I think it's inevitable if one is standing there for 15 or 20 minutes in the sunshine looking at the river with its dappled light.

Initially I was a bit wary about getting into the water but finally entered the river and in fact entering the river is highly recommended, as the world looks different once you're in and it's beautiful. I was worried about getting my camera wet, but the water never went above my waist. My camera was up around my chest so it was OK. Once you muster the courage and get into the river you have to be careful because it is slippery underfoot. Some parts of it are muddy, and people avoid those sections because one can sink down deeply. Once I was in the water I realised that it really is the soul and essence of the thing. It is an attractive environment and you are in this other world; a river-world; with the hounds hunting around you, the dogs splashing in and out of the river; and, as so often when out hunting, I began thinking of the vast numbers of people who experienced this activity over many centuries. Sometimes when out hunting I think of the Celts and of their mythological creation the Fianna. When we read about the Fianna the stories are frequently located in an outdoor world, a world where a great deal of time is devoted to the chase. Hunting for me is great fun, sociable and excellent exercise but it also contains a sense of the sacred. Some people may scoff at such a notion but I feel that the ancient Celts would have understood what I mean, as would the Red Indians of North America.

### ***Nobody minded getting wet***

Anyway, get into the water is my advice if you ever go



mink hunting. It is, in fact, hard to avoid getting into the water; you could stay on the bank most of the time but you'd be missing out on the fun and the beauty. And the water was quite warm. Appropriate footwear of course is very important. I wear ecco boots which are perfect for the task in hand. Their ankle support is also reasonably low which is an important factor because once you start running, high ankle support can result in sprained ankles. Nobody on a mink hunt minds their feet getting wet. The most important thing is that the boots are comfortable and are also all right for jogging along in, and for coping with uneven ground. People wear old clothes. Aiden explained to me that when there is a lot of rain during the week the County Cork might actually cancel the hunt or they will avoid certain rivers and head to other rivers which are not too bad.

At one stage we saw the mink running across what was referred to as The Island, which was a tiny island in the middle of the Awbeg compelling the river to briefly form two branches. We spent a lot of time either on or in the vicinity of The Island which was a lovely spot, and an area which always contains minks. We saw the mink (sometimes referred to as 'the animal') running across this small area of ground with the hounds extremely close and I thought it was likely they would catch the mink, but they didn't. Catching the quarry is a rare event when mink hunting. It's a similar story in beagling. When I go out beagling we sometimes mightn't catch a hare until ten or more days have elapsed. Therefore beaglers are definitely not going to affect the numbers of the quarry they are pursuing; which is good, because the quarry is there for another day, which means another day's sport.

I really enjoyed my day with the County Cork. They were a bit annoyed that the scent was a tad bitsy but people were fairly happy at the end. The huntsman had tried his best and overall I think it was a good day. The

followers were also pleased to hear that the senior Cork hurling team had beaten Kilkenny that afternoon in the championship quarterfinal. As we stood looking into the river for the animal someone was on his mobile and announced to everyone that Cork won by five points. It was an unexpected victory as Cork were the underdogs.

The County Cork is also a sociable bunch. Afterwards they invited me for a few pints but sadly I had to decline as I had to make an appointment that evening.

*Huntsman Brian McDonagh (facing the camera) about turns and heads towards the calls of a couple of followers who have spotted the quarry.*



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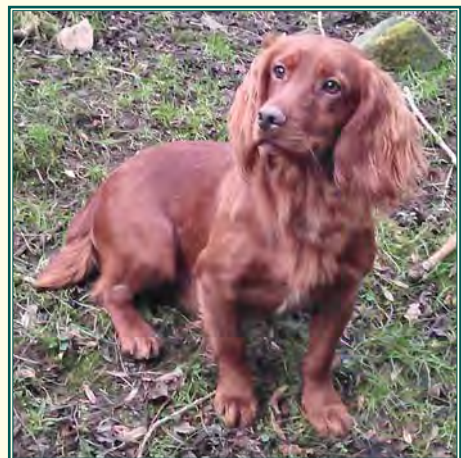
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# Hunting Roundup

## *Around the Puppy Shows*

A new entry of 5½ couple of doghounds and 10½ couple of bitches from nine litters came before judges Deirdre McKenna, former master of the High Peak Harriers (in Derbyshire) and James Lowry, huntsman of the West Meath Foxhounds at the Ballymacad Foxhounds' puppy show. Intermittent rain did not deter the large number of spectators, all of whom stood at the new, open showing area in front of the house from enjoying the spectacle.



*The grin says it all – Ballymacad Huntsman Kevin Donahue receives the Trophy for the Two Couple of Bitches class at the Stradbally from Yvonne McClintock*

After necessarily protracted deliberations Tosh Kellet MFH announced the following placings:

Doghounds 1. Daly East Galway Caesar 09 Dainty 10.

2. Silver East Galway Caesar 09 Four Burrow Signet 07

3. Simpson Sibling of Silver.

Bitches 1. Simply Sibling of Silver , 2. Ribbon Bosco 08

Duke of Beaufort Riddle 09, 3. Daylight Sibling of Daly

Simply was then declared Champion puppy with Daly as Reserve Champion.

James Armstrong MFH welcomed a large crowd, on a lovely sunny day, to the East Down Foxhounds' kennels, at Seaforde, where judges Roddy Bailey from Co Wexford and Townley Angel, from the Louth Foxhounds, had three couple of doghounds and four couple of bitches from two litters to consider.

Huntsman Declan Feeney and whipper-in Ian Donoghue had put in a lot of work to make the day go well and the judges played their part before giving James Armstrong the following decisions to announce:

Doghounds 1. Malton Middleton Gunner 07

Marigold 06, 2. Malvern Sibling of Malton, 3. Marshall

Sibling of Malton. Bitches 1. Sago Bailey 10 Stable 05, 2.

Salary Sibling of Sago, 3. Marion Sibling of Malton.

Not only have the East Down Foxhounds gained a new professional whipper-in but James Armstrong has been joined in the mastership by local businessman Brian McConville, whose first public appearance in his new role this was.

## *Hunting Association of Northern Ireland annual hound show*

A gloriously sunny day greeted us at the HANI annual hound show at Gosford Forest Park, where the Armagh County Agricultural Show kindly continue to host us at their Annual Show.

Our judges this year were Mr Michael MacEwan, former master and huntsman of the Cattistock Foxhounds and Mr Otis Ferry, master and huntsman of the South Shropshire Foxhounds since 2004.

Eight Foxhound and two Harrier packs brought forward some quality hounds and prizes

*Huntsman Derrie Donegan with Tipperary Chieftain The Doghound Champion at the IMFHA Show at Stradbally.*







*Heythrop  
Wiseman 11  
Champion  
Hound at the  
HANI show at  
Gosford Forest  
Park when  
shown by the  
North Down  
Foxhounds.*

were fairly evenly distributed with no one pack hogging the ribbons.

North Down Foxhounds huntsman Tom Haddock has got into his stride on the flags and took the prestigious two couple of bitches class as well as the doghound championship while the Ballymacad Foxhounds held the Republic's banner high in winning the bitch championship.

#### **Results: Foxhounds**

Champion Doghound North Down Wiseman 11 (Heythrop Forelock 08-their Willow 08)

Reserve Champion Meath Berkeley UE (Exmoor Belfry 08-Meath Gravy 10)

Champion Bitch Ballymacad Sapling 11 (Saturday 06-Kildare Saintly 08)

Reserve Champion Meath Benefit UE (sister of Berkeley)

#### **Harriers**

Champion Doghound Mid Antrim Hector 12 (Rockwood Harlech 04-Witty 09)

Reserve Champion Mid Antrim Harber 12 (brother of Hector)

Champion Bitch Mid Antrim Baslow 11 (Holcombe Badger 04-High Peak Query 07)

Reserve Champion Fermanagh Hawthorn 12 (Lordly - Julie)

A feature of this Show is that the winners of each class go into a Champion Hound class to select an overall Champion.

Overall Champion North Down Wiseman 11

Reserve Champion Ballymacad Sapling 11.

Irish Masters of Foxhounds Association introduce a

#### **Bursary Scheme**

The IMFHA have introduced a Bursary Scheme to bring high potential young people into hunt service. Chairman Rupert MacAuley has overseen the creation of a system of 'hands-on' instruction to develop skills and establish standards by placing young people with an experienced huntsman at a willingly participating Hunt.

The first entrant to the scheme is Ian Donoghue, from Dunshaughlin Co Meath, who has joined huntsman Declan Feeney at the East Down Foxhounds. Rupert MacAuley tells me that it is intended to invite applications for a placement next year and, subject to the availability of funds, he hopes that two placements could be made. The trainee will be visited on a quarterly basis and a report will also be furnished by the Hunt thus enabling the scheme to be of benefit to the Association, to the Hunt and to the trainee.

The IMFHA deserves the highest praise and the full support of everyone as this scheme is of immense importance to and for the ultimate benefit of hunting.

### ***Irish Masters of Foxhounds Association National Hound Show***

A total of nineteen packs provided judges James Andrews MFH (South and West Wilts Foxhounds) and Countess Goress -Saurau, former MFH of the Vale of White Horse Foxhounds, with a large number of quality hounds to consider.

Stradbally Hall, Co Laois, was again kindly made available by the Cosby family as a venue for the Show and the occasion was greatly enhanced by gloriously sunny weather. Show chairman David Lalor MFH (Laois Foxhounds) and his team had been very busy and their



organisation paid off with an excellent show. The show opened on a sad note with IMFHA chairman Rupert Macauley calling for a minutes silence in memory of Michael Morris, honorary secretary of the Association, who died earlier this month. The Louth Foxhounds took the first two unentered doghound classes with their Stoker and had further successes in the Bitch classes, after lunch, to take their total wins to five classes.

The Doghound Championship went to the unentered Tipperary Chieftain while the Wicklow Foxhounds marked their appearance by winning the entered Doghound Class with their Camelot 12. The Ballymacad Foxhounds took their first Doghound Class, the entered couple (Open), with Samson and Safeguard 11. In the Stallion Hound Class Percy Woggle 09 prevailed for the Ormond Foxhounds in the Old English section while the Wicklow Foxhounds notched up their second win with Island Mendip 11 in the Modern section.

After lunch, the Louth again opened with victories in the first two classes through Tinsel while she and her sibling, Ticket, took the unentered couples class. Ballymacad Ribbon took the unentered (Open) Bitch Class and Waterford's Charity 12 took the entered Old English Doghound or Bitch Class before Charity went on to take the entered bitch (Restricted) class. The strong distaff side of the Ballymacad Foxhounds again rose to the fore in the entered couple of bitches class which was won by Sable and Sapling 11. Huntsman Kevin Donoghue's broad grin was even broader in the next class, the prestigious two couple of entered Bitches class where Sable 11, Billis 11, Biro 11 and Bobbin 08 prevailed. The Tipperary Foxhounds won the Brood Bitch class with Sable 09 and Sable went one better in taking the Bitch Championship to add to their earlier Doghound Championship.



Nineteen packs is a healthy number of contestants with that number being swollen, this year, by the participation of the Wicklow Foxhounds and the South Union Foxhounds, from County Cork. This Show underlined the increased quality of hounds now being bred and shown by Irish packs.

### ***Heard it on the grapevine***

James Norton has retired from the mastership of the Westmeath Foot Hounds which he founded in 1999.

At the Grallagh Harriers Susan Oakes and Kevin Hough have joined the mastership where senior master David Burke continues to hunt hounds.

Richard Perry has retired from the kennel huntsman's post at the South Tyrone Foxhounds.

Craig Caven, in office since 1978, has stood down from the mastership of the East Down Foxhounds.

### ***New whipper-in at the East Down Foxhounds.***

The new whipper-in at the East Down Foxhounds, Ian Donoghue, was born in Co Meath and hunted on ponies with the Ward Union Stag hounds where his great uncle, Andy Lynch, was honorary whipper-in to long serving huntsman Eamon Dunphy.

Ian graduated to horses with the Ward Union, the Meath Foxhounds and the Tara Harriers then, on leaving school, he rode out on thoroughbreds for Joe Considine and on halfbreds for Joe Rogers. On seeing the IMFHA advertisement for the hunt staff Bursary Scheme Ian applied for an interview and was accepted, then placed with Declan Feeney from whom he is 'learning every day.' This is an excellent scheme which will hopefully continue to attract high quality young people and place them with first class professional mentors.

### ***Death of Michael Morris, Honorary Treasurer of the Irish Masters of Foxhounds Association.***

The death has occurred of Michael Morris, honorary treasurer of the IMFHA. An avid hunting man Michael had been master of the Kilmoganny Foxhounds (1984-89) and of the Waterford Foxhounds (1989-91) as well as having been honorary secretary of the IMFHA.

A highly respected figure in Irish hunting circles Michael leaves a wife, Susan, two daughters Faith and Susannah and a son, Richard, to whom every sympathy is extended in their very sad loss.

*Brian McConville MFH presents Freyja Armstrong with her award as Champion Puppy Malton's puppy walker at the East Down Foxhound Puppy Show.*



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A photograph of two men in traditional Scottish shooting attire standing in a glen. The man on the left is wearing a green tweed jacket and trousers, holding a long wooden staff. The man on the right is wearing a brown jacket, a kilt, and a hat, holding a shotgun. Two dogs, a pointer and a black and white speckled dog, are standing with them. The background shows a vast, open landscape with hills and a cloudy sky.

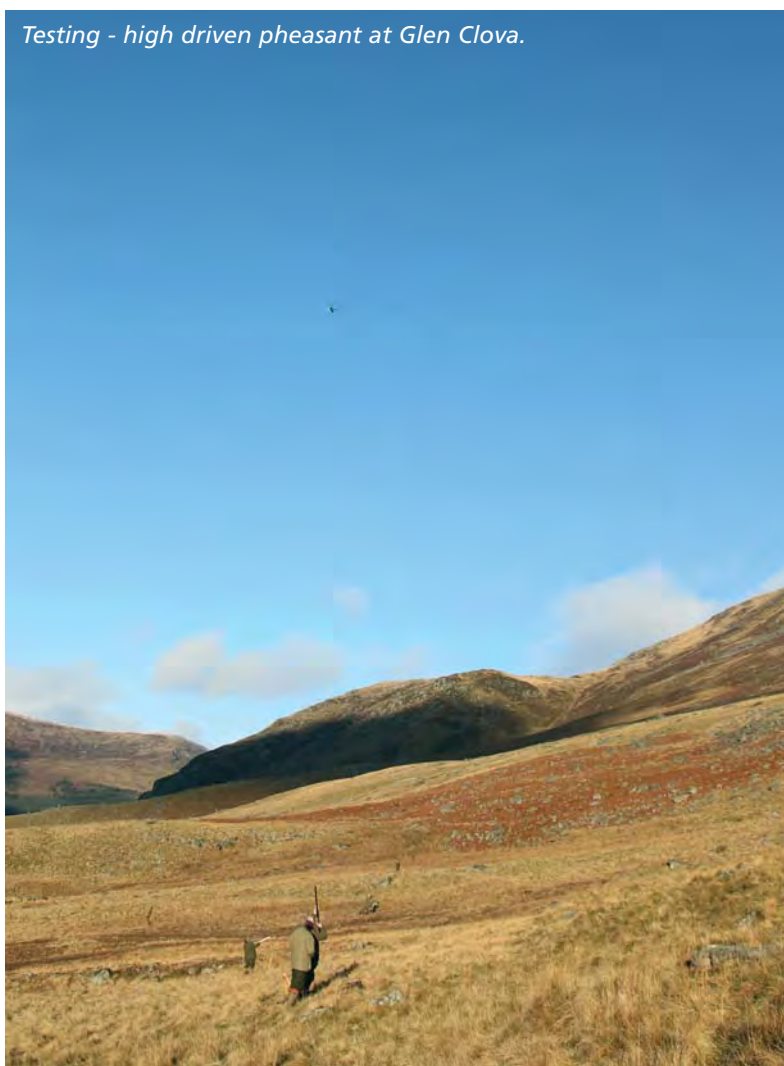
# Sunny outlook for the Scottish shooting season

**T**he hot summer months made us all very optimistic about the Scottish shooting season. Many estates reported they were fully booked well in advance of the season starting on the glorious twelfth. Previous years were tough as they were blighted by bad weather. The prolonged cold and wet spell in 2012 meant many game birds perished. Wild birds struggled to survive in the tough conditions and reared birds were weakened and susceptible to disease. High winds brought down trees and changed the landscape; constant rainfall meant rivers burst their banks and flooded large areas of land. However, the long hot summer months of 2013 raised our hopes considerably.

Dick Hardy is the shooting tenant of the 10,000 acre Glen Clova Estate in the Angus Glens and 3,000 acre Kinblethmont Estate. Dick and his son Mike rear their own pheasant, partridge and duck. Their guests enjoy the challenge of shooting high flying, strong birds from the sides of the glen. Dick, who will turn seventy next year, said: "2012 was the worse summer I can recall but this year is the second best in my lifetime. The first one was in 1976, it was exceptional year and I remember seeing the wild partridge numbers explode, they were like swarms of bees."

The key time for game birds is from late May to the end of June, so this year's warm weather ensured good

*Testing - high driven pheasant at Glen Clova.*







*In the bag at Balbirnie.*

conditions and plenty insect life for the birds to feed on. Dick says: "The season is looking fantastic and thanks to the good weather we are ahead. The birds are thriving; they are content, happy and have put weight on. All our dates are booked and we are going into the season very happy."

Equally buoyant is Johnnie Balfour of Balbirnie Estate in Fife. He says: "All of our days were sold by June and we have had to turn people away." Balbirnie is spread over 5,000 acres and has been in the Balfour family since 1642.

The estate is an interesting mix of rolling landscapes, woodland, eight duck ponds and a heather clad grouse moor. Guests enjoy driven days but the most popular are the rough and walked-up days to shoot partridge, pheasant, teal, widgeon, pigeon, mallard, snipe and woodcock. Balbirnie is the only estate in Fife to have grouse so they offer a handful of walked-up grouse days on the east Lomond hill.

And he added: "We lost lots of woods at the beginning of last year in a storm which made the planning quite difficult and then vermin got into one of the pens at the wrong moment so this year has the makings of an easier year for Cameron the Gamekeeper to plan. In addition, we are growing a more diverse mix of better quality cover crops in many of the field margins so the habitats should be better for both reared and wild birds throughout the season."

A hectic shooting season is also a welcome prospect for estates further north. "We are looking forward to a busy time as our bookings are up for the driven partridge and pheasant on our low ground shoots," says Alastair Lyon, Head Keeper on Ralia Estate in the Cairngorm National Park. Alastair offers a diverse range of shooting, including Ptarmigan and duck, over 23,000 acres. The land includes the big hills at Drumochter as well as farmland and low ground shoots at Ralia. Alastair continued: "The grouse numbers on south Drumochter looks similar to last year but north is poor with a lot of late broods and small coveys. We will shoot lightly on the north side and hopefully leave a good stock for next year."

The scenery on Drumochter is breathtaking. I was fortunate enough to be a guest of Texan Chris Godfrey in August. We enjoyed a day on the hill shooting grouse over pointers with Alastair. The weather conditions were very good that day, warm with a breeze to keep the midges away and occasional light showers of rain to cool you down. Chris was visiting from Texas to shoot grouse in Scotland and wore his kilt and Stetson. He shot very well and I bagged my very first grouse.

We sat in the heather some 3,000 feet up enjoying our lunch, listening to the grouse cackle as we looked out over the purple heather clad hill tops and watched a rainbow arching over the loch below us. These scenes are food for the soul, or as Chris said: "We had us a time!"





*The Author's first grouse.*

Chirnside hall hotel in the Scottish borders is owned and run by Christian and Tessa Korsten. Originally from the Netherlands they settled in Scotland and bought the hotel 13 years ago. The couple are very passionate about field sports and turned the hotel into a popular sporting destination. They have access to more than 20,000 acres to provide guests with deer stalking, driven, walked up



*Framed by the rainbow on Drumochter.*

headed to the Lammermuir hills ferreting for rabbits then we finished the day with driven duck. The next morning we were out before dawn on a roe buck stalk then after breakfast we had a day of driven duck.

Christian commented: "The good summer months have ensured very healthy numbers of wild stock, the pheasants, grey partridges, grouse, ducks and even the

redleg partridges have done well. Thanks to the warm, dry summer all the releasing of reared pheasants, partridges and ducks is going smoothly.

"Our expectations for this season are high. We have a small grouse moor on the Lammermuir hills of approximately 1500 acres for walked-up or small driven days. On the glorious twelfth we organised our first proper driven day and it was



*Fast and furious - partridge at Chirnside*

and rough shooting. They have pheasant woods, partridge drives, duck ponds and grouse moors. The area also boasts a healthy roe population and they regularly stalk medal class bucks.

I spent three days at Chirnside last season, joining a group of nine gentlemen from the Netherlands midway though their week long break. On my first day, we shot driven partridge and, in the evening, duck from hides before returning to the hotel to dine on local game in the trophy room. The following day after breakfast we were

a big success, we shot a record bag of grouse. This is a great omen for the rest of the season."

The shooting season in Scotland got off to a great start with good weather boosting healthy game stocks. A warm Scottish welcome awaits you!

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# MANNA AND QUAIL



*The Authors ready for the field.*

*(Photo courtesy of RNB Photography)*

**D**uring November of last year my wife and I took a few days off to go shooting in Scotland. We both work on Sundays so took our break midweek. As there were only the two of us our host and ghillie, Davy Milne of Shooting Events Scotland, asked if we minded an American gentleman joining with us. Of course we didn't mind and so looked forward to our first time shooting geese and duck.

We met our American friend on the Monday evening and although we were determined to be open minded about our shooting partner we were surprised to find him to be a caricature of what we might expect an American to be. He was loud, brash, overbearing, and talked incessantly about his own prowess as a hunter! The next morning we enjoyed a hearty breakfast and set off well before dawn, arriving at the field in darkness. Jen and I immediately began to set up hides and decoys, under Davy's supervision. Once settled we waited in the hide. The crispness of the morning and the light drizzle only made the rising sun more beautiful as it filtered

through in rainbows, lighting the golden stubble in majesty which would rival the finest stained glass of any great cathedral. We waited in silence until we heard the faint honking of the first geese of the day as they rose from distant ponds eager to feed in our field. As they came into first sight Davy shouted over in a stage whisper,

"Jenny can ya see the geese?"

"Yes," she replied, "they're beautiful."

"Aye, well if you ken see them, they ken see you - keep yer heid doon!"

We have never seen or heard a sight like it. The honking grew steadily louder. Davy had told us of the noise but nothing could prepare you for this first great experience. The sky darkened with hundreds of geese flying high above and, as many turned to land and feed, we could hear the flapping of their great wings as they came increasingly closer allowing us ample time to choose sporting birds well in flight. These birds were in beautiful lean condition, freshly returned from the breeding grounds of Greenland.

Our American friend only left the comfort of the Land





*Waiting in the hide with light rivalling the finest stained glass window of a cathedral.*

Rover as the first geese arrived, missing the beauty of the sunrise. He wondered over to the hide Davy had prepared for him, and asked: "How many geese am I allowed to kill?"

Davy, visibly taken aback, struggled for an appropriate answer until his guest suggested a personal bag of 70. Jen and I had already discussed our own limits the evening before and decided that 10 geese would fill our freezer with ample fare for a year and Christmas dinner for our parents and siblings.

In the book of Exodus we find the Israelites tired and hungry close to the beginning of their forty year journey to the promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey. The Israelites are now regretting their escape from captivity: "There (in Egypt) we sat round pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into the desert to starve this entire assembly to death." (Exodus 16:2c NIV.) God, hearing their complaint, promises that he will supply all the needs of His chosen people and instructs Moses:

"I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, 'At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.' That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, 'What is it?' For they did not know what it was." (Exodus 16:12-15) Each day through the gift of God they gather two quail apiece and as much bread as they require. Moses instructs them to take only what they will need. "No one is to keep any of it until morning." (Exodus: 16: 19) Some, however, are greedy and take much more than they need, waking the next morning to find their grand meal rotting and filled with maggots.

Our American friend killed many more birds than Jen and I put together, but nowhere near his personal target. Of all these birds he chose the pelt of one particularly fine mallard, which he intended to have mounted. Davy has his own processing plant, though, so not a bird was wasted. The American, I felt, treated our fine country

and noble sport with contempt, he left the field without picking up either bird or spent cartridge.

There are many and varied reasons why those of us who love country sports pursue our hobby. For us there is something quite satisfying to have been at a shoot one day and eat the fruits of your labour the next, and of course all shoots either use the meat themselves or sell through game dealers so that all animals who meet their demise in this way are used without waste.

We live in an increasingly secular world in which fewer and fewer find their morals and values within the pages of the Bible, that Jen and I ply as our trade. Many are quick to adhere to fashionable morals against countrysports, all the while wearing their leather coats and shoes and enjoying everything that Mr McDonald has to offer in every corner of the globe. Where, I wonder, is the integrity in that? Far better, surely, to enjoy shooting and put on the table the product of a day's pleasant sport.

Jen and I enjoyed a wonderful few days of shooting, learning so much from Davy and even from our American friend. Enjoying the early morning breakfast and waiting for the sun to rise over the stubble to the exhilarating honk of the distant geese I was reminded of the wonder of God's creation and providence and took to heart the lessons of Moses.

Shoot what can be used and enjoy God's abundance! Peace be with you.





# Grouse With A Muzzleloader



**I**magine the scene. Mile after mile of heather moorland stretches out all around with a backdrop of tall mountains looming blue in the summer haze. The big pointer is standing absolutely motionless, tail and neck stretched out, head high, nostrils scenting the air, totally fixated on a patch of heather twenty yards in front. The dog handler checks on either side that the Guns are ready, in position and alert; then he clicks his fingers and the dog inches forward, one careful step at a time. The Guns ease along with him, concentrating on that patch of heather. One step, another, another and then, suddenly, the air is full of grouse as a covey bursts into the air. The birds swing left and right, the old cock shouting defiance as he leads his brood away. The Guns react after a single, heart-stopping moment of surprise, even though they were expecting the covey, then BOOM! KABOOM! Two shots crash out across the heather; the air is filled with thick grey smoke and a voice asks, rather plaintively, 'Did anything fall?' Welcome to grouse shooting with a muzzle loader.

Back in the days when all shooting was done with muzzle loaders there was only one way to shoot grouse – over pointing dogs. The nineteenth century sportsman took to the hill with his pointers and setters and his

muzzle loading guns because that was simply the way it was done. The dogs found the birds, pointed them and waited patiently for the Guns to come up to them. Once the first grouse had risen and been shot – or missed – the action was suspended for a few minutes while the guns were reloaded, then the dogs were cast off again and it was on to the next point. Only with the arrival of the breech loading shotgun did the idea of driving birds to standing Guns become feasible and fashionable.

At about the same time as the breech loader and rapid fire became generally available better methods of moorland management saw a tremendous rise in the numbers of grouse. Heather burning to provide fresh young shoots for food and longer stands of heather for shelter and nest sites, coupled with efficient predator control saw grouse numbers spiral upwards and driven shooting quickly became the norm. The early sportsmen had relished tramping for miles over the moors and shooting relatively small numbers of birds, but with the advent of the driven shoot the more sedentary Gun could ride a pony right up to his shooting butt and shoot grouse by the hundred with only the minimum of physical effort. He would even have a man to load his guns for him. But despite many dire predictions over the years pointers and setters are not yet redundant and every year, from choice, or because there is too low a density of birds for driving, some Guns still take to the hills with their bird dogs. In a few cases some will even step right back into the past and revert to using muzzle loaders.





*Harry and Jeremy moving in to Fred's point with dog handler Georgina directing matters.*

## **Something special about the roar of black powder**

Why muzzleloaders? I think the only proper answer is: 'Why not?' After all, shooting grouse over pointers and setters is a bit of an anachronism these days so why not go the whole way and shoot with the same weapons that the Victorian sportsman used as well as copying his methods? And besides, there is something special about the roar of black powder; the clouds of sulphurous smoke and the whole ritual of pouring and ramming powder and shot into the barrels from the sharp end instead of simply pushing a lever and shoving two cartridges into the breech.

It takes a while to reload once a shot has been fired. First you take your powder flask and pour a measure of black powder down the barrel, then reach into your pocket for a felt wad: pop it into the muzzle, slip the ramrod out from its loops and ram the wad down onto the top of the powder. Next comes the shot flask to measure out an ounce or so of shot, then a cardboard overshot wad which is also rammed down into position to stop the shot pouring back out once the gun is lifted into the horizontal plane. The ramrod is replaced in the loops under the barrel, then the hammer is drawn back into the half cock position and a percussion cap is slipped on to the nipple. Draw the hammer fully back and the gun is ready to fire. Total time, for one barrel: perhaps thirty-seconds. It doesn't sound very long, but if you were waiting in a grouse butt with coveys pouring over you, believe me, it would seem like half a millennium. But if you are standing on a moor with the pointers lying quietly at your feet and no prospect of a shot until they are cast off again, it is simply a gentle break in the routine of the day. There is no pressure and no hurry: the dogs will get a bit of a rest and the grouse will still be there whenever you decide to start off again.

Sometimes though it is useful to be able to get the guns back into action reasonably quickly. Let us

suppose that the dog has pointed, half a dozen grouse have risen and four shots have been fired. We will be kind to our Guns and allow that three grouse have tumbled into the heather. Normally this is the moment when we would send a Labrador in to retrieve them but we observe that the pointer is still on point. There may still be one or two – or perhaps another half dozen – grouse sitting tightly in the heather

just in front of us. Normally the dog handler would say: 'Reload,' the Guns would grab a couple of cartridges each from belt or pocket and within two or three-seconds they would be ready for further action. Today it is going to take a little longer.

The important thing is not to hurry. It is all too easy to make a mistake when scrambling to get powder, shot and wads pushed down the barrels. Some mistakes are merely annoying – perhaps you pour the shot in first instead of the powder, or forget the over-powder wad – but others are potentially dangerous. It is all too easy to pour a double dose of powder into one barrel or to load a second charge on top of an unfired one raising the possibility of a burst. Ideally you will have made a mark on the ramrod that should line up with the end of the barrel when it is properly charged, but when you are scrambling to load up with a pointer quivering with excitement and grouse right under your feet liable to rise at any moment it is possible that you might forget to check that vital mark. So don't rush: take your time and if the grouse should happen to rise before you are reloaded, then so be it. There will be other coveys before the day is over. But assuming the birds sit tightly, once you and your fellow Gun are ready it is time to click the pointer in to clear his ground and only then should the retriever be loosed to do his stuff.

## **It was a frustrating day**

There was a day, a few years ago, when we were shooting grouse with muzzleloaders on a hill high above



*Seconds later the spaniel races in to flush the grouse.*



Loch Tay. There were not, if truth be told, that many grouse about and the pointers were having to work hard to find them. Unfortunately, nearly every time we got a point one of the Guns insisted on walking forward with his cocker spaniel at heel. This would not have been a problem had the spaniel remained at heel, but as soon as it spotted the pointing dog it raced forward to flush the grouse – generally with the Guns still twenty yards or so out of range. It was a frustrating day. If you are going to shoot grouse over pointers, irrespective of whether you are using an ancient muzzle loader or brand new Purdey, please keep your dog at heel or better still get someone to hold him, on a lead, when you go in to a point. Flushing grouse from under a pointer's nose is liable to make the dog unsteady. It doesn't do much for the dog handler's equilibrium either.



*Harry ramming down a fresh charge.*

Shooting with a percussion muzzleloader shouldn't be that much different to shooting with a normal gun, apart from the clouds of smoke that obscure your vision and make taking a second bird a little difficult. There may be a fractional difference in lock times between percussion cap and regular cartridge, but it is not noticeable in practice. I wonder though, how much more difficult it would be to take to the hill with a flintlock shotgun? Not only would you have the slow reloading and the clouds of smoke to overcome, but you would have to modify your shooting technique as well to cope with flintlock's firing sequence. You pull the trigger, the cock falls and there is a fizz, a flash from the pan and then, after a quite noticeable delay, the roar of the main charge igniting. Snap shooting is definitely out. Presumably you have to maintain some sort of lead on your target and wait for the Bang! Difficult? I'm sure it is, but you have only to read Colonel Hawker's Diaries to learn just how deadly a good shot could be with both flintlock and percussion muzzleloaders.

Clearly the muzzleloader is never going to make a comeback. The modern breech-loading shotgun is so much quicker, safer and easier to handle. The muzzleloaders that we use on our occasional forays are heavy, poorly balanced and not terribly reliable which perhaps accounts for the relatively poor kills to cartridges (if that is the right word) ratio that usually results. Even so, there is something special about a day on the hill hung about with shot flasks and powder horns, pockets stuffed with wads and percussion caps, and the shattering Boom as the black powder explodes and the smoke spouts from the barrels. Not to mention that plaintive cry of 'Did anything fall....?'



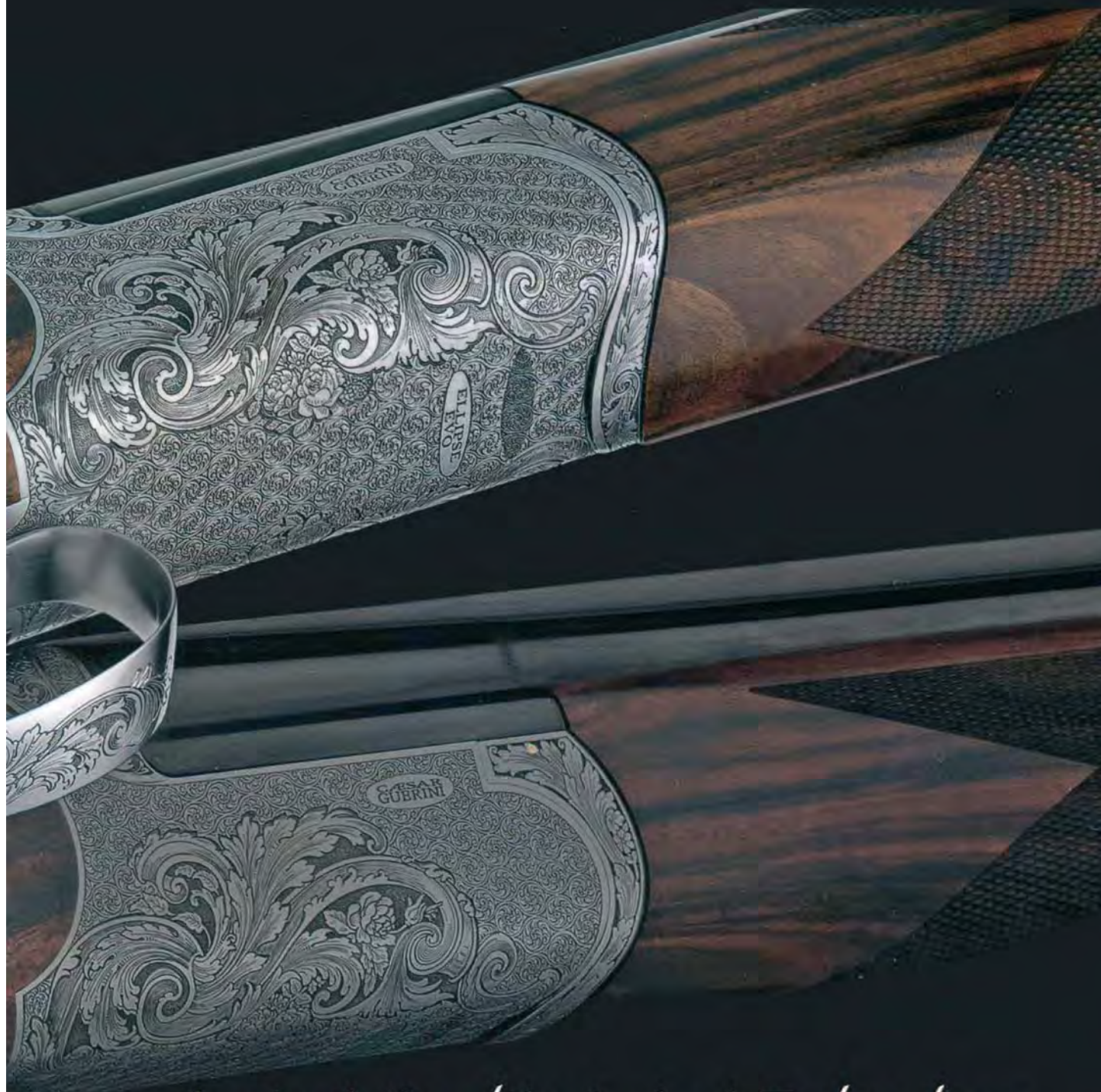
*Laurie and Georgina going in to 'Jake's' point. Labrador sitting and spaniel on lead.*



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# Trialling Setters and Pointers in Scotland



*Carol Calvert with Glynlark Glorious Twelfth and Glynlark Gamekeeper discussing the action with Glasgow's Brian Morris with a frozen Lochindorb in the background.*

**T**here is something very magical for the setter and pointer enthusiast about the highlands of Scotland. The beautiful estates there are custom made to provide the most thorough test possible for our section of gundogs. Dogs have to run and search and are nearly guaranteed an opportunity on game, should their search be extensive and thorough enough. This virtual guarantee set the trials maybe a little ahead of the venues we enjoy in Northern Ireland, although thankfully game has been incredibly reliable here too over the last few years, where again the venues are perfect for testing the speed, stamina and ground coverage of the dogs, as required by the basic requirements laid down by the Kennel Club.

But the scale and extensiveness of the highland moors, the dedication of the gamekeepers and the part the moors play in binding the highland communities together. The views, whether snow capped high tops in

the spring, or the purple clad hills in the summer, give the visitor a feel that they are in a very special place. I treasure every visit to the Highlands and whether my dogs go well or not, the time spent working them there is very unique.

As I write, we are about to embark on the summer visit to Scotland and the sense of anticipation is great, particularly given the excellent record of Ulster dogs; on the Scottish summer circuit last year when we accounted for four out of five Open Stakes. This success was carried on into the spring of 2013 too.

However, this spring, a sense of uncertainty began to creep in a few weeks before we were due to travel. The weather forecast began to contain the doom and gloom of predictions of serious snow disruption. Word came through the week before that the English Spring Trials due to be held in Co Durham were wiped out, leaving lots of triallers from all over the UK and Ireland sitting stranded in their accommodation in the north of England. There were still hopes that the Perthshire trials might go ahead. Decisions quickly followed and they too





*Carol Calvert receiving the SFTA Novice Trophy from the official gun - Gavin Kippen.*

were cancelled. Was there any hope for the trials in the far north if the venues in the traditionally milder south had been wiped out? Feedback from the keepers and FT Secretaries continued to be optimistic, but this was greeted with some scepticism by those who hadn't yet left their homes to begin the journey. The majority of the NI competitors were traveling over on Friday 22nd or Saturday 23rd March. Imagine the feelings which were engendered when disembarkation from the ferry met closed roads with no prospect of movement either eastwards to Dumfries or the desired north up the A77.



*Gerald Devine with his awards for winning the Pointer Club of Scotland Open Stake from FT Manager Richard MacNicol.*

Roads had been closed by continued drifting snow early on Friday afternoon and the cross-channel ferries

continued to unload their passengers into Stranraer that was valiantly trying to cope with the unexpected numbers of stranded humans. Leisure Centres and Community Centres were opened to attempt to provide the stranded with somewhere warm to rest overnight. By Saturday morning there were four triallers holed up in the car park by the old ferry terminal in Stranraer, seriously questioning the sense of attempting to journey any further north. However the A77 was finally reopened at 1pm on Saturday afternoon and the very delayed trip could finally be begun. Driving north, there was still evidence of snow, virtually the whole way there. However, by this time, Nicky Ackerley-Kemp was managing to run the Gordon Setter Association Novice on Balnespick Moor near Tomatin. Despite ongoing snow the judges were able to run the Trial and it was won by Billy Darragh and NI's Mark Adams from Ballymena received a Certificate of Merit in his first trial with his young IRSD Ballydavid Spitfire.

### ***Cawdor with the Pointer Club of Scotland***

Monday saw the pointer and setter enthusiasts gather on the lovely Cawdor Estate (by kind permission of Lord Cawdor) where the shoot Manager, Roddy Forbes, gave us a warm welcome and led us out along hill tracks to begin our Open Stake which was being run by the Pointer Club of Scotland under the efficient directorship of FT Manager Richard MacNicol. There was snow in the wind all day and it was cold and early signs showed that scenting conditions were tricky. The first dog to make good her chances were Bill Connolly's three year old ESB Ballyellen Cara under the very able piloting of her trainer Gerald Devine. Shortly afterwards, the second find in the judges books was by my own IRSB Glynark Amazing Grace. Lots of further chances were there and some dogs ran really well without an opportunity for game. Gerald Devine had a good find with his little dark ESB Gortinreagh Clio and Mrs Julie Organ also had a find with her PB Sparkfield Bonnet of Fernglen and her husband Colin also recorded a couple of finds with Margaret Sierakowski's IR&WSB Dalreich Neige. After lunch the convoy of vehicles moved a considerable distance around the estate roads and stopped in an area where there was initially quite a snow covering. Nine brace of dogs had been recalled for a second round. The first brace out Billy Darragh's FTCh Glendrisock Arabella (2nd in 2012 Champion Stake) and my IRSB Grace who both seemed somewhat confused by the conditions and did not run the way they could. The first dog in the second round to record a find was my IRSD Glynark Azlyn who located and produced a pair of birds on the sunnier and clearer ground on the right hand slope of the hill. At the end of the second round the judges asked three brace of dogs to continue for a third



round. Ballyellen Cara had a long and impressive run with Laurence McAlister's very good PB FTCh Ardclinis Caitlin. They did not meet birds. This was followed shortly afterwards by my IRSD IntFTCh Glynark Apollo (winner of the 2012 Irish Championship) having a nice find on the left hand side of the beat shortly after being cast off with Richard MacNicol's PB Gannochy Sapphire of Gerensary. The third brace of the third round paired my Azlyn with Richard's Ardclinis Calypso of Gerensary but they had an uneventful run. The judges, Cornwall's Carol Brown and Glasgow's Brian Morris, then called for a small extension of two dogs: Laurence's Caitlin and Richard's Sapphire. Despite a long run they did not meet any further game and the judges called it a day.

On returning to the lodge at Drynahan, the FT Manager Richard MacNicol announced the results: First place went to the very impressive Ballyellen Cara. This ESB had run beautifully all day, inch perfect in her ground work and immaculate on her birds in very tricky conditions. The win added to the one she had claimed in Glarryford in October 2012, gave her FTCh title. In second place was my IRSD IntFTCh Glynark Apollo, who again had run with speed and precision in all rounds and had a good find in tricky conditions. Certificates of Merit were awarded to Julie Organ's PB Sparkfield Bonnet of Fernglen, Margaret Sierakowski's IR&WSB Dalriach Neige and my IRSD Glynark Azlyn.

### **Drynahan Lodge again for the Novice Stake**

The following morning the meet was again at Drynahan Lodge where the draw for the Novice Stake was made. This time the ground chosen for the competition was just on the southside of the river almost within sight of the Lodge. This was by far the coldest and most unpleasant day of the week. Again scenting conditions were very tricky and the first find for the judges was recorded by Mark Adams with Ballydavid Spitfire, in only his and his dog's second trial. Many other chances were squandered and it was Jon Kean who had a find with his PD Fearn Questren producing birds after along work out. Wilson Young also had a good find with his GSD Ensay Finvarra producing birds behind my IRSD Glynark Glorious Twelfth. The second round began with Richard MacNicol having an early find with his PB and then Bob Whitworth also doing some good work with his GSB Clitters Fern of Breighntonside. The trial was now progressing on to some excellent running ground and there were some dogs who really showed their paces, but there were no further finds to alter the result.

By the time the judges had seen enough, competitors, despite the heat of competition, were thoroughly chilled and very, very happy to move down the hill to slightly milder conditions for the results. Winner was Richard



*Gerald Devine with the two new Field Trial Champions he made up on the Scottish Spring circuit. His own FTCh Gortinreagh Eppie and Bill Connolly's ESB FTCh Ballyellen Cara.*

MacNicol's PB Gannochy Sapphire of Gerensary, Bob Whitworth steered his GSB Clitters Fern of Breighntonside into second place, Mark Adams maintained his 100% record of finishing in the awards by securing third spot with Ballydavid Spitfire. Fourth was Jon Kean's Fearn Questren. Richard received the Damson Wood Farthing Cup for winning the Novice and the Dinah Might Trophy for best pointer at the Trials. The Garvault Hotel Cup for best setter at the Meet was presented to Bill Connolly's FTCh Ballyellen Cara. A



*Edward Butler receiving the awards for the SGA Novice from Club Secretary Maggie Northcott.*



very notable addition to these two days of Trialling was the presence of the trainee gamekeepers from the North Highland College in Thurso where Richard MacNicol is a lecturer. These young keepers will surely be the future of keepering and engendering their interest in pointing dogs at this stage of their training will surely help develop a good relationship which will mutually benefit the estates and the bird dog fraternity far into the future. They were also very obliging in helping to hold dogs for those who had multiple entries – something which is very much appreciated.

### **Scottish Gundog Association's Open Stake held at Lochindorb Estate**

Wednesday saw us able to continue to the Scottish Gundog Association's Open Stake held at Lochindorb estate by kind permission of Mr Fletcher and the Kinrara Estate Partnership. Hon Sec Maggie Northcott gave her usual warm welcome and the draw was made for the first round near the loch-side. The judges for the next two days were to be Dominic Goutorbe and Sarah Chichester. It was obvious before the first dog was let off the lead that conditions were going to be tricky as birds could be seen flying and could be heard calling down by the loch. The early braces were subjected to what could only be described as a minefield and many were the mistakes that were made until the trial managed to progress beyond these banks and into slightly more open ground, although the abundance of game and incredibly difficult scenting conditions was to make the whole day a matter of survival. By the end of the first round there were a few clean finds recorded in the judges books. Laurence McAlister had good work with his PB FTCh Ardclinis Caitlin, as did two red setters of Billy Darragh (FTCh Glendrisock Arabella) and mine (IntFTCh Glynlark Apollo). Five and a half brace were recalled into round two and it was a story of lost chances with only Colin Organ recording a good find with Maureen Thomas's PD Amshot Eric's Charm. First place went to Laurence McAlister's very good PB FTCh Arclinis Caitlin and second place to Mrs Julie Organ's PB Sparkfield Bonnet of Fernglen. Brian Morris took third spot with his IRSD Bownard Boffin while Maureen Thomas's PD Amshot Eric's Charm was fourth. In summing up, Dominic stated that conditions had been very, very challenging and whilst the judges had been very sorry to lose the 2 red dogs who had shone in Round 1 they were very happy to be able to make a full set of awards.

### **Lochindorb Novice Stake**

The week continued with the Scottish Gundog Association's Novice Stake, again at Lochindorb, on Thursday. With the same judges 15 brace of novice dogs

set out on a sunny but cold morning. Whilst we were very close to the previous day's ground, there were less birds and this allowed the dogs to put in some good uninterrupted running. Again there was a great concern about the scenting conditions as opportunities were not capitalised on. Moving below the track where the cars were parked, we seemed to meet more game and Jane Hope's GSB Carnockmoor Shilfa had a good find in some sheltered banks shortly after she was released. The first round was finished well before lunchtime and everyone retired for an early cup of coffee. The judges recalled 4 ½ brace of dogs for round two and we continued on from where the first round had ended. This round did not take long to complete as grouse were encountered quickly and again mistakes were the order of the day. The first brace had obviously run past a bird, as the judges walked it up when the dogs were well in front. One of the second brace fell quite quickly when pressurising birds he obviously knew were there. The bye-dog a Gordon Setter was called in to run on with his surviving partner Edward Butler's IRSB Hunshigo Kestrel. The Gordon got snagged on scent on the right hand side of the beat leaving the red to locate birds in front. The fourth brace were running well but did not take the grouse opportunity when it arose and the fourth brace who both had finds in Round 1 did not fare any better, with only one surviving. On returning to the vehicles, the judges gave Edward Butler's 4½ year old IRSB first place and Jane Hope's GSB Carnockmoor Shilfa received a Certificate of Merit.

### **Scottish Field Trial Association at Dalmagarry**

The next two days of competition were to be organised by Jon Kean on behalf of the Scottish Field Trial Association. We moved up along the A9 near Tomatin to the very scenic Dalmagarry Estate. A very interesting Open Stake was judged by the vastly experienced husband and wife team Colin and Julie Organ. Birds were encountered straightaway; again there was a mix of good work and mistakes throughout the Trial. My IntFTCh Glynlark Apollo was the first to have a find on the extreme left of the beat in the second brace of the day while his brace mate drew forward and got into bother on the right hand side. I was back in the third brace with my IRSB Glynlark Amazing Grace, drawn with Gerald Devine's very precocious 16 ½ month old puppy Gortinreagh Eppie. The dogs hadn't covered much ground until Eppie coming in from the right drew forward and pointed, Grace coming in from the left backed. Eppie was given the workout and produced her birds well. When she was taken back Grace worked out to the spot where they had risen. After another couple of casts there was an almost carbon copy situation, except this time Eppie seemed to draw her



birds from further back and had a very good work out to produce her pair. The stake then progressed with quite a lot of errors creeping in. Some dogs seemed confused by scent and there were quite a lot of non-productive points. A few dogs ran well without encounters on game and by the time the first round was completed, the judges felt able to recall 6 brace of dogs for another run in round two. Again there was a good supply of birds. A few dogs with finds were seen to drop in the judges' estimation while a few others moved into contention. The highlight of Round two was the young ESB Eppie's run with Laurence McAlister's PB Caitlin. After a couple of casts Eppie threw up her head and drew right up the centre of the beat, before setting staunchly. The PB coming in from the left was dropped, but didn't distract Eppie at all – she worked out on the judge's instruction and produced first one and then the second bird in the pair. This put the icing on the good work she had done in round one. My IRSD Glynark Gamekeeper, who had embarrassed me at the previous Open, by deciding doing his own thing was preferable to listening to me, really put it all together with some powerful, wide casting running in Round two culminating with a strong point on the left wing. Holding steady until I reached him, he worked in sweetly and produced his grouse. He had had a disrupted run in Round 1 as he and his brace-mate had been started at a point when the ground fell away steeply. Both had run well and obeyed their handlers, but the judges had taken them back to new ground to give them a better chance and they had completed some nice running. Other dogs were run on, but most perished as they failed to capitalise on the chances offered.

Back at the cars, the awards were announced and as predicted the Trial was won by 16 month old Gortinreagh Eppie. This win combined with her win at Glennoo Shoot in October when she was just 11 months old gave her UK Field Trial Champion title. This is surely one of the youngest dogs ever to gain this award. Second place was given to my IRSD Glynark Gamekeeper, Wilson Young took third spot with his PD Gerensary Espresso of Burncastle, while Brian Morris's IRSD Bownard Boffin was fourth. Certificates of merit were awarded to Richard MacNicol's PB Ardclinis Calypso of Gerensary and my own IRSD IntFTCh Glynark Apollo. Gun's Choice decided by Gavin Kippen, son of local Gamekeeper Calum, was awarded to my IRSD Glynark Azlyn.

### **Balmy weather for the final Novice Stake**

To round the week off, we returned to Dalmagarry on a positively balmy sunny Saturday for the final Novice Stake of the week being run By the Scottish Field Trials Association. The wind was not coming from the easiest

direction to allow the trial to run where the judges wanted to go, so it was decided to have a long hike out to get to the best starting point and then run the trial in a continuous beat, ending up back at the vehicles. Despite the increase in temperature on what we'd experienced earlier in the week, scenting conditions still seemed very tricky and all the plentiful game opportunities seemed to be squandered. The judges had 6 'survivors' for the second round and the first brace was my own Gamekeeper and Ned Butler's Hunshigo Kestrel, both bred from Ivor Sewell's fine red dog, Red Stinger, who was bred in Donegal by Ned Devine. After just a couple of long raking casts my red dog buckled round into some heavy heather on the far extremity of the left hand side of the beat and produced a single bird when asked. He was not run on at this point as he had already run well in his first round and the second round. The other 5 dogs were run on - given every chance - but all fell foul of the tricky grouse and were eliminated. This left the judges able to make only one award – first place to my IRSD Glynark Gamekeeper. Gavin presented the Guns Choice to Jon Kean's PD Fearn Questren and spoke of the his admiration for the work done by the Clubs and Secretaries and how amazing it was to have a group of people from the far flung reaches of these islands travelling to the highland estates year on year to participate in the Trials.

When asked to thank the judges, I pointed out how lucky we are as competitors to have access to such lovely places, to have such accommodating estates and keepers extending a welcome to us each year and how we all have a role to play in making the trials a success - from the hardworking secretaries and committees of the clubs, to the competitors who travel great distances and spend such a lot of time preparing their dogs and of course to the judges who deprive themselves of a day's competition to take up the book and assess our dogs. Our Trials have a long history and I very much hope a long future stretching ahead of us to look forward to.



*Laurence McAlister thanking the judges after winning the SGA Open Stake with judge Dominic Goutorbe.*



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# ‘Till you are cooked yourself...’

**I** found it difficult to concentrate at the best of times, but today was near impossible. Earlier that morning, my father’s friend Vincent and his other shooting partner had been setting up a pigeon hide in the field outside my window. They had left for a couple of hours and when I saw the magnet whirling I knew they were there. Every few minutes the shots rang out and I kept turning round in my seat, knowing full well I shouldn’t. I was hoping to see a bird hitting the stubbles, or better still one of the men getting a shot. My teacher became increasingly irritated, not by the shooting but by a young McGonigal who cared less about maths and more about chasing rabbits with ferrets and watching men shoot birds. Finally, lunch time came and I went straight out to the fence and got talking to Vincent. I remember longing to be in that hide with them; I remember being in awe of them and the many other shooters, hunters and fishers I was lucky enough to have known as a child, many of them now gone.

I was very privileged to have grown up around men who were masters of their sport. Vincent, who is no longer with us as are many of the men I remember, was a keen shot, a salmon angler and a real countryman. He was also a neighbour of a man called Archie Fleming, someone whom I am sure if he had ever taken up the pen would have been one of the many well known names of today. Archie at one time was having work done to his house and for quite sometime lived in a caravan. Most people including myself would detest such a move. Being turfed from the comfort of your home in mid winter to the confines of a small caravan would be a nightmare for most, but not Archie.

I remember going to visit him with my father and he would be sitting in his caravan, a small vice clamped to the bench and a magnifying glass curved over it and

bags of feathers, furs, dubs and waxes sitting everywhere. What amazed me most was that among these mallard wings, pheasant capes, silks and jungle cocks, Archie never searched for anything but simply kept his eyes on the vice and reached out for what he needed next. The smell of pipe tobacco, the warmth of a small gas fire and the talk of big fish was amazing for a keen youngster. Poetry, times tables and other nonsense didn’t interest me one bit and even less so when there was pigeon shooting out the back. That day I might as well not have been at school because as long as Vincent and his friend were in the field every word my teacher said went in one ear and straight back out the other, field sports seemed a better education to me! How my teacher put up with me was a mystery.

When the class was instructed to create a scrap book on a particular subject mine was on fishing. I took flies from my father’s old sponge-lined tobacco tins and stuck them in the scrap book, detailing each one and what it was made from and my poor teacher had a job not to prick her fingers on the pages upon pages of salmon hooks.

When Christmas came around and we made cards for our parents, I presented my mother with a card which contained pictures of rabbits, ferrets and pheasants, not a Christmas tree or a bit of holly in sight! The other pupils in the class had pet rabbits, guinea pigs and horses but I had ferrets. I got my first two ferrets when I was about nine years old and never looked back since,



*A faded photo but the memories linger on.*



only ever being without at least a pair a couple of times in my life.

### ***Des Tosh, was a local ferreting man***

The first rabbit I ever caught was in my back garden. My brother and I, some days after obtaining my ferrets, chanced upon a small warren to the back of the small wood which bordered on our house. I carefully placed five or six torn and bedraggled purse nets someone had given me, with pegs made from skirting board and entered my new coney catchers which I'd bought from Des Tosh, a local ferreting man. Within a few minutes that all familiar rumbling, which still excites me to this day, got louder and louder, until a brown ball exploded through the leaves and into my carefully set net. I landed on top of the rabbit and held it as tight as my hands would allow, before untangling it from the net and trying to dispatch it the way I had seen the older men do it, which I soon realised I couldn't do, and had to call for my father. That rabbit was important because, although it was one rabbit, it was massive for me. A rabbit that I caught with my own nets and my own ferret; I remember taking my school friends to the hole afterwards just so they could see where it was caught, such was the excitement at the time!

My school was small, very small and in fact when I went secondary school there were as many people in my class then as there was in my old school. The grounds were amazing and we had free reign in them at break times to do as we pleased. When autumn came around, conkers became currency and the biggest and best were to be found on the school grounds high among the tops of the ancient horse chestnut trees. We were allowed them, but only if they fell and the reason was that the older boys that had gone before us had taught us that, if you armed yourself with a suitable stick or lump of deadwood from among the grounds, really good conkers could be obtained by a strong throw coupled with a good aim and, if you were lucky, you could knock them right out of the tree. If you were unlucky you could knock your class mate right out with that same stick or piece of deadwood and so it was that the practice became illegal in school, although it never really died out as long as we had a watcher in place.

### ***A poem of guns and hares***

One day in class we were doing poetry as we often did and again I was paying little attention. I sat thinking about something or other, until in the background some words caught my attention. "Have you snared a weeping hare? Have you whistled No Nunny and gunned a poor bunny, or blinded a bird of the air?" My teacher was looking at me and my ears pricked up. What was this poem talking of guns and hares. She read it

again, and I listened intently:

Have you been catching of fish, Tom Noddy?  
Have you snared a weeping hare?  
Have you whistled "No Nunny" and gunned a poor bunny,  
Or blinded a bird of the air?

Have you trod like a murderer through the green woods?  
Through the dewy deep dingles and glooms,  
While every small creature screamed shrill to Dame Nature  
"He comes - and he comes?"

Wonder I very much do, Tom Noddy,  
If ever, when you are a-ream,  
An Ogre from space will stoop a lean face,  
And lug you home:

Lug you home over his fence, Tom Noddy,  
Of thorn-sticks nine yards high,  
With your bent knees strung round his old iron gun  
And your head a dan-dangling by:

And hung you up stiff on a hook, Tom Noddy,  
From a stone-cold pantry shelf,  
Whence your eyes will glare in an empty stare,  
Till you are cooked yourself!

She stared at me, reinforcing every word and knowing full well because of the content I was paying full attention. I listened closely, as she repeated: "Whence your eyes will glare in an empty stare, *till you are cooked yourself*. Then she looked at me fiercely and said, someday that might happen to you Mr McGonigal, and smiled. Mrs Anne Gray was the name of my teacher and although I have had quite a few over the years she in particular always was one I liked. That poem from that day which is called 'Tit for Tat' by Walter De La Mere must have sat in the back of my mind until I came across it one day in a book a few years ago. As soon as I read the first line it came back to me like it was yesterday, the pigeon shooting fields, the poem and the school.

All those days are gone, just like Vincent, Archie, John McIntyre and all the old boys who nowadays really do seem to be a dying breed. Where have the men gone who knew where the waterhen would lay her eggs, what gate a hare would go through or the best place on the river for your fly? For us then, to catch a trout, a rabbit, or for someone to bring home a hare was everyday life. Sometimes, I don't like to say it because it makes me sound like I think I grew up in 50s, but the world today is a whole lot different even from what it was twenty



years ago. There have been many changes since then and I always look back fondly and feel glad that I grew up in the area I did with the people I knew, for it was a rather special way to grow up.

### **Final thoughts**

This summer came and went and although it was only a few months ago now it seems like a long time but it set me thinking of Philip Lawton whom I first met at Ballywalter game fair about four years ago. The plan was he was to become a policeman in pursuit of that 'Victorian Poacher' and boy did he pursue me! We did our first stint together that year and afterwards I said to Philip: "How did we get involved in this?" To which he replied "That man Albert, but I am more worried how we are going to get out of it!" We stayed in touch and Philip and I became very good friends. He would ring me quite often over the winter and each time he did it was with a new idea for the poacher or policeman, sometimes he had found something new, a coat, a badge and then a proper R.I.C hat. More often than not I missed his call and he always left me a comical voice mail which made me laugh. As most of you will know Philip

was a man of many talents, and was a gifted musician and writer, writing under Plus Twos for Irish Country Sports & Country Life and Midlander for another publication. But Philip had much more writing on the cards which unfortunately he never got to finish. His talents on camera as the policeman really shone through in a small sketch at Shane's Castle with Harry Cook in 2012, and he wouldn't have looked out of place in Dad's Army or Last of the Summer Wine! Throughout the short time I knew him he was a great friend, a fantastic 'policeman' and someone I am proud to have known. So to Philip I wish to say thanks for the fun, for the real and genuine friendship you gave me and the great memories I have forever, Thank you.

It is now about time for me to go. The evenings are drawing in and my Lurchers are getting anxious. The ferrets too are keen and looking forward to resuming work after their lay off. The Great Game Fairs of Ireland have had a fantastically successful summer with in my humble opinion the two finest Game Fairs Ireland, and I am sure they have plans underway to do the same in 2014, and you know by now it will be bigger and better as it always is. Have a good season.

*A slightly older Author in action.*







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# Three Firsts for Cork



*Not weighed but it's a nice double.*

**I**n early May this year, I visited Cork for a couple of days fishing. I had hoped to have a go at the bass before the close season began in the 15th of May. I had originally intended to go in April, but the long winter meant the trip was put off several times. My contact in Cork is Ross Macklin of Lee Reservoirs Angling Services. He knows exactly where and what is happening as far as angling is concerned and I am lucky to call him a friend.

Anyway I headed down on the train from Dublin and was met by Ross. He immediately told me that he had heard that a couple of bass had been caught the previous evening from the shore in Cork Harbour, so we could have a go for them that night. But first target was carp in the famous Lough in Cork City. Ross knows these carp well, as he is just finishing up a PhD on these fish. That he is a regular around the Lough became apparent as soon as we pulled up, when a teenager ran along the bank to us with a large carp in his net. He wanted to know if Ross had a weighing scales and if he wanted to tag the fish. The fish was weighed and measured, photographed and released. A fine Carp of 15pounds 8 ounces, a specimen. First specimen carp I had seen. As Ross got the gear set up and cast into what he predicted was the right spot other youngsters came along to say hello and seek advice. It was not long before a bite alarm screamed and Ross grabbed the rod. Immediately you could see the bow-wave as a big fish tried to get into the roots of the bushes surrounding the island in the Lough.

Ross halted this rush and gradually steered the fish into open water. After a good scrap he had it close enough for me to net. The first specimen carp I had seen caught, as it weighed 13 pounds 8 ounces. Shortly afterward another youngster arrived with a carp of about five pounds with one of Ross' tags in it. Ross recorded the details and it went off to be caught another day. Next time the alarm sounded I had my first Carp of the year another fish of about six pounds, not big but in lovely condition. As time was pushing on we decided to get a bite to eat before heading to the harbour to try for the Bass. The tide would be right when we got there, about one hour after low water.

I have to admit even though they are probably recognised as our premier sea sport fish, I have never caught a bass or even seen one caught. I have tried many times with bait in many places but as with all fishing, catching a fish is a bonus. I have enjoyed trying. The light was fading and the tide was rising when Ross and I started throwing our lures into Cork harbour. He said that he was not sure how the fishing would be as he thought that everything was about a month behind and the bass were not feeding on baitfish yet. That did not stop us trying. Rigged up with DUO 175 tide minnows 30 yard casts were achievable in the wind. It was not long before Ross announced "Fish On!" The bass glinted as I tried to keep it in my headlight as he brought it ashore. The sight of this beautiful fish made me more determined than ever to catch one myself. Anyway this one was lucky that Ross was the one who caught it, as it





*Bass from Cork Harbour.*

was quickly photographed and released. I have no qualms about keeping one for the pot. We had agreed before we started that no big fish would be killed as these are the most valuable spawning stock and big fish over 10 pounds are often over twenty years old. Rosse's fish was about four pounds weight and well over the minimum landing size. He told me that he might keep a couple of fish if asked, for a season when he probably catches a hundred or so bass a year.

Another first for me seeing a decent bass caught. I have seen them brought up from a beach but not the whole catching process. Despite Ross coaching me on how best to work the lure, I only succeeded in getting one knock later on that night. There were not many bass

about yet given the long period of easterlies this year keeping the water colder than normal. We fished until after midnight and called it a night and planned for a next quarry the following day.

Next morning, we headed to Carrigadrohid Reservoir where Lee Reservoirs Angling Services has five boats moored. Ross had the motor in the van and our targets today were perch or pike. Perch on small rubber jigs and Pike we would try for with fly rods. There were a number of anglers set up on the shoreline when we got there having been fishing all night. They were after hybrids (rudd/bream, roach/bream) with feeder rods. Ian Mulligan had three specimens during the night. We set off and discovered that the fishfinder had given up and we therefore could not use it to locate the schools of Perch as we had hoped. We resorted to trying in various locations around the reservoir. We drifted over a large bay, trolling some rubber shad for perch doubled over. Unfortunately it was a pike that bit through our line for perch.

We quickly switched to the fly rods for pike given how deadly this method can be. Again this was my first time using big pike flies and I found it difficult to throw them the required distance. Ross assured me that they did not have to go far, as the Pike tend to follow them right to the boat before hitting them. I listened to his advice as I had seen the Pike he had got earlier in the year on fly, which weighed an estimated twenty-seven pounds. It did not seem long before I heard "It's On!" accompanied by a big splash as the pike fought against the fly rod. It ran and jumped but eventually it was in the net and resting on the unhooking mat on the bottom of



the boat. As Ross checked to see where the fly was the pike flipped and got his finger with a swipe of a tooth. Anyone who has had this happen to them will know that this sort of cut bleeds like the slime on a Pike has an anticoagulant in it. It bleeds like the finger has been opened with a knife. The pike had totally swallowed the fly. We turned it on its back, which tends to calm most fish down. Lifting the lower jaw then allowed access for

*Playing the pike on a fly rod.*



the forceps to take the fly out without harming the pike. Then over the side after a photo or two. It was a good double but we did not weigh it. The fly rod was well able to handle the runs and pulls of this fish, again another first for me to see this.

Soon, I had to head for the train so that concluded a great couple of days fishing in Cork for me. I may not have caught a lot but that is fishing, next time I might well be catching. I will be back, not only to try for these three species but also to have another go at the shark off the Cork coastline. Possibly even have a go at catching the Albacore Tuna later in the year. The bass get a break until the 15th of June as the only sea fish to have a closed season in Ireland. Ross has promised to let me know when they are on.

Lee Reservoir Angling Services can be contacted on their website. I cannot recommend them enough. If you are wasting your time going down there after bass they will tell you; if not they can put you on whatever fish



*Ross with his specimen carp.*

you want to target, sea or freshwater. Ross has over fifty specimen pins not including three brown trout over ten pounds this year which says a lot.

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## Obituary Thomas McCormack

**T**he light of the canine community dimmed substantially with the passing of a dedicated young country sportsman from their midst. Thomas McCormack left this world on Saturday 17th August 13 leaving a void in the sporting and hunting community that can never be filled.

Born in Blanchardstown, Co Dublin on 10th August 1980 to parents Thomas and Georgina McCormack. Thomas was one of a family of seven children, four boys and three girls. Predeceased by his younger brother Dara, his soulmate, this was the second tragedy to hit the McCormack family in the last seven years. From a very young age, Thomas developed a keen interest in country life and all its trappings. This was inherited from his father Thomas senior who, when the children were young, would take the family camping to Galway annually, and taught all of them to explore nature and treasure the memories and values of country life. Throughout his young life, Thomas created a menagerie of every type of bird, from finches, to chickens and also his treasured canine friends. Country life and country sportsmanship will be his epitaph.

Thomas was laid to rest on Wednesday 21st August in



Mulhuddart Cemetery, Blanchardstown, Co Dublin.

"Perhaps my time seemed all too brief  
 Do not lengthen it now with untold grief  
 Lift up your hearts my canine friends  
 God wanted me now, he set me free."

**Margaret McStay**



# Around the Terrier, Whippet & Lurcher Shows



*Sales Director Gareth Connolly from sponsors RED MILLS presents the prizes for the Five Nations Terrier Champion Rushill Dodge and the Reserve Champion his brother Floyd.*

## **North West Lurcher, Terrier, and Whippet Club Show Sunday 12th May 13**

Another great day of racing, showing, excitement and laughter was had by all at the new venue of the North West Lurcher, Terrier, and Whippet Club Show, held at Killynaught Road, Artigarvan, Strabane, Co Tyrone on Sunday 12th May. This new show ground was superb with a good long racing track, views to die for and loads of room in the show rings. Ringside parking was laid on and a burger van to keep hunger at bay. The weather was not kind with torrential rain pouring down at times but did not dampen spirits. This show is always a great family day out with lots of fun and frolics, and we were not disappointed. It was nice to see the usual show goers back this year, in the ring showing off their whippets, terriers, lurchers and hounds, maybe with a nice trophy to take home at the end of the day.

### **Results:**

Showing: Overall Best in Show Paul Reid Reserve Clayton Hastings

### **Racing:**

Whippet: 1st: Charlene Rafferty-Lush 2nd: Gavin Wright- Bolt

Bull Cross: 1st: Brendan Creggan- Bolt 2nd: Brendan Creggan-Ruby

Over 23" 1st: Michelle Rafferty- Zena 2nd: Mick Moore- Lady

Over 23" Elite: 1st: Fiona Devlin-Shogun 2nd: John

Lynch Blue

Under 23": 1st: Charlene Rafferty-Nina

Under 23" Elite: 1st: Dale Wilson- Shadow 2nd: Fiona Devlin- Diva

## **Florence Court Dog Show and Raceday Sunday 26th May 13**

Florence Court was the place to be Sunday 26th May at the Annual Dog Show and Race Day as part of the Florence Court Country Fair. The venue was excellent, and was a very welcoming family day out in the beautiful surroundings of this 18th-century property, and the former home of the Earls of Enniskillen. The house enjoys a peaceful setting in West Fermanagh, with a dramatic backdrop of the Cuilcagh mountains and forests and has charming walled gardens. Every aspect of life in this classical Irish house, with its fine interiors and exquisite decoration, are brought to life on some very fascinating guided tours. Quite a few of our Canine folk availed of this extra attraction on the day.

### **Results:**

### **Showing:**

Overall Whippet Champion David Best with Penny Reserve John Shaw with Mango

Overall Lurcher Champion Mickey Quinn with Lady Reserve Glen Doherty with Diesel

Overall Terrier Champion Ian Heslip with George Champion Puppy John Shaw with Oreo Reserve John Heslip with Molly



Overall Champion and Best in Show Ian Heslip with George Reserve David Best with Penny Runner up Mickey Quinn

Racing:

Elite Under 23" Rose Mc Coy with Diego

Elite Over 23" Michelle Rafferty with Zeus

Lurcher under 23" Tom Barry with Copey

Lurcher over 23" Anthony Taggart with Togs Bess

Lurcher under 21" Fiona Devlin with Angel

Bull Cross Barry Holland with Misty

Whippet Ryan Wright with Bolt

### **The NISDC Show held at Annaghmore Raceway Saturday 1st June**

The Orchard County was in full bloom with the smell of its famous apple trees, as we drove into the heart of apple country along the winding country roads that led us to Annaghmore Raceway and the NISDC Dog Show. The weather was good though a little on the cold side. This did not dampen the spirits of show goers as they arrived with their families and trailers in tow. With the beauty of the countryside, good company, and the sun shining, what more could we ask for on a great family day out? The big attraction at this year's show was the ferret showing and racing. What an abundance of entertainment these little fellows brought. When the ferret racing began, the whole crowd erupted with words of encouragement, laughter and excitement. I would suggest there should be a lot more of ferret showing and racing at shows of the future, as they bring the crowd together and start the day off on good firm footing.

#### **Results:**

Showing:

Overall Best in Show - Mickey Quinn from Lurgan with his beautiful Lurcher Lady.

Reserve Best in Show - Janet Duke with Whippet Finlay.

### **Sporting Whippet Club N.I. Show and Race Day Sunday 2nd June**

What a brilliant day out on Sunday with the Sporting Whippet Club NI held at Dunsilly, Co Antrim. There was not a cloud in the sky as we set up the rings and prepared for the influx. This was to be the start of a great days showing and racing. There were some lovely cups and trophies to be won,

#### **Results:**

Showing:

Best In Show John Shaw with Blue

Reserve Best In Show - Tracy Gill with Ash

Racing Results

Grade 'A' Winner Michael Quinn with Blue Reserve

John Shaw with Mango 3rd Glen Doherty with Mac 4th Bradley Dynes with Jess

Grade 'B' 1st Patsy McCoy with Rio Reserve Mark Doherty with Juke

Grade 'C' Winner Tracy Gill with Ash Reserve Paul McNally with Jack

Puppy Racing 1st Graham Fyffe with Bolt Reserve Paul McNally with Daisy 3rd Steven Dumigan with Frankie

Kiddy Slip Winner Brooke Rafferty

### **North Down Lurcher, and Terrier Working Dog Show Saturday 8th June**

I woke up Saturday morning 8th June to the sound of the dawn chorus, reminding me the day for the North Down Lurcher & Terrier Club (Working Dog Show) Charity Event had finally arrived. It was time for us to get our feet out on the floor, dogs in trailer, and head for Movilla Road, Newtownards Co Down. They say the sun only shines on God's people, well he certainly dished it out on Saturday in abundance for this show. It was nice to see so many folk out with their prized dogs, for a good day's craic and enjoyment. There was a lovely carnival atmosphere in the field with face painting for the children, burgers, and an all round welcoming feeling.

#### **Results:**

Overall Best in Show Clayton Hastings with Jake Reserve Best in Show Ann Forsythe with Poppy

### **Farney Harriers Dog Show Sunday 9th June**

I left home early Sunday morning to meet up with a few friends along the way, stopping off at McDonalds in Newry for breakfast and continued on our journey. As we approached our destination, deep in the Dundalk countryside, nestling in the bed of the beautiful Cooley Mountains was the venue for the second annual Farney Harriers Dog show and Race day. The sun shone on us all day, and very soon the field was full to capacity with cars, trailers, dogs, and families. The organisation was impeccable, showing and racing went without a hitch and on top of it all beautiful weather. There was a large attendance of lurchers, terriers, whippets, hounds and pets.

#### **Results (some):**

Showing:

Overall Champion Whippet Dave Horan with Bear Reserve John Shaw

Overall Champion Terriers Stan Kelly with Boris Reserve John Heslip with George

Overall Champion Lurcher Brendan Mooney with Duke Reserve Glen Doherty with Diesel

Overall Champion and Best in Show Dave Horan with Bear Reserve Best in Show Brendan Mooney with Duke



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## **Man O War Dog Show and Race Day Sunday 16th June**

The town land of Man O' War just outside Keady Co Armagh, opposite beautiful Clea Lake was the venue for the Man O' War Dog Show/Race Day and Digging Competition Sunday 16th June 13. A tributary of the River Callan, Clea Lake flows radiantly along the winding roads which lead us to this stunning part of Northern Ireland and the venue for this superb family day out. Plunkett Rafferty, owner of the show field and father of the organisers had the ground in mint condition. With a backdrop of spectacular scenery and good weather, this was the perfect venue for holding a Dog Show with its brilliant race course, showing area, and ringside parking. The show was run with impeccable organisation and the rosettes and trophies were class. There was a very large turnout from north and south of the border, with a big turnout out of lurchers, terriers and whippets. Keady is noted for its great trout lakes. John Lip Rooney was perturbed that he did not bring his fishing gear with him. Better luck next time John.

### **Results:**

#### **Racing:**

Lurchers Under 23" Paddy Mc Carthy with PIP

Under 23" Elite Nigel Greer with Sunshine

Over 23" Nigel Greer with Pipa

Over 23" Elite Jed Donagh

Whippets 1st Bolt with Gavin and Ryan Wright 2nd John Shaw with Mango

Bull Cross Barry Holland with Misty

Terrier Racing Geoffrey Hutchinson with Gruff

After the racing was over, it was digging time. Off came the shirts and in came the spades, shovels and picks. Tango was there with his stopwatch and the digging began. After the cheering and jeering and many bottles of water later, it was stop digging time. This was one of the highlights of the day, and great fun. Congratulations to the winning team of Breandan Coleman and his teammate.

### **Results:**

#### **Showing:**

Whippets Overall Whippet Champion: John Shaw with Tara Reserve Dave Horan with Bear

Overall Lurcher Champion: Breandan Coleman Reserve Mickey Quinn

Champion Terrier: Sharon Reid Reserve Breandan Coleman

Overall Best in Show: Breandan Coleman Reserve: John Shaw with his winning Whippet Runner Up Sharon Reid with her beautiful terrier.

## **Tullylish Gilford Co Down Dog Show and Race Day 13th July**

Tullylish sits on the River Bann, along the main road

between the towns of Gilford and Banbridge. Its beautiful countryside and green elevated hills was the perfect setting. We were blessed with fine weather for a change and the sun shone brilliantly. From my own observation over the past couple of years our doggie shows have become real family days out. This was very evident on Sunday by the turnout on the day and there was just a lovely atmosphere. As I gazed around the field, for a moment I thought I was on the Rivera with parasols, gazebos, summer chairs, salads, flasks, sandwiches, BBQs, and a few beverages, all brought along for the makings of a fun-filled family day out. As this show has not been on for the last three years, it was nice to see so many of the old faces still on the scene, and also quite a few new up and coming sportsmen and women coming to the forefront of the sporting scene. On my travels around the show, and chatting to several people along the way, I bumped into Albert Titterington, out for an afternoon of leisure, and the odd chinwag with the canine folk.

### **Results (some):**

Simulated Coursing: 1st Fiona Devlin with Maverick 2nd Clayton Hastings with Jake

#### **Racing:**

Lurchers Under 23" 1st Fiona Devlin with Diva 2nd Jed Donagh with Flick

Over 23" 1st Jed Donagh with Jess 2nd Fiona Devlin with Rally

Terriers 1st Liam Toner with Vixen 2nd Brian Crothers with Molly

Puppy Race Clayton Hastings with Annie

Whippet Racing Dave Horan with Bear

#### **Showing:**

Overall Whippet Champion Davy Best with Penny Reserve Davy Best with Harley handled by Janet Boyce

Overall Champion Terrier John Heslip Reserve Neil Cunningham

Overall Champion Lurcher Johnny Wilson with Scooby Reserve Glen Doherty with Diesel

Strong Dog Overall Strong Dog Champion Mark Brown with Goldie Reserve Daniel Scullion with Sid.

Overall and Best in Show Johnny Wilson Reserve John Heslip

NI Lurcher Champion of Champions Mickey Quinn with Lady Reserve Fiona Devlin

NI Terrier Champion of Champions John Heslip with George Reserve Janet Duke with George

NI Whippet Champion of Champions Dave Horan with Bear Reserve Janet Duke with Finlay

## **Barron Top Dog Show And Race Day Saturday 20th July**

Sitting on the hillside, straddling the borders of Strabane and Donegal, is beautiful Barron Top Fun Farm.



This was the venue for last Saturdays first ever Dog show and Race day run by Barron Tops owner Mr. George McGerrigle. This brilliant show was organised by Michael Lynch in the grounds of beautiful Barron Top Fun Farm. This location provides the unique combination of being interesting, educational, and very enjoyable, and a real children's paradise. This was very evident on Saturday with the children enjoying themselves over at the animal farm, with slides, bouncy castle, and many more attractions in a safe environment.

#### **Results:**

##### **Showing:**

Whippets Charlene Rafferty with Lush

Under 21" Jude Lynch with Jill

Under 23" Johnny Hegarty with Levi

Over 23" Charlene Rafferty with Bullet

Over 23" Elite John Lynch with Blue

Bull Cross Jonny Carlin with Nina

Whippets Overall Champion Whippet John McStay with Reilly Reserve Davy Best with Penny

Lurchers Overall Champion Lurcher Jed Donagh Reserve Jonny Carlin

Terriers Overall Terrier Champion Ged Donagh with Spike Reserve Robert Hamilton

Overall Champion Pairs Melissa Greer Reserve John McStay

Overall Champion Veteran John Mc Stay with Silver

Overall Puppy Champion Michelle Rafferty with Vino Reserve Mark Duffy

Overall Show Champion Jed Donough Reserve John McStay

**A Young Sporting Star Was Born At The Sporting Whippet Club Show And Race Day At Dunsilly, Co Antrim Sunday 21st July - Hearty congratulations to young Pearse Reynolds on winning the Overall Best Whippet in Show with his beautiful pedigree Whippet Peaches.**

#### **DWTC Dog Show and Race Day (Tom Barry's Show) Sunday 28th July**

The beautiful Derrytresk/Coalisland countryside, with the smell of newly cut turf in the bog oozing out at us and the waters from the shore line of magnificent Lough Neagh in view, set the scene en route to the Dublin Working Terriers Club dog show and race day run by Tom Barry at Feagh Bridge Racing Track, Derrytresk, Coalisland Co Tyrone. As we approached the immaculately newly mown show rings and well rolled sandy race track, all in mint condition, it was evident there was a very big turnout of lurchers, terriers, whippets, and strong dogs attending this well organised show. It was nice to see so many families out for a good day's enjoyment with all their canine friends in tow. It was nice to see so many show goers and also some new

people making their debut into the canine world. That is why I love the show scene and doing my show

write-ups. I meet so many nice appreciative and interesting people along the way, who love their dogs and love to hunt, show and race them in the appropriate seasons of the year. The sun beamed down on us all day, with the exception of a few showers in the evening.

#### **Results:**

##### **Racing:**

Whippets Gavin Wright with Bolt

Lurchers Under 23" Alec Hagans with Gypsy, handled by Davy Boyd

Over 23" Ryan Wright with Sam

Elite under 23" Fiona Devlin with Diva

Elite Over 23" Michelle Rafferty with Zeus

Bull Cross Joint Heat Mickey Quinn with Lady Joanne Mc Cormick with Casey

##### **Showing: (some random results):**

Whippets Overall Champion Whippet Davy Best with Penny

Reserve Davy Best with Harley, handled by Paul Reynolds

Terriers Overall Terrier Champion

Dessie Macken's Soda, handled by Paul Mc Alinden Reserve Terrier Champion Roy Nixon with Red

The Danny O' Neill Memorial Spade, donated by Tom Barry, was won by Dessie Macken's Russell Spot, and handled by Teri McVitty.

Lurchers Overall Champion Lurcher Paul Reid Reserve Philly Mc Cormick

Strong Dogs Overall Champion Strong Dog Gerry Finnegan with Ben

Overall Puppy Champion Kieran Young Reserve Leanne Hawthorne

Overall Show Champion and Best in Show went to Gerry Finnegan, from Silverbridge, Co Armagh with his beautiful Wheaten Dog Ben.

#### **The Irish Game Fair & Flavour Fine Food Festival, Birr 31 August and 1st September, Birr**

##### **Racing Results:**

Terriers Overall Winner - Brian Crothers with Molly

Lurchers - Rough Coated Overall Winner - Brian Crothers with Nell Runner up - Glen Doherty with Diesel

Bull Cross Overall Winner Redsor with Chino Runner up Brendan Coleman with Bouncer

Smooth Coated Overall Winner Ryan Wright with Boris Runner up Paddy McCarthy with PIP

Bull cross/Rough and Long Dog Ryan Wright with Boris Over 23"

Overall Winner Fiona Devlin with Shogun Runner up Fiona Devlin with Chad



Under 23"

Fiona Devlin with Diva Runner Up Raz Caine with Bella

Under 21"

Fiona Devlin with Angel Runner up Brian Crothers with Nell

Pure Bred Whippets Gavin Wright with Bolt Runner Up Charlene Rafferty with Lush

Whippets

Overall Whippet Champion - John Shaw with Mango Terriers

Overall Terrier Champion - Mandy Hume with Floyd Reserve Champion Terrier - Peter Morgan with Chip

Lurchers

Overall Champion Lurcher - Sam Hennessy with Kyser Overall Best in Show - Sam Hennessy with Kyser

#### **Publishers Note:**

#### **Five Nations Championship at Birr**

**History was made at Birr by Martin Hulme doing a 'Master Mc Grath in reverse.'**

"Eighteen sixty eight being the date and the year,  
Those Waterloo sportsmen and more did appear;  
For to gain the great prizes and bear them awa',  
Never counting on Ireland and Master McGrath."

As you know Master McGrath went on to bear the Waterloo Cup away from England three times!

Well this year at Birr in the **RED MILLS /Barbour/ Irish Countrysports and Country Life Five Nations Terrier Championships** Martyn Hulme's Dodge did the 'Master McGrath' in reverse and just as Lord Lurgan had some difficulty in getting the 'Master ' across the pond as Martyn was in Spain, his sister Mandy had to make special arrangements to get Dodge across for the challenge of meeting up to 24 of the top terriers from Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Dodge is a 6 yr old smooth dog, his line has been bred in Martyn's family for the last 30 plus years.

He has had a terrific show career winning lots of hunt shows in GB AND he won the National Working Terrier Federation's Championship in 2010 and was res in 2011 as well as winning it, the final English FN qualifier, again this year - the only terrier ever to win it twice.

In some ways more importantly Dodge works all through the winter, Martyn follows the Fernie foxhounds as well as working him on over 1100 acres in the midlands.

His Progeny have just started working and winning so as you can see he has many attributes and the line was also successful in providing the runner up with Dodge's brother.

Martyn had intended to retire Dodge after his great win in the NWTf championship but sportingly decided to try to get him across to make his challenge in Ireland's top international terrier event at the Birr Castle Game Fair on Sunday 1st September. The fact that Martyn was prepared to risk the dog being beaten not only demonstrates his sportsmanship but also the high regard that the Great Game Fairs of Ireland titles are increasingly gaining in the international terrier, lurcher and now whippet world.

#### **And a great home win in the Five Nations Lurchers by Fiona Devlin**

The Five Nations Lurcher Championship prizes stayed at home when Fiona Devlin's Maverick retained his champion title in a very strong field of lurchers. This completed a memorable weekend for Fiona as she also took all three elite racing titles.

More results from Birr in the Winter edition of the magazine.

*Gareth Connolly  
Sales Director of  
RED MILLS  
presents the prizes  
for the Five  
Nations Lurcher  
Championship to  
Champion and  
runner up. Also in  
picture the three  
judges.*







Pat McGrath's Joey beats Fiona Devlin's Shogun in a tight finish for the Master McGrath.

(Photo Derek Laverty)

# THE 26TH ALL IRELAND TERRIER, WHIPPET & LURCHER CHAMPIONSHIPS

**T**HE 26TH ALL IRELAND TERRIER, WHIPPET & LURCHER CHAMPIONSHIPS were staged at Shanes Castle, Antrim on Saturday 29th & Sunday 30th June 2013 they were sponsored by Feedwell, Barbour and The Master McGrath Final was sponsored by Barbour, Irish Countrysports and Country Life magazine and Sarah Majury.

This year the Championships which are Ireland's longest running and most prestigious terrier, whippet and lurcher championships were organised under the Directorship of Tom Barry and the Northern Ireland Lurcher Racing Club. Tom has subsequently resigned as Chairman of the NILRC. For the 28th & 29th June 2014 the organising responsibility for the 27th championships is in the capable hands of the Mourne Club and the new Terrier, Lurcher & Whippet Director at Shanes Castle will be Kieran Young.

Pat McGrath won the Master McGrath - Ireland's premier lurcher race; Rose and Patsy McCoy won three All Ireland Champion Racing Titles and in the showing Des Mackin won the supreme accolade of ALL IRELAND OVERALL CHAMPION WORKING DOG. Having won the ALL IRELAND CHAMPION TERRIER TITLE and then THE OVERALL ALL IRELAND CHAMPION Title against two other great champions. I

can understand Des's frustration at another show producing what appears to be simply a 'copycat' title with no real status or pedigree - i.e a 'CHAMPION OF ALL IRELAND TITLE'.

There is no doubt who did win the 2013 ALL IRELAND TERRIER, WHIPPET & LURCHER CHAMPION titles this was DES and his dog SODA!

ALL IRELAND CHAMPION SHOW WINNERS

ALL IRELAND CHAMPIONS: Overall In Show  
Dessie Mackin Soda Puppy Dessie Mackin Rush

ALL IRELAND CHAMPION TERRIER: Dessie Mackin Soda

ALL IRELAND CHAMPION LURCHER: Brian Crothers Nell

ALL IRELAND CHAMPION WHIPPET: Sammy Bowers Lady

ALL IRELAND CHAMPION RACING WINNERS

Master McGrath - Winner Pat McGrath Joey Reserve  
Fiona Devlin Shogun

Directors Challenge:

Rough Coat Lurcher: Winner Frank Kenny Jack  
Reserve Glen Doherty Diesel

Bull Cross Winner: Decky Gordon Sasha Reserve  
Brendan Cregan Ruby

Overall ALL IRELAND CHAMPION Director's  
Champion: Decky Gordon Sasha



ALL IRELAND CHAMPION Terrier: Winner Geoffrey Hutchinson Red Reserve Liam Toner Vixen  
 ALL IRELAND CHAMPION KC Whippet: Winner Patsy McCoy Rio Reserve Graham Fyffe Bolt  
 Whippet Under 21": Winner Charlene Rafferty Lush Reserve Rochelle Duffy Lily  
 ALL IRELAND CHAMPION Lurcher Under 21": Winner Jude Lynch Jill Reserve Brian Crothers Nell  
 ALL IRELAND CHAMPION Lurcher Under 23": Winner Jed Donagh Flick Reserve William Hill Mandy  
 ALL IRELAND CHAMPION Lurcher Over 23" Winner Ivan McCann Patch Reserve Timmy Clark Blue  
 ALL IRELAND CHAMPION Elite Under 21" Winner Rose McCoy Zola Reserve Janet Duke Sally  
 ALL IRELAND CHAMPION Elite Under 23" Winner

Rose McCoy Diego Reserve John Humphries China

ALL IRELAND CHAMPION Elite Over 23" Winner Fiona Devlin Chad Reserve M. Kenny Nell

In 2014 Ireland's most prestigious ALL IRELAND CHAMPION TITLES will once again be Ireland's most sought after race title THE MASTER Mc GRATH CHALLENGE supported by the Director's Challenge for Novice Dogs AND the NEW FIVE NATIONS WHIPPET CHAMPIONSHIP. The MASTER Mc GRATH & FIVE NATIONS are pre qualified competitions the ALL IRELAND LURCHER, WHIPPET & TERRIER CHAMPIONSHIPS are open to all comers and as such the title holders are recognised as the REAL ALL IRELAND CHAMPIONS of their YEAR.



*Catherine Lawton presents the Philip Lawton Memorial Trophy (donated by Albert & Irene Titterington) to Pat McGrath winner of the Master McGrath.*  
 (Photo Derek Laverty)



*Best pup — Des also won best pup.*  
 (Photo Billy Harpur)



*The McCoy's won three ALL IRELAND CHAMPION RACING TITLES.*  
 (Photo D. McCoy)



*Des Mackin wins the Supreme All Ireland Champion Title from Sam Bowers' Lady and Brian Crothers' Nell under judges Tracy Gill, Graham Brennan and Tom Barry.*  
 (Photo D. McCoy)



# AJ's Angst

## Frank opinion on the issues facing the Irish country sports scene

**2013** was a sad year for us when our colleague Philip Lawton died. As most of you know Philip was involved not only as a director of the Birr Fair but also as arena director of Shanes Castle and as ROI editor of the magazine. We dedicated the success of the 2013 Great Game Fairs of Ireland to Philip's memory and thus there is simply no way I and the team could not deliver on this. The team responded magnificently with Johnny Mc Coy taking on Philip's arena role and Irene adding Philip's record keeping and Birr communications role to her own.

If Philip was looking down on the team he would have been proud of the work that they put in to deliver two of the best Great Game Fairs of Ireland ever. Philip will be remembered at the fairs as our other late and valued colleague John McClelland has been through two memorial trophies.

### *The Largest ever Game or Country Fair in NI*

I would like to thank all of those people and organisations who participated in making the Irish Game Fair & Flavour Fine Food Festival not only the largest game or country fair staged in Northern Ireland but also one of the most successful in terms of all the parameters of success.

It was a particular delight to me to see so many of our representative organisations, large and small, present and taking an active role in promoting the event, sponsoring events but most of all interacting with the huge number of visitors including their members in the promotion and defence of our country sports. This included for the first time the NARGC from the ROI making a fraternal visit and the Ulster Angling Federation returning after several years to join FISSTA, NSN, Irish Working Terrier Federation, The Six Mile Water Trust and the National Woodcock Association of Ireland, in the well visited Salmon & Woodcock Pavilion

Countryside Alliance had an enhanced presence including having a larger marquee, hosting a special lunch attended and addressed by Chief Executive Barney White-Spunner; sponsoring



*Albert Titterington & Kieran Young being interviewed.*

*(photo: Deirdre McCoy)*

the dog handling master classes by Dog Guru Keith Mathews and looking to the future highly innovative championships in archery and air rifle shooting for the Scouting movement.

The one organisation that did not take up their invitation of a free stand was BASC. Since BASC and possibly two of their finest ever representatives John Richards and John Bond, attended the first ever fair at Clandeboyne, this is the first time in the history of the fair that BASC have not been present. I do appreciate that BASC are now heavily involved in the Moira NI Countryside Festival but for them to miss interacting with the larger shooting public at Shanes appears to me to be a serious error of judgement, not only in my opinion but one shared by a considerable number of their members and members of the shooting public to whom we spoke both at the fair and afterwards.

### *The Largest ever Game and Country Fair in the ROI*

We were amused to read that the fair at Borris was being promoted as 'Visit the Carlow game fair, Ireland's leading game fair, the National Country Fair at Borris House in Co. Carlow.' Now the history of this fair firstly at Clonmellon and then Borris last year appeared to give absolutely no basis for this claim so we were interested to see if this was just the sort of hype we have become used to associating with this event. I am afraid to say it appeared that virtually the only people who could even consider this to be the case were the organisers!

However we thought we would let the performance of our Irish Game and Country Fair at Birr expose this misguided claim for the absolute rubbish it was and so it did! Record crowds, record numbers of trade stands, great trading performances and fantastic competition prizes and entries demonstrated to the traders and sporting public why the Great Game Fairs of Ireland team really do deliver Ireland's leading game and country fairs at Shanes Castle, Antrim and Birr Castle, Co Offaly. Telephone calls to our organising team, verbal communication over both days, targeted market research and the huge amount of satisfied customers on Facebook, lauding our efforts speaks of Birr's REAL results – not unsubstantiated hype!



*Winning Scout Jamie Orr receives his trophy from CAI's Chief Executive Lyall Plant, while looking on (L/R) are sporting enthusiast Rev Stephen McWhirter, Game Fair Organiser Albert Titterington and Simon McWhirter, Scout Shop NI.*



And so the two Great Game Fairs of Ireland move forward into 2014 with new resolve to deliver great game fairs in terms of all of the parameters of success - no hype, no undelivered promises just steady, sustainable growth. Inclusion of the word 'Great' in our brand means just that - and as they say 'we do what we say on the tin!'

### ***The 27th All Ireland Terrier, Whippet & Lurcher Championships set for new heights***

The 2013 and 26th All Ireland Lurcher, Terrier and Whippet Championships were staged at Shanes by the NILRC under the direction of its ex chairman Tom Barry.

However it was announced at the Birr Fair that in 2014 the responsibility for taking Ireland's premier terrier, whippet and lurcher racing and showing championships has been delegated to Kieran Young and his team from Mourne. Kieran currently organises the Mourne Show, which is widely recognised as Ireland's premier specialist show, and also the Mourne Digging Championships, which have their final at the Birr Castle Game Fair.

As usual the Master McGrath Challenge will take place at Shanes and will be joined by a new Five Nations Whippet Championships.

The Great Game Fairs of Ireland have given Kieran our full support in the challenge to make the 27th ALL IRELAND Lurcher, Whippet & Terrier Championships the best ever.

In 2014 the responsibility for the ROI Championships at Birr Castle and the Five Nations Lurcher & Terrier Championships will remain with Shane Lee and the Roscrea Club who organised truly superb events this year.

### ***The Firearm Debate and some questions***

The debate over Firearms fees rumbles on and is causing not only concern amongst shooters but with the trade. In this matter it would appear that the waters have been muddied by an application for certification for 'young shots' - does anyone really think or even been asked for their opinion on whether a rise in the cost of an FAC should be linked with this? With the greatest respect to our 'representatives' I think the two issues should have been dealt with separately. Because there has been little or no consultation with actual shooters about why shooters should be faced with a swingeing rise in the cost of a FAC rumours abound. I have dealt before with the lack of consultation between the representative organisations and their members but this latest lack of consultation over a quite critical matter makes us think that it is time we had a hard look at those who are purporting to negotiate on our behalf. We think it is time to ask some pertinent questions to some of the participants about who they do actually represent. Now CAI have declared their All Ireland membership at 10,000 but two of the other organisations involved BASCNI and the GTGNI appear strangely reluctant to divulge their membership and therefore the numbers for whom they speak.

So here are open questions to them:

**1. To BASCNI:** Is it true that at the Northern Ireland Firearms Control Liaison Committee (NIFCLC) that your representative did not utterly reject the concept of full cost recovery with regard to fees?

**2. To BASCNI:** Is it true that at this committee a figure of £85 was put forward without objection from your representative? Why did you not object or consult with your members over the proposed fee and the concept of full cost recovery being applied to FACs?

**3. To BASCNI:** You are claiming to represent shooters and trade in negotiations yet in spite of being asked how many members BASC have in Northern Ireland you have refused to

disclose this. I think both shooting members and shooters who are not members plus of course the Minister and Dept of Justice who appear to have acknowledged your legitimacy by negotiating with you, have a right to know who you actually do represent. So an end to prevarication - how many individual and trade members does BASC have in NI? What steps has BASCNI taken to consult with members? And what percentage of FAC holders does BASCNI represent?

**4. To the GTGNI:** You have apparently got involved in representing the interests of shooters AND trade in these negotiations - are you a regular game shooter? Do you realise the implications of children as young as 10 yo shooting game? How many members of the trade do you represent? What proportion is this of all gun dealers in NI?

**5. To the Minister of Justice/Department of Justice/PSNI:**

Do you know how many members BASC have in NI? Do you if BASCNI have carried out a full consultation with all of their members to get their views on this issue? If you can't answer 'yes' to both these questions why are you negotiating with them if you are unaware of their mandate? Why do you not directly seek the views of the FAC holders?

Don't get me wrong this magazine has and always will support our representative sporting organisations and give plaudits when they are deserved such as when the NARGC, who openly disclose their membership, won a landmark victory on firearms in the ROI and FISSTA (again who also openly declare their membership) led the case for the abolishment of salmon netting. But those organisations who seek to represent us and speak for us must be truly representative through consulting with their members AND openly demonstrating their legitimacy by declaring their membership numbers. If they don't the only real conclusion that can be drawn is that they are embarrassed by the actual number of members they have within their organisations.

### ***Wildlife Crime***

I supported the release of red kites and was delighted to see one soar over our house. Personally I dislike the use of poisons for any vermin control including even rats and mice. I always feel any animal should be killed as cleanly and efficiently as possible. So I have to deplore the poisoning of the red kites just as they were gaining a foothold.

Let me be clear, I do not support unlimited protection for species which are reaching plague proportions. The protection of such species should not be forever but should be reviewed when populations reach a level where they become a pest. Elsewhere in the magazine you will see how one species, the buzzard, that has been protected until they are reaching plague proportions, attacked a very rare species - an osprey! We have had up to seven buzzards over my house on several occasions and earlier in the year one killed one of my guinea fowl. I am also totally plagued with another protected species (also reaching pest proportions because of over protection) - the badger.

They break my pheasant/guinea fowl feeders and eat their food, break down fences, dig up our lawns and newly planted trees and plants, and use our front lawn as a latrine. Apart from this, they have eaten our hedgehogs and pose a real threat to my neighbours' cattle. When we first came here about 6 years ago there was one sett now there are several satellite setts.

We have had to resort to feeding them to try to minimise further damage to expensively sown lawns and my trees and I am seriously considering billing the Minister of the Environment for the damage and expense they have caused!

I would love to see both badgers and buzzards controlled but controlled legitimately!





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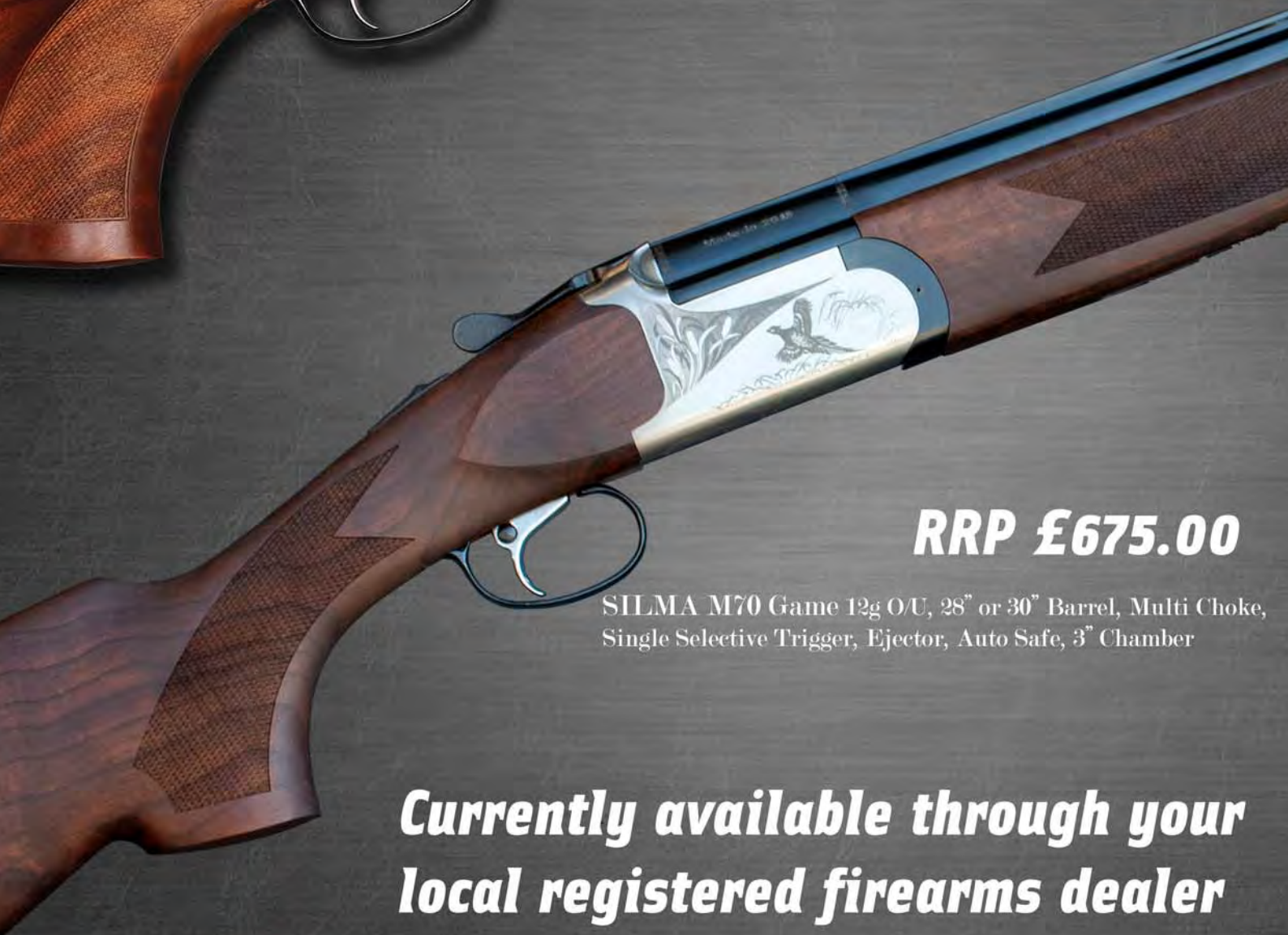


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