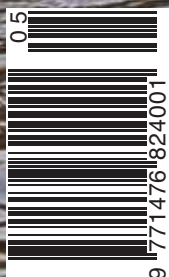


# Irish COUNTRY SPORTS and COUNTRY LIFE

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**Front Cover:** Flyfishing for Grayling (Photograph by Simon Everett) and Winners of the IKC Retriever & Spaniel Championships

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**Managing Editor:** Albert Titterington, **ROI Editor:** Derek Fanning, **NI Editor:** Paul Pringle, **Associate Editor:** Irene Titterington **Sales and Marketing:** Paul Robinson  
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**Email:** Email: irishgamefair@btinternet.com a.j.titterington@btinternet.com **Web:** www.countrysportsandcountrylife.com  
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# Country Sports and Country Life Rol Comment

I am writing this on my sixth day into a festival of beagling in Cork and Limerick. Organised annually by the Woodrock and Blackwater Valley Club this event is now in its 24th year. Each year the Woodrock pack invites over a couple of English packs for nine days of hunting.

This year's packs are the Taw Vale Beagles from Devon and the Old Berkeley Beagles from Buckinghamshire and about 50 people have travelled over for the week, along with 60 hounds. I've been out every day so far, and it's been a magnificent week of hunting. Today's hunt was especially good, where the two English packs joined forces and all 60 hounds were used. It was a wonderful sight witnessing these 60 beagles in action, sometimes reminding me of a flock of birds in flight because of the way they moved en masse when temporarily slowing down and casting for the scent. As we stood on the side of a hill and enjoyed a top-notch view of the valley and the beagles in full pursuit while making fantastic music, someone turned to me and said, 'Hunting doesn't get better than this.'

The hunt was in Killeely, a village in East Limerick set in interesting hill country (the creation of volcanic activity) and it's a really fabulous place from a foothunter's point of view. Hares are always found here and there's a grandstand view from the side of a hill of the action in the wide valley below.

Our day started at 11.30 in driving rain and very strong winds. After a few minutes the beagles latched onto the scent of a hare and the music these sixty hounds made was special indeed. I had been hunting five days in a row and had done a lot of jogging through the Cork and Limerick countryside. My limbs were a little weary and I was content to stand on the side of the hill and watch the action. It was a beautiful sight and sound, which would thrill the heart of every lover of the chase. For long periods the hounds resembled one single creature, focussed upon one purpose. Despite the strong winds they remained attached to the scent. For long periods they travelled very swiftly, resembling a hunter's arrow in flight. Along the length of the wide valley they went; then up the steep slope, over the top of the storm-buffed hilltop, then turning back and returning once more to the wide valley to make the circuit again and again.

Some local hunting people had come out to watch the English packs in operation, and it was obvious they were deeply impressed. When the day came to an end after five hours everyone went home with a glow of satisfaction. Hunting certainly doesn't get better than this, and over all the years I don't remember as good a beagle hunt. These small dogs covered the species of beagle in glory again and showed us what a great pleasure it is to follow this breed of dog in pursuit of the hare.

Every evening, after each enjoyable hunt, I sit in my hotel room in Mallow and read a couple of hunting books. One of them was given to me as a Christmas present by a friend in the Rockview Foot Harriers in Kilkenny. It's about a man called Anthony Barker, the well-known huntsman of the Ullswater Foxhounds and Windermere Harriers in Cumbria, England, who died in 1999 after a hunting career which dated back to the early 1940s. This book has lots of intriguing passages which give us a glimpse into a very different world.



Anthony's father, Fred, also kept hounds. This was a trencher fed pack who were kennelled only a mile apart. 'On arranged hunting days,' writes the author, 'Jim would let his hounds out and Fred, climbing a small hill behind the house, blew the hunting horn and that was the signal for Jim's hounds to come and join his.'

There was also a story of how Fred's hounds possibly saved him from an unpleasant experience after he had too much to drink in a pub. Walking home with his hounds, Fred slipped and fell. It was a bitterly cold, frosty night but he fell asleep anyway. When he woke the next morning he was as warm as toast. The hounds had lain down on top of him and kept him warm!

There's brief mention of a huntsman who should be an inspiration to us all. This was 'Hunty' Joe Bowman who hunted the Ullswater pack from 1879 until 1924 and whose attitude to life inspired the young Anthony. 'Joe was a man of grand physique,' writes the author. 'He loved nature, children and all animals. Even the fox got fair play. Anthony remembers at the age of five, Joe taking him by the hand to go hunting. His mother made him a red coat from one of Joe's. It is said that the songs "Mardale Hunt" and "Joe Bowman" were sung in army camp canteens in both world wars.'

As a young huntsman of the Ullswater Foxhounds in the 1940s Anthony hunted hard and played hard. He memorised 21 songs, which he sang in the pubs after the hunts. Their subject-matter was both hunting and sentimental. And he was able in those days "to sup beer till me tonsils dangled in it." As huntsman he was very busy travelling from farm to farm dispatching foxes who had been killing lambs. In an eccentric move, he removed the seats from his car and transported his hounds in this manner. His days were very busy and the beers were well earned. This paragraph gives a good taste of a typical few days: "At day break the next morning they set off and once again the hounds set off in full cry. They could see a white hound, called Trilby, leading the way. It disappeared into a peat hag and caught the fox. Anthony blew the horn and loaded the hounds into his car and came back home to the kennels only to find he was needed at Grasmere. Leaving his car this time, he set off in the afternoon and walked over Grisedale Tarn down into Grasmere where for two days he hunted and caught two foxes."

**Derek Fanning**  
ROI Editor



**A** recent Daily Telegraph headline stated: 'Red squirrels: 5,000 volunteers sought to save species and help kill invasive greys.' The paper said that the Wildlife Trusts' biggest-ever recruitment drive was focused on areas of northern England, north Wales and Northern Ireland where invasive grey squirrels are driving the retreating red squirrel population to extinction.



obligation to undo the damage the Victorians did by bringing them here in the first place," she told the Telegraph.

The article impressed me: a conservation crisis was being addressed by taking hard decisions regarding a natural imbalance, in order to protect one group from being wiped out by another.

I seem to recall — perhaps I'm wrong — that there was an idea at one time that all we needed to do to keep the red squirrels at bay was to draw a line across the north of England to prevent them taking over in Scotland. Just how that line was to be drawn is lost in the mists of time.

As far as I can see, much of the excellent work done by countrysports enthusiasts goes relatively unnoticed and certainly seldom reaps headlines in the media.

Just think of the amazing work undertaken on grouse moors which has seen so much regeneration of both flora and fauna. Think of the work done on estates throughout the country that makes these areas havens for 'the little brown birds,' which many a townie or headline-making celebrity would fail to recognise, and of course the habitat improvement which goes along with the work of a gamekeeper. Think about the work done by small DIY syndicates and individuals, fishing clubs, farmers, our representative organisations — the list is endless. Perhaps you who are reading this can lay claim to protecting or improving the natural world.

A final thought: countrysports people actively involved at the sharp end of practical conservation should get more coverage if the media were less fixated on 'names' rather than the hard graft of the country community.

You can read about Owen Williams and his work for woodcock and also about Loughmacrory & Murrins District Angling Association in this edition to see what I mean. Why not shine a light on YOUR or YOUR club's practical conservation work by getting in touch with this magazine and we will be delighted to tell our national and international readership.

The reason was simple: over 2.5 million grey squirrels are continuing to spread north through England and into Scotland, out-competing the 140,000 remaining red squirrels and spreading the squirrelpox virus, which does not affect greys but rapidly kills reds.

"In most of the UK there are only a handful of refuges left for red squirrels," said Dr Cathleen Thomas, programme manager of Red Squirrel United in the paper, "without help, experts predict this beautiful and treasured creature could be extinct within as little as 35 years."

Volunteers for Red Squirrel United will be asked to monitor red squirrel strongholds in Northumberland, Merseyside, Wales and Northern Ireland, and report any grey squirrels entering these areas. Volunteers will set up camera traps to film squirrel behaviour and teach the public and school children about the way in which greys have rapidly driven the reds to extinction across southern Britain since 1945. Supported by Heritage Lottery and EU Life funding, volunteers can also undertake training to trap and kill grey squirrels, which are caught in a cage-trap, put in a bag and knocked over the head, said the Telegraph.

The paper then quoted Julie Bailey, who lives in Cumbria's Eden Valley and used to watch dozens of red squirrels at her garden feeders. A grey squirrel arrived in Christmas 2009 and within a month all her reds had died of squirrel pox virus. She began volunteering for local red squirrel groups recording red squirrels, and trapping and shooting greys. "It's an unfortunate part of red squirrel conservation that we have to kill grey squirrels. But we have an

**Paul Pringle,**  
Northern Editor



# DAERA Inland Fisheries Community Outreach is casting far!

*Inland Fisheries, since its integration into the new Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, has continued the successful Community Outreach Programme, designed and launched in 2013 to attract new anglers, reach the disadvantaged and showcase angling as a healthy, affordable and accessible outdoor recreation.*

This programme, which has surpassed all annual targets in engaging with potential anglers, has worked with many groups across Northern Ireland including the Simon Community, Heath Trusts, PSNI, Scouts and mental health charities. Inland Fisheries officials have also supported local, established, angling clubs and venues in hosting events and angler taster days for those who may be interested in the sport. It is estimated that these combined efforts have allowed over 3,000 to experience the benefits of angling.



DAERA Fisheries Officers with a participant at a Community Outreach Event, Dunalis, Coleraine.

## ***Inland Fisheries Events Fund – delivering through partnership***

Taking a further step of progress on the Community Outreach road, DAERA Inland Fisheries has launched in 2017, a grant funding scheme to assist those hoping to get involved and get others involved in fishing. The Community Outreach Angling Events Fund offers a grant payment of up to £500.00 to assist in the delivery of angling projects and a simple application, giving details of the event, participants and any other assistance received, can be made directly to Inland Fisheries in DAERA. The funding, for successful applicants, can be used to purchase equipment, hire



instructors, entrance to venues or transport costs among other things which might be required for a first time angling venture.

Anyone interested in applying to the Community Outreach Angling Events Fund can find out more by speaking to Gillian Kinnier or John Blair on 0300 200 7860 or by e-mailing [IF.Complimentaryinbox@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:IF.Complimentaryinbox@daera-ni.gov.uk)



An Inland Fisheries Community Outreach supported project at Beechill Fishery, Newtownards.

## ***DAERA Public Angling Estate***

As in previous years, DAERA Inland Fisheries offers a substantial Public Angling Estate which includes around 70 game and coarse waters across Northern Ireland. This Public Angling Estate is growing as new waters, introduced under joint management agreements with local angling clubs, become available. This ongoing process will see these waters available to DAERA game permit holders for a reduced day ticket charge and details will be placed on the Angling website at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/angling](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/angling)





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## New research reveals new information about sea trout in Irish Sea set to inform conservation management



Pictured were Dr Willie Roche, Senior Research Officer at Inland Fisheries Ireland, Minister Sean Kyne T.D. and Dr Cathal Gallagher, Head of Research at Inland Fisheries Ireland at the launch of the Celtic Sea Trout Project.

**Inland Fisheries Ireland has published a new report called The Celtic Sea Trout Project (CSTP) which addresses significant knowledge gaps around sea trout. This migratory trout has a significant fisheries value however some sea trout fisheries in parts of Ireland and the UK bordering the Irish Sea are suffering decline.**

The research will improve the management and long term future of sea trout in the Irish Sea by providing information and advice for management which can be translated into fishery and conservation benefits for countries bordering the Irish Sea. It has also established a wider awareness and long term network of people working to secure the future of sea trout.

### Key findings:

- There are nine major genetically distinct and phylogeographic sea trout groups discovered within the Irish Sea. The genetic data showed that sea trout in the Irish Sea originate from a large number of rivers and are distributed widely. Although the majority of sea trout occurred in marine waters in the vicinity of the rivers in which they originated, some migrated up to 300 kilometres for feeding purposes.

- Sea trout abundance, based on angling catches, varied considerably over time and between rivers and regions around the Irish Sea but catches were shown to demonstrate a degree of synchronous variation pointing to some common factor/s influencing different stocks or entry period into rivers. The river size and the fishing effort in the area was recognised as a dominant factor controlling the catch. It also discovered that shorter rivers of low alkalinity in areas with poor nutrients, but which had good spawning and nursery areas that were easily accessible from the sea, tended to be the better sea trout rivers.

- Sea trout growth, which is strongly tied to environmental factors of temperature and food, is an important measure of subsequent smolting and of marine survival. The spatial variation in marine growth in sea trout in this research was significantly positively correlated with mean annual sea temperature. Fish from more northerly rivers were smaller at age .0+ (finnock) and .1+ (maiden) than fish from southerly rivers.

- Sea trout diet at sea is mainly fish-based and their preference for high protein/lipid prey can be met by sand eel or sprat, depending on which is available.

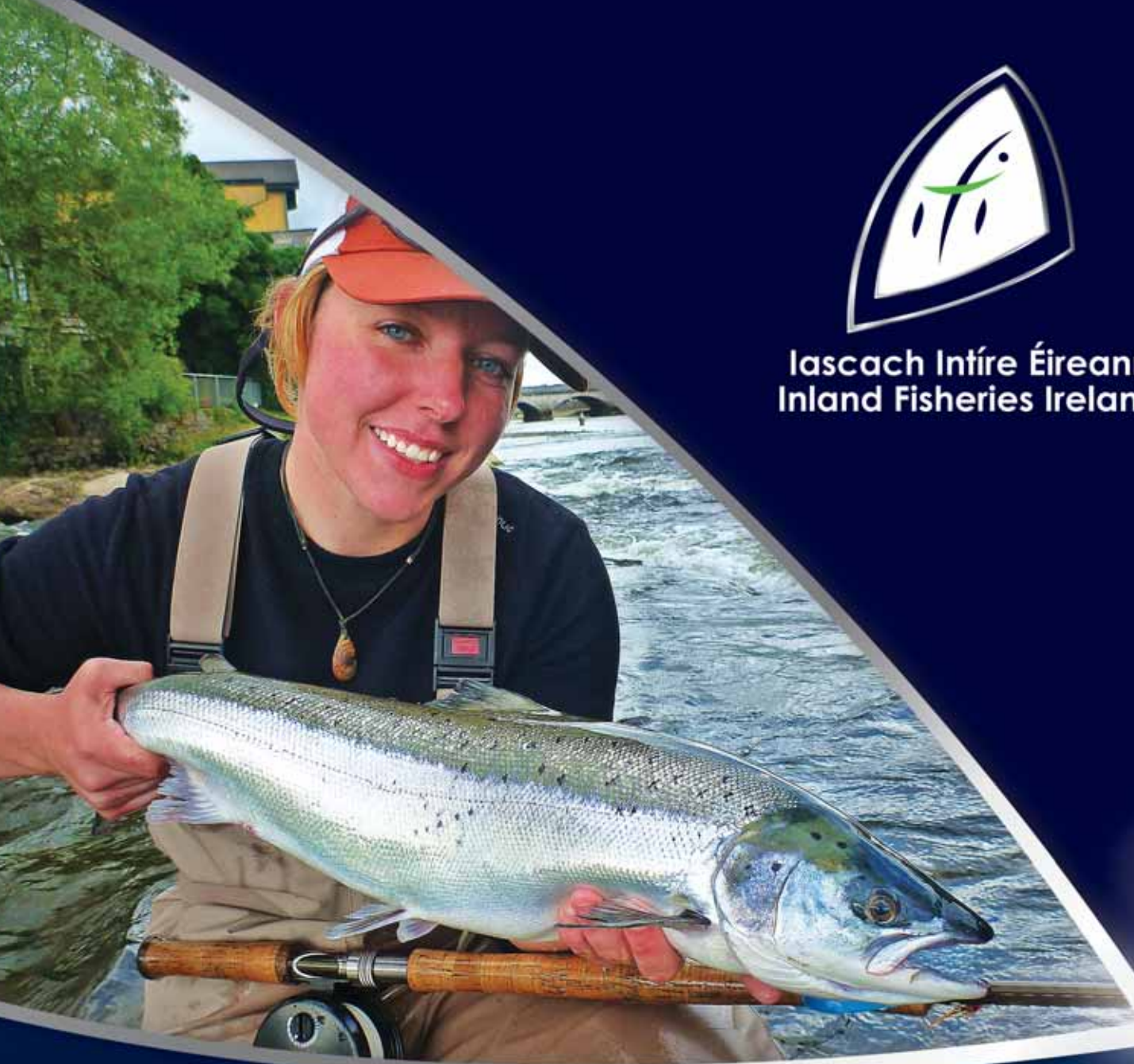
Enhanced feeding opportunities are a major factor in determining the benefit of trout migration to the sea and sea trout are dependent on these keystone prey species (sand eel and sprat), as are many other marine fish and bird species. The study demonstrated that the marine habitat and ecosystems are strongly structured. The combinations of current, depth, seasonal fronts, temperature and salt content within this marine environment appear to influence productivity and growth opportunity for sea trout.

- Various models (e.g. hydrodynamic (marine), freshwater production, growth and riverine population dynamic models) were developed over the course of the CSTP project which will contribute to enhancing the decision making framework for managers of sea trout in both the freshwater and marine environments. These will be particularly important in contributing to understanding the potential impact of climate change for sea trout and other species.

Dr Cathal Gallagher, Head of Research at Inland Fisheries Ireland said: "This is a ground-breaking multi-agency partnership investigation which aims to fill some of the information gaps around sea trout conservation."



Iascach Intíre Éireann  
Inland Fisheries Ireland



## The Moy Fishery

The Moy Fishery is one of Ireland's premier salmon fisheries, situated on the lower reaches of the River Moy and running through the town of Ballina, the Salmon Capital of Ireland.

The Fishery's large fly-fishing beats are highly sought after by anglers from all over the world.

**Contact:** The Moy Fishery, Ardnaree House, Abbey Street, Ballina, Co. Mayo.  
**Telephone** +353 (0)96 21332 **or email:** [moyfishery@fisheriesireland.ie](mailto:moyfishery@fisheriesireland.ie).



## Landowners invited to tackle the impact of ash dieback

**L**andowners across Northern Ireland have the opportunity to put down roots in preparation for the potential impact of ash dieback and other tree disease.

The offer of subsidised trees comes from conservation charity the Woodland Trust.



The 'Targeting Tree Disease' packs each contain 45 trees and come with advice on planting. The mix of native species is specifically intended to be planted in landscapes where ash trees could be lost in years to come. The first finding of ash dieback in Northern Ireland was in November 2012; by December 2016 infected ash trees had been identified at a total of 176 sites (containing recently planted ash).

Gregor Fulton, the Trust's operations manager, said: "Sturdy hedgerows and small woodland blocks are part and parcel of the Northern Ireland landscape. They provide a crucial habitat for wildlife, and shelter and shade for livestock. Ash is the most common tree in our Northern Ireland hedgerows, and – with the ever increasing threat of tree disease and pests – we definitely need to think ahead. With collective efforts, we want to create resilient wooded landscapes, ideally containing a mix of trees of different species, and of different ages."

Each pack contains a mix of 45 broadleaf trees (one to two-year-old saplings) including oak, wild cherry, silver birch and more; protective tubes; and stakes. The Trust will contribute more than half the cost, leaving the landowner to pay only £60.

So far, across the UK, over 400 packs have been taken up by members of the public. The charity aims to plant 64 million trees by 2025 and all its trees are grown from seed sourced in the UK and Ireland.

To order a pack, or find out more about the Woodland Trust's other tree planting schemes, visit

[www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant)

The Woodland Trust is also appealing for members of the public to play a part by being vigilant and reporting any symptoms of tree disease to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. A web-based service called 'TreeCheck', [www.treecheck.net](http://www.treecheck.net), makes it easy for people throughout Ireland to report details of suspected diseased trees. For more information, telephone the Department on 0300 200 7847 or email [planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk)

*(Left) Ash dieback (photo courtesy of Forestry Commission)*

## New record fish reported by Irish Specimen Fish Committee

**T**he Irish Specimen Fish Committee has ratified a new Irish record fish. Wexford angler Dean Quigley has broken the Smooth Hound record which had been established as recently as 2015. The new record fish, weighing 11.27 kg, was caught on the 10th of June at Kilmore, Co. Wexford.

The announcement was made in the Irish Specimen Fish Committee report 2016 which just been released. The Irish Specimen Fish Committee, which is supported by Inland Fisheries Ireland, is an independent voluntary body which verifies and records the capture of large fish caught on rod by anglers in freshwater and marine waters.

As well as the new record fish, detailed information on 485 specimen fish (large fish) taken by anglers from venues throughout Ireland in 2016, comprising 41 different species, is presented in the report. The main species were Smooth hound (17%), spurdog (15%) and Carp (10% of total). In total, 28 different marine species (including Bass, Common Skate, Gilthead Bream, various species of Mullet, several species of ray, etc) were taken by sea anglers, and freshwater specimens accounted for the remainder. All fish were caught, weighed, measured and released.

The Irish Specimen Fish Committee report is available on the ISFC website [www.irish-trophy-fish.com](http://www.irish-trophy-fish.com) or from the Inland Fisheries Ireland website [www.fisheriesireland.ie/](http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/)



*Dean Quigley with his new Irish record Smooth-hound.*



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## PORTLOUGHAN SHOOT IN COUNTRY DOWN WINS PURDEY GOLD AWARD

**D**avid Sandford's Portloughan Shoot in County Down, has won the coveted Gold Award in the 2016 Purdey Awards.

David's win was announced at a ceremony held in London gun and rifle maker James Purdey & Sons' famous Long Room. At the presentations, the Duke of Wellington, Chairman of the Awards judging panel, announced the 2016 winners of Purdey's annual competition to find the UK's most outstanding game and conservation projects.

Presenting the awards, countryside broadcaster and TV personality Julia Bradbury, said: 'The Gold and Silver Award winners this year both go to exemplary and successful grey partridge restoration projects, the Gold in Co Down and the Silver in Hampshire, and in both cases led from the front by their owners' clear vision, strong leadership, and first class keeping. They show what a well-run shoot can do to preserve and develop nature and wildlife', said Richard Purdey, who has run the Awards since 1999, 'They also display great leadership and demonstrate what the shooting and farming communities can achieve by working together.'

David Sandford, owner of the Portloughan Shoot in County Down, was presented with the 2016 Purdey Gold Award trophy and £5,000, in recognition of his exceptional vision and leadership in successfully re-establishing a sustainable population of wild grey partridge on 2,000 acres of farmland in County Down, where none had existed for decades.

Mr. Sandford achieved his ambition to reintroduce wild grey partridge by persuading 21 neighbouring farmers to join him in working together under Northern Ireland's Countryside Management Scheme. This allowed wild bird cover, rough grass margins and 12-15cm high over-wintered stubbles, lapwing fallow plots, beetle banks and wide arable headlands sown with 'grey partridge' seed mix, in all providing a total area of 2000 acres of what was formerly just grassland bordering Strangford Lough, with the necessary mix of interconnecting arable strips to provide the right habitat to support wild greys. Once this was established, Mr Sandford was able to introduce the grey partridges by importing family units of indigenous Irish brood stock, having secured a cross border agreement from the Irish Grey Partridge Trust in Co Offaly in 2014. Four coveys were released in 2015 and again in 2016, and the controlled breeding programme is designed to continue for another 4 years. None will be shot until an annual shoot-able surplus is regularly achieved.

### **Portloughan Shoot's ambitious project impresses Judges**

The Purdey Awards judges were not only impressed by Mr. Sandford's shoot, but also by his success in leading and coordinating such an ambitious project as the restoration of wild grey partridge to Northern Ireland. By providing appropriate habitats Mr. Sandford is not only enabling their return, but his shoot's conservation work is enriching Northern Ireland's wildlife and natural biodiversity.

Purdey Silver Award and £3,000 went to Richard Wills, owner of the Portway Estate at Longparish, Hampshire, where an ambitious wild grey partridge restoration project has been in full swing for eight years alongside his well established and very highly regarded wild pheasant and red-leg partridge shoot. Richard Wills' aim is to achieve a sustainable, shoot-able surplus and with a spring count of 65 pairs of wild greys, from one pair in 2008, Mr Wills believes he is now on the cusp of achieving his ambition. The Purdey judges noted the excellent habitat creation in cooperation with a productive and well managed arable farm, sound predator control, wildlife and biodiversity benefits, and biennial visits by up to 150 schoolchildren under the Countryside for Education charity. Portway exemplifies the aims of the Purdey Awards which is to show to a wider public how shooting begets

conservation and benefits the biodiversity of the countryside.

Bronze Award and £2,000 was awarded to Kelly Partridge Hicks, who has managed and developed an exemplary conservation driven commercial shoot with her husband Stephen. They added a further 350 acres in 2003, and by bringing in neighbouring landowners the shoot is now run over 2,000 acres, which can comfortably accommodate 25 shoot days with up to 250 bird bags, the revenue from which helps to fund several outstanding conservation projects. Suffolk Wildlife Trust recently bought a 200 acre neighbouring farm to Little Haugh, and its chairman says he looks forward to working together with the Partridge-Hicks to inspire other landowners to create a living landscape in which crops, wildlife, and game shooting, can all thrive alongside each other.

The Panel of Judges is chaired by the Duke of Wellington and the Awards competition run by Richard Purdey, in close cooperation with The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust. Members of the judging panel are; The Duchess of Devonshire, David Clark, Head Keeper at Sandringham, William Garfit, author, artist, and former Laurent-Perrier Awards winner, Tim Furbank, specialist seedsman and adviser on cover crops, Jonathan Kennedy of CKD Kennedy Macpherson, Charles Nodder, PRO National Gamekeepers Organisation, Jonathan Young, Editor of The Field, Marcus Janssen, Editor of Fieldsports Magazine, Fiona Wells, Ex FWAG Adviser and Environmental Consultant based in East Anglia, Professor Caroline Tisdall, Director of the CA, Bertie Hoskyns Abrahall, Landed Estates Partner at Withers, Jonathan Irby, Head of Sales at James Purdey & Sons, Roddy Richmond-Watson, director of West London Shooting School, and Scottish judges Malcolm Innes and Hamish Macdonald Lockhart. (Photo courtesy of Purdey).



David Sandford's Portloughan Shoot won the Purdey Gold Award 2016



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## Loughs Agency introduces new electronic licence system

**The Loughs Agency have introduced an on-line rod licensing system making it easier for the angler to purchase a licence.**

**From the 2017 season onward, angling licences for the Foyle and Carlingford areas will be issued electronically.**

Loughs Agency Chief Executive, John Pollock said: "Since the 1950s anglers have been purchasing their fishing licences for the season at Loughs Agency offices and through a network of distributors. Whilst this service will continue to be provided through tackle shops, it will no longer be a paper process. Licences can also be purchased on-line at home, which is great for overseas anglers who can buy before they travel."

The new system will keep the Loughs Agency in line with the two other rod licensing bodies, Inland Fisheries Ireland and Inland Fisheries Group who have recently moved to an electronic system. Angling Manager Lionel Knobbs said: "Globally, angling authorities are moving towards electronic systems. We have looked at electronic licensing systems in England, America, Canada, New Zealand and developed an on-line platform that meets the needs of angler in the modern world."

John McCartney, Director of Conservation and Protection said: "This new system makes it easy for the angler to make their catch return. Traditionally anglers would have to complete a table on the back of the licence, recording fishing effort and catches and these would then be manually entered on a database. The new system enables the angler to record these easily throughout the season and ensures that the Agency gets the data we need to manage the fishery effectively in a consistent format. The new system also means that Loughs Agency protection staff can carry

out licence checks more efficiently as they will have access to the secure database along the river bank."

Oliver McGauley from the Ulster Coarse Fishing Federation said: "I attended an excellent presentation promoting their new eLicencing system and in my opinion the system has a lot of benefits including the fact a licence and tags can be acquired without an angler leaving his home/place of business and catch returns can also be recorded on line." Ulster Angling Federation also support the new system saying: "We believe the new eLicencing system will make it easier for many anglers to obtain a licence. In addition, making an angling return has become simpler." Loughs Agency have also been consulting with local angling clubs and associations as part of a series of annual meetings and discussions regarding the new e-licence system have been very positive.

The system has 3 steps: firstly, anglers register and obtain their life-long angler number. Secondly, anglers purchase their licence and a confirmation email will be sent automatically. Finally, anglers can complete their catch returns throughout the season. Thousands of anglers have already successfully registered on the system with nearly 70% choosing to register and purchase their licence at home. However, if the angler prefers they can still purchase their licence at one of over 20 distributors in counties Armagh, Down, Louth, Fermanagh, Tyrone, Donegal and Londonderry.

For more information visit [www.loughs-agency.org](http://www.loughs-agency.org) or go directly to the elicence website <https://elicense.loughs-agency.org>.

## Ireland's rivers are fragmented with significant impact on fish populations

**Ireland's rivers are too fragmented due to human activity according to Inland Fisheries Ireland at the launch of new European project called AMBER which aims to restore river connectivity.**

The project, which stands for Adaptive Management of Barriers in European Rivers, seeks to raise awareness of the problems posed by stream fragmentation, the pressures on freshwater ecosystems and the need for innovative solutions to restore river connectivity. All major rivers across Europe are disconnected from the sea to varying degrees as a result of barriers, with negative impact on many fish species.

A survey on the River Nore by Inland Fisheries Ireland found 500 instream structures currently in place. While not all of these structures are barriers to fish passage, the number indicates the extent of human activity on Irish rivers. Man-made barriers on rivers, such as dams or weirs, can delay or block the migrations of some of Ireland's iconic migratory fish such as the Atlantic Salmon or European Eel.

AMBER, which is a €6.2 million Euro multi-disciplinary research project, will see 19 partners from 11 countries, including Ireland,



Dr Jimmy King (Senior Research Officer, IFI), Paul McLoone (Research Officer, IFI), Dr Cathal Gallagher (Head of Research and Development, IFI), Alan Cullagh (Inspector, IFI) and Dr James Barry (AMBER project, IFI).

combine citizen science and cutting-edge technology to map the distribution of barriers and assess their effects on freshwater organisms. It will work with hydroelectric companies, water providers, NGOs, anglers and local authorities to restore river connectivity.



## Introducing a **NEW** suite of Apps and Websites



**uFish Ireland** is a **FREE** Loughs Agency app and dedicated website for the Angler with up-to-date information of game, coarse and sea angling in Foyle and Carlingford.

**[www.ufishireland.org](http://www.ufishireland.org)**



**WaterWatch** is a **FREE** app which enables the public to report illegal fishing and water pollution within the Loughs Agency areas of Foyle and Carlingford.



**From the 2017 season**, anglers will be able to purchase their rod licence on-line using this dedicated website.

**<https://ellicence.loughs-agency.org>**

**[www.loughs-agency.org](http://www.loughs-agency.org)**



## FISHERIES PROTECTION

**Inland Fisheries Ireland spent 188,404 person hours and carried out 31,180 patrols in 2016 to protect the fisheries resource, it was announced at the launch of the Inland Fisheries Ireland Protection Review. The review highlights the results of recent protection work of the fisheries resource, which contributes €836 million to the Irish economy every year.**

Inland Fisheries Ireland's programme saw fisheries officers patrol the entire resource which includes 74,000 kilometres of rivers and streams, 128,000 hectares of lakes and 5,500 kilometres of coastline in their attempts to apprehend those responsible for illegal fishing and environmental offences.

Some key findings from the Fisheries Protection 2016 Review include:

- 103 prosecution cases initiated for breaches of fisheries and environmental legislation, regarded as one of the most important tools in the prevention of illegal fishing activities in the long term.
- 1,487 items of illegal fishing equipment seized, including 301 illegal fishing nets which measured 14,782 metres in total, approximately the same distance it takes to travel from Leinster House on Kildare Street to Dublin Airport.
- 22,066 environmental inspections across a variety of sites including farms, industrial premises, wastewater plants, forestry sites, wind farms as well general inspections for pollutants in the natural habitat. Inspections were carried out by environmental officers with a view to mitigating against potential environmental incidents which could have a detrimental impact on fish populations and fish habitats.
- 36,979 inspections of recreational anglers carried out nationwide to ensure anglers were compliant with the fisheries acts, which aim to protect fish populations.

Sean Kyne TD, Minister with responsibility for Inland Fisheries, said: "Close to 200,000 man hours speaks for itself but I want to commend Inland Fisheries Ireland for the immense and dedicated efforts they have put into protecting our invaluable inland fisheries resource. The vast array of river, lake and coastal based habitats present huge logistical challenges for our front line protection staff and for Inland Fisheries Ireland Management. These challenges are being met by augmenting traditional patrol and protection methods with state-of-the-art surveillance technologies and new and innovative patrol methods in the ever



*State-of-the-art surveillance technologies and new and innovative patrol methods for protection work.*

changing environment in which services are delivered."

Dr Ciaran Byrne, CEO of Inland Fisheries Ireland said: "The role of Inland Fisheries Ireland is to act as steward of the inland fisheries resource and that role is crucial as we endeavour to protect and conserve Ireland's aquatic habitat and the wild, indigenous fish populations who live within it. Our fisheries and environmental officers worked relentlessly in 2016 to ensure the continued availability of this resource to communities nationwide for recreational and business opportunities.

The fisheries protection programme comprised planned day and night patrols, covert patrols and intelligence led surveillance operations and specifically targeted the fish species most at risk during particular seasons. The principle methods used for patrols were boats (1,151 patrols), kayaks (188 patrols) and personal water crafts (37 patrols) while land based patrols were carried out using quad bikes (84 patrols), bicycles (363 patrols) and by vehicles and foot (29,357 patrols). In addition to the use of traditional methods, fisheries officers used advanced surveillance equipment including night vision scopes, thermal imaging scopes and enhanced optical surveillance scopes to help them in their work.

For more information on Inland Fisheries Ireland and to view the Fisheries Protection Review, visit [www.fisheriesireland.ie](http://www.fisheriesireland.ie).

## Ludwig Willnegger FACE's new Secretary General

**The Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU is pleased to announce that Mr. Ludwig Willnegger has started his employment as new Secretary General of FACE.**

Mr. Willnegger holds a degree in agricultural sciences and law and has both Belgian and German citizenship. He obtained his hunting license in Bavaria at the age of 16 and grew up on a farm in a family with longstanding hunting traditions. He initially worked for two years for the European farmers' federation and later headed the representative office of

a large German retail group for another eight years.

Fluent in the three official languages of FACE, the new Secretary General combines a breadth of professional EU affairs and diverse hunting experience across Europe and we are excited to welcome him into FACE and begin this new chapter together for the future of European hunters.

In regards to his new role, Mr Willnegger said: "I am delighted to be joining FACE and would like to thank President Dr. Ebner and the Membership for this unique opportunity. As stewards of our

countryside and nature, hunters have a direct stake in safeguarding Europe's wildlife and biodiversity for future generations. Hunting is one of the expressions of Europe's cultural heritage.

"The future of hunting lies in strengthening the bond between man and nature, acting responsibly and implementing sustainable policies. To be part of this as FACE's Secretary General is a great prospect which I am keen to take forwards with the FACE Secretariat, working with its Members and other stakeholders to connect their expertise and experience."



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## German Shorthaired Pointer Bitch Makes History

**G**ramhey River Falcon (Holly) owned and bred by Kieran Fox makes history in achieving 38 green stars with 6 excellent gradings in Open Trials.

She has never been eliminated for running in, or failing to retrieve, in any of her trials and has won numerous working tests. Holly was also used for demonstration purposes at game fairs at Ballywalter and Shanes Castle.

Holly is Kieran's second Field Trial Champion and we hear that he's well on his way to making up his third champion as well.

Quite an achievement!



Kieran and his GSP Holly with some of their numerous awards.

## Pen Heaven Premieres the New IM PARKER Pen

**T**his online gift emporium, Pen Heaven, is delighted to announce the launch of Parker's rebranded (and bestselling) IM pen range.

Debuting the new design for the first time, Pen Heaven offer the full collection of the elegant IM pen, with its modern revamp bringing with it some new and unique textures in a plethora of colours.

Available in fountain, ballpoint and rollerball options, the re-engineered Parker IM further accentuates the pens sleek and clean form, featuring the iconic Parker arrow on the clip, the brand's logo on the band and a new cap design. The packaging has had a facelift too, with more prominence given to the brands Royal Warrant.

An undisputed bestseller thanks to its superb value and high-quality finish, Pen Heaven present both Core and Premium models, finished with either a classic gold or stylish chrome trim.

### Core Collection

The bestselling and original IM Core range offers a weighty all-metal design that won't break the bank. Featuring the timeless classic Black with gold trim, this collection screams style and is a must-have for any pen devotee. Available in a choice of 7 colours, including the new Espresso or Light Blue Grey (both with chrome trim), along with a White Chrome option and a stunning Brushed Metal with gold trim. Prices start from £15.90 with special edition gift sets also available.

### Premium Collection

One to impress, the IM Premium range features an all-metal construction producing a high-quality weight and feel. Its design caters for both right and left-handed writers, with its uniquely textured aluminium body making it stand out from the crowd – you can choose from a chiselled crosshatch pattern, an engraved diamond weave, or a unique jigsaw etch. 7 colours are available including Matt Black, Metallic Violet and Gun-metal Grey. Prices start from £28.

With all styles coming complete with a Parker presentation box and optional in-house engraving, the new IM range is a sure winner for 2017. [www.penheaven.co.uk](http://www.penheaven.co.uk)

## Stocking of Departmental Waters

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has stocked the following waters with takeable fish in January 2017:

9 January – Castlewellan, Brown Trout, 1,000

9 January – Killylane, Brown Trout, 1,000

10 January – Loughbrickland, Brown Trout, 1,000

10 January – Lough Ash, Brown Trout, 1,000

11 January – Stoneyford, Brown Trout, 1,000

11 January – Moorkough, Brown Trout, 1,000

12 January – Ballykeel, Brown Trout, 1,000

12 January – Lower South, Brown Trout, 1,000

13 January – Altnahinch, Rainbow Brown Trout, 1,000

16 January – Hillsborough, Rainbow Brown Trout, 1,000

17 January – Bellanaleck, Brown Trout, 1,000

18 January – Keenaghan, Brown Trout, 1,000

19 January – Meenameen, Brown Trout, 1,000

23 January – Brantry, Brown Trout, 1,000

24 January – White Lough, Rainbow Brown Trout, 1,000

Details on recent fish stocking can be found at: [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/fish-stocking-archive-January-June-2017](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/fish-stocking-archive-January-June-2017). Further information on all aspects of angling is available on: [www.nidirect.gov.uk/angling](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/angling)

# Retriever Working Tests Calendar 2017

Details Correct at the time of going to press

Date	Venue	Organisers	Contact	Telephone
1 April	Larchfield	Selection Test for Irish team for Scottish Game Fair	William Megaughan	07703463857
8 April	Ballydugan Estate	NIGF&SS	Philip Turner	028 9261 1845
15 April	Dobbs	Lab Club of NI	Daniel McKelvey	07714720055
17 April	Aughtentine, Fivemiletown	Fermanagh Gundog	Shauna McGroarty	07526527488
22 April	Shanes Castle. All entrants get a FREE ticket to the Game Fair at Shanes Castle	Prelim, Novice and Open Tests. UGRC – Selection test for Shanes & Birr Castle Int. Teams	Geoff Peoples Joe Johnston	02893342604 07886377306 07788 927014 028 8673 6432
29 April	Cleggan Lodge TBC	Moyola	R Kane	028 79468585
6 May	Drumcairn	Mid Ulster Gundog Association	Joe Johnston	07789927014/ 028 8673 6432
13 May	Rademon	UGL	Timmy woods	07860241617
20 May	Scarva house	NIGF&SS	Philip Turner	028 9261 1845
3 June	Shanes Castle	North Antrim Gundog Club	Stephen Simmonds	07740826877
10 June	Gilford	Craigavon Gundog Club	Noel Doran	028 3832 5272
17 June	Clandeboy. All entrants get a FREE Ticket to the Game Fair at Shanes Castle	Lab Club	Daniel Mc Kelvey	07714720055
24 June	Irish Game Fair Shanes Castle	FEEDWELL Preliminary & Novice Retriever Tests: RED Mills Spaniel Tests & Spaniel International	UGRC/ MUGA Geoff Peoples Joe Johnston	02893342604 07886377306 07788 927014 028 8673 6432
25 June	Irish Game Fair Shanes Castle	Feedwell International Retrievers team event / Open Test and Cocker Tests	R. McGregor	028 77729690
1 July	Glenarm	Ulster Select	Jim Buchanan	0774 5088266
22 July	Foymore Lodge	NAGC	Stephen Simmonds	07740826877
29 July	Scarva	NIGFSS	Philip Turner	028 9261 1845
5 August	Gosford	Craigavon Gundog Club	Noel Doran	028 3832 5272
12 August	TBC	URC	G Murdoch	07768670022
19 August	TBC	Fermanagh Gundog Club	Shauna McGroarty	07526527488
26 August	Irish Game & Country Fair Birr Castle	International Spaniel Team Event/ Spaniel Tests	Albert Titterington	028 44839167
27 August	Irish Game & Country Fair Birr	International team event/Novice/ Open Retriever.	Albert Titterington	028 44839167
26 August	TBC	NAGC	Stephen Simmonds	07740826877



# Barbour's Spring / Summer '17 Countrywear Collections

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Functionality and performance is at the heart of Barbour's Spring Summer '17 countrywear collections for men, women and children, designed especially for life in the outdoors.

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Lightweight, waterproof jackets in coated cotton provide protection against the elements while lighter knitwear provides the perfect pieces to layer up on chillier summer evenings. Whatever the weather, Barbour offers the very best in practical, functional clothing.

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# Countryside Alliance



## A New Logo

After nearly ten years with our current logo, Countryside Alliance is rebranding.

The Countryside Alliance works on a host of issues facing the countryside and the rural community and we want the way we look to more closely reflect the huge range of work and campaigning we undertake.

The new look emphasises the Alliance's aim to ensure a future for the countryside which both preserves its traditional values and promotes a thriving rural community and economy; a countryside sustainably managed and sustainably enjoyed; a countryside where rural communities have equal access to the facilities and services enjoyed in urban communities; a countryside where people can pursue their businesses, activities and lives in a society that appreciates and understands their way of life.

The current logo has become one of the most distinctive in the rural arena; but the time is right to build on that success and reach a wider audience both in the rural community and beyond it. Countryside Alliance Chief Executive, Tim Bonner, said: "We are committed to supporting people who hunt, shoot and fish – that won't change. This is about communicating the remarkable work we do to a much wider audience.

We are extremely grateful to Steve Edge who generously donated his and his agencies' time and expertise to create our new logo. Steve Edge, is one of Britain's foremost designers working for some of Britain's top brands including; Purdey, House of Garrard, and Fortnum and Mason to name but a few. Steve is a long-term supporter of the work of the Countryside Alliance and a committed angler, being one of the few fishermen to be hit by an iceberg when fishing. We have been delighted to work with him to develop the new Countryside Alliance brand logo – one that will increase our capacity to communicate in a digital age and stand us in good stead for many years to come.

Countryside Alliance Ireland while continuing to remain under the CA 'umbrella' will have a slightly customised logo, reflecting our incorporation with the Irish Game Protection Association and of course our name!

You will still see our 'old' logo for a while as we phase it out to use up existing stocks of stationery and membership cards.

## Ignorance is no Defence

One of the benefits of membership of Countryside Alliance Ireland is the information and advice we can offer our members on a variety of subjects.

One topic which is always tops the list is firearms legislation and the queries we receive cover all aspects; from initial applications to re-grants/applications and appeals if a certificate is under threat of refusal or revocation.

As much as we like to help and assist our members, it is vital that each firearm certificate holder is aware of and indeed adheres to the information and legislation which surrounds the issuing of a firearm certificate to them. Not only may this include the specified conditions for which a particular firearm is issued but also the legislation pertaining to the safe storage, transportation and use.

Northern Ireland and the Republic may share land borders but the firearms legislation varies greatly and anyone travelling to shoot between the two jurisdictions must adhere to the law of the land. Ignorance is no defence when it comes to firearms legislation and even the most unintentional of misdemeanours

can have serious, long lasting consequences for the firearm certificate holder concerned.

If you are unsure of any aspect of firearms legislation as it relates to you, do not hesitate to contact your issuing authority – they will be pleased to assist. More information can also be found on the relevant websites – [www.psnl.police.uk/firearms](http://www.psnl.police.uk/firearms) or [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie) (and search firearms licensing).

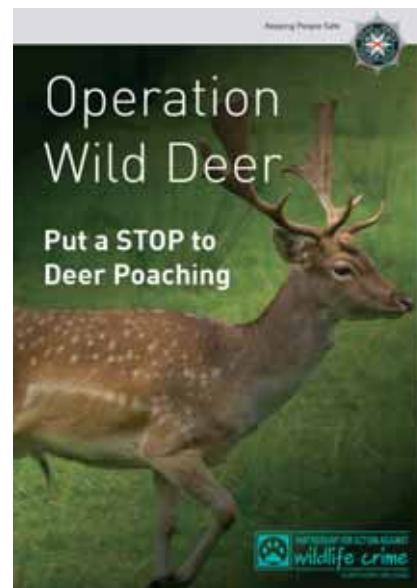
## Operation Wild Deer Targets Clough Valley

A programme to tackle the issue of deer poaching has been running in the Clough Valley area. Following concerns from members of the public, local PSNI officers have raised the profile of the Operation Wild Deer initiative to help address the issues in this area.

Representatives from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), including the Wildlife Liaison Officer, firearms branch and local police have joined forces with Countryside Alliance Ireland (CAI), the British Deer Society (BDS), British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC), Environmental Health, Forest Service NI, Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), Scottish Association for Country Sports (SACS) and Crimestoppers. These organisations continue to work together to combat illegal and on-going deer poaching issues and to ensure illegal meat is not sold into the food industry under the umbrella term Operation Wild Deer.

Emma Meredith, the PSNI's Wildlife Liaison Officer, explained: "Deer poaching can be barbaric and is against the law. It is the illegal or unauthorised hunting of deer. The Wildlife Order as amended protects deer in Northern Ireland and it is an offence to kill, injure or take deer (Red, Sika or Fallow) out of season, kill, injure or take any deer between the expiration of the first hour after sunset and the commencement of the last hour before sunrise, or entering any land without the consent of the owner, occupier or other lawful authority in search or pursuit of deer with the intention of killing, injuring or taking deer"

"It is encouraging so many organisations have come together to tackle illegal deer poaching through Operation Wild Deer. Partner organisations have collectively worked on deer poaching leaflets and posters which local police have been distributing throughout the Clough area. The posters and leaflets were designed so police officers and local organisations such as the partnership organisations can use these to help raise the profile of deer poaching and to encourage reporting in the hope to put a stop to deer poaching in targeted areas in Northern Ireland.



PSNI would encourage local people to support the Operation Wild Deer partnership and also be on the lookout for unusual vehicle movements at any time of the day or night. The evidence usually left behind is deer heads, legs or grallochs (stomach and intestines) all of which we would ask is reported to your local PSNI station.

Supt Brian Kee the PSNI service lead for rural and wildlife crime stated "Police take wildlife crime seriously and on occasions wildlife crime is linked to other crimes such as rural crime. The success of Operation Wild Deer should not be underestimated and is a perfect example of local police working tirelessly with local organisations to stop crime in their area. Operation Wild Deer is a long term initiative and one that can be used elsewhere in Northern Ireland as and when required and areas of concern are identified"

Police are urging anyone with information, on deer poaching to contact the PSNI on 101 or anonymously to Crimestoppers 0800 555 111.

## Northern Ireland Politics

By the time you read this, who knows what will have happened following the snap election on 2 March and which party will hold the majority. Who will be First Minister? Will the parties be able to agree and actually commit to working together for the good of NI and its people?

Anything could happen given the recent rumblings and accusations being hurled between the parties at the very highest levels.

What has this got to do with 'us' you may ask? Everything! When we vote for our political representatives we are putting our trust in them to represent our views in Parliament, hopefully for the greater good. How will the despondent NI electorate vote? Will they change their party allegiance? Will they vote at all? We will just have to wait and see.

If the balance of power does undergo a seismic shift, the country sports community have reason to be fearful. The Alliance party has made no secret of their 'anti' stance and would use any new found power to try to bring in legislation to curtail our legitimate sporting activities. We cannot and must not let this happen.

CAI will be attending this year's Alliance Party Conference to reinforce the many positive aspects of country sports; their benefit to the economy, society and even the political divide!

Northern Ireland politics is like no other but we must continue to do our duty to safeguard the future of country sports for the generations to come.

## PSNI Firearms and Explosives Branch – Online Applications Launched!

As part of the Police Service of Northern Ireland's ongoing commitment to improving the service it provides to the firearm community, Firearms and Explosives Branch introduced a new online application process effective from Monday 16th January 2017.

Anyone applying for initial/re-grant and variation of a firearm certificate will now be able to complete the application form online. The application form can be accessed on both the PSNI and the NI Direct websites.

## Operation Wild Deer

### Put a STOP to deer poaching

- Do you know anyone involved in deer poaching?
- Have you been offered venison 'off the back of a lorry'?
- Is venison being sold illegally in your community?

If so, you might be purchasing **contaminated meat**.

Deer poaching is a **CRIMINAL OFFENCE**.

If you have any information about deer poaching or the illegal sale of venison please call the Police or as an alternative you can call **CRIMESTOPPERS** which is an independent charity, is not part of the police and you do not have to give any personal details.

Put a stop to  
**DEER POACHING**



In addition, detailed guidelines have been developed which can be accessed from the Firearms section of the PSNI website, together with the answers to some 'Frequently Asked Questions'.

The proposal is to continue the dual system for a period of six months ahead of any final decision to remove the paper option.

## Appointment of New Chairman for Countryside Alliance Ireland

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Barry O'Connell as Chairman of Countryside Alliance Ireland.

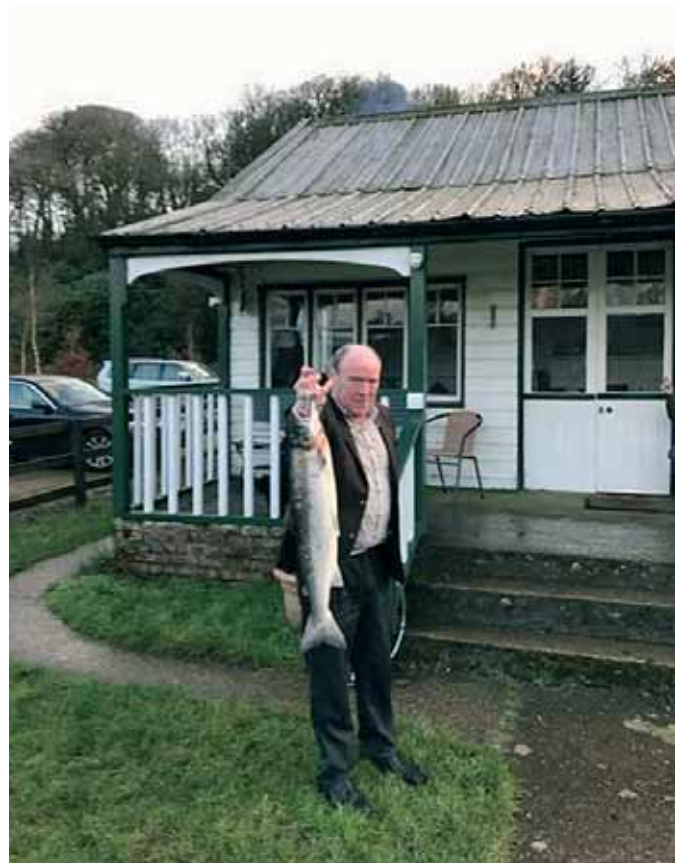
Barry is from a farming background and resides in rural County Cork. A keen fieldsports enthusiast, Barry is actively involved in hunting, shooting, deer stalking and fishing.

Since joining the board of Countryside Alliance 2013, Barry has made an outstanding contribution in areas of policy and membership growth and he has represented Countryside Alliance both nationally and internationally.

We look forward to working with Barry during his tenure as Chairman of our organisation.

**There's an exclusive interview with Barry later in the magazine.**

## First salmon of 2017 caught in Cork



The first of the year fell to Ronan O'Connor.

**T**he first salmon of 2017 has been caught in the Careysville Fishery on the Munster Blackwater on the opening day of the river, according to Inland Fisheries Ireland. Angler Ronan O'Connor caught a fresh run salmon on Wednesday, 1st of February in Fermoy, Co. Cork.

The salmon, which weighed 7lbs, was confirmed as the first salmon caught in 2017 by Inland Fisheries Ireland today. The fish was caught while the river was high with around two foot visibility at 4pm on Wednesday and O'Connor's success followed a morning of stormy weather which cleared slightly before he managed to catch the elusive salmon.



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## WILD DEER ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND SET RECORD STRAIGHT ON WILD DEER AND TB IN CATTLE

**Management Forum (IDMF), of which our Association is a member, recently issued a press release regarding wild deer in Ireland and setting the record straight in order to address the misinformation and confusion regarding wild deer and TB in cattle along with the conservation of wild deer in Ireland.**

The press release supported by IDMF members including the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Department of Agriculture confirmed:

- There is presently no conclusive evidence of a link between the strain of Bovine TB in cattle and the strain in the wild deer herd.
  - The testing methodology used in Co Wicklow for testing TB levels in wild deer was far more detailed than that used for livestock so levels cannot be compared directly.
  - Of 103 deer culled exclusively on farms where TB was already present in livestock in a small area of East Wicklow, 5 carcasses or 4.85% of the total tested showed signs of TB that would have been likely (but unproven) to infect other animals they came into close contact with.
  - The IDMF recommended that in the interest of deer welfare a programme to reduce deer density should be designed and undertaken in the Calary area in Co Wicklow within the prescribed hunting seasons and measures.
  - Deer poaching or the illegal killing of deer is a key concern for the forum along with people and organisations in Ireland.
- It is important to note that the population of wild deer in Ireland



*Kerry Red Deer (Photo credit Peter O'Toole)*

or of any of its counties is currently unknown as are the trends in population. In particular there is no evidence at this time to support claims of a total population. While not independently verified, data produced by National Parks and Wildlife Service show over 31,000 wild deer were culled by licensed hunters in the period from September 1st 2015 to February 28th 2016, one third of this cull took place in Co Wicklow.

In response to a Dail question, the then Minister for Agriculture, Simon Coveney TD confirmed: "A detailed examination, similar to the Wicklow one, of 17 deer in North Sligo found no evidence of infection with TB." The Department of Agriculture also undertook testing of deer carcasses in Co Kerry and again found no evidence of TB infection. Both these areas have high levels of TB within livestock. Co Wicklow currently has the highest levels of TB infection in livestock nationally. Infected farms can suffer significant financial losses as a result of TB infection.

Deer like many of our wildlife species and even domestic pets, are susceptible to TB but at very low levels. Wild deer are a protected species under our Wildlife Acts and may only be culled under strict licence within designated hunting seasons from September 1st to February 28th during day light hours with the use of a specific firearm. Any suspected incidents of deer poaching should be reported to An Garda Síochána and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. See [www.wilddeerireland.com](http://www.wilddeerireland.com) for more information.

## Game Angling Seminar in Coleraine

**The Honourable The Irish Society Game Angling Seminar was held in January in the Lodge Hotel. It was well attended by members of angling clubs from the Lough Neagh/Lower Bann catchment and also the Foyle catchment area.**

Speakers from DAERA, Loughs Agency and the Atlantic Salmon Trust gave an up to date overview of game angling issues in the region and further afield. These included Seamus Connor, Chief Fisheries Officer, DAERA Inland Fisheries; Dr Richard Kennedy, AFBI Bushmills; John McCartney, Director of Conservation & Protection, Loughs Agency; Professor Ken Whelan, Director of Research, Atlantic Salmon Trust; Gary Lavery, Angling NI Active Clubs Co-ordinator; Mark Patterson APGAL on the Hatchery in the Classroom project.

Edward Montgomery, The Honourable The Irish Society, said: "All the speakers gave a very detailed account of the issues and challenges affecting fishing today in our rivers and Loughs. We are delighted to have reintroduced our angling seminar after an absence of some years and hope that fishermen across Northern Ireland will have found it thought provoking and useful. My particular thanks go to our excellent speakers for giving up their time to come and speak to us."



*Speakers pictured at the Game Angling Seminar were Doug Barrow, Roger Chadwick, and Edward Montgomery, Irish Society (seated); John McCartney, Loughs Agency director of conservation and protection, Dr Richard Kennedy, AFBI Bushmills Salmon Station, Gary Lavery, Angling NI Active Clubs Co-ordinator, Seamus Connor, DAERA Inland Fisheries Chief Fisheries Officer, and Professor Ken Whelan, Director of Research Atlantic Salmon Trust.*





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## The Honourable The Irish Society

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Our team of private water bailiffs patrols the river daily for the good of everyone, and

all our angling income is reinvested into protecting, enhancing and managing the fisheries.

Carnroe saw 478 salmon taken and safely released alive in 2016, a 36% increase on the previous year and against a backdrop of a hugely improved run of salmon in the river, almost 16,000 in all. This is a most encouraging sign for the future.

Lower Bann private salmon angling beats with availability for season and day rods are:

Carnroe (pictured), Culiff Rock, Movanager and Portna. Register your interest with us NOW before syndicates are fully formed for the season.

Game and Coarse permits from as little as £10 per day are available for other parts

of the Lower Bann, including the beautiful Estuary.

Day rods are also available on the following rivers: Agivey, Macosquin, Ballymoney, Clady, Moyola, Roe, Faughan, Ballinderry, Dennett, Derg.

Salmon angling on the Lower Bann opens from 1st May, and will be 'Catch & Release' only, in order to help preserve fish stocks. Fly, Spinning (no trebles, and barbless hooks only), prawn and shrimp methods all permitted. Prices remain unchanged from last season.

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**For more information contact:** [theirishsociety@btconnect.com](mailto:theirishsociety@btconnect.com) or on 028 7034 4796

**By post:** 54 Castleroe Road, Coleraine, Co Londonderry BT51 3RL

**Or visit our comprehensive website at:** [www.honourableirishsociety.org.uk](http://www.honourableirishsociety.org.uk)



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**Who said pouched food isn't tasty, healthy and flavoursome? Real Turmat is low in weight and high in flavour!**

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Sourced and manufactured in Norway, the brand's high-quality, freeze-dried expedition meals promise to deliver on both taste and nutrition. For over 30-years, Real Turmat has perfected its closely guarded freeze-drying process to capture all the taste, texture and aroma of its locally sourced ingredients. Other dehydrated food brands buy in ready freeze-dried ingredients from numerous suppliers, then blend them together to produce the end product. This isn't the case for Real Turmat. Every recipe is prepared at their Norwegian base and the company harvests ingredients at the peak of the season. The cod they use is caught in winter when the fish journeys from the Barent Sea to the Norwegian coast, the vegetables and berries are harvested in the autumn when they're at their best, and only the finest quality meat is used.

With Real Turmat, you can choose from a large range of flavours, from Sweet and Sour Pork and tasty Chicken Tikka Masala, to hearty Cod and Curry Sauce – you'll never be bored of eating the same old meals. Specially developed to provide a balanced source of protein, carbohydrate and fats, each Real Turmat recipe has been designed to fuel outdoor adventures and the calorie content varies between 250kcal and 650kcal so users can tailor their intake to meet the energy requirements for any outdoor adventure.

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Pack light with a big appetite while out in the great outdoors with Real Turmat. Find out more at [www.drytech.no](http://www.drytech.no) or contact [sales@rosker.co.uk](mailto:sales@rosker.co.uk) for stockist information.



*High-quality, freeze-dried expedition meals in a handy pouch.*



*Taste, texture and aroma of locally sourced ingredients.*

## Sea trout carry significantly higher levels of sea lice infestation closer to marine salmon farms.

**The research revealed that sea trout captured closer to salmon farms had significantly higher levels of lice infestation and were found to be of reduced weight. Sea trout are known to remain for extended periods in near-coastal waters where the majority of salmon farms are located. This fish is therefore particularly vulnerable to sea lice impact, having the potential to encounter lice of farm origin throughout much of its marine life.**

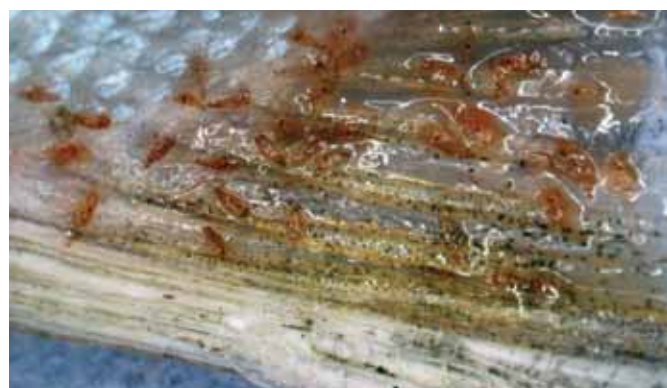
Researchers from Inland Fisheries Ireland and Argyll Fisheries Trust (Scotland) found that examined sea lice levels over 25 years from more than 20,000 sea trout. The sea trout were sampled from 94 separate river and lake systems in Ireland and Scotland at varying distances from salmon farms.

The effect of the increased lice infestation was most evident in years of less rainfall, when a sea trout of average length (180mm) caught within 10 kilometres of a farm could weigh up to 10g less than fish of similar length caught more than 40 kilometres from a farm. The study covered the entire coasts of West Ireland and Scotland and accounted for variability in temperature and rainfall.

The research article entitled 'Aquaculture and environmental drivers of salmon lice infestation and body condition in sea trout' was authored by Dr. Samuel Shephard and Dr. Paddy Gargan of Inland Fisheries Ireland alongside Craig MacIntyre of the Argyll Fisheries Trust. It was published in the international journal *Aquaculture Environment Interactions* in October.

Studies have shown that the impact of sea lice in farmed areas on sea trout has been substantial with increased mortality, reduced body condition and a changed migratory behavior reported. Heavily iced sea trout return to freshwater prematurely to rid themselves of lice and exhibit very poor marine growth and greatly reduced marine survival. In fact, the most heavily lice infested sea trout die at sea. Rod catch data from 18 Connemara fisheries from 1974 to 2014 show a collapse in rod catch over the 1989/1990 period (see Figure 1). This collapse has been linked to lice infestation from salmon farms while recovery of sea trout rod catches to pre collapse levels has not occurred.

Sea trout offer significant angling value while traditionally the species was abundant on the west coast of Ireland. Angling is worth €836 million to the Irish economy every year and supports upwards of 11,000 jobs, often in rural and peripheral communities. Inland Fisheries Ireland carries out research across fish populations, their habitats and the ecosystem with a view to informing the protection and conservation of this precious resource. Fisheries Ireland, visit [www.fisheriesireland.ie](http://www.fisheriesireland.ie)



*The extent of lice present on a pelvic fin.*

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# Building Bridges



*The National Association of Regional Game Councils has fallen out with many institutions over the years. As an Association, we have a desire to build bridges and meet new and old friends/associates and to strengthen our Association and its aims.*

*With that in mind, we requested a meeting with the Firearms Policy Unit of An Garda Síochána and we had a very successful meeting out of which was born the current accord.*

*As National Chairman, I will endeavour to meet as many*

*Government Departments and Agencies as possible and indeed these meetings have already started. We will also meet with other*

*like-minded sporting bodies in order to benefit our sport and ensure our members needs are best catered for.*

**Michael Fenlon**  
**National Chairman**  
**NARGC**

Following recent talks at Garda Headquarters, the NARGC and An Garda Síochána have brokered a new accord that will pave the way for NARGC Members to overcome their Firearms Licensing issues in a speedy and resolute manner that will bring clarity to any difficulty or issue encountered in the process of acquiring or renewing or substituting a firearm license.

In the past, many issues arose between the Gardai and the NARGC which eventually led to a complete breakdown in communication between the two bodies. This new development is intended to restore and foster a good working relationship that is in the interests of both organisations.

From time to time, NARGC Members cite various difficulties encountered at local level in the process of dealing with An Garda Síochána in the matter of firearms licensing. This has caused much frustration and in some cases even hardship to individual members, the accumulative consequence of which is often resentment. This is neither desirable nor helpful.

The NARGC has resolved that the National Fund Administrator, Mr. Chris Gavican, will be the Liaison Officer between the NARGC and the Gardai and so any Fund Member who has an issue or complaint and having fully exhausted local enquiries obviously, should contact Chris, who will issue a Questionnaire to ascertain the background to the complaint and will, thereafter, follow up on matters directly with Garda Headquarters to achieve an outcome. This new arrangement takes immediate effect.

When engaging with Garda Stations locally, it is never really satisfactory to simply push your papers through the letter box of a Garda Station in hopeful expectation that everything is in order. It is much more beneficial to directly engage with an Officer who may browse through the paperwork and highlight any evident shortcomings or documentary requirements. Always remember the name of the Garda you have dealt with and if you do not recognise him/her by name, ask for that information. The granting of a firearms license is serious business and firearms licenses are not issued willy nilly. Therefore the application process is thorough and of course you must meet the criteria set down in order to acquire a firearms license. By way of a reminder, these criteria are:-

- a) You must have a good **REASON** for having the firearm
- b) You must not pose a **DANGER** to public safety, security or the peace
- c) You must have **SECURE STORAGE**
- d) You must not be a **DISSENTLED PERSON**

It is worth spending a moment to consider these elements and what they mean.

By 'good reason for having the firearm' is meant that you must have a specific purpose for it, i.e. rough shooting, sporting shooting (shooting clays) or, if it's a rifle, rabbit shooting or fox shooting or deer stalking, depending on the calibre.

By 'not posing a danger to public safety, security or the peace' is meant that you must be a person of good character, sound mind and generally considered as somebody who behaves with the constraints of normal behaviour.



Pictured following their meeting at Garda Headquarters are (l. to r.) Mr. Chris Gavican, NARGC National Administrator, Mr. Matt Nyland, Garda Chief Superintendent, Mr. Paul Greene, Garda Inspector and Mr. Michael Fenlon, National Chairman NARGC. Pictured below is Mr John Butler, NARGC Exec. Member, who also engaged in the talks.



Having ‘*proper secure storage*’ means that, depending on the number of firearms you hold or intend to hold at any one address and also being cognisant of other firearms held at that address by a parent or other siblings, you must be in accord with Statutory Instrument 307 of 2009 which states:-

NUMBER OF FIREARMS (Kept in the same place)		STORAGE REQUIREMENTS
1 Shotgun (i.e. non Restricted type)	-	No safe required but disassemble the shotgun and affix a trigger lock.
Up to 3 firearms (or 1 Restricted Firearm)	-	A Gun Safe to standard BS.7558 is required.
Up to an incl. 5 firearms (or 2 Restricted Firearms)	-	A Gun Safe to standard BS.7558 is required plus your house or the room where the gun safe is located or the Gun Safe itself must be alarmed.
6 firearms or more (or 3 Restricted Firearms)	-	A Gun Safe to standard BS.7558 plus a monitored Alarm System is required.

Section 8 of the Firearms Act 1925 (as amended) covers the area of disqualification. This Section sets out the categories of persons who are ‘*disqualified to hold a firearms certificate*’. That is to say persons who may not under any circumstances be granted a firearms certificate.

These include persons who:-

- are under the age of sixteen years
- are of intemperate habits
- persons who are of unsound mind
- persons who have been convicted for various offences and who have received custodial sentences within the previous seven (7) years and
- persons who are under the supervision of the Gardai or persons who are bound by a Court Order to keep the peace or to be of good behaviour, a condition of which is that such person will not have in his/her possession any firearm or ammunition.

The NARGC delegation also made reference to the delays and difficulties sometimes encountered when making a firearm substitution, especially when it relates to a ‘like for like’ firearm. The Gardai said they will look to simplify this process in the period ahead but equally stated that firearm substitutions cause something of a nightmare for the Gardai with some owners making multiple changes during the currency of a firearms certificate. One factor that would greatly help all concerned is to **avoid firearm substitutions near the expiry date of a licence**. In this regard we ask members not to apply to substitute during the last **3 months** of a firearms certificate, so as to ease the administrative burden. Wait until the new license issues and then apply to make the necessary amendments.

Finally, we remind you of the contact details for the National Fund Office which are thus:-

**Mr Chris Gavican,  
Brookside House,  
Ahanagh,  
Bornacoola,  
Co. Leitrim  
N41 D596**

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FAX: 071/9638429  
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Packed full of technology, the CXS+250 and CXS+300R head torches offer REAX™ auto-adjusting, light-sensing technology, which automatically adjusts the beam and brightness to suit your activity and Coleman's new KineSix™ technology offers a convenient hand-swipe interface meaning you'll be in control of the five different light brightness modes.

The advanced head torches also feature Coleman's innovative, new BatteryLock™ technology which signals an end to battery drain, corrosion and acid leak. A simple pull forward disconnects the battery from the headlamp, meaning that not only is your appliance safeguarded against premature power drain but the risk of it accidentally turning on in your pocket or pack is eliminated. To cope with the rigours of life, the new head torches also feature Coleman's new RUGGED construction,



CXS+250 LED Headtorch RRP: £29.99

polycarbonate lenses ensure the head torch is shatterproof and the over-moulded edges give extra protection against drops, as well as being jostled around inside your pack for days on end.

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[www.coleman.eu/uk/p-26644-cxs-250-led-head-torch.aspx](http://www.coleman.eu/uk/p-26644-cxs-250-led-head-torch.aspx)

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Judges: Spaniels Mr R Young (A) 2023 & Mr I. Wilson (A) 1781  
Judges: Retrievers Mr R Rankin (A) 11 & Mr E. Finn (A) 2259  
Mr B Lundy (Np) & S. McKelvey

**Irish Captain: William Megaughin**

**OPEN SPANIEL TEST (Meet Dobbies Garden Centre) 9.00am Entry fee £10.00**  
all dogs must be capable of competing at open test standards

**OPEN RETRIEVER TEST (Meet Dobbies Garden Centre) 12.00 noon Entry fee £10.00**  
all dogs must be capable of competing at open walked up test standards

**ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED ON OR BEFORE SAT 25TH MARCH 2017 by email or phone.**  
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**NO ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED ON THE DAY OR AFTER CLOSING DATE**

# MY FIRST EVER DRIVEN GAME SHOOT

*A short time ago my Grandfather, Ronnie Mack, purchased a new 20 bore Cogswell and Harrison shotgun for me. I was so pleased to have this new gun as it was a replacement for my 410 single barrel Webley and Scott. I had used the Cogswell and Harrison only once before at the farm of my Great Aunt at Lisburn, but my Grandfather had taken me first to clays and then roughshooting to make sure that my safety skills were absolutely perfect with the new gun.*

When Granddad told me he was taking me to a big driven pheasant shoot at Castle Dobbs, Carrickfergus, with the North Down and Mid Ulster shooting party on Monday 2 January, I was so excited at the prospect but also very nervous as to how I would perform. The night before the shoot I was buzzing with excitement and found it hard to sleep. I had selected all of the right clothing and boots in case of a very wet day.

When we arrived at the shoot, the weather was quite mild and the prospects were fine for a good dry day. I was introduced to Nigel Dobbs, the Estate owner and Alastair the Gamekeeper and all of the shooting party. We all then sat together and enjoyed a lovely Ulster fry breakfast prepared by Alastair and his team.

After breakfast and a gun safety talk, we boarded the shoot bus taking us to our pegs. On drive one, my Grandfather shot a high cock pheasant. My luck was not in, as I missed the first pheasants over me. Granddad advised me I may be snatching a bit and not following through the bird. It was probably due to my first sight of so many pheasants coming over me and the excitement of the occasion.

After the first three drives I began to settle. A very high cock pheasant came over the trees and I pulled through it and bang, it fell some 30 yards behind me. It was great to see a Springer Spaniel dash to collect the pheasant.

This gave me great confidence. The next two pheasants were hens which were also high over me. I did the same thing and pulled through them before firing. I shot both with no problem whatsoever. These were the first pheasants I had ever shot. Such excitement.

One other thing to mention. I was astounded to see so many well trained and well behaved dogs. On command, they ran out and retrieved many fallen birds. I had never seen dogs working like this before. It was such a treat to see this and also the way in which the beaters and pickers up went about their tasks so effectively. And just a mention of the shoot lunch - fabulous and all home cooked too!

Visiting Castle Dobbs was an unforgettable experience and I cannot wait to come to another shoot soon with the Mid Ulster and North Down shooting party.





# Enniskillen's 'Fishing Tackle and Bait' Business Hooks Anglers Worldwide

*Whether you live in the Enniskillen area or thousands of miles away - Fishing Tackle & Bait is a stunning angling supplies shop that's only seconds away!*

Many countrysports enthusiasts have done it. Perhaps we are on holiday and decide to take an hour away from the family holiday 'just to take a wee look around.'

Of course the 'better half' knows what has happened. You spotted an interesting tackle shop on the way through the town to your hotel destination or out sightseeing and well, fishing tackle devotees understand only too well what comes next. A lightening visit that's what.

And it is one of the best tackle shops that you have ever seen! You gaze in wonderment, you look at the sparkling new tackle, the accessories the clothing, the.....well you get the picture.

'Why can't there be something like that at home?' echoes round your head, as all too quickly the 'wee look' is over. Anyway, could you really get that new rod, reel, landing net or whatever into the suitcase unnoticed?

## *It's no ordinary business*

Well, folks — there is an answer and it's right here in Northern Ireland. It's an amazing business called Fishing Tackle and Bait and it is no ordinary business as we found out on a visit to Fishing Tackle & Bait in Enniskillen and spoke to the owner, David Burleigh.



Fishing Tackle & Bait - where it's all about customer choice in store and online.





Just some of the extensive range of rods.

David told us that while the shop itself had existed in Enniskillen for over 14 years, it was only relatively recently that the business had taken a huge leap forward and a massive change of direction.

David explained: “I took over the already successful business outlet in 2011 when I was just 21,” he told us, “but with the change in the way customers purchase goods online, my strategy to grow the business was based on expansion online via the Internet.



Everything you could possibly want for a successful fishing trip



A great selection of accessories is available.

### ***Huge range in-store and online***

Now while some may have thought, why change at all, David felt that offering a huge range of goods in store — coupled with an expanding market online — was what was required by today’s customer.

“We offer a choice — shop with us in person in Enniskillen, or for anyone who dropped in on a fleeting visit, or only knew us by reputation they can now get everything from the comfort of their armchairs along with our specialised help and advice.

### ***Worldwide reputation***

“Enniskillen is recognised worldwide as a heartland of fishing and I wanted to tap into that worldwide reputation online. We have thousands of products from dozens of top fishing equipment manufacturers including Daiwa, Shimano, Greys, Shakespeare, Sensas, MAP, Wychwood, Fox, Snowbee, Tubertini, Drennan, Rive and Preston Innovations. While our huge range is a massive attraction to people in the area or maybe further afield, I wanted to market it worldwide.”

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David explained: “Our new website has been developed as part of our ongoing investment into our online presence and



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# Obituary

## Tribute to Paddy O'Flaherty

*On the 27th of September 2016, the renowned Northern Ireland broadcaster and journalist Paddy O'Flaherty departed this world at the age of 73. The unexpected news left his devastated family, his colleagues and his many friends in complete shock.*

The death was announced by the BBC on "Good Morning Ulster" one of the many programmes for which Paddy reported. He presented television and radio news bulletins for the Corporation and reported on a variety of Radio Ulster programmes such as Evening Extra.

In paying tribute, Kathleen Carragher, Head of BBC News NI, said: "Mr O'Flaherty was comfortable reporting from a field, a river or a bike. His reports covered life in Northern Ireland, the highs and the lows, the people and the places and his skill brought the listener to the heart of every story."

Paddy was more than just a brilliant reporter and broadcaster, he was an accomplished musician, raconteur and angler. I first met him by a lakeside many years ago when he interviewed me for his Saturday morning broadcast on Radio Ulster's "Your Place and Mine."

Since then we have fished together often as members of the Media Angling Group.

Entertaining came easy to Paddy. His talent as a violinist/fiddle player shone at our musical sessions at Ti Burca. At first gently moving the bow across the strings an evocative slow air would lead into a couple of jigs and reels. The beat would slip easily into country and western or Cajun, followed seamlessly by the best jazz outside of New Orleans. He would be joined by his fellow journalist /musician Diarmaid Fleming on the accordion and other talented members of our group on their various instruments to produce the very best impromptu entertainment.

Paddy's storytelling and poetic



composition was unique. One evening after dinner and without notes, he recited a poem of seven or eight verses about his companions of the 'angle' and that day's experience on Lough Mask. It was rhyme-perfect and priceless. Paddy's recording of "The Coulin" was heard during his funeral Requiem Mass in St. Gerard's Church, Antrim Road Belfast. His memory will remain with us all.

From Derek Evans: Shock is hardly

the word strong enough on learning of the passing of Paddy O'Flaherty. I will never forget the moment. It was a beautiful morning on Mask as I set out for a day's fishing with Tom Ormond. The message read: 'Paddy O'Flaherty passed away peacefully during the night.' I was dumbfounded, lost for words.

I met Paddy about 15 years ago when a group from The Irish Times travelled to Lough Cowey to join the northern



hacks for their annual competition. Our friendship blossomed thereafter as the media circle travelled the length and breadth of Ireland, I can honestly say Paddy never missed an occasion and really looked forward to the adventures.

Last year (just two months before he died) he really showed his mettle in Burkes of Clonbur. For the evening music session, Paddy's fiddle playing left Yehudi Menuhin in his wake! His recitations were top notch.

At his funeral in St Gerard's Church, Antrim Road, the church was packed to capacity, a fitting tribute to this wonderful man. A brilliant angler, singer, journalist, musician and, above all, a great family man. May he rest in Peace.

#### **From Diarmaid Fleming:**

As a journalist, from the first time I had the privilege to work with Paddy O'Flaherty, I knew I was in the presence of one of the greats of our trade. Paddy was a true Irishman - a friend to those of all faiths, creeds and beliefs, and foe of none. His achievements were legendary, driven by his boundless energy, curiosity, knowledge, charm and wit -

but always in sincere modesty.

Paddy's voice was famous on the BBC in Northern Ireland - but largely unknown South of the border. Ireland was his home, his heart was in the North. During the darkest days of the Troubles, he was sent on the most difficult postings because of the respect in which he was held by all sides. In 2011, RTÉ listeners heard the brilliance of his story-telling in his documentary about his grandfather, Patrick Rooney, who drove a fire-engine from Dundalk to Belfast after the city was bombed by the Nazis on Easter Tuesday 1941, killing 1,000 people and leaving 100,000 homeless.

He hosted music shows, such as the long-running "Country Club," getting world-famous guests like Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash and Loretta Lynn to perform for Radio Ulster, and "Make Mine Country" for BBC TV. Angling featured regularly in his broadcasts, rod and line meant politics were abandoned, fishing a great bridge between the communities as recognised by Paddy. His mischievous wink and the twinkle in his eye sparkled in his journalism. - but wisdom was his great foundation.

Life took me away from the BBC to Moscow - but on my return to Ireland, it was in fishing and music we were to share time together rather than news. Sadly, our meeting on Lough Mask with our media group in 2016 was to be our last. My rods and the accordion were packed. Paddy, his fiddle and great friend Larry Nixon made the journey from Belfast by public transport. That evening Tí Burca in Clonbur was full as Galway had beaten Mayo in Gaelic football for the first time in years. The music flowed with Paddy on fiddle and two accordions competing with the noise of celebration. But when he took to song the revellers fell silent. In full voice Paddy was really at heart a man of the stage, a born performer and in his element. His recitation of WB Yeats' "Fiddler of Dooney" that night seems almost prophetic now, a poetic epitaph for Paddy himself - "And the merry love the fiddle and the merry love to dance." Lough Mask will not be the same without him - but it will have a new guardian spirit to watch over those who fish a place he loved. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam ceolmhar dílis.

**Compiled by Betty Hayes**



# EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH NEW CAI CHAIRMAN BARRY O'CONNELL

*Recently appointed Countryside Alliance Chairman Barry O'Connell talks about his work with CAI and reveals the challenges ahead for 'the only All-Ireland body representing country sport.'*

**What sort of farm were you brought up on - did country sports play an early part in your life?**

I was brought up on a mixed farm, dairy, beef, sheep and tillage (mainly grown for feed on the farm). As you can imagine this was a busy yard to grow up in, so my early years were fully occupied working on the farm and I didn't take up country sports in a serious enough way until I had access to transport to follow the hunt and go shooting.

**Recreationally, which country sport do you enjoy most at the moment?**

Depending on the time of the year and open seasons, I'm active in deer stalking, mainly on farm land for fallow and red deer. I also go rough shooting for pheasant, woodcock and the occasional duck.

My gundogs are German Wirehaired Pointers. I selected this breed as I feel they are a universal gundog that meet my needs; they hunt, point, retrieve game and blood trail on deer if required. In addition, they have good endurance to keep going all day and they are a loyal companion on any hunt.

I also enjoy following the local hunt. Our pack hunts on Sundays; my daughter rides her pony and I am a foot follower.

Once the hunting and shooting seasons close, then the fishing rods are

dusted down. I particularly enjoy trout angling on the River Blackwater on a summer evening. I normally get a few days on the lake each year and our club hold an annual lake competition. Even when the fishing is bad, it's still a great day! The lunch-time barbecue on an island shore is always great craic and makes it a real social event for the club. I have been fortunate enough to qualify to represent the club in the Munster Lakes competition at Lough Leane, which is a great education for a novice angler such as myself.

I also try to get a few evenings in August fishing off the rocks for mackerel and pollock; nothing tastes better than fresh mackerel fried over a Kelly kettle, overlooking the Atlantic in the late summer sunset.

**Please give examples of the work that you have been engaged with in CAI?**

I was nominated and appointed to the Board of Countryside Alliance Ireland by the general membership of the organisation, so I'm very much grass roots.

I gather the views and concerns from our members across the spectrum, including game shooters, field trialers, deer stalkers and both mounted and foot hunt packs. I represent these views and concerns at board level and they are discussed to ensure the correct strategy and subsequent action plans are

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implemented; including lobbying government agencies, departments and elected representatives.

I have also represented the organisation at meetings with An Garda Síochána regarding the implementation of 'Operation Bambi' to combat deer poaching.

My connection with the membership across many areas of country sports allows me to capture the concerns locally and because Countryside Alliance Ireland board members are directly engaged with government policy consultation panels and policy makers, I can provide prompt feedback and mobilise support as and when required.

**What are the challenges ahead for country sports generally, and specifically for CAI?**

The challenges for country sports and the rural way of life are greater now than at any time in the past. Many country sports people are lulled in to a false sense of security given the decline in the green movement, however the





John Clarke hands over to recently appointed CAI Chairman Barry O'Connell.

ideas they aspire to are still present and pronounced in government, albeit under the independent grouping.

The threat to fox hunting is ever present, shooting and fishing are only one step away from the focus, and farming is also in the field of vision of our opponents.

Fortunately our destiny is in our own hands if we work together.

Neighbouring gun clubs need to work together for the benefit of each other, gun clubs and hunt clubs need to support each other and we all need to work with the farmers and respect their property and their livelihoods.

**Do you see changes required (in CAI policy or organisation etc) to meet future challenges?**

Change is an inevitable part of life and every organisation needs to be able to adapt to meet the needs of its membership, environment and political landscape.

Countryside Alliance Ireland is a very nimble and agile organisation that is well placed to meet any challenges ahead. Our CEO, Lyall Plant and his team are widely regarded and respected for their contribution in protecting

country sports both in Dáil Éireann and at Stormont. They are a very hard working team covering both the Lisburn office in the north and the Courtlough office in the south, this is working very well and I don't envisage any structural changes.

Our membership has grown significantly over the past year or so, thus we are currently recruiting a Development Officer to help with membership and operational support.

The main change I see coming down the road is political uncertainty; elections in the north and a minority government in the south. This will inevitably result in candidates targeting country sports to attract attention pre-election. However, these challenges are not new to CAI and we will meet them head on.

**Government legislation can and does impact on country sports - what role does CAI play?**

Countryside Alliance Ireland is the only All-Ireland body representing country sports. We are effective both north and south and have representatives or associates on all Government consultation panels. Lyall

is an excellent strategist and achieves a win win solution in many cases.

Countryside Alliance are also active via FACE on European regulations and have always been to the forefront on challenging any government bills affecting the rural way of life.

The one thing I'd encourage everyone to do, is to consider your contribution to protecting the sport you enjoy.

Countryside Alliance is not there just to provide insurance, we are representing you

and defending your interests against legislation change. Yes, we do provide the best and most competitive insurance packages to our members but we are much more than that.

Commercial companies may provide your hunt, syndicate or club with insurance but they don't represent your sport in defending legislative changes or lobbying government on your behalf. So perhaps it time to take a long term view.

**What personal goals have you for CAI and for country sports generally?**

My appointment to the board was via the membership, to represent the membership. Now that I have been elected as Chairman I will continue to do this, so personal goals don't come into it.

Every country sport enthusiast, farmer or rural resident I meet, would agree that we have an onus to protect the environment, landscape and rural way of life that we all so enjoy and try to ensure that it is protected for the next generation. If I can help the organisation fulfil its aims and objectives in doing this, then I will feel my contribution has been worthwhile.



# Grayling – The Lady of the Stream

*Simon Everett introduces the grayling, a beautifully coloured, sporting and obliging fish.*

Autumn is the time when the grayling come into their own, extending the river fly fishing season for the trout fly fisherman prepared to brave the cold

and falling leaves, for grayling inhabit many of the same waters as trout. The classic chalk streams are the iconic waters that hold these magnificent fish

in high numbers.

Once thought of as vermin, they are now, rightly, recognised as a sporting fish in their own right and for the trout fly fisherman they offer superb sport right through the winter for anyone prepared to brave the elements and cold water in the depths of winter. There aren't many fish that you can target with the fly when the ice is encrusting your rod rings, but the colourful grayling is one of them.

The distribution of grayling is quite widespread, from the West Country right through to the midlands of Scotland, and most waters in between. At times they shoal up and can be difficult to locate, at others they are more thinly spread and easier to find.

As a rough rule, if it is mild they will



Colourful grayling fins.



tend to be found in the faster parts of the river, when it is cold, they seem to prefer the deeper pools. However, even on the cooler days, if there is a hatch coming off, it is worth prospecting with a dry fly. For some reason grayling like the warmer end of the spectrum and the famous Red Tag is still a notable fly to use for grayling, it is distinctive being a peacock herl body, red hen hackle and the tail is bright red wool, that gives the fly its name.

### ***Grayling will rise freely at times***

Grayling don't require any specialist tackle and anyone who river fishes for trout is already suitably equipped. I prefer an 8ft or 8ft 6in rod rated for a #4 or #5 line, on bigger rivers. The British Record grayling weighed 4lb 5ozs and a 3lb fish is the fish of a lifetime, so you can safely fish light lines and it is an advantage to do so. Although grayling will rise freely at times, if they are grubbing about on the bottom then a fine leader and tippet will help you cut through the water column and get your weighted fly down in the taking zone.

If they are rising you can often spot a grayling rise by the bubble in the middle of the rings. Having an undershot mouth the grayling have to sit vertically in the water in order to sip down insects from the surface film, because they put their snout so close to the surface, they create a bubble as they engulf an insect on or very close to the surface.

A typical nymphing set up might consist of a 9ft leader finishing in a 3lb breaking strain tippet and having just one dropper about 2ft or 3ft above the point. I like to put a weighted fly, such as a gold bead hares ear, on the dropper, and a smaller, lighter, more mobile fly on the point.

In very fast water you need a heavier fly and put it on the point. Instead of cheating with one of the modern foam 'bite indicators', which is really a float, I mark my line with a permanent marker

Choice of fly can be down to personal preference.





in sections of about 4-inches, so it is patterned a bit like a zebra. This has two benefits, the first is I believe it helps to break the line up and disguise it, and secondly the sector striping helps to show any movement of the fly line and works well to indicate when a fish has taken. Other people dye their lines for similar reasons.

### ***What fly to choose?***

Choice of fly is very much personal preference; people do tend to have their favourites. For grayling I like bright colours incorporated into the fly, such as the reg tag, which can be tied as a dry or wet version. It is known that fluorescent colours, especially orange and pink, are very attractive to grayling and they can often be relied upon to produce more takes than more natural dressings. For some reason grayling home in these bright colours.

Perhaps it is because they themselves are so brightly coloured, because a male grayling in full dress is a fish to behold, they are magnificent with their big, sail-like dorsal fin crowned in crimson, the yellow blotches framed in black and then on the flanks often there is bright turquoise sheen broken up by black flecks in lines. The grayling really is a most handsome fish and one worthy of pursuit.



This one is on!



(Below) The fish is brought to hand.

Holding high to regain control.





# The IGL Retriever Championship 2016 at Ampton

*This year, the International Gundog League ran the 2016 Retriever Championship on 6, 7, 8th of December at Ampton Estate in Suffolk, by kind permission of The Kennel Club, the Turner Family and at the invitation of Mr Peter Rushbrook.*

The main sponsors were Skinners and Isuzu. The Judges were on the right, Billy Steel and Robert Atkinson and on the left, Phil Allen and Kevin Doughty.

Sixty dogs had qualified for the Championship, four were withdrawn, Billy Steel had qualified a dog but was judging, and Aidan Carr elected not to run. For the statistically minded, there were 54 runners, 43 were dogs, 11 bitches, 4 Golden Retrievers and 26 had already achieved FTCh status.

The current Irish Champion

IRFtCh Abhaile Taite Bui was being run by its current Italian owner, Thelma Blumenthal. Other Irish runners were Declan Boyle with FTCh Miller McDuff, John Williamson with FTCh Gortons Gaelic Prince and Gary McCutcheon with Int FTCh Camgart Tommo.

The meet on the first day was 6.30am, which allowed for the necessary preliminaries and announcements, but we were soon being lined up by ever efficient Secretary Gilly Nickols and Chief



By Peter Smith

Steward Alan Hammond, and the first shot was fired at 8.30 am.



Winner David Latham and FTCh Beileys Aguzannis of Fendawood

(photo courtesy Shooting Times)

The cover on day one consisted of stubble, high mustard, maize strips, woodland, sugar beet and reedy bog. The weather was cold, but with a damp fog which limited visibility initially to 100 yards, with the heat rising the fog lifted by lunchtime. Scent was difficult, but improved as

the day went on.

Game was pheasant, partridge, hare and woodcock.

Early retrieving in the high mustard was difficult, as once the dog was cast, it disappeared from view and could not be handled, but most coped well. Thelma Blumenthal had a nervous

start at No 2, but survived. Early casualties were Andy Latham with FTCh Rimrock Hurricane and Dianna Wiggin with FTCh Brockweir Daisy who were eye wiped by Leigh Jackson with FTCh Arkglass Thor on a pheasant, which had been shot some 100 yards off the end of the right hand side of the line.

After walking parallel to a lake for some distance, the line stopped and some woodland was driven out, which produced quite a number of birds. These were in 'driven' mode, with dogs being asked to pick specific birds. Among those to be lost at this stage were Louie Robertson with FTCh Mitforton Nacho who failed on a partridge in the water, and Gary McCutcheon with Int FTCh Cangart Tommo, who had indifferent work on two blinds. Such were the number of birds produced from this drive, that on calling "lunch," we had advanced to dog No 47.

### ***Spectacular work and a very impressive three dog eye-wipe***

Crossing the lake, we now entered some boggy ground with long white grass and reeds, which was flanked on one side by woodland. This produced some spectacular work, none more so than a very impressive three dog eye wipe by Morton Redpath with Hassycott Whistlefish Fin. John Barr with Derryadd Moss had two very nice retrieves when others struggled, but by 2.30 pm Round 1 was finished and by close of play some eight dogs had completed their third retrieves. Without any harsh Judging, simply letting dogs do their work, the four experienced Judges produced 28 dogs for the second day.

Day two was warm with a perfect blue sky, and scent seemed to improve. Early work was done in woodland, before edging out into sugar beet, where we stayed for the rest of the day.

Unfortunately, just on exiting the woodland John Williamson with FTCh



Top Irish handler at the Championship was John Barr with Derryadd Moss



Gortons Gaelic Prince was lost, first dog down on a runner. Once in the sugar beet, retrieves were challenging and across the line. Here Declan Boyle with FTCh Miller McDuff came to grief with two others on a partridge which had moved slightly on fall, and was picked by the Judges.

Hares started to prove a problem and two dogs were lost on a hare lying in a furrow, including Morton Redpath who had been acclaimed for his brilliant eye wipes the previous day. At this point a skein of geese appeared over the line, and two birds were shot, and easily marked. The first was retrieved, and then Norman Onens with FTCh Kestrelway Freddie, who had been going well, was sent for the second. The dog refused to lift and was called up, only for the dog that had lifted the first, Garslake Dunbar to fail and be eye-wiped by David Field with FTCh Artistryn Ulrich, who by now was mounting an impressive challenge for honours. At 11.30 on the second morning, the ground had proven challenging and there were 17 dogs remaining.

### ***Amazing speed on a line and picked the bird, perhaps two hundred yards away***

After lunch, we continued cross retrieving in sugar beet and good work was again seen from John Barr, and also Vicky Stanley with FTCh Patanavac Brough. Unfortunately another hare accounted for two dogs including John Halsted with FTCh Brocklebank Navigator of Chatsworth. Now came a turning point, as with David Latham and FTCh Beileys Azugannis of Fendawood next to go, a cock pheasant was shot in front of the line, and it was obviously going to move. David Latham expertly handled the dog to the fall, where upon Beiley took off at amazing speed on a line and picked the bird, perhaps two hundred yards away, and returned triumphant to the handler and a massive, sustained round of applause.

After a couple more retrieves, day two was closed around 3.00 pm with 14 dogs remaining.

Day three dawned warm and clear, and we had a long walk to a stubble field, flanked on one side by white grass and woodland, with an intersecting drain. Early on, one of the favourites, David Field, was eliminated for picking a wrong bird. Meanwhile Thelma Blumenthal continued to consolidate her position with some solid work from the Irish Champion.

Three dogs were then eye wiped by the Judges on a hen runner, so the field was rapidly diminishing.

A cock bird was then shot behind the line and Tallygold Mullberry, Troddenmills Beck and Call of Leacaz, and FtCh Windoogpack Coral all were tried and failed. Vicky Stanley with FtCh Patanavac

Brough, being the only dog left in line was tried for the bird. Most people were convinced the bird had moved, but it had tucked in more or less where it fell. After a long hunt, and probably on the point of being called up, Brough produced the bird, but the work was not tidy. Steadily making progress without fuss was David Logan, one of the youngest handlers, with Devonvale Shadow.

The Judges finished the round, unfortunately losing Philippa Williams with FtCh Warrenbank Monkeyson of Castlemans, and six dogs were brought to the lake to finish the Championship with a retrieve of duck, on or across water.

Discussion back at HQ was frenetic, and trying to place the first four dogs nearly impossible. The four Judges had a difficult task for sure, but the result of three brilliant days of trialling were announced by Secretary Gilly Nickols.

### **Results**

1st David Latham and FTCh Beileys Aguzannis of Fendawood.

2nd David Logan and Devonvale Shadow.

3rd John Halsted and FtCh Asterix Aguzannis of Chatsworth.

4th Victoria Stanley and FtCh Patanavac Brough.

Diplomas of Merit - Thelma Blumenthal and IrFTCh Abhaile Taite Bui - John Barr and Derryadd Moss.

Gilly Nickols then graciously thanked all participants and sponsors and so ended a remarkable Championship.

This is the third time this dog has won this event, equalling the record set by John Halstead with FTCh Breeze of Drakeshead. The winning dog is also of identical breeding to last year's winner, and the dog which was third this year.

The work which David Latham and FTCh Beileys Azugannis of Fendawood had done on the second day runner proved decisive. There was much discussion about this retrieve and I along with Tommy

Hughes happened to be in the same hotel as David and his wife, brother Andy and other competitors and friends from Cheshire and we debated long and hard about what had taken place. My own view, and I was in line and directly behind the fall, is as follows: David Latham knew the bird would run, handled the dog to the fall, then completely trusted the dog to take a line. It was glory or disaster, I do not believe it was a chase, the dog genuinely took a scent, followed through and produced the runner.

David had seen him do it before, and let the dog show his brilliance. A worthy Championship winning retrieve!

This has not been an easy year for the IGL, and in mid summer it seemed that there may be no Championship at all in 2016. Hard work and pragmatism prevailed, and a new Committee, democratically elected by the IGL Members, produced a memorable event.

On any objective assessment, this Championship was as good as it has ever been, and as good as it should be. Very well done to all concerned!



For working and active dogs

A black dog, possibly a Labrador Retriever, is standing in a grassy field. In the foreground, there is a branch with small, reddish-orange flowers. The background is a soft-focus landscape with trees and a clear sky.

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By Tom Fox

# The 87th Cocker Spaniel Championship



Guns in action on the second day.

***The 87th Cocker Spaniel Championship was held at Abbeystead Estate, Lancashire on 4th & 5th January 2017 by kind permission of the Duke of Westminster & the Grosvenor Family.***

Judges for the event were Mr Jeremy Organ, Mr Ben Randall (twice winner of the event), Mr Steve Wanstall and Mr Graham West.

The Head Keeper at Abbeystead, Mr

Tony Barrow is responsible for two teams of game keepers at Abbeystead for pheasants and grouse moors and the teams were immaculately turned out from head to toe, always pleasant and

very forthcoming whenever the need arose for advice. They were a credit to the Grosvenor family and to the Head Keeper.

There was a very large attendance from all over Europe, and of course a good number came from Ireland. Among the Irish supporters who attend annually, were Domhnall Creamer, Mick Donnelly, Christy Hasson, and Alan Mooney, all of them successful Cocker Spaniel men.

The event got underway on the first day following the introductions to the event from Mr Jon Kean, Chairperson of the Working Group for the championship.

## **Day 1**

Forty-five dogs were scheduled to compete originally from the throughout the United Kingdom and one dog from Ireland and competitors were transported from the Headquarters at Abbeystead by a fleet of Landrovers, Minibus and tractor and trailer.

Game was plentiful on Day 1 with pheasant, snipe and woodcock all on the cards. The ground was testing, and while there were short retrieves at the beginning, as the morning continued the weather became hotter and the retrieves



The Championship winner Byrbwll Dotty, owned and handled by Dai Ormond.





1



2



3



4



5

1. Ian Openshaw's FTCh Endowood Cork brings a cock pheasant to hand.
2. Richard Preest hands a hen pheasant to Judge Ben Randall.
3. Matt Farish's Baileys Pure Gold with a cock pheasant.
4. Guns Steve Orzechowski and Glyn Roberts, Head Keeper Tony Barrow, Guns Anthony Jones, Mick Dickinson and Neil Kilgour
5. The Judges: Graham West, Jeremy Organ, Ben Randall and Steve Wanstall.

*(Photos by David Hudson)*





Runner up was Lee Cooper running his own Breckmarsh Brook.



A cheery smile from Patrick with 'Finch'.

a little longer and with birds tucking in causing some dogs to fail.

Dogs that stood out for me on the early part were Endowood Beatrice (Ian Openshaw), FTCh Jacksheated of Poolgreen (Will Clulee), Fernmoss Gold Dust of Gournaycourt (John Bailey), FTCh Dakotagun Arwin (Jaeson Atkinson), FTCh Kingcott Robson (R Clayton). Gardenrath Picasso with Ireland's Patrick Peppard had the longest run of the day with 33 minutes hunting, finishing with a five minutes hunt to return with a very strong runner...outstanding!

Others like Byrbwll Dotty (Dai Ormond), Ardcaein Fall of Delphaven, bred by Mark Stewart and Handled by Steve Brewer had an outstanding run in very tough rushy terrain along the opposite side of the initial area.

At the conclusion of first day's proceedings everyone returned in convoy to Abbeystedd for refreshments.

## Day 2

Twenty-eight dogs were called back for the second and Day 2 brought a similar day weatherise, but with a little fewer onlookers making better viewing all round. Again all handlers and dogs who had made it to the second day were put through their paces evenly by the judges, and on what I would say was better ground with birds sitting tight. The guns shot excellently for everyone, without exception.

There was some great displays on the second day, the best coming from No 19 FTCh Dakotagun Arwin. On coming into line this dog was sent for a blind

retrieve which he gathered excellently and then there was a woodcock who jumped through the fence unknown to all except the gallery. The Headkeeper was informed what had happened by his staff and he in turn brought the matter to the judges attention. Handler and dog were soon over the fence and Dakotagun Arwin was dispatched to very heavy rushy cover only to successfully retrieve the fallen bird. There was spontaneous loud applause from the gallery.

The event was over by 12.30PM and after some deliberations the Judges gave their decisions to everyone's delight.

## Results

1st – Byrbwll Dotty, owned and handled by Dai Ormond

2nd – Breckmarsh Brook, owned and handled by Lee Cooper

3rd – FT Ch Dakotagun Arwin, owned by Claire and Jaseon Atkinson and handled by Jaseon Atkinson

4th and Gun's Choice – Spiriteddawn Mystic, owned and handled by Andy Waterhouse

Diplomas of Merit:

Endowood Clowne, owned by Ian Openshaw and handled by Wendy Openshaw

Endowood Beatrice, owned by John Heeley and handled by Ian Openshaw

Baileys Pure Gold, owned and handled by Matthew Farish

Glenugie's Nalani, owned by Jamie and Rhodella Reid and handled by Jamie Reid

Zamyendor Minnie, owned and

handled by Wayne Greig

FT Ch Mallowdale Georgi, owned by John Heeley and handled by Ian Openshaw

FT Ch Jackshea Ted of Poolgreen, owned and handled by William Clulee

Fernmoss Gold Dust of Gournaycourt, owned by Janet Menzies and handled by Jon Bailey

FT Ch Broadmeafarm Beau, owned by Ian English and Linda English and handled by Andrew Bennett

FT Ch Kingcott Robson, owned and handled by Richard Claydon

FT Ch Centrewalk Willow of Episcopi, owned and handled by Anita Jones

Ardcaein Fall of Delphaven, owned by Ian Openshaw and handled by Steve Brewer

FT Ch Woodash Quaver, owned and handled by Dave Rayner

Endowood Cork, owned and handled by Ian Openshaw

FT Ch Countryways Alice of Craiwarn, owned and handled by Natalie Cannon

The event was one I would have to say was organised with military precision, with everything in place from transport, first aider's, facilities to special doggy bags for all of the handlers.

I found it a real pleasure to be there for my first Championship, meeting people from around the globe who had the same interest as myself in dog work, watching great handlers and dogs in action in a perfect environment for the job.





1



2



3



4



5

1. The line spread out across the Tower beat at the start of the trial.
2. Judges Jeremy Organ and Ben Randall watch as Ian Openshaw prepares to cast off Mr J Healey's Endowood Beatrice.
3. The Duke of Westminster presents the Brook Challenge Cup to winner Dai Ormond.
5. Linda Hudson's Chyknell Redwing collects a cock pheasant.
4. A hen pheasant retrieved by Richard Preest's FTCh Centrewalk Piccolo.

*(Photos by David Hudson)*



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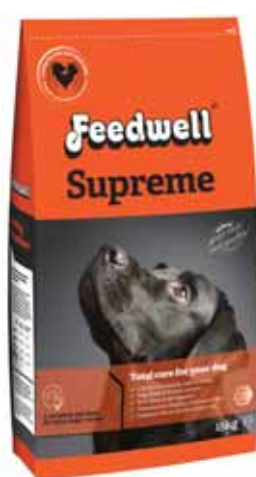


Tim has won the IKC Spaniel Championships twice; 3rd twice and 4th three times; 2nd in the British Championship twice and many diplomas; and has been a member of the CLA team and won Top Spaniel many times.

**Damian Newman** – Maighmor  
([www.maighmorgundogs.com](http://www.maighmorgundogs.com))



Damian has won the IKC Retriever Championship twice, won and been placed in trials with cockers and springers and has been a member of the winning CLA team



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Roger Clegg (MD Feedwell) presents Ed McAuley, the winner of the championship, with the Joe McGrath Perpetual Trophy with Ftch Lisgarvagh Jet. IKC Spaniel Championship and 2017 English Springer Spaniel Championship Gun's Choice



John Barr Snr with Ftch Derryad Moss  
Diploma of Merit at the IGL British Retriever Championships 2016 Diploma of Merit at the Irish Retriever Championships



Pa Peppard with Finch (Gardenrath Picasso)  
The only Cocker qualifier from Ireland for the British Championship

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# Irish Kennel Club Any Variety Spaniel Championships 41st Championship Stake 2016



## *Sponsored by Feedwell Dog Foods*

*The morning of Wednesday 28th of December 2016 began with spaniel championship committee chairperson Damien Kelly welcoming everyone to the premier event in the Irish Spaniel calendar. He further welcomed and congratulated all who had qualified for this year's event. Our host and master of the beat was Stuart Greaves, who runs his Awbeg Sports Shoot in Kildorrery, Co. Cork. This ground in the Quitrent mountains, was to be our spaniels challenge in this year's championship.*

Our most proactive and progressive main sponsor for this year's event was Co. Down based company, 'Feedwell.' Feedwell and the Clegg family, have produced dog food of the highest quality for some 50 years. Jimmy, Roger and now, Jamie Clegg, have

created this high quality dog food in Castlewellan, Co. Down and Irish Kennel Club C.E.O. Mr Kieran Moloney, sincerely thanked the Clegg family for their support of the championship (past and present) and indeed their support of gundog clubs

and events throughout Ireland.

Ever present with us, for a great many years now, was our videographer, Mr Paul French, his wife, Janine and assistant, Anthony Wallace. This was certainly going to be one of Paul and his most efficient team's greatest challenges. We were also graced by the presence of field photographer, Mr Coleman Howard and his photographer colleague who functioned sensitively and unobtrusively over the two days.

As ever, there was a most capable and experienced group of championship committee members and volunteers who were officiating, as field officers at this two day event. Chief Steward, Ivan McAllister drew on his professional background and vast championship experience to run this event in an impeccable manner.

Of course we could not have such an event were it not for our judges, Mr Pat Brennan, Mr Eddie Scott and referee, Tom O'Connor. Pat Brennan, from Drom in Co. Tipperary, was judging his



Kieran Moloney, CEO Irish Kennel Club with the members of the 2016 IKC Spaniel Championship committee.





Competitors and gallery in some great spaniel ground.

first championship. Pat's 'Clodahill' prefix is well known and much sought after throughout the UK and Scandanavia.

Eddie Scott from Fife in Scotland and his very well known, 'Broomfield' prefix was our other 'A' panel judge. Eddie has previously won the IKC Championship in Slane and indeed the EKC Springer and Cocker Championships. Both Pat and Eddie are highly respected and experienced competitors and judges. Our referee for the two days was, Tom O'Connor, from Co. Kerry, whose Bremarville prefix is synonymous with top quality hunting

spaniels in Ireland.

### ***The Championship gets underway***

As we arrived on the ground on day 1, we were blessed with early morning, winter sunshine which was to last throughout the day. From the start it was evident that the dogs would all have to cope with varying terrain and ground cover. The trial began in a typical Irish glen; containing a small stream with a covering of brambles, bracken and fallen trees on either side of this stream. Our game over the two days was pheasants and partridges.

From the start, our first day, guns were on their toes and most attentive to every move of our spaniels. Gavin Tegetmeier, Fintan Kelly, Michael Finglas and Michael Twohig shot safely and for our dogs throughout the day.

As in previous years, our spaniel

bitches greatly outnumbered the male dogs by some 23 to 12. At the request of our host, the field was limited to 35 spaniels. On our printed programme, we had 2 cockers and 33 English Springer Spaniels. On this occasion only one cross channel competitor, Nick Powell from Lancashire made the cut of 35 competing spaniels. This year once again, Des Donnelly's Int. FTCH Skronedale Romulus was the leading sire with the leading dams being Hollydrive Kylie (M. Walsh) and Clodahill Annie (P. Brennan).

Throughout the day our spaniels admirably dealt with a great variety of ground cover and game supply. Some of the very deep hedgerows untouched by men or machine in decades contained the most punishing cover of interwoven bracken, grass and brambles. One thing was greatly evident from start to finish, this was the courage and heart with



Chief Steward Ivan McAllister kept the Championships running smoothly.



'Retrieve of the Championship' was won by Errol Rowan with Anna Bell for this retrieve on a running cock pheasant.





Handling at their first Championship were (l-r) Benny Ryan, Murt Walsh, Pat Peppard, Ivan Hanna, Errol Rowan and Paul O'Shea (photographed separately).

which our Irish Spaniels attacked the cover. As ever, some handlers and dogs had somewhat easier cover to deal with. Such is shooting and trialling. Messrs P. Brennan and E Scott alluded to the positive hunting display shown by ALL our spaniels at the presentation. Pat Brennan stated that the myth that trial spaniels cannot hunt cover properly should be well and truly put to bed following the excellent display of bravery in the toughest of cover from all dogs competing at this championship.

### ***Second day and three dogs are called for the run-off***

The day saw most of the 35 dogs return to have their second runs under

the other championship judge. Joining us on this occasion was substitute gun, Ricky Cashin (for Gavin Tegetmeier) from Co. Laois. The ground and pattern of game supply was very similar to our first day. Most dogs had to work hard to produce game. When game was in the air, it was swiftly dealt with by our super sharp guns.

By approximately 1pm, our judges got together to make up their books. Many informed and interested competitors had it that some of our 'first time' (in a championship) handlers had performed really well, these 'first-timers' being Paul O'Shea, Ivan Hanna, Pat Peppard, Earl Rowan, Benny Ryan and Martin (Murt) Walsh.

Our chief steward, Ivan McAllister called three dogs for a run-off, No 5 Lisgarvagh Jet (Ed McAuley), No 29 Anna Bell (Errol Rowan) and No 30 Ainninn Susie (Brendan Ryan). These dogs had all been in cover in the body of the trial so our judges were happy to have the run off in white grass and heather. After three brief interchanges of dogs in this run off, Ivan McAllister declared that the 41st I.K.C. AV Spaniel Championship was over.

Back we went to our head quarters, the Hibernian Hotel, in Mallow, Co. Cork for the presentation. After a brief interlude, Kieran Moloney (I.K.C CEO.) thanked everyone involved with the trial and presented a framed memento to host, S. Greaves. Roger Clegg, Feedwell and thanked K Moloney and the super championship committee who did their utmost to make this a successful championship. Roger Clegg wished our gundog clubs and handlers, all things good for 2017, and hoped that the Feedwell brand would figure prominently in the new year.

### ***The Awards***

First: Ed McAuley's ESSD Lisgarvagh Jet (The J. McGrath Perpetual trophy for winner and R McElhinney Perpetual Trophy for best Irish Dog.

Second: Errol Rowan's ESSB Anna



Paul O'Shea at his first Championships.



Judges Pat Brennan, Tom O'Connor; and Eddie Scott with Championship winner Ed McAuley.





Roger Clegg (MD Feedwell) presents Ed McAuley, the winner of the championship, with the Joe McGrath Perpetual Trophy.



The top prize winners (l-r) Benny Ryan (3rd); Errol Rowan (2nd); Ed McAuley (1st) and Willie Megaughin (4th)



Championship Diploma of Merit Winners.

Bell (Parkmaple Perpetual Trophy) and (The Cathageinne Perpetual Trophy for best retrieve)

Third: Benny Ryan's ESSB FTCH Ainninn Susie (Combined Spaniel Clubs of Ireland Perpetual Trophy).

Fourth: William Megaughin, ESSB Woodlandbank Joyce of Mountdavis. (Cretoka Perpetual Trophy).

#### Diplomas of Honour

Mr Louis Rice's FTCH Sliabh Cusla  
Mr Philip Taylor's Portman Cassie  
Mr Damian Kelly's Anahoe Viceroy  
Mr Eamon Taaffe's FTCH Holydrive Bert

Mr David Cairns' Dromore Earl  
Mr Mick Walsh's Int FTCH Hollydrive Sally

Mr Jamie Cahill's FTCH Clodahill Nell (Handled by Damian Kelly)

Mr PJ Davitt's Glenhestbeg Della  
Mr Norman Blakeney's Colcourt Firecrest

Mr Robin Patterson's Aine's in the Pink

Mr Martin (Murt) Walsh's Sharmar Coco

Mr James Casey's FTCH Blackguard Ivy

Mr Mick Walsh's Int FTCH Hollydrive Kurt

Mr Ian Blair's Clodahill Nofler of Carnteel

Most interesting to note was that several of the competitors and this year in particular, Ed McAuley and Benny Ryan were graduates of the proactive training classes ran by North Tipperary Gundog club and the Working Spaniel Club of Ireland. So a huge debt of gratitude is owed to all those who contributed to these superb classes in recent years.

To conclude the prize giving, Mr Ed McAuley thanked our judges, guns, our host and a special mention of thanks was extended to training partners Mr Gavin Tegetmeier and Paul Carragher, Jet's breeder.

(All photos courtesy of Colman Howard, Rathcormac Gun Club)



# HPR Championship 2016

Winning dog Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla FTCh Kerride Henry retrieves a partridge.

*The weather was good, the shooting was excellent and there was some great dog work to savour. What more could you ask?*

It is thirty years since the first Hunt, Point and Retrieve Championship was held on Lord Joicey's Ford and Etal Estate and won by Tommy Brechney's great GSP FTCh Heidi of Strathbock. Tommy went on to dominate the Championship, winning again in 1987, 1989, 1992 and 1993. The only other winners of the Championship were Cliff and Madge Simons with FTCh Geramers Victress of Swifthouse in 1990 and FTCh Swifthouse Jaffacake in 1996. Then the Kennel Club withdrew Championship status from the HPR breeds until 2013 when the event was reinstated and won by Mick Canham's FTCh Jhebron's Nephrite of Stubblemere.

In 2014 Howard Kirby's German Longhaired Pointer FTCh Wamilanghaar Tash of Mullenscote became the first breed other than a GSP to win the Championship though GSPs were to the fore again in 2015 when Lucy Hustler's FTCh Aytee Isadora took top place at Swinton Estate in

Yorkshire. For the 2016 trial we moved north of the border to the Tollishill and Longcroft Estate in Berwickshire by invitation of Wilson Young and Wilson Young Jnr of Eskdale Shooting Services who have over the years hosted many trials for retrievers, spaniels and pointers and setters as well as HPRs. The Judges were Mark Firmin and Eddie Kania and the Guns were Paul

Nixon, Costas Wilkinson, Phil Pearson and Karl Field. Nigel Dear was Chief Steward and Gavin Hannam the Steward of the Beat.

There were twenty-two runners for the 2016 Championship: nine German Shorthaired Pointers, five Hungarian Wirehaired Vizslas, three German Longhaired Pointers, two German Wirehaired Pointers and one



Gill Pillinger's German Shorthaired Pointer Withamfriary Dallas retrieving a hen pheasant.





The awards went to: Adrian Blackledge with first and second placed Hungarian Wirehaired Vizslas Ribble Amber and FTCh Kerride Henry, Gill Pillinger with fourth placed German Shorthaired Pointer Withamfriary Dallas and Rob Gouldwith Diploma of Merit winner German Longhaired Pointer Wamilanghaar Djynn.



Howard Kirby's German Longhaired Pointer FTCh Wamilanghaar Tash of Mullenscote retrieving a woodcock.



Adrian Blackledge's, Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla Ribble Amber at work.



Gill Pillinger's German Shorthaired Pointer Withamfriary Dallas retrieving a hen pheasant.



Winning dog, Adrian Blackledge's, Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla FTCh Kerride Henry is barely visible in the bracken.





Winning dog Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla FTCh Kerride Henry at the water test



Judges Mark Firmin and Eddie Kania.



Rob Gould won a Diploma of Merit with his German Longhaired Pointer Wamilanghaar Djynn.



The Guns were Costas Wilkinson, Karl Field, Paul Nixon and Phil Pearson.



Second-placed runner, Adrian Blackledge's, Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla Ribble Amber with a partridge at the water test.



Judge Eddie Kania watches as Adrian Blackledge casts off second placed dog, Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla Ribble Amber.





Guns' Choice Jim Field's German Shorthaired Pointer Deeptatch Pocona with a cock pheasant.

Weimaraner, one Brittany and one Large Munsterlander with bitches outnumbering dogs by fifteen to seven.

The last two years have been a nightmare for photographers with rain and fog dominating but this year we had dry, sunny weather for the first day. The beat was the same ground used for the Springer Spaniel Championship in 2015 and while it was ideal for spaniels it presented some problems for the HPRs. The line spread out across the side of a steep valley split by deep gullies and mainly covered in bracken and rushes: great holding cover for pheasant and woodcock but hard work for dogs, handlers and Judges. Where the springers burrowed through the below cover the bigger HPRs had to either bound over it or bash their way through it and tangled, windblown bracken is not easy to penetrate as everyone in the line could attest.

### ***The pheasants generally were obviously running on ahead of us much of the time***

The other problem for the Judges and the handlers was that it was difficult to see what was going on at times and when game was flushed it was debatable whether or not it the dog had pointed it or whether the bird had taken to the wing as a result of disturbance from the advancing line. The pheasants

generally were able to get through the bracken stalks at ground level with ease and were obviously running on ahead of us much of the time, though in the most tangled bits of bracken even they struggled and a couple were pegged as they tried to rise.

In places there were areas of rough grass where the dogs could be seen clearly as they worked though the game tended to be scarce in these more open areas. Geoff Saint's Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla Hourra Du Domain St Hubert ignored a hare that jumped right under her nose and then worked well to find and retrieve a woodcock from well down the hill. Adrian Blackledge's Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla Ribble Amber worked impressively over some more open ground before dropping down into the bracken to point and then retrieve a pheasant.

The breeze was quite light though mostly a cheek wind as we felt it above the cover, but down among the bracken stalks and rushes there was probably little air movement at all. Pete Bennett's Brittany Ch Tournesol Inox pointed, flushed and retrieved a cock pheasant in good style, then hunted up two more cocks through to the edge of the cover where one was shot. The pheasant fell out of sight down the slope and the retrieve proved too much for both the

Brittany and Anne Johnson's German Wirehaired Pointer FTCh Trudvang Lara who followed, but the Judges walked forward picked the bird with no trouble.

Gill Pillinger's German Shorthaired Pointer Withamfriary Dallas started with an easy retrieve on open ground then a tricky second one in a steep little gully with very thick cover. That thick cover proved the downfall of the next runner when a pheasant was pegged as it struggled to rise through the bracken.. Adrian Blackledge's Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla FTCh Kerride Henry did well to pick a woodcock that was dropped ahead of him in thick bracken, then with four more dogs to see in the first round we dropped down to a little wood where three of these were lost when they failed to retrieve woodcock.

With the afternoon drawing on there was just time to see three of the eleven dogs to make it through to the second round before the Judges called it a day. Unfortunately both Suzi Burton's Weimaraner Trubon Delta Truffle and Geoff Saint's Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla Hourra Du Domain St Hubert were eliminated before the day's final runner, Adrian Blackledge's Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla Ribble Amber completed her run safely.

### ***There was some very thick bracken to challenge the next couple of dogs***

The second day was a lot colder with a strong wind blowing directly towards the runners as we started out along the side of a steep bracken and rush covered hill. The game here was mainly partridge, plus the odd woodcock and some pheasants but they were quick to rise as the first dogs began hunting giving little chance of a point. Steve Kimberley's German Longhaired Pointer Questor Karson of Caldera ran with great pace and quartered the hill with precision but the only game on his beat were a couple of partridges that jumped well ahead of him. There was some very thick bracken to challenge the next couple of dogs and,





Pete Bennett's Brittany Ch Tournesol Inox retrieves a cock pheasant.

surprisingly no game until we came to a shoulder of the hill where there was a little shelter from the wind and the birds seemed more inclined to hold for the dogs to point them,

We lost a couple of runners here when they failed on what looked like quite straightforward retrieves though the final dog to run in the second round, Adrian Blackledge's Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla FTCh Kerride Henry, made light work of pointing and then collecting two partridges from well down the hill.

After some discussion the Judges called up five of the remaining dogs for further scrutiny. Adrian Blackledge's Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla Ribble Amber was first down and retrieved two partridges from down on the flat ground below the beat. Steve Kimberley's German Longhaired Pointer Questor Karson of Caldera was given a good long run and impressed again with his ground work but found no game. Lucie Hustler's FTCh Aytee Isadora pointed a woodcock in thick cover but failed on the retrieve to lose any chance of defending her title when the bird was easily picked by Rob Gould's German Longhaired Pointer bitch, Wamilanghaar Djynn .

Gill Pillinger's German Shorthaired Pointer dog Withamfriary Dallas and Rob Gould's Wamilanghaar Djynn both

needed a point and a retrieve to complete the trial and both were successful before we broke for lunch back at the marquee where refreshments were on hand from sponsors Skinners. There remained only the water test with just four dogs required to make a short swim to collect a partridge from the far bank of a little pond. All four completed the retrieve with ease and that marked the end of the Championship. We were back in the marquee to await the results with perfect timing as it began to rain heavily just after we reached the shelter.



Gun Paul Nixon watches as Lorne Bunn sends his Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla Red Sky Rambler for a retrieve.

First place went to Adrian Blackledge with his superb Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla dog, FTCh Kerride Henry. Adrian also took second spot with his Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla bitch, Ribble Amber. Fourth went to Gill Pillinger's German Shorthaired Pointer dog Withamfriary Dallas, there was a Diploma of Merit for Rob Gould's German Longhaired Pointer bitch, Wamilanghaar Djynn and Guns' Choice was Jim Field's German Shorthaired Pointer bitch, Deepthatch Pocona.

With the thick cover and birds that were more liable to run or flush than tuck down in front of the dogs this was never an easy Championship for the competitors or the Judges. That said, there was some really excellent dog work to enjoy and the winner in particular put together two rounds of real quality and thoroughly deserved his top spot. Adrian began with springers and Brittanies for shooting but only got into trialling when he got his first Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla. His kennel now has six HWVs and all are used regularly for shooting, picking up and stalking. Despite the difficulty of trying to photograph dogs in thick cover I thoroughly enjoyed the Championship.





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# IRISH KENNEL CLUB RETRIEVER CHAMPIONSHIP 2016

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***MR BILLY LUNDY WINS THE IRISH KENNEL CLUB RETRIEVER CHAMPIONSHIP with DRUMGOOSE WARLORD and is awarded 3rd place with Warlord's Mother Int FTCh THE NEWCAM BOSS. Over the two days of the Championship Billy and his dogs put on an exhibition of both superb dog work and dog handling. Billy is also the breeder of both dogs.***

The 2016 IKC Retriever Championship was held in Ballincor Estate on the 29th and 30th December by kind invitation of Sir Robert and Lady Goff and their son William. This is the seventh time that we have been privileged to hold the Championship in this beautiful estate. We were there in 1993, 1996, 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011. Planning for this event started in 2015 and in the months leading up to it when we visited the estate, to finalise our plans, we were made very welcome by William Goff, Mr John Pritchard Head keeper and Mr Keith Woolridge ex-head keeper. William, John and their entire team went out of their way to ensure we got everything we had hoped for.

Once again the main sponsor for our annual event was Connolly's Red Mills ENGAGE Premium Dog Food. We are deeply indebted to them for their generous and continued support. Not only does Connolly's Red Mills sponsor the IKC Retriever Championship but they sponsor many Field Trials and Working Tests for retriever clubs throughout the country. Red Mills Premium Dog Foods are widely used by successful handlers and as has been the case in previous years, the winner of

this year's IKC Championship along with most of the prize-winners and competitors feed Red Mills. Mr Bill Connolly and Mr Johnny Geoghegan joined us at the Championship and as they are both very keen gundog enthusiasts they took a great interest in the trial as events unfolded.

The Judges this year for the IKC Retriever Championship fell to this very experienced team.

**Mr Jimmy Black**, is the current Irish Champion having won this event in 2015 and was also runner up in 2010. Jimmy has now judged the Championship four times and has made

up six Field Trial Champions.

**Mr Damian Newman** has won the Championship twice, placed 2nd three times and 3rd twice. In 2004 he was placed 1st and 2nd and also received the Guns Choice award. This was his second time to Judge the Championship. Damien has made up three champions two of which were International Champions.

**Mr Jamie Bettinson** has previously judged the British Championship. He qualified many times to compete in the British and has been placed 3rd. This is the first time he has judged the IKC Retriever Championship. Jamie has



Judges and Sponsors (l-r) J Bettinson, D Newman, D Latham, J Black, B Connolly Red Mills, J Geoghegan Red Mills.



made up three Field Trial Champions.

**Mr David Latham** is the current British Champion having won the British Championship in December 2015. He has now won the British Championship four times and he has made up Seven Field Trial Champions.

Throughout the year 31 dogs

qualified to run in this year's Championship with 28 going to post. The line-up comprised 26 Labradors and 2 Golden Retrievers, 18 Dogs and 10 Bitches.

### 1st Day

In his introduction, the Chairman

Michael Corr welcomed everyone to the Championship and wished all the competitors the very best of luck. He introduced the Judges and outlined the running order of the day. The Chief Stewards Mr Paul Mc Guirk and Mr Derek Hartford then led everyone to the trailers which brought us up the hill for the 1st drive.

It was a beautiful mild morning and it was forecast to be like this for the two days.

The drives for the IKC Championship had been arranged in advance between the head keeper Mr John Pritchard and members of the committee. John was very amenable to all our requests and to say that he went above and beyond would be a gross understatement. The 1st drive "Kelly's Diamond" produced a huge number of excellent pheasants over the guns. The guns were in fine form and due to the excellent terrain and ground cover the Judges were able to set up some spectacular retrieves. The spectators had brilliant viewing of both the shooting and the retrieving.

Jimmy and Jamie were on the left-hand side of the line with the odd numbers. Here they had birds in white grass with some of them in and around the pond which was surrounded by gorse bushes. Most of the dogs getting retrieves on this side were successful however there were a few failures.

Damien and David had the even numbers on the right. They had their dogs positioned well out in the field and could set up some long spectacular retrieves towards and into the cover. From where the spectators were standing they could witness some 1st class retrieving, however a few dogs had difficulty making the area and were subsequently dropped.

After some delightful work and testing retrieves the Judges decided to move to the next drive and at this point the picking up team moved in to sweep the area for any remaining birds which were unused by the Judges.

At the 2nd drive, "The Rookery", the birds again flew superbly and it seemed



Birds were hard to find in this white grass.



A stylish water retrieve by John Behan's Quarrypool Glenda which ended up in 4th place.



Derryad Moss winner of The Irish Country Sports & Country Life Guns Choice Award, making a fine retrieve from heavy bracken.





Day Two Handlers, sponsors and spectators.

that the flush of pheasants would never end. The standard of dog work remained very high and the spectators were treated to some brilliant dog work. The large quantity of birds shot at this drive enabled us to finish the first day here. There was some excellent dog work throughout the day which was befitting the standard required for the IKC Championship.

The following dogs and handlers were still very much in contention and made it through to the 2nd day, Mr John Barr Jnr with Lab B FTCh Willowmount Regal Rose, Mr Declan Boyle with Lab Dog Int FTCh Millar Mc Duff, Mr Gary Mc Cutcheon with Lab D FTCh Camgart Tomo, Mr John Barr Snr with Lab D FTCh Derryad Moss, Mr Declan Mc Carthy with Lab D FTCh Watergreen Jasper, Ms Gail

McNab with Lab D Grovery Fallon , Mr Andrew Rooney with Lab D Calderhey Evan, Mr John Behan with Lab B Quarrypool Glenda and Mr Billy Lundy with Lab B Int FTCh The Newcam Boss and his Lab D Drumgoose Warlord.

Later that evening we met with head keeper John Pritchard and together with the Judges we decided on our plans for the second day. We had hoped all along that we would be able to finish the Championship at the drive called Winter Quarters. This is always a spectacular drive, where in places the woodland floor is covered in dense ferns and a rocky terrain interspersed with rhododendrons. This would be the perfect place to test the remaining dogs and the perfect place for the spectators to get the best possible view. John

assured us that this could be arranged.

### 2nd Day

After the usual formalities, we walked the very short distance to the 1st drive and we were ushered into position to witness one of the best drives many of us had ever seen. The dogs were lined up on the embankment with the spectators gathered nearby which afforded the gallery the best possible viewing. It must be said now that during our entire time in Ballincor our every need was catered for by ex-head keeper Mr Keith Woolridge. Keith chauffeured the Judges around the estate and positioned them in the best position relative to where the birds would be. He also worked closely with the Chief Stewards and made sure that the spectators were always in the best spot for viewing.



Tense handlers in the final line up.



The remaining dogs continued to perform excellently and in fact their work improved as the competition progressed. The Judges came together for the final two rounds of the competition. They continued to set up very challenging retrieves which in the most part were executed superbly. Unfortunately, right at the end two dogs were lost, who despite having completed their retrieves, the Judges had deemed their work to be below par and were subsequently dropped.

On completion of round seven the Judges conferred and with seven dogs left they concluded that they had seen enough and the 2016 Championship was now over. After the customary handshakes between Judges and competitors and sighs of relief at having crossed the finish line everyone made their way back to the carpark. As usual there was much speculation among the gallery as to the placings but it was clear to all that this was a close contest. The presentation took place at Ballincor House.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the presentation of prizes and congratulated the handlers who had finished the competition. He paid tribute to The Goff family and in particular William who had been so helpful and accommodating in the run up to and during the Championship. A presentation was made by Lady Waterford on behalf of the committee to both Lady Goff and William Goff. In her address, Lady Goff spoke of how happy she was that the Championship had returned to Ballincor. She hoped that, as in the past, we had enjoyed our time there and we would return in the future.

The Chairman thanked Mr John Pritchard the head keeper for all his help, courtesy and cooperation throughout. He also complimented the guns and thanked the entire team of beaters and pickers up on the estate. He asked John to come forward to accept a presentation on behalf of the Championship Committee and amid loud applause Lady Waterford presented



Winner Mr B Lundy receives his awards from sponsor Mr Bill Connolly and Lady Goff.



Mr Declan Boyle receiving second place prizes from Mr Bill Connolly, Red Mills, and Lady Goff.

him with a gift. A presentation was also made to Mr Keith Woolridge for the huge part he played in ensuring that everything went smoothly for us.

At this point the winner of the prestigious Guns Award was announced, this prize is kindly sponsored by Albert Titterington and Irish Country Sports and Country Life. Mr John Barr Snr and his dog FTCh DERRYAD MOSS was the winner of this prize which was

presented on behalf of the guns by William Goff.

The Chairman spoke of how indebted we all are to Connolly's Red Mills for their continued support of our sport and especially their support of our Championship which cannot be over emphasised. He urged everyone to support Red Mills by using their products. In his address Mr Bill Connolly said how much he enjoyed the





Mr Billy Lundy with Mother and Son 3rd and 1st place respectively.



Mrs Lilian Jennett presenting The Sam Jennett Raughlin Trophy for the breeder of the winner to Billy Lundy.

Championship and congratulated all the competitors who had qualified for this Championship and all those who had finished in the awards. He said that both himself and John Geoghegan had enjoyed the Championship immensely and complimented the Judges on having done such a wonderful job. He also remarked on how it was so nice to meet and chat with so many of his customers. Lady Waterford then presented Mr Connolly with a gift as a token of our appreciation.

The Chairman expressed sincere thanks to everyone who volunteered and helped in any way, the Judges stewards, markers, number boards stewards, game carriers, Picking-up team, photographer, reporters etc., and said how much an event like this depends so much on the backstage help. He finished by thanking Mr Declan Boyle Secretary, Lady Waterford, Treasurer, Paul Mc Guirk, Vice Chairman and the entire Championship Committee for their hard

work, support and co-operation throughout the year.

The results were then announced and the prizes were presented by Mr Bill Connolly, Red Mills

**The following are the results of the 2016 Irish Kennel Club Championship for retrievers:**

- 1st Mr Billy Lundy's Lab D FTCh DRUMGOOSE WARLORD
- 2nd Mr. Declan Boyle's Lab D INT FTCh MILLAR MC DUFF
- 3rd Mr Billy Lundy's Lab B INT FTCh THE NEWCAM BOSS
- 4th Mr John Behan's Lab B QUARRYPOL GLENDA COM

Mr Andrew Rooney's Lab D CALDERHEY EVAN

Mr Mr John Barr's (Snr) Lab D FTCh DERRYAD MOSS

Mr John Barr's (Jnr) Lab B FTCh WILLOWMOUNT REGAL ROSE

**Special awards went to:**

**The Fred McGuirk Perpetual Cup**



Mr John Barr receives the Irish Country Sports and Country Life guns choice award from Mr William Goff.

for the highest placed bitch was awarded to Mr Billy Lundy Lab B THE NEWCAM BOSS

**The Sam Jennet Raughlin Perpetual Trophy** for the breeder of the winner of the Irish Retriever Championship was awarded to Mr Billy Lundy.

**The Ballyfremra Perpetual Cup** for the breeder of the highest placed Irish Bred dog/bitch in the IKC Championship was awarded to Mr Billy Lundy.

**The Irish Country Sports & Country Life Perpetual Trophy** for Guns' Choice was awarded to Mr Mr John Barr Snr Lab D FTCh DERRYAD MOSS



Award Winners & Judges L-R J Black, J Barr Jnr Diploma, J Barr Snr Diploma, A Rooney Diploma, J.Bettinson, B Lundy 1st & 3rd, D Boyle 2nd, D Newman, Lady Waterford, J Behan 4th, D Latham.

**Report by Michael Corr  
Photos by Jana Scupakova**



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# The Red Mills Interview with Nigel Carville

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*In this issue Nigel interviews Billy Lundy who has just had the unique success of being first and third in the Irish Retriever Championship with a son and mother combination.*

**Q: Can I take you right back to the start and ask you what was your first dog and when did you acquire it?**

A: My father bought me my first dog when I was 10 years old. His name was Spring and he was a Deerhound Cross Lurcher and I got him at 8 weeks old from a local lad called Paul McKeown who had bred him. He had a super temperament and was also a fantastic hunting dog and I used him mainly for hunting rabbits while out ferreting. Unfortunately he was killed on a main road at only 2 years old when my brother and his friend decided to take him out, but I don't hold against them one bit lol

**Q: When did you purchase your first Trial Dog? What was its breeding and name?**

A: My first trial dog was out of Philip Turner's FTW dog Shangarilyn Andy in 2003. Her KC name was

Leader Lady Lynn and her pet name was Nelly.

**Q: What is your prefix and why did you choose it?**

A: My prefix is Drumgoose, Sean Nolan helped me come up with it. I had actually wanted Oakleaf because I liked the sound of it but unfortunately at the time I couldn't get it.

**Q: Where and when was the first trial you ran in and how did you get on?**

A: The first trial was under the Irish Kennel Club with the Bernish Gun Club's grounds in Meigh, Co Armagh. The Trial was run by the Labrador Retriever Club of Ireland. It was a novice stake in 2006 and I was so nervous that Jim Perry shouted: "Someone get that man a pint of blood and quick!" This actually relaxed me a bit and I finished the trial 2nd with Leader Lady Lynn, beginners luck!

**Q: With which dog did you win your first trial and on what ground and what quarry?**

A: For the next few years, I spent doing what you might call an apprenticeship in the gun dog world, I had a few different dogs and I found I enjoyed taking on young dogs and training them and was lucky to move a few dogs on to handlers who went on to have wins with them and made champions out of them. I then won my first trial with Oakleaf Warlord in 2012 with Golden Vale Gun Dog Club at Lough Cutra, Co Galway on driven pheasant. I was over the moon to say the least.

**Q: How many trials have you won?**

A: Between 2012 and 2016 I have won 28 trials.

**Q: How many Champions have you made up? What are their names?**

A: I have made up 2 Champions.



Unique success  
for top trainer  
and handler  
Billy Lundy.



The first is my homebred bitch 'Roxy,' International Field Trial Champion The Newcam Boss and my second FT Champion is her son, 'Murph' whom I also bred and is called Field Trial Champion Drumgoose Warlord (Int FT Ch The Newcam Boss x FT Ch Astraglen Fergie).

**Q: Which of your dogs to date would you rate as your best dog and why?**

A: The most consistent dog I have trialled to date is Int FT Ch The Newcam Boss (FT Marranscar Blackcap x Smirnoff Teal) who has won 22 trials, but her son (who has been a slow maturing dog but just won the championship) was definitely trying to give her a run for her money this season and what he lacks in maturity he makes up for in style, drive and speed.

**Q: Through your career you must have met, seen and been influenced by many handlers, can I ask you who of these handlers most influenced or impressed you?**

A: Nigel Carville has been a big influence on me, helping to direct me and keep me right, Damian Newman has also been very influential and both these men I have much respect for as handlers and as judges. Of the older school, Roy Rankin and Philip Turner have been instrumental in giving the right advice. Again its men like these I have a lot of respect for, there's no hidden agenda, and they are there for the good of the dogs and the sport.

**Q: Other than your own dogs, which retrievers have you seen and/or judged that you would rate as some of the best of their breed?**

A: The dog that sticks out in my mind is FT Marranscar Blackcap. He is the father of my Int FT Champion bitch and he had everything I look for in a dog.

**Q: What impressed you about these dogs?**

A: Drake (Blackcap) had drive, style, hunting ability in abundance, he did everything with great zest, he had a super temperament and he was also a brilliant casting dog and super at

diversions. There was very little he couldn't do well, although he didn't take a great photograph, the camera never did him justice, a bit like myself lol.

**Q: What do you look for when judging a dog?**

A: All of the above, but first and foremost a dog who has initiative as well as taking handling well; it's a fine line to balance but it's really the essence of Field Trialling.

**Q: What changes have you seen over the years in judging and running trials that (a) you think are positive and (b) more negative?**

There are a few negative aspects of judging, but probably one of the most detrimental I feel is people being put forward for judging just because they have won a trial and haven't really been in the field long enough and, worse still, progressing onto the B without enough knowledge and experience. I know we are short of judges in this country, but I feel this is detrimental to the sport and also puts the new judges under pressure. Some judges also tend to apply the first dog down scenario in every situation as if it's a rule and don't take into consideration the circumstances of the retrieve and the fact the dog carried out good work.

A: The positive aspects of judging and the running of trials is that judges are not making dogs sit in line for silly amounts of time, but enough to judge the dogs steadiness and concentration, the leads are then put on so the dogs are still able to sit and mark the birds, but it takes a wee bit of the pressure off these dog. These same dogs could be trialling the next day at a walked up, so reason needs to come into play as we are not working with robots. The other positive is that there are more walked up trials and if the grounds are properly suited to walked up, this is a great way to test and judge a gun dog.

**Q: How important is nutrition in conditioning your dogs for trials? What food do you use and why?**

A: I have been feeding Connolly's RED MILLS Engage range for some

time. I believe the slow release nutrition provided by Engage gives my dogs the stamina to compete all day while remaining calm and concentrated. They never lose condition and recover quickly throughout the season, this means I can train them hard which is fundamental to keeping them fit and focused on their job. I believe Engage Dog Food is central to the consistent performance of all the dogs in the Drumgoose Kennel.

**Q: As well as a handler, you have developed a reputation as a breeder of good dogs and these dogs are in demand throughout the world. Can you tell us (a) which KC recommended screening tests you use? (b) why you think it is important that breeders should use the KC recommended Health Screening Tests? And (c) what you look for in a dog and bitch that you are going to breed?**

A: The KC recommended tests and tests which I am therefore also required to carry out as a breeder are:

- BVA Hip and Elbow Scoring
- BVA Eye screening
- PRA / CNM

The best case scenario is an average or below average hip score, clear eyes and clear DNA tests, obviously if a dog is a carrier I will mate to a dog who is not a carrier etc. I always try and balance my health results with the results of the chosen sire, however they are not the driving force for my breeding plans but definitely do influence who I would and would not use at stud. Temperament and ability always are at the top of my agenda, alongside health. It's very important that breeders use these tests because they allow the breeder to make an informed choice. For example if they had a bitch who was a carrier they could mate to a dog who wasn't a carrier etc, unless the tests are carried out, they are basically taking a stab in the dark.

**Q: You must have had many highlights as a trainer and handler as well as some disappointments can you share with us (a) your highlights?**





Billy has handled goldens and his 'fox red' labradors.

**(b) your biggest disappointments?**

A: Obviously winning the Championship was a massive highlight for me and the biggest to date but the first big moment was Roxy winning her first 2 day stake and qualifying for the IGL in 2013. This also happened to be the biggest disappointment as when I went there Roxy didn't manage to get a bird in her mouth, she was so wired up, as was I, and it just didn't go to plan.

**Q: You have been mainly associated with training retrievers, what qualities do you look for in your own dogs?**

A: Honesty, biddable and that wee bit of extra spark, something that catches your eye and wants to be with you along with a good amount of cheekiness.

**Q: Do you prefer handling dogs or bitches?**

A: No preference

**Q: You have become known for mainly having Fox Red coloured dogs? Any reason for this?**

A: Because I can't handle goldies, so fox reds are the next best thing lol

**Q: Have you trained / handled any other breeds?**

A: Cockers and Springers for rough shooting and I recently won a trial with my partners Golden Retriever.

**Q: Why do you think the Labrador is the breed most suited to**

**(a) your training methods (b) for overall trial success?**

A: My personal preference is for Labradors, they tend to be the most consistent dogs therefore best suited to the grounds we have and the conditions required for trialling.

**Q: On what grounds do you train and what do you like about them?**

A: The Sperrins are the best grounds for training on, where my partner lives. We have every bit of terrain we need and the freedom to train wherever.

**Q: What is your favourite Trial ground and why?**

A: Glennoo used to be the best trialling ground in the country when the conditions were right, it was rugged and really tested the dogs on all accounts and the viewing of dog work was generally excellent.

**Q: What sort of quarry do you prefer trialling on?**

A: Pheasants

**Q: Name your current team of stars – which ones are at stud?**

A: International Field Trial Champion The Newcam Boss (my bitch)  
FT Ch Drumgoose Warlord (standing at Stud)

**Q: What are your ambitions for the future?**

A: To continue my line of Drumgoose Labradors who have been

successful for various handlers over the last couple of seasons, hopefully it's not beginner's luck and I can continue to apply the knowledge that I have gained and am continuing to gain, to my breeding plans.

**Q: What really is your formula for success?**

A: You need the right stock if you want to achieve success. Along with good dogs we have a solid kennel routine, the dogs are well cared for, get plenty of exercise and have a good training regime with the proper rest in between. Happy dogs equal happy workers.

**Q: When not judging, training or breeding do you enjoy shooting? If so what is your favourite quarry?**

A: I enjoy rough shooting over my dogs, my favourite quarry are rabbits and snipe.

**Q: What do you like to do outside of countrysports — any other hobbies?**

A: Working with dogs is what I do every day. I don't have much time for hobbies outside of that, but occasionally I like to go fishing.

**Q: Anything you would like to add?**

I would like to thank my partner for all her support with the dogs as well as being a fantastic mother to our beautiful new born daughter.



## AT STUD



FTW:  
Waysgreen Apollo

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Elbows: 0-0

CPRA/CNM: Clear

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## AT STUD

### FT Ch Drumgoose Warlord

(Sire Ft Ch Astraglen Fergie x Dam Int Ft Ch The Newcam Boss)



Pictured with his mother after winning the Irish Retriever Championship.

In a 6 week period he won the Fermanagh Novice Trial and the Clones Open Trial; was placed 2nd at Mohill and Clodagh Valley trials; and won the Irish Retriever Championship with his mother in 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Hips3/5 Elbows 0 CNM clear PRA clear EIC clear Dm clear HNPk clear Rd/od1 clear SD2 clear.

Enquiries to Billy Lundy

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# WOODCOCK NETWORK'S MIGRATION RESEARCH

*Many shooters will be aware of the pioneering work being carried out over recent years by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) into woodcock. Much of the focus has been on the use of new modern tracking devices such as the 59 satellite tags, which have been fitted to woodcock in Britain and Ireland since 2012.*

Other tags called geo-locators have also been used and the information gleaned from this exercise is revealing a great deal of useful information on how migrant woodcock move between their breeding grounds in Russia and Scandinavia, and their wintering grounds in the UK or Ireland.

At the same time as this high profile tracking work has been going on, the Woodcock Network has been increasing the numbers of woodcock ringed in the UK. Our efforts have increased the numbers of woodcock ringed from just a few dozen a year to over 1400.

You might ask why ringing is important now new technology is enabling us to follow migration far more accurately. It is true that prior to modern trackers our understanding of migration had been built up from years of rings being recovered from woodcock shot, however ringing gives us so much more information than just where a particular bird was shot.

Every woodcock ringer records whether the bird is an adult or a juvenile, we also weigh and measure every bird. My own here in West Wales was the first to have a sustained ringing effort with over 1000 woodcock ringed since I started in 2007.

This has revealed that a high number of these ringed woodcock return each year to the exactly the same fields, I have frequently caught the same bird within yards of where it was first ringed the previous winter. Sustained ringing efforts on other sites across the UK will soon reveal if this is a nationwide



Owen Williams releasing ringed Woodcock.





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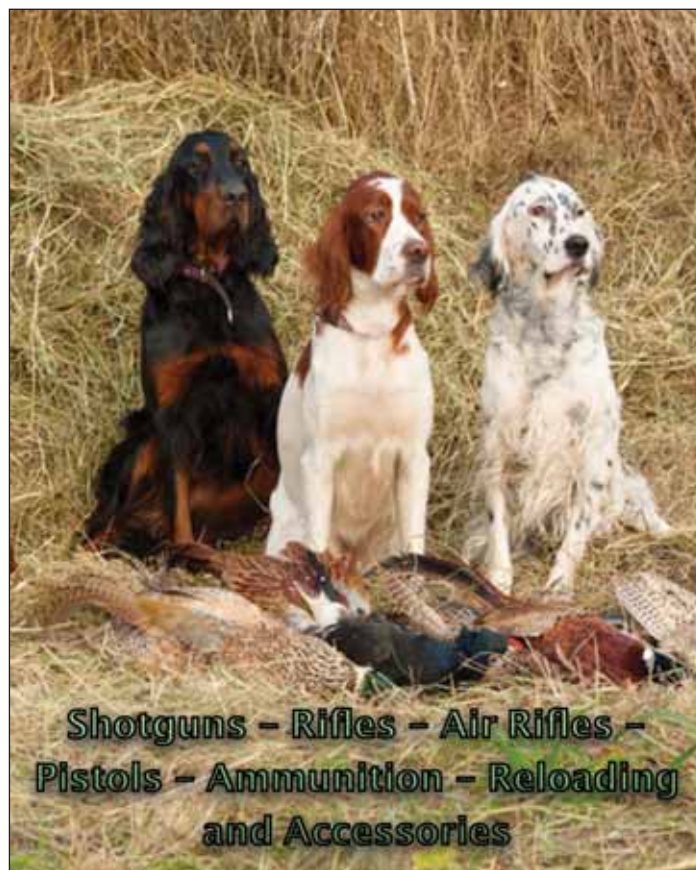
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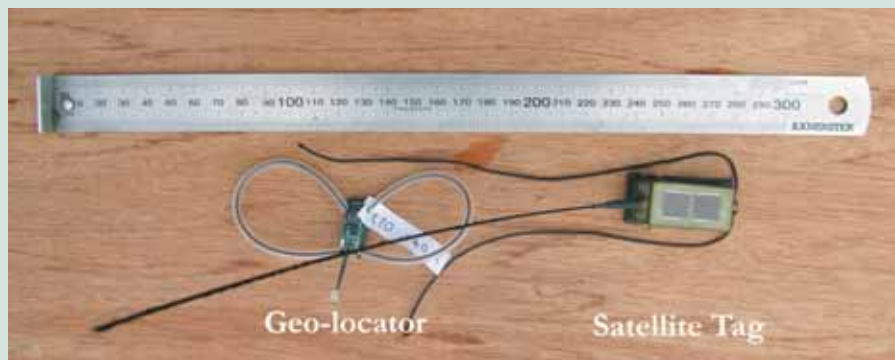
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feature of woodcock. If this is so we will then understand that when you hunt woodcock they are your wintering stock and not just a random selection of our wintering population which just happened to be passing through.

All this information makes ringing worthwhile, and of course being able to identify individual birds by ring number when shot is still important. This is why everyone who shoots a ring bird should report it to the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). The BTO is not an organisation which campaigns against shooting, their remit is to gain information about birds through ringing and research and are very much about science rather than politics. As a shooter, I was very wary about contact

with ringers when I started the Woodcock Network, however in all the talks I have given, despite being honest that the Woodcock Network was started as an initiative by shooters, I have never experienced any hostility.

I have met a number of fellow shooters who tell me that they have a ring from a shot bird, yet have not got around to reporting it to the BTO. This is a pity because woodcock ringers like me put in a lot of effort, this is often on wet and cold winter nights on their ringing sites.

### ***Shooters are intrigued about where their birds come from***

If you have any rings from shot birds, woodcock, snipe, or wildfowl please

make sure that you report them. It is easy to do this online by going to [www.bto.org](http://www.bto.org) click on the link titled 'Report a ringed bird' and complete the details. You do not have to divulge the exact grid reference if you wish that it remains private, the nearest town or village will do. If this is a bird that was shot a while ago and you do not have a record of the exact date you can give and approximate date, and it doesn't matter how old the ring is, all ringing data is valuable. Recoveries of woodcock rings has always been higher than many other species, this is because most shooters are intrigued about where their birds come from, the BTO will contact you with this detail when your recovery has been processed, furthermore you can keep the ring, it's just the ring number time and location that we need.

I know how shooters value this enigmatic species, it is a wild quarry species and as such we are duty bound to ensure that our shooting is sustainable, we can only do this if we know as much about it as possible, This is where you, as a responsible shooter can help so please report your ringed birds.

I have personally fitted satellite tags and the smaller geo-locators to woodcock on my site here in West Wales. It is conceivable that some of these might have made their way to Ireland so please take a close look at the picture of both sorts of trackers and if a bird you shoot is carrying one of these it is vital that we get them back. Even if they are damaged we can recover the data from the geo-locators and the satellite tags can be refurbished and used again. These should be sent to; GWCT, Burgate Manor, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, SP61EF. For further information on woodcock ringing contact Owen Williams at the Woodcock Network @ [wildscapes\\_2000@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:wildscapes_2000@yahoo.co.uk) or telephone +44 (0)1974 272654.

Elusive and mysterious certainly, but research is revealing some interesting facts.





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

## FISSTA THANKS ALL ANGLERS

Following a very busy period since our AGM, we are delighted that the Minister has granted us a review of the way our regulations which we hope will bring good changes to the anglers lot next season.

Sadly, there is need for our National Executive Council to encourage all politicians to influence the Minister in his work on considering granting more licenses in the various bays around the country which would cause great damage to our salmonid stocks.

### FISSTA REPORT ON ALAB BANTRY BAY HEARING

The great debate on the value of salmon farming in our communities took a new direction on the 14th and 15th of February in the West Lodge Hotel in Gantry, Co. Cork, when Dr Owen Mc Intyre chaired the oral hearing on behalf of Aquaculture Licences Appeals Board (ALAB) who will decide if the 14 appellants raise their various objections have a case or not.

FISSTA has objected to every salmon farming license in Ireland, north and south since a policy review in 1999. This oral hearing into the granting of a licence for a salmon farm in Bantry Bay has now been adjourned for at least a month, after it emerged a technical report relevant to the proceedings had not been circulated to all parties due to an

oversight. The applicant, Marine Harvest, had been granted a licence for the facility off Shot Head and the

second day of the oral hearing was to feature a contribution from the company in which it intended to



FISSTA thank all supporters of our 5 year campaign against the Galway Bay Mega Salmon Farm plan which was withdrawn by Minister Coveney and BIM on December 21st 2015. Their announcement stated the decision to withdraw the application was to comply with new strategy and EU grant aid regulations. This means that future salmon farm applications based on 'a standing stock/ biomass licence' could possibly be bigger than 15,000 tonnes in future in the 46 sites identified along the Wild Atlantic Way. FISSTA continue to lobby the new Government to bring offshore salmon farming on land under the RAS system where pollution and waste management will be monitored and EU regulations enforced.

**PLEASE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OUR CAMPAIGN AGAINST TOXIC SALMON FARMING AND TO PROTECT OUR WILD SALMON AND SEATROUT**



Legend  
\* Potential Aquaculture site  
The 46 potential offshore aquaculture sites as identified in the 'Next Steps' report. (Source: M1, 2006)

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respond to concerns raised by those of us objecting to the development.

After FISSTA and the 12 of the 13 appellants made their verbal submissions to the hearing, Dr Neil Bass proceeded to make a submission on behalf of Marine Harvest, cited a report that involved hydrodynamic modelling of currents in the area and the dispersal rates of sea lice, appellants including An Taisce and the Save Bantry Bay group said they had not seen it.

Dr Bass stated that the company would be “severely disadvantaged” if it could not cite the report to address the concerns raised by those objecting to the project. There was then an outcry from all sides seeking an adjournment so Chairman Dr McIntyre could consult with the board of the Aquaculture Licences Appeals Board (ALAB), following which it was decided to adjourn the hearing for at least four weeks so all parties could read the report, which is over 100 pages in length.

Many of the issues raised were site-specific and highlighted the very sensitive nature of the marine habitat

(and impacts of pesticides and sealice on shellfish, pearl mussel, salmonids) of Bantry Bay marine and tourism economy and this should be valuable to the non localised membership of ALAB who are charged with making the decision.

### **Broader view**

FISSTA decided to reflect a broader view and cited the outcome of a recent international aquaculture special session conference at NASCO in Germany where the FISSTA as an accredited NGO had debated with the International Salmon Farmers Association had representatives of NASCO participating in the session.

The Steering Committee noted the statement made by the representative of ISFA to the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Council of NASCO that the industry is developing rapidly but that advances in relation to minimising impacts of farmed salmon on the wild stocks had not been reflected in the presentations at the Theme-based Special Session.

The Committee notes that since 2013

the Council has retained an item on its agenda entitled ‘Liaison with the Salmon Farming Industry’ specifically to allow for an exchange of information on issues concerning impacts of aquaculture on wild salmon. The Steering Committee recommends that ISFA use this opportunity to provide relevant information to the Council each year commencing in 2017.

### **Need for urgent progress towards the international goals**

As will be clear from the conclusions drawn by the Steering Committee, it considers that there is a need for urgent progress towards the international goals given the latest scientific advice from ICES on possible effects of salmonid aquaculture on wild Atlantic salmon populations, focusing on the effects of sea lice, genetic interactions and the impact on wild salmon production. The response from ICES, which provided new information to update that reviewed at the 2005 NASCO/ICES Symposium,



FISSTA making our views known outside the hearing — Noel Carr, FISSTA Secretary Donegal, Paul Lawton, FISSTA Chairman Cork, Michael O' Keefe, Kerry and Youth Officer FISSTA, Donal O' Doherty, Kerry and FISSTA Treasurer.



concluded that there is substantial and growing evidence that salmon aquaculture activities can affect wild Atlantic salmon, through the impacts of sea lice as well as farm escapees. While both factors can reduce the productivity of wild salmon populations, there is marked temporal and spatial variability in the magnitude of reported effects.

### ***Greatest impact from lice is likely to occur on post-smolts***

The report which can be viewed on [www.nasco.int](http://www.nasco.int) stated that Sea lice are a serious problem for the salmon farming industry. Salmon farms have also been shown to increase the abundance of sea lice in the marine environment and increase the risk of infestation among wild salmon populations, although impacts vary both spatially and temporally. Several studies have demonstrated a link between fish farming activity and sea lice infestations on wild salmonids; however, there are challenges in quantifying effects at the population level, particularly for salmon which exhibit variable survival linked to environmental variables. The greatest impact from lice is likely to occur on post-smolts during the early period of marine migration and therefore the application for a salmon farm at Shot Head in Banty Bay is very pertinent.

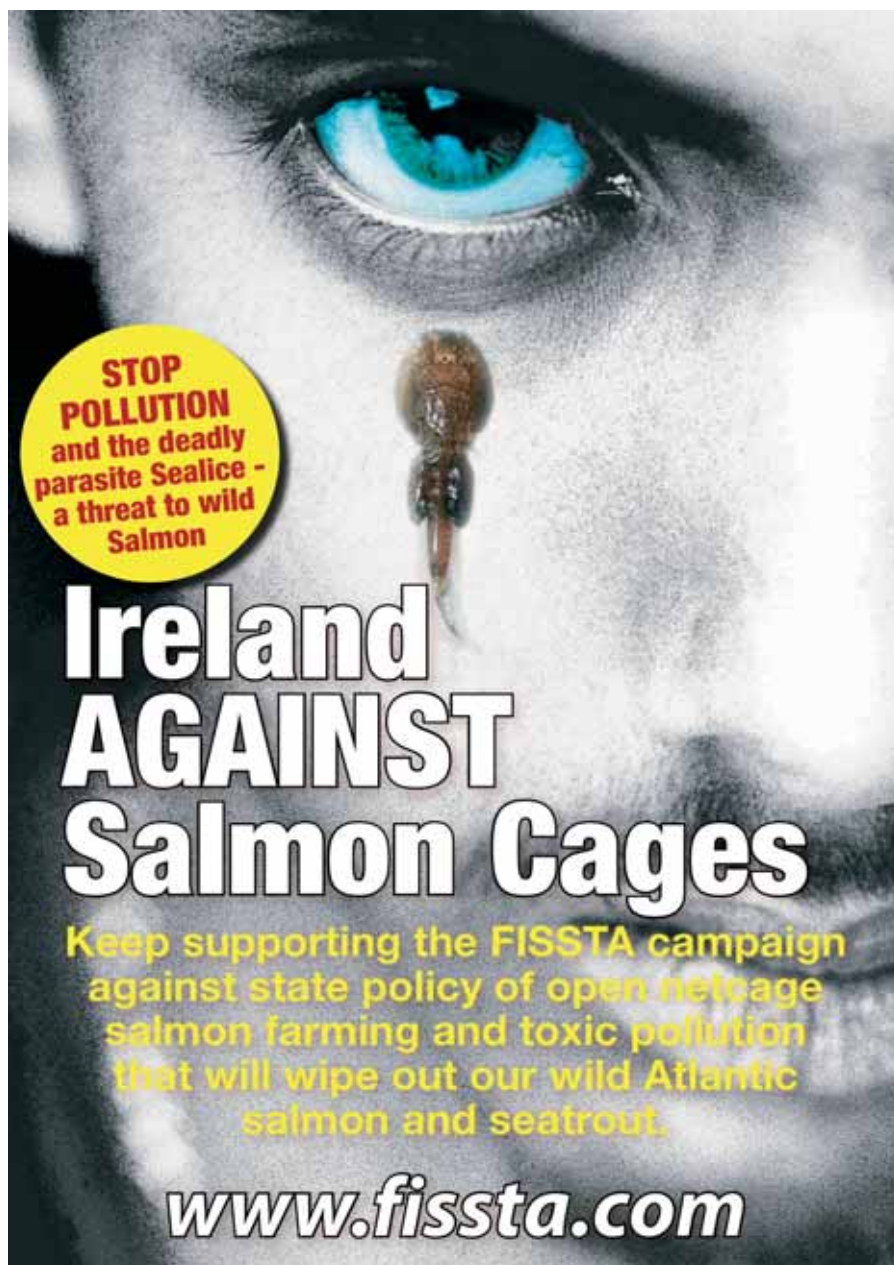
In relation to the 230,000 salmon escape in Bantry Bay, FISSTA cited that ICES also advised that very large numbers of domesticated salmon escape from fish farms each year and escapees are observed in rivers in all regions where salmon farming occurs. While the number varies both spatially and temporally, escapees have comprised 50% or more of the spawning population in some rivers in some years. Farmed salmon display substantial differences to wild salmon in a wide range of fitness-related traits as a consequence of breeding

programmes designed to enhance their performance in commercial production.

A study of the genetic integrity of 125 salmon populations in Norway indicated that 35% of the populations showed no genetic changes, 33% showed weak genetic changes, 7% showed moderate genetic changes and 25% showed large genetic changes as a result of introgression from escaped farmed salmon. In other words, approximately two-thirds of the Norwegian Atlantic salmon populations sampled showed signs of genetic changes, with the highest levels of genetic introgression identified in the fish farming regions along the west coast

of Norway. There is a highly significant correlation between genetic introgression and the long-term average proportion of escaped farmed salmon in the rivers. ICES indicates that introgression has also been detected in other countries with salmon farming and that the consequences of these genetic changes in wild salmon populations are likely to be depression of fitness, decreased overall productivity, erosion of genetic diversity and decreased resilience.

Repeated invasions of farmed salmon in a wild population may cause the fitness of the native population to seriously decline and potentially enter an 'extinction-



**STOP POLLUTION and the deadly parasite Sealice - a threat to wild Salmon**

# **Ireland AGAINST Salmon Cages**

**Keep supporting the FISSTA campaign against state policy of open netpage salmon farming and toxic pollution that will wipe out our wild Atlantic salmon and sea trout.**

**[www.fissta.com](http://www.fissta.com)**



vortex' in extreme cases. Preliminary analyses of non-introgressed and introgressed adult wild salmon from more than 50 populations in Norway suggest that ecological and life-history changes are widespread in Atlantic salmon populations where there has been introgression. This is a very worrying development.

It is envisaged that the adjournment will hold for four or five weeks, when the dates for a new hearing will be advertised. It will also mean that the reconvened hearing will also take place after a judgment is due to be delivered in the High Court relating to an incident from three years ago involving a different fish farm in Bantry Bay area operated by a different company in which 230,000 fish escaped and which was cited by many appellants including the FISSTA submission to the oral hearing.

## **SALMON ANGLING OUTLOOK FOR 2017**

We have campaigned long and hard for a review of the way our rivers are closed and at last our pleas have not fallen on deaf ears. There is growing optimism that our calls for a review in 2017 has been granted and we hope it will entail a good win / win deal for all clubs in time for our 2018 season.

Our salmon and seatrout clubs turn their attention to the future outlook for angling as Sean Kyne, T.D., who is our new salmon Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, gives statutory notice of his Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme Regulations to provide for the management of the wild salmon and sea trout fishery by Inland Fisheries Ireland from 1st January 2017. Sadly, some once great rivers such as the River Slaney is not just closed to Catch and Release but completely closed for 2017 which means that poachers in certain honeypots will not be

troubled with the deterrent of anglers in the future.

We may yet see some reconsideration from the new Minister but despite many appeals to our previous ministers in the past, we have sadly failed to convince them that the best protection of our fisheries is to keep anglers on the rivers albeit for catch and release. We are sadly approaching 95 of the 148 rivers in the Republic of Ireland who will be closed to taking a fish for 2017. To view the new list click on this link [www.fisheriesireland.ie/](http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/)

## **FISHERMEN TO SEEK A RETURN TO DRIFTNETTING**

There has been considerable concern generated by a new film called "Atlantic" by Risteard O' Donnell, as it highlights how our marine resources, particularly fisheries and energy were squandered and has failed to deliver the prosperity that was envisaged when we joined the EEC in the early 1970s. The usual calls are once again being made to open the closed salmon drift netting fishery but FISSTA continue to oppose such a proposal in their ongoing campaign to end draft or estuary netting and open net sea-cages.

Sadly, our authorities seem to cite climate change as the only reason for the salmon decline which our national broadcaster RTE have frequently failed to challenge, and like the BBC, should do a lot better as public service broadcasters, especially when it concerns the environment and health of our nation. "That which you have wasted will not be there for future generations," was famously said by our fellow campaigner, the late Bruce Sandison RIP, an ardent guardian of the environment who lived in northern Scotland. His loss is huge but his spirit will continue to inspire us all in our quest to protect our dwindling resource.

## **NEW FISSTA EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

At our recent AGM in Birr County Offaly, North Atlantic Salmon Fund Chairman Mr. Orri Vigfusson acknowledged our creative campaign against the mega salmon farm application which was withdrawn last December. He encouraged all anglers to continue to keep the very low production tonnage below the FISSTA target of 8,,000 tons against the 200,000 tons plus in Scotland. He urged our delegates to redouble our efforts to fight for the very sport and salmon we have enjoyed in our lives to date.

Sadly, NASF still has its fair share of doubters as we have failed to gain the support to assist in the funding from many of the nineteen salmon states around the Atlantic, who prefer to question the NASF policy on the many buyouts costing millions to the Faroese and Greenland fishermen rather than propose a better alternative, if one had existed. A recent salmon genetic study published in the Faeroes (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0165783616304052>) confirms that 15% of the stocks were of USA and Canadian origin while 84% were European and of this sample, over 37% of the salmon were from UK, Ireland, France and Spain while 62% were of Scandinavian origin.

We can only look forward in 2017 to a new era in international salmon management that will repair the serious damage done to our wild Atlantic salmon stocks. In Ireland, our AGM delegates acknowledged and thanked NASF for buying the protection of our fish in the feeding ground of the North Atlantic for so long and hope that the irresponsible state licensing of netting and salmon farming are halted very soon to allow our wild salmon recover.

## **TIGHT LINES**

FISSTA wishes all anglers a productive new season.



# ANGLING CHAT

*This time we chat with well known angler Mark Tierney about Loughmacrory & Murrins District Angling Association.*

We wanted to hear more about this hugely successful club, located on a NI Water-owned lough that's a public water source of 55 acres, with depths ranging from shallow to forty feet deep.

**How was the club formed and what sort of angling?**

Mark: Loughmacrory & Murrins District Angling Association was formed as an Angling Club in Mid Tyrone back in 2009, by local anglers in co-operation with NIW, Loughs Agency, Loughmacrory Community Development Association, NIEA.

A natural lake with crystal clear water, originally the Loughmacrory Lough was home to brown trout, perch, pike and eels and a decision was made to stock triploid rainbow trout as a measure to protect the wild browns and only rainbow trout could be taken by its members. The club was popular when from its launch and with a committee of 7 active members, was well received



A fine example of our triploid rainbow trout caught by lady member Ruth Arrell. and provided an excellent opportunity for local anglers when river conditions were less than ideal.

The club joined Ulster Angling Federation and Trout Anglers Federation of Ireland (TAFI) and competitive angling was introduced which proved popular especially in 2013 when the club hosted the World

Youth Fly

Fishing Championships which raised the club profile on an international stage. The venue received good comments and LAMDAA earned quite a few accolades from many quarters which made all the effort worth it.

**How is the club managed?**

Mark: It's run on a voluntary basis



LAMDAA committee members with Loughs Agency's Lionel Knobbs celebrating the final event of 43 events they ran that year.





One of our magnificent new angling stands designed for all abilities, training and families.

and most anglers will know how difficult it is to hold on to committee members due to pressures of everyday life. However, in 2014 new members came along and re-invigorated the club, so now with founding members and a committee of 17 people, we saw maybe the biggest turning point since it began. This new committee made a commitment of three years in their respective roles and almost all are still in place, just now coming to the end of the three year stint. This, we believe, is down to our transparency in proceedings with every member knowing what is happening as much as possible.

#### **Can you explain the Club's successful development strategy?**

Mark: In 2014, the Loughs Agency organised an Angling Fair for Loughmacrory with some famous 'Angling Faces' coming along to present instruction and fly tying and the then DCAL Minister, Carol Ni Chuilín and DFM Martin McGuinness, along with many other VIPs, visited the village. The Loughs Agency used the event to launch a Status Report on Loughmacrory and two other local loughs, which showed us our potential.

LAMDAA decided to look to the future and set about creating a plan. A large number of people helped us to implement our future, including Gary Lavery (Club Co-ordinator), Lionel Knobbs (Loughs Agency) and Dr Bethany Sinclair (formerly DCAL) and

Mike McClure (Sport Northern Ireland).

#### **We now find ourselves in 2017 and the club is well known in NI Angling circles - how will you build on this achievement?**

Mark: We had a speaking role in the 2015 NI Angling conference and we received a nomination to send a representative out to Barcelona in 2016 to compare coaching styles in other water sports, which was beneficial to us all and the shared learning will be reflected in the coming years.

There are many reasons for these changes and it probably all started with the Strategic Review of Angling which was launched in 2014 and this document and its recommendations are what we used to create a new look constitution which also included policies from local government such as "Promote Equality and Tackle Poverty and Social Exclusion" (PETPSE) and the inclusion of Section 75 groupings which call on clubs to put special emphasis on attracting groups from all races, ages, gender, sexual preference, political preference, religion, marital status and regardless of physical ability. **LAMDAA has many excellent facilities - is there anything which is unique to the Club?**

Mark: We also have a purpose built casting green measuring 170 ft by 70 ft which is used for training and by members testing rod and lines and comparing with others. We don't know of any other facilities with a specifically

designed casting green and the space is also shared with other users of the lough.

Our constitution is now widely used and adapted by many Angling Clubs in Northern Ireland, has been put through the rigorous tests by various funding bodies and has been accepted as a good example of a governing document.

#### **Have any special training or policies have been put in place to meet today's wide ranging requirements?**

Mark: We also have many policies incorporated like child protection, code of conduct, fair play policy and others which spurred us on to ensure our committee members were also a good example. To date we have 7 Level 1 Game Angling Coaches and 3 Level 2 Game Angling Coaches. We also have 4 X APGAI Ireland Instructors at our disposal when required. All committee members and club volunteers have Access NI clearance, Safeguarding for both juveniles and vulnerable adults and we have a safeguarding officer. We all have frequent water users first aid, cast awards, mental health, disability inclusion and cast awards.

With having a good working committee with properly qualified and trained volunteers, we then had to look at our water itself and look at what is logistically needed changed to make our waters more viable and attractive to new members.

#### **Have you done anything else to enhance the 'angling experience' for everyone?**

Mark: We wanted a site where people could come along and try their hands at a sport which for some, looked impossible for them to try due to maybe having a physical or mental disability, or even a lack of equipment or personnel with the skills or qualifications required to give them the experience.

We applied to many funding groups but most memorable was to Sport Northern Ireland under their Active Awards For Sport fund and we were proud to become the first Angling Club to have success and were awarded the





Loughs Agency's Lionel Knobbs presents Club Secretary Mark Tierney with an award for community angling made to LAMDAA's committee.

full £10,000 allowing us to run 2 week long summer camps, disabled taster days, Families fishing events and ladies days.

In total we completed 43 angling events over the 2015 season and as you can imagine, this tested our commitment to the full and we received recognition from Loughs Agency that year winning the prestigious Community Angling award. We also won a cleaner and greener award in 2014 and are proud of how we can integrate a progressive club which also has a triathlon club sharing our waters and still maintain our waters which are an ASSI (Area of Special Scientific Interest) to a high level.

The Loughs Agency's Sustainable Development Fund also allowed us to create 2 new Angling Stands which are built to a very high standard and were designed using British Disabled Angling Association recommendations, and these new stands allow anglers of all abilities to fish with room for three anglers comfortably at each one. They were also designed to be used as a platform to coach new anglers from and are also heavily used by walkers, photographers, triathlon spectators and

even for wedding photographs!

With this fund, we have recently completed the purchase of a new 30 X 10 foot clubhouse with a fitted kitchen which will be unveiled in time for opening day on the 1st of March. We also have had a new toilet designed which is suitable for anglers with disabilities and again is created using British Disabled Anglers Association

recommendations. These are important elements that were missing from our club and will allow us to maintain an even greater presence in the area and allow us to cater better for ladies, disabled anglers and children in groups of all sizes.

#### **How well equipped is the Club in terms of equipment and trained bodies?**

In the past three years, we have achieved over £40,000 in funding and built up a good amount of angling equipment which we use over and over again at events and we have become very good at applying and achieving funding. Working with groups such as APGAI Ireland and local Angling Clubs has helped us progress no end to gain experience with coaching and organising taster events. In 2016, 7 of the 10 members of the Ulster Junior team were from our club and they won the Inter-Regionals in Killarney for the first time.

#### **Can you sum up the Club's future plans?**

We have ambitious plans to increase our club water from 1 to 3 loughs and we also need more boats including a wheelyboat and a boathouse to protect

them. We also hope to be selected as a venue for the 2018 Commonwealth Games and have been selected to host the Ulster Youth Qualifiers in July this year.

We stock our waters every month with top class triploid trout of varying sizes and we welcome all new members who would like to come and try our waters. In line with our Petpse policy, you can deduct the cost of day tickets from the cost of your season ticket and this is something we have found really successful.

We have hosted regularly in the past and hopefully into the future: Camphill Community Clanabogan; Mencap; The Irish Ladies Fly Fishing Association; Polish Anglers NI; Trout Angling Federation of Ireland and many other club outings. We have had Tyrone TV, Lesser Spotted Ulster visit us and these programmes were aired and well received.

So, come along and give us a try and keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates and upcoming events.

### **Factbox**

Season: 1st of March to 20th of October

Licence: Loughs Agency Foyle Licence required

Tickets: Adult Season- £50, Day- £15, U-18 Season- £10, Day- £5, 18-21 yr old students Season-£30

Bank and boat angling permitted - we have 6X 19ft Sheelin Boats and 3 X 17ft others.

Electric motors only and lifejackets must be worn when using boats.

No U-18's on boats without adult supervision.

All legal methods from boats and bank.

2 rainbow Trout max per angler per day (C&R welcomed)

All pike, perch, brown trout and eels must be returned quickly and carefully

Everyone is welcome in our club and we currently have no restrictive criteria for membership.





# "But — I'm only catching fish for fun!"

Holding a Tope while supporting it.

***Does the Common Fisheries Policy apply to anglers? The simple answer is yes. All aspects of the CFP will apply to recreational anglers. Why shouldn't it?***

We all want fish in the sea. It belongs to everyone. The two main features of the CFP are to have Maximum Sustainable Yield for all stocks by 2020, and of course the 'discards ban' or Landings Obligation.

The two big problems with the recreational sector are that, first and foremost, we have no quota so TACs do not apply. The 'why not?' is a study in itself. One thing to be very clear about at the outset is the definition of a recreational angler. Anyone who sells his catch is not a recreational angler, whether it is a box of mackerel or a bluefin tuna. These are illegal for commercial fishermen and should be treated as such.

The discards ban does not mean that we have to land everything we catch. The commercial fishing industry can

get an exemption for species with high survivability, which is right. The Discards Ban was not set up to kill fish which might otherwise live if put back into the sea. So anglers who catch and release a fish 'to fight another day' are all right to keep doing so (at least that is my interpretation of how it will work).

I do not see anglers killing fish such as sharks, just because they think they have to land everything. This raises another important subject. I know anglers try to be careful when releasing fish to ensure that the fish go back with the best chance of surviving. Sea anglers do not use stainless steel hooks because some species are notorious for swallowing bait, hook, everything, before you know they are on your line, deep hooked fish happen.

***I personally do not subscribe to the barbless hook belief***

I have seen anglers and skippers struggle for ages trying to get the fish unhooked using a variety of tools, before resorting to cutting the line as close to the hook as possible. Stainless steel hooks take a long time to rust out but not the normal hooks used by most, if not all, anglers. I personally do not subscribe to the barbless hook belief. They remove easily but they also go in easier and deeper than barbed hooks. I prefer to just crush the barb down on my hooks rather than use barbless, but there are arguments for and against them. Circle hooks are used by many shark anglers in an attempt to prevent deep hooking. They usually catch in the corner of the fish's mouth and can be removed without too much fuss,



My son Finn holding a nice ray with hands well clear of eyes, gills and spiracles.

However there is a problem: the vast majority of both anglers and commercial fishermen are not aware of the protocols which should be followed to ensure a sea fish survives. I have seen

anglers take a mackerel or small cod from a string of feathers and throw it back in the sea thinking it would grow bigger. In fact the fish will die within a few days. It may swim off strongly but



Returning a huss.

its skin may have been damaged and the water balance within fish has could have been compromised and it will surely die within a few days.

When large trawlers illegally slip a haul of small mackerel, they turn up dead a few days later having been crushed together in the net. Even best practice of shaking the fish from the hook by holding the hook alone results in a swollen jaw for a few days, but the fish will most likely survive. This has been observed in aquariums.

### ***Sharks should always be supported when out of the water***

Sharks, skates and rays are a different case as their skin is tough, but they are very delicate in a different way. Anyone who has seen a photo of a large shark hanging by its tail will notice that it looks odd. This is because the tissues holding its internal organs in place are very weak and they will fall towards the head in this position. These tissues do not need to be strong as the body is normally supported by the water, lifting a shark by the tail can kill it, again perhaps not immediately but it will die. Sharks should always be supported when out of the water. They do survive well if handled correctly. I know that some Environmental NGOs such as the Shark Trust are producing handling protocol information sheets which will be useful to all sectors catching sharks and rays.

I know some who think anglers hold rays too close to the eyes and gills, but I know from experience that the grip anglers use is well forward of these delicate organs. Dead fish are sometime lifted by the eyes by fishermen and fishmongers as the sockets provide a grip, but I have not seen a live fish handled like this, especially one destined to be returned. But chucking a dogfish overboard by slinging it by the tail will kill it.

Back to the C.F.P: The commercial sector is sometimes very 'put out' let's say, by the sight of anglers landing a fish such as cod in an area where they cannot fish for cod. The commercial



sector was happy to put down 40% of bass mortality to recreational anglers. We did not have the figures to refute this at one stage. This figure has been revised to 30% and the European Angler Alliance now have reliable figures of 20% and falling for bass mortality due to angling.

I have been out with guys who want to keep everything they catch. It really sickens me to see someone keep everything and continue to do so after they have caught more than enough fish. I have asked some to stop fishing for mackerel when out on a private boat only to be told: "I freeze them." In fact, I know there is the real chance that many go in the bin. I keep what can be eaten by me and my friends within a day or two. Maybe a few frozen for bait for the future but within reason. It has to be recognised that it is hard for charter skippers to enforce a bag limit unless they all do. Most cannot afford to lose business to another skipper who lets anglers kill what they want.

The discards ban will mean that most likely charter skippers will have to record all fish caught. I cannot see how it could work for individual anglers. But we will have data on catches which can all go to the scientists, which I see as not a bad thing.

My impression is that anglers think we take next to nothing compared to commercial fishermen. Having the data can prove this. I have seen the commercial fishermen frankly refuse to believe that an angler will return a bass he has caught. This impression is not helped when fishermen see recreational anglers putting to sea in boats with boxes of ice for their catches. I stress that these should not be considered recreational anglers.

On a personal note. I have never seen an angler kill a blue shark, tope, huss or skate, although occasionally they keep a ray to eat. I am very proud to say that I played a small part in the introduction of measuring mats to record specimen fish in Ireland. Previously, in order to claim a specimen the fish had to be weighed ashore, which usually meant it died.



Circle hooks are used by many shark anglers in an attempt to prevent deep hooking.



Easy does it - note the careful handhold.

# On The Edge Of Darkness

*Dark grey clouds scud over the steely water surface, the cool easterly wind driving them along and pushing our boat too fast for a comfortable drift. Weak shafts of sunlight break through here and there and rainbows chase the April showers across the lough.*

Nothing stirs in the cold choppy waters as we pull wet flies just to try to keep warm, following the contours where hopefully the trout are cruising. But on a day such as this, they'll probably lay sullenly in deeper water away from the chilled surface.

As evening approaches we pull in to a sheltered headland for a hot brew and as we huddle around the flames of the Kelly Kettle out of the wind, we are both thinking about a hot bath and warm dinner. But we also know that the best chance of sport may come just before dark if that chill wind would just settle.

The sun is low in the sky as we climb back into the boat, this time

armed with dry buzzer patterns in anticipation of a hatch. A sheltered bay is our destination and sure enough the breeze is dropping as we pull in beside a reed bed, the dry broken remnants of last years growth rustling behind us.

Out in front of the boat comes another sound as a trout sucks a hatching buzzer off the surface. Eyes strain to spot the rise but it's too far away, we notice that suddenly it doesn't seem so cold and soon there are buzzers hatching around us, hovering over the boat and landing on the white engine casing. Before long the trout appear and start moving to the buzzers with a distinctive sucking sound and we position the boat to face the last rays of

daylight so we can spot the rises against the glow of the dying sunset, the opportunity will be short and we'll make the best of it!

***A cracking trout feels the hook and bolts for the deep water, peeling line off the reel***

The fish move closer as the light fades and soon they're feeding hard at the edge of the ripple and within easy casting range. A gentle cast drops the flies just inside the ripple and I mark the exact spot as they aren't visible sitting low in the inky surface. A loud suck and small dimple signal the fly has been taken and a firm strike sees the surface erupt as a cracking trout feels the hook and bolts for the deep water, peeling line off the reel as he goes. After several minutes Phil dips the big net over the side and lifts in a beautiful glistening bar of gold, red and black spots gleaming in the last rays of the sunset.

We fish on into the dark, catching and releasing several more classic wild trout before the night turns cold, the buzzers stop hatching and the trout vanish into the dark waters once again. The little boat engine splutters to life



Perhaps it's time for a sedge.





A study in concentration as a fish takes as a handheld torch lights the scene.

and we cross the open waters, the beam from our torch picking up light from a reflective jacket hung up to mark our distant boat birth in the pitch blackness of the night.

### ***If we want to catch big wild trout we've got to follow their feeding pattern***

This type of angling is not for everyone, some don't like being abroad on the water after dark but often the best chance of sport comes in the evening and it's no surprise as that's when the insect hatches tend to take place. Buzzers, caenis and sedges all tend to emerge during the evening during the low light conditions and if we want to catch big wild trout then we've got to follow their feeding pattern. Although it's nice to be at home with the feet up or in a cosy pub as the evening draws in that is often the best time to be on the water and I'd often trade the full days fishing for a couple of hours later in the evening.

Opportunities to find rising fish are often dictated by weather conditions: a nice warm overcast day will often produce daytime sport and it would be nice to be able to take advantage of these conditions. But often we have to make the best of whatever conditions occur during our trip, which often means slogging through poor daytime conditions and the best hope of sport is

as the sun sets.

I find a little psychology applied to the angling goes a long way for me: if I arrive at the water and conditions aren't right I don't knock myself out during the day but save myself for the evening. This way I have a more relaxing and enjoyable day and I'm not burned out by the time the fish start rising. Too many times on the big loughs I've toiled for nothing when the conditions and my instincts told me I was wasting my time. Nowadays, I'd rather save myself for the evening rise as it's far more reliable and productive.

The buzzer is the main player in many evening rises and especially later in the evening, I've noticed that, after caenis and sedge hatches, the trout often switch to buzzers. Even during the start of the spent gnat fishing last year the fish turned to the buzzers later on.

Early in the year the buzzers tend to be dark, black, grey and dark olive and as the water warms then we get the apple greens and lighter colours. There are many imitations which feature the different stages of the buzzer (or Chironomids) life cycle. The epoxy buzzer or wet flies such as Black Pennell or Sooty Olives etc can imitate it's pupal stage whilst Shipman's Buzzers, Shuttlecock Buzzers and small Hoppers imitate the emerging fly and Grizzle Gnats imitate the emerged fly sitting dry on the surface. A unique

phenomenon is the huge Balling Buzzer which imitates a bundle of mating buzzers which occur in prolific waters such as Lough Sheelin and Corrib where the flies can emerge in their thousands!

### ***This seems to be the signal for flies to hatch***

During hot summer weather a similar situation occurs to our first scenario. Again, nothing much happens during the day as the hot sun beats down on the water, but as evening approaches the buzzers, sedges and caenis start to hatch and the trout will be up on the fin searching for them. Often in

summertime it's not worth putting out on the water before nine PM though it's always nice to be able to make time to take in the sights and sounds before the action begins and only experience can tell where the best areas for hatches will be; local knowledge is invaluable.

As always if we find the flies, the fish will already be there. Often if there's a wind during the day around dusk this will drop, the temperature moderates slightly and this seems to be the signal for flies to hatch.

A couple of years ago, I took my old Dad fishing on the west coast in search of the June grilse on the Ballisodare River. As we wound our way through the Leitrim roads we could see that the rain stopped, the gusty wind was dropping and it was turning into a fine evening. I decided to drive on up to Lough Arrow and, after a quick look at



The buzzer is the staple player in the 'evening rise'.



The leopard spotted Lough Arrow brown trout is slipped back into the dark waters.

the enchantingly beautiful Ballindoon Friary and a yarn with Mrs Dodds who provides the boats, we ventured on to the Lough. Dad had never been to Arrow before and as an old Scouter I had to show him Baden-Powell's residence on a peninsula on the Lough before the business of angling began — and it just happens to be a great spot to find a trout or two with wide shallows dropping into deep water. I thought we'd see some Green Peter hatching, but they didn't appear and although a few fish were moving to caenis (anglers curse), they were only on the surface briefly before moving upwind to another location and not offering a chance to cover them.

The sun slid behind the horizon leaving a flaming red and gold back drop to the western sky and as Dad tied on his favourite flies, his trusty Shipman Buzzer patterns, it occurred to me there were some lovely bays along the side of the adjacent island where buzzers abound, so a quick motor over took us over to

the first little bay, creeping in silently on the oars.

### ***Another loud slurp from the dark waters and the rod pulled up into a hoop***

I could hear the buzzers hovering around us in the darkness and a quick glance at the white engine casing showed numbers of them resting on that.

Before long, a loud suck signalled the presence of a trout in front of the boat and Dad dropped the flies into the gloom. All our senses were straining for a sign that the flies had been intercepted. Another loud slurp from the dark waters and Dad's rod pulled up into a hoop as a hefty trout exploded from the surface of the dark waters. The little Orvis reel sang out in the darkness as the fish ran for the deeps. There was a great sense of relief when I eventually lifted the trout over the side of the boat, glistening in the light of my wee head torch. We repeated this in several little bays until the cold descended, the hatch ceased and the catch now included a smashing trout of over three pounds — and we'd seen some a lot heavier than that!

These trips are the essence of angling for me, stunning locations, spectacular sunsets and the possibility of great sport with beautiful wild Irish trout. Our heritage and traditions are certainly worth preserving and protecting, not to mention the experiences and memories to pass on to future generations. And it's hard to beat a spectacular tussle with a wild brown trout on the edge of darkness as well!



There is the possibility of great sport with beautiful wild Irish trout.



# ONE TO REMEMBER AND A FLY CALLED HECTOR

*Let me tell you about a wild trout which I caught when fishing Lough Sheelin with my good friend Gerry Teggart and how I came to fish a fly called The Hector.*

We both love Sheelin and have been fishing there for many years, and on this particular evening we were down to get the last of the season's mayfly fishing. At times last year it had been patchy, mostly due the weather conditions. We had had a cold spring and everything was running a bit late. Mayfly had been hatching, but only in dribs and drabs.

We launched Gerry's boat and proceeded on one of our favourite drifts on a perfect early June evening and saw the flies dancing above the trees as we headed out, with some already falling to the water to lay their eggs and become spent, always an excellent sign. I remember this trip for a few reasons, one being it was the good fish I landed on the new outstanding, 9'6" Marryat Tactical PRO rod for 6/7 lines, a stunning piece of kit for this type of fishing. Of course there was the fact that the trout took one of my favourite dry flies, called the Hector after one of my beloved cats — you can read more about this pattern below — but also everything about this session was just right!

Sometimes fishing is not a numbers game and to be honest I don't even remember if we had many other fish this time. However, the fish I am writing about the company, the setting, the light, everything was superb. The rod was a dream to use and to top all that, in the distance, we could see marvellous wild trout sucking down spent mayfly.

Fishing the dry fly in these massive wild loughs can be frustrating, as often the trout rise out of casting range and no matter how good you are you need to be in the right place at the right time. Your chances can improve fishing over the



The fine trout of the story.



Two anglers afloat on Sheelin.

right depth of water, or finding a wind lane or slick with mayfly and staying with it even into the deeps. These habitually hold the trout's food and are feeding zones.

### ***The fish exploded out of the water***

I remember we positioned ourselves on the edge of such a slick and we saw trout heading towards us. Sometimes you get one chance at trout feeding in the flat water of a slick, a bad cast or a sudden movement or noise on the boat can spook your quarry and your chance is gone and as happened on this occasion, the fish took and exploded out of the water spooking the others that were feeding nearby.

I remember watching my fly setting in the surface after I had cast where I thought a trout was about to take its next mouthful. Suddenly a take, with me raising the rod promptly and hooking the fish. "Gerry, I'm in!" I shouted, actually slightly ridiculous as Gerry was only sitting a few feet away at the back of the boat.

The trout shot into the air, like a gymnast with a tight leotard, crashed back into the depths, heading for the horizon. If this happens to you on an Irish Lough, then let your fish run. I have seen many fish lost by anglers



Flies dance above the trees.

trying to stop a large one running on 6lb or 8lb tippet.

On this occasion, the fish did not seem to be slowing down as line screamed from the reel and I was down to the backing. I shouted to Gerry: "Start the engine, I think we need to follow this one!" As I gained some line back unto the reel, the trout turned and started running directly towards us with me then stripping line back as fast as I could to keep the tension on. Now I was shouting even louder stop the (colourful language) engine. It's at times like this that you realise boat fishing can be a real team effort.

After some more deep and powerful runs, though thankfully around the boat,

the fish eventually tired and the net was slipped under the wonderful trout, with its heavily spotted flanks gleaming in the last of the setting sun.

After a quick snap taken on Gerry's phone, we slipped the beauty back to its domain and we both smiled and realised, at times how lucky we are to be fly fishers on one of Ireland's gems.

Now, this was not the biggest trout I have ever caught by a long way, but for the 2016 season it was one I will always remember.

### ***The Hector***

Every year for almost thirty years I have fished Lough Sheelin. It's a lough that can be at times a challenge to say the least, but it is one that will always produce great fish and for that reason, and many others, I have always loved it. The cream of the fishing normally is the Mayfly, from May to late June depending on weather conditions. Many anglers from all over the world have come to this famous water, hoping she is on song, and fly fishers at times swap patterns and this was how I came across this pattern first, or rather how I started dressing something similar as I lost the original.

The fly was given to me by an English or perhaps Welshman (please forgive me if you are reading this). One of my fishing clubs was on their annual club outing when most of the society spends five days on the Lough each year at Mayfly time. I had a couple of nice



Nature's perfect specimen.





The Hector is dressed on Partridge Ideal Nymph size 10 or 12 - 10 is a perfect size for Sheelin.

fish on wets, which I had caught on Green Dabblers, one was a nice fish around 4lb, so I was feeling pretty pleased with myself as I came in off the lough for dinner. I met a few anglers at the jetty, and from their accents they were a mix of English and Welsh. One told me he had not caught anything, saying it was his first time on a big Irish Lough and was finding it hard going as he normally fished small very well stocked fisheries at home. I felt sorry for him as a Lough like Sheelin can beat the best of anglers, so I decided to give him a few of the Green Dabblers that had worked for me, maybe they would bring him some luck. I gave him a few more to give his companions, as I thought at the time they had no fish either.

But I was wrong. All but one of the ten tourists had fish up to 8lb, a fantastic result, a lot better than our club, who had fished here for years. One of the group then told me to try one of his flies. He said he had been lough fishing

in Ireland since he was a boy and had just come from Mask and Corrib to fish Sheelin until the Mayfly was over. He opened his large wooden fly box and there were rows and rows of this fly. I thought it looked nice but a little strange and instantly thought it was a wet pattern because of the French Partridge hackle wound at the front, very typical of many Irish wet gosling style patterns. This was what they had all got fish. He fished it ginked up which really surprised me. I thanked him and put it in my box. We were going home that next morning, but I knew I was coming down in a week or so and would try it then.

Looking at the pattern on the way home, I noticed the tail was dressed with fur though I was unsure what it was. I showed it to other knowable anglers and fly dressers but they were also unsure, it was a soft but not too soft a material and dyed I almost Iron Blue. I thought it was maybe fox, artic runner perhaps, but when I checked in my fly

tying room it was not. I dressed a few with feather fibres and thought they might work.

Back to Sheelin to fish, again with Gerry Taggart, and I decided to try the fly I'd been given. To my joy it worked and landed me two lovely trout, the best was around 5lb. Then I lost the fly, I'm not sure how, and the ones I had dressed with feather fibre tails didn't catch a fish. Now I'm not saying they won't, just they never did on that occasion.

### ***Frantically looking for something like fur to make the tail***

Fast forward a year later and it's early May. My thoughts turn again to the big loughs and Sheelin with its large trout and its mayfly hatch. I start thinking about that pattern that was given to me and the two nice trout I landed on it. I rush into my messy fly tying room and start to plunder around looking for the materials to make it and also frantically looking for something like the fur to make the tail of the fly. I find everything to make the pattern, or at least something like the first pattern apart from the tail.

Then as luck would have it, up onto my lap jumps one of our cats, my wife and I have three and we have always had cats. I stroke him, he purrs and looks at me. I must admit he is a wonderful cat and I am extremely fond of him. However, I noticed the hair along his back looked perfect for the tail of the fly, so I decide to carefully give him a little trim. Just enough to make four flies and little enough so my wife would not think that her cherished Russian Blue called Hector had been given a haircut!

I gently took a piece of the priceless hair and cut it away, he really did not seem to mind though he did stop purring and maybe I imagined it, but he seemed to give me a disgruntled look. Anyway that is why we now call this wonderful pattern The Hector, after our cat. My friends say that next year wee Hector will need a jumper as I will have used all his fur, but there is no way that's



This glistening beauty is just about to be returned.  
going to happen!

**Hook:** Partridge Ideal Nymph CZF size 10 or 12 (the ten is a perfect size for Sheelin mayflies)

**Tail:** Russian Blue Cat back hair (please do not harm your pets or other peoples they are loved) If this is not

available. I would advise grey squirrel dyed Iron Blue or Black.

**Rib:** Very fine silver wire, this is to stop the trout teeth from ripping the fly apart.

**Body:** Pearly Mylar  $\frac{3}{4}$  then Veniard Glister Dubbing, Peacock Black.

**Hackles:** A good badger dry fly cock hackle not too long and wound over the dubbing. Then a natural French Partridge.

The flies really looked the part with Hector's fur tails and they have proven their effectiveness landing some great fish from Sheelin. Tight lines for 2017. *Fishing Matters PRO-Staff, Partridge Pro Team and Marryat Fly Rods Pro Team, Game Angling Consultant, Stevie Munn is a fully insured and qualified fishing guide, writer and qualified game angling instructor in fly casting and fly tying. He has appeared in many angling books, magazines and DVDs and gives casting demonstrations at angling events all over the world. He has grown up fishing on rivers and loughs of Ireland where he often guides. He runs teaching courses in Ireland and hosts groups to fish in Norway, Argentina and other countries. Email [anglingclassics@aol.com](mailto:anglingclassics@aol.com) or visit [www.anglingclassics.co.uk](http://www.anglingclassics.co.uk) for more information.*



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# Terrier, Lurcher and Whippet Show Roundup

## *Dessie Mackin's Annual Christmas Dog Show 2016*

Bannvale House Hotel is a beautiful Old World Hotel, sitting in the lap of the County Down countryside between Gilford and Banbridge. This idyllic landscape was the venue for Dessie Mackin's Annual Christmas Dog show on Saturday 17th December.

This dog show is a special get together for all canine enthusiasts at Christmas. It is a welcome break from the trials and tribulations of Christmas shopping leading up to the festive season. As always, there was a good turnout on a cold winter afternoon. The



Whippet of the year went to Janet Duke with Oscar Lurcher of the year went to Kirsty Harpur with REGAL Strong Dog of the year Tom Barry with Shamgar.



(Right)  
Overall  
Champion  
Whippet and best  
in Show and  
Qualifer for the 5  
Nations Whippet  
Championship at  
Shane's Castle  
2017 - Leeroy  
McCullough with  
Tizer.



(Left)  
Champion  
Lurcher and  
Qualifer for the  
5 Nations at Birr  
Castle 2017 - Lisa  
Beggs with  
Joker.





(Above)  
Overall Champion  
Terrier and Qualifer  
for the 5 Nations at  
Shanes Castle 2017 -  
Sam White with  
Merlin.

atmosphere was electric, and full of Christmas cheer. As we all know Christmas is a very happy time, but it also can be a very sad and lonesome time. This festive day out before Christmas helps lift this mantle, brings cheer in abundance, and enables us to leave our cares behind, and learn to smile again, if only for a day.

#### Results:

Overall Champion Whippet and Five Nations Qualifier at Shanes Castle 2017

Leeroy McCullough with Tizer

Overall Champion Lurcher and Five Nations Qualifier for Birr Castle 2017 Lisa Beggs with Joker

Overall Champion Terrier and Five Nations Qualifier at Shanes Castle 2017 Sam White with Merlin

Overall Champion Strong Dog Mark Holmes with Buster

Overall Champion Strong Dog Pup Davy Boyd with Albert.

Overall Best in Show and Show Champion 2016 Leeroy McCullough with Tizer

Whippet of the Year Janet

Duke with Oscar

Lurcher of the Year Kirsty Harpur with Regal

Strong Dog of the Year Tom Barry with Shamgar

Children's Handling Class  
Dakota Mercer with Miss Triclone.

Overall Champion Puppy Sam White with Vic

The Christmas Show always has a presentation for Country Sports Person of the Year, and this year was no exception. The accolade this year went to Leanne Barry. Many Congratulations Leanne.

Many thanks to the judges: Whippets/Lurchers, Charlene and Michelle Rafferty/Terrier, Strong Dogs, Peter Conn. Judging is not an easy remit at any time, but a job well done by all. None of this would be possible without the hard work and dedication of the man himself, Dessie Mackin. Although Dessie was slightly incapacitated due to a recent operation, his show was a resounding success, and I look forward to more of the same in 2017.



(Right)  
Overall  
Champion  
Puppy Sam  
White with Vic.



# DOG SHOW CALENDAR 2017 SEASON

Sunday 2nd April	Tommy Cullen's Dog Show and Race Day.
Sunday 23rd April	Carnew Show Wicklow (Alan and Tracy Crosby's Show) Carnew, Co Wicklow
Sunday 30th April	Rockview Harriers Annual Hound, Terrier, and Lurcher Show, Seven Houses Coursing Ground, Danefort, Co Kilkenny.
Sunday 7th May	Golden Vale annual dog show Sunday 7th May, Clonakenney, Co Tipperary.
Sunday 7th May	Cuchlann Working Terrier Club, Gilford, Co Down
Sunday 14th May	DWTC Dog show and Race Day, Co Armagh.
Sunday 14th May	West Wexford Harriers Dog Show
Sunday 21st May	Mourne Dog Show and Race Day (Kieran Young's Show)
Saturday 27th May	Northern Ireland Country Sports Fair, Scarva House, Scarva
Sunday 28th May	Northern Ireland Country Sports Fair, Scarva House, Scarva
Sunday 4th June	North Armagh Working Terrier Clubs Dog Sunday 4th June
Sunday 11th June	Shannagh Working Terrier Club Dog Show and Race Day Sunday 11th June

## **IRISH GAME FAIR & FINE FOOD FESTIVAL, SHANES CASTLE, ANTRIM**

**Shanes Castle, Antrim, Saturday 24th June 2017**

**Shanes Castle, Antrim, Sunday 25th June 2017**

Sunday 2nd July	The Wicklow Lurcher, Terrier and Whippet Club's 5th Annual Dog Show, Rathnew Co Wicklow (David Dickinson's Show)
Sunday 9th July	Jed Donagh's Dog Show and Race Day There will be Lurchers / Working Terriers / Whippets / Ferrets and Racing
Sunday 9th July	Coolnakilla Harrier Club Dog Show and Sheep Dog Trials, Sunday the 9th July 17 at Rathcormac, Co Cork
Sunday 16th July	West Meath Working Terrier Dog Show and Race Day
Sunday 16th July	Cloyne Harriers Dog Show, Cloyne, Co Cork
Sunday 13th August	Williams Donnell's Working Dog Show.

## **IRISH GAME & COUNTRY FAIR AND FINE FOOD FESTIVAL,**

**BIRR CASTLE, BIRR, CO OFFALY**

**Birr Castle, Saturday 26th August 2017**

**Birr Castle, Sunday 27th August 2017**

# A 'Lady' of the Canine World

Lady by name and lady by nature, this sums up the winning combination of a beautiful Bull Cross lurcher born and bred in Lurgan, Co Armagh. Avid doggie man Mickey Quinn eyed Lady in Marty McCartan's kennels, love at first sight comes to mind and the rest is history.

From a very early age Lady showed great potential in the show ring, racing and in the field and went on to win many cups and trophies.

Lady's winnings in the show ring and racing circuit go back a long way and below is a roll of honour of just some of them:

Northern Ireland Champion of Champions Lurcher 2013 at Artigarvin, Strabane;

32 counties Champion of Champions bull cross racing 2013 and 2014 at Artigarvin, Strabane;

32 counties Champion of Champions lurcher 2014, Artigarvin. Strabane;

32 counties Champion of Champions Dog of the year 2014 Artigarvin, Strabane;

Montalto Champion of Champions Lurcher 2014, Ballynahinch; and many more championships too numerous to mention.

Lady's proud owner Mickey Quinn just adores his winning bull cross lurcher. Whether it's snowing or raining, Mickey only has to mention show or field and Lady's ears prick up, and she's into the trailer and on her way to her next venture.

In between the seasons, lady gave birth to nine beautiful puppies, who are now following in their mother's footsteps, showing great potential, and have already proved they are a chip of the old block, with siblings Hoss and Lance winning overall puppy championships and Hoss winning his first adult show champion award at 14



Mickey Quinn with Lady.

months.

No doubt Lady and her siblings will go on with their winning streak for a long time to come. Definitely an all rounder and very definitely one to watch down the line.

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# Mafeking Siege - An Insider's Report

*I was extremely fortunate to secure the typewritten copy of a private diary kept between October 1899 and January 1900 during the siege of Mafeking. It is a vivid description of life and death.*

Most people are familiar with South Africa's 2nd Boer War from 1899 to 1902 including the sieges of Ladysmith, Kimberley and Mafeking that took place during the conflict. The photographer's art, well established by the turn of the 20th century has provided a fascinating record of the campaign, terrain, and conditions endured by both sides.

Many books on the subject have been published although few authored by actual participants are still in circulation today. In 2007, I was extremely fortunate to secure the typewritten copy of a private diary kept between October 1899 and January 1900 during the siege of Mafeking.

Following a 10-day hunting safari that year, my wife and I were staying on in Johannesburg for a few days when a friend offered to arrange a visit to a recently constructed interpretive centre in the grounds of a long established convent second-level school. We decided to avail of the offer because the building was close to an art gallery that

we were planning to visit.

This new centre contained a museum which held, among many other items, a collection of artefacts gathered during the siege of Mafeking and stored by the nuns since the early 1900s. In the midst of medical kit, binoculars, lanterns, uniforms, coins, et al was a bound typewritten document entitled "Journal of the Siege of Mafeking" — an unpublished journal kept by Mother Mary Stanislaus of the Mercy Convent in Mafeking. The diary was discovered by Boer War Historian, M.C. Hibbard in 1966, who produced the typewritten copy and presented it to the Order. It had remained in storage until the new interpretive centre opened.

## **Less than 2000 British soldiers held Mafeking**

Briefly, a 5000 strong Boer force commanded by General Piet Cronje surrounded Mafeking, held by a British force of less than 2000 men commanded by Colonel Robert Baden-Powell. In

arranging defences in and around the town, Baden-Powell informed the Superior, Mother Mary Teresa, that he was commandeering strategic buildings including the Mercy Convent school, which at that particular time housed nine Irish nuns as well as five boarders. The school had just successfully dealt with a short outbreak of Typhoid which may have influenced the Colonel's decision to designate the building as a hospital.

Hostilities commenced within a matter of days, resulting in casualties arriving at the convent for care and nursing. An army medical team was stationed there to deal with surgical procedures. The A4 30-page typed diary mentions Baden-Powell's frequent visits on almost every second page, indicating that he was a constant visitor during attacks, counter attacks accompanied by shelling from both sides which were daily occurrences.

The diary contains regular entries from 11th of October until November 5th 1899, after which they become less frequent as the siege intensified. Tuesday, November 8th records "two shells" hitting the convent destroying the piano and furniture in the Parlour which up to then had been considered the safest room in the building.

## **Hunger, cold, lack of many basics including medical supplies took their toll**

The following day "a large shell struck the hospital," passing through the mortuary and damaging one of the wards — although none of the patients were injured. The same day reports that



The Long Tom cannon which shelled Mafeking.



called out, nurses hastened to their posts. Breathlessly, all awaited the expected attack, but as the day wore on tension relaxed. Night fell. All retired except those on watch. No fighting that day.

Saturday, 14th October

Firing from the enemy's lines began at 5 a.m. Troops went out to meet them. The battle lasted until 9 a.m. The British were outnumbered twenty to one yet the victory was theirs. They could not pursue the enemy to a complete rout because of the fewness of their numbers. Two men were killed, and eight wounded. The wounds were not serious. The men were brought to the dressing stations and later to the hospital.

The ambulance was fired on when the orderlies went to bring in the bodies of the dead, though it was flying the Red Cross flag, and carrying it conspicuously on the sides. The orderlies were of course, unarmed and had to return without executing orders. In the evening Cronje sent a message to the Colonel asking for the surrender of the town, within forty eight hours or it would be shelled. The Colonels' reply was "We are Britishers". An apology was also sent for firing on the ambulance. The excuse that it was not recognised was considered a flimsy one.

An excerpt from the Mafeking Siege Journal.

"the Colonel sent a strong letter to the Dutch expressing his views on the shelling of the convent and hospital". Shelling was but one of the many privations suffered by occupants of Mafeking – hunger, cold, lack of many basics including medical supplies took their toll.

Thereafter the diary entries become even more infrequent due to the increase in numbers of wounded and the ensuing workload. Trenches had been dug by local people enabling doctors, nurses, nuns and patients to take cover during heavy shelling. Christmas Day 1899 is described as "dull, sultry, calm" until a thunder and lightning storm broke out "which made us shudder". The second last sentence states that "all were wet, soaking wet and muddy" indicating that the trenches must have been in use. The Christmas day entry concludes with: "Lady Sarah Wilson sent a bottle of Port wine that we might unite with the rest of the world in festivity." This was the final entry dated on a specific day.

The following entries headed "January 1900" include the report of a December 26th assault by the British defenders on Game Tree Fort, led by Captain Fitzclarence. The 100-man force lost "three officers and twenty-one rank and file killed – Captain Fitzclarence and twenty-two rank and

file were wounded". Mother Mary Stanislaus contracted "a fever" and was still recovering when the siege was lifted in May 1900. At some point in early 1900 Lady Sarah Wilson went walking and was captured by the Boers – her release "was negotiated by Col. Baden-Powell".

***Frequent targeting of the convent by the Boers' "long gun"***

The journal includes numerous letters of support received by the nuns including one on 17th March 1900 from H. Goold Adams enclosing £19, two shillings and nine pence to help celebrate St. Patrick's Day. Dated April 30th, a further letter from Baden-Powell contained £98-15-0, proceeds of a raffle held in aid of the Sisters of Mercy. It is not clear if the raffle was subscribed by the soldiers, towns-people or both. Numerous anecdotes are included about narrow escapes with the town being laced by Maxim machine-gun fire and the frequent targeting of the convent by the Boers' "long gun."

Several nuns were injured during the siege by shelling and some had narrow escapes from rifle fire when moving around outside on errands of mercy. Structural damage to the buildings was considerable and tongue-in-cheek Mother Mary Teresa sent a bill for

compensation to the British High Command. The account was paid in full and at a later date the Mother Superior was awarded the Royal Red Cross by Queen Victoria.

The entire document is a vivid description of life and death throughout the siege of Mafeking which to my knowledge has never appeared anywhere other than the typed version by historian M.C. Hibbard. Given Baden-Powell's use of young boys for scouting purposes during the siege and subsequent establishment of The Boy Scouts movement, I sent a copy to Scouting Ireland for their archives. Baden-Powell was stationed in The Curragh during his military career and is buried in Kenya where he had lived for several years following his retirement.

An account of one Boer's war experiences is recorded in an excellent book first published in 1929, *Commando*, by Deneys Reitz, 17 years old at the time of the Mafeking siege. Reitz was a son of former Orange Free State President Francis Reitz. Following some hair-raising escapades during the Boer War and meeting a prisoner named Winston Churchill, the young Reitz was riding towards Mafeking with a large commando to bolster Boer forces there when a message was received ordering



Colonel Robert Baden-Powell. South Africa 1896.



their immediate return to Johannesburg. Unknown to the riders, a number of British cavalry units were patrolling the final 100 miles they were due to cross. Had that recall not occurred the course of history might have been different?

At some point during the war, while raiding a British camp Reitz shot and wounded an enemy Officer, a Major Vyvyan whose name appears several times in Mother Mary Teresa's Mafeking Journal. Reitz spoke to the wounded Officer and took possession of a nearby Lee Metford Rifle, leaving his old Mauser behind. The Boer's rifle had been presented to him by President Paul Kruger when on his way to war. Vyvyan held onto the Mauser and brought it back to England. Reitz later served as a Colonel during the WW1 German campaign in South West Africa and following a political career he was eventually appointed South African High Commissioner in London. An unexpected caller carrying a long parcel wrapped in brown paper arrived at his

#### Tuesday, 17th October

No water reached the town from the reservoir this morning. The supply has been cut off by the enemy. Fortunately three of the pumps in town are supplied from other sources which are almost inexhaustible.

#### Wednesday, 18th October

All quiet the whole of this day also. The soldiers are busy preparing fortifications. The rooms struck were photographed by several correspondents. The Colonel sent men to lay a pipe to the Convent. This gave us an ample supply of water without our having to leave our own grounds.

#### Friday, 20th October

A dispatch from Cronje reached the Colonel today. "A large gun coming from Pretoria. Shelling to re-commence on Monday." The Colonel set natives to dig trenches in several parts of the town. These are 5½ ft. deep, 6 ft. wide, and long enough to accommodate the number allotted to each. The trench or shelter prepared for the Sisters is in the Hospital grounds, which adjoin the Convent. It is 50 ft. long and connected with the Convent by an open trench or passage, deep enough to conceal a person passing through it. The actual shelter is roofed with corrugated iron, on which are heaped sand, bags and clay. The air and light came through unglazed openings at the top of the sides. Into the shelters, all are obliged to go as soon as the alarm sounds.

The Colonel says, "Let the Boers destroy the houses; it is easy to rebuild them, but we must save the

More grim reading from the Journal.

office in 1943 — a Lord Vyvyan. The visitor reminded the mystified Reitz where they had previously met. Thereupon he unwrapped the Mauser with the comment "perhaps you will

recognise this" — returning the old rifle to its owner whose name was carved on the stock. According to the most recent information available, the Mauser still shoots well today.

# COURTLOUGH

## SHOOTING GROUNDS



### Courtclough Shooting Grounds

was established in 1996 by former Irish Olympian Richard Flynn and his son William also an International grade shooter and Irish team member.

Since its formation in 1996 Courtclough has expanded to become Ireland's premier, shooting ground, offering disciplines such as Down the line, Olympic Trap, Automatic Ball Trap, Skeet, Sporting, Fitasc and Compak shooting. All shooting are fully covered in away from the elements of the weather, which makes us an ideal venue all year round.

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# Mid-Asian Ibex Hunt, Kyrgyzstan

*Riding with Kyrgyz nomads on the Old Silk Road for ten days, sleeping in caves, drinking horse milk and surviving on basic rations would prove to be both a mental and physical challenge. A year in the planning, this extraordinary trip would eclipse anything I had done before.*

We saddled up and rode out for eight hours to the core hunting area called Moldo Bel.

I relish the chance to hunt animals living on the edge of their instincts in their natural environment. For me, this is tremendously exciting and I have consequently visited some fascinating places I would otherwise have never been to. Kyrgyzstan represented the most exotic destination I had ever planned to hunt.

Whilst physically up to it, hopefully the case for some years to come, I have found great enthusiasm for mountain hunting. Whilst high in the mass of rock, drops and danger, it is possible to hunt scores of strikingly different goat capra and sheep ovis species in almost every mountain range of the world. Incredibly, there are around 40 species of the capra genus to hunt worldwide including eight sub-species of chamois and 14 sub-species of ibex. And not to be outdone, there are 46 different subspecies of the ovis genus to hunt. This means for an adventurous chap like myself, with goat and sheep species combined, I will have the chance to hunt differing species around the globe until my knees give up.

Kyrgyzstan, officially the Kyrgyz Republic, is located in central or middle Asia. Landlocked and mountainous, Kyrgyzstan is bordered by Kazakhstan to the north, China to the east, Tajikistan to the southwest and Uzbekistan to the west. Formerly a Soviet state, independence was declared in August 1991. The country is now culturally diverse with clear influence from the

western world, its immediate geographic neighbours as well as its Soviet past, amusingly highlighted to me by the enormous selection of vodkas in every petrol station. With political corruption rife and a heated bun fight between China and Russia over the abundant mineral resources hidden within the mountains, Kyrgyzstan faces some major challenges in the coming



These charming structures are the traditional dwellings of the nomads in central Asia.





The next four days were full of sightings, wild goose chases and physical exertion but no real chances.

years. Be that as it may, the country, although ending in 'stan,' is a safe and moderate Muslim republic with no more risk to foreign travellers than a trip to anywhere in Eastern Europe or Turkey.

My hunting expedition to Kyrgyzstan was with the possible bounty of an unusual and beguiling trophy, the spectacular mid-Asian ibex (*capra sibirica alaiana*). These knuckle-horned, bearded beasts live at high altitude in relatively low numbers in the mountain ranges of mid-Asia including the Tien Shan Mountain range in Kyrgyzstan on the western border of China. Ibex are ruminant ungulates and the Mid Asian sub-species are the largest of all with magnificent horns sweeping back to their saddles in an impressive and majestic curve. It is possible to obtain hunting permits for them in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan as well as Kyrgyzstan. There are minor differences in body size and horn length within these ex-Communist republics with the largest horned animals being regularly harvested in Kyrgyzstan. Good length horns can measure 41 to 45 inches; with the very best exceeding 50 inches. The hunting season varies by country, but is generally around September through to February.

***The tricky situation was being in Turkey without the necessary firearm permit***

My indirect flight to Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, may as well have

been via hell instead of Istanbul. Flying with firearms can sometimes be a bind and this was one of those times. The bright check-in staff at Stanstead Airport forgot to link my bags and rifle to my final destination. This meant leaving Istanbul airside, applying for a visa to enter Turkey just to collect my bag and rifle from the baggage carousel. Once reunited, I was in the tricky situation of being in Turkey without the necessary permissions or permit for a firearm. With some serious pleading, I just managed to get onto my next flight. This episode was one of stress and angst but in a funny stoical way, it did add to the beginning of my adventure.

It was dark when I landed with my cargo into Bishkek. I had arrived in the early hours, jet lagged to the hilt.

Kyrgyzstan is six hours ahead of Europe and flying east is always painful for me. This coupled with my Istanbul horror and no sleep on the plane, completely wiped me out. The friendly Kyrgyz Customs officers cleared my rifle with ease and I had finally arrived gun and all. I was met at arrivals by my cheerful young interpreter called Asman and his boss, the hunting outfitter Rinat. We set off for a further 10-hour journey southeast towards the higher peaks. With nothing in the dark gloom to keep them occupied, my heavy eyes yielded to my tiredness and I finally drifted off.

A few broken hours later, daylight thwarted any further ideas of rest. I came round but was happy to do so. Some dramatic scenery met me, the likes of which I had never seen before. The potholed road snaked a steady gradient rising along the base of a valley. The visual end point was a pass between some mountains on the far horizon awkwardly nestling between two jagged mountains. Arid and parched scrub covered the valley walls with weary looking grasses desperately holding on. Every so often, we would pass some skeletal cattle on the verge seeking out growth that had not yet been sucked of its nourishment. Near the cattle, solitary yurts would stand with gently smoking chimneys. These charming structures are the traditional dwellings of the nomads in central Asia.



The most promising sighting of a mature ibex came on the morning of the sixth day.



One guide's rifle had certainly seen action.

I suddenly felt a long way from home with my only reference being photographs from National Geographic magazine.

After seven hours, our first proper port of call was Naryn, a small city at the foothills of the Tien Shan mountain range. We were stopping to collect my hunting permit and license issued by the Kyrgyz hunting federation based there. The government closely controls the hunting of Mid-Asian ibex in Kyrgyzstan. This control ensures the animals are managed effectively for the overall benefit of the species and not commercial gain. Paperwork in order, we headed the last 3 hours to base camp

on roads better classified as basic dirt tracks. The final half an hour in the Landcruiser sent us along a dry melt water riverbed littered with boulders that gave the suspension a good work out.

### ***Base camp and greeted with a frenzy of activity***

Finally, I caught glimpse of some acid green buildings perched in a clearing with towering rock faces surrounding them on all sides. Drawing closer, I could make the structures out as two old railway carriages with the bogies propped up on sleepers and the wheels removed. This was base camp.



Undetected, I was able to select the most mature from the group.

Our approach was greeted with a frenzy of activity and the camp boss, cook and taxidermist all came out of one of the cabins to help unload my bags into my overnight carriage lodgings.

A check of zero was crucial with shots at ibex rarely less than 250 yards. The echoing booms of a .300 win mag signalled to my five nomadic guides that I had arrived in camp. Curious to meet me, they galloped on horseback from their yurts further up the valley to the makeshift range. Dressed in a strange mixture of traditional wool felt clothing and Western tracksuits, their weathered faces beamed with gold-toothed smiles. They were warm and gentle-natured and absolutely fascinated by my high-tech equipment.

Annually the nomads move from the lower ground to the luscious valleys higher up in the mountains in the spring after the snow has melted. They remain there with their flocks and herds until October when the cold weather returns. Of the 5.2 million people that populate Kyrgyzstan, 10 per cent still live in this basic and straightforward way. The lack of internet, telephone, credit cards and processed food means they live in blissful simplicity where providing food for their families and keeping wolves away from livestock are their only daily concerns.

The nomads had brought with them a stocky dapple grey horse, which was to be my steed throughout the trip. Named Kyok-at, meaning 'horse the colour of the sky,' the young gelding was highly experienced at traversing steep mountains, as were all of the horses the nomads used. For this type of terrain, it is impossible to use anything but horses – vehicles, however sophisticated – just would not cut it.

Low with jet leg but high on excitement, I struggled to sleep at all





A long haul.

the night before we started hunting. Despite taking the anti-altitude sickness drug Diamox, I was already feeling the adverse effects of being at 9,000ft. I was experiencing sporadic pins-and-needles in my lips and feet but felt confident that the tablets would off-set any further symptoms that might cut short my adventure.

We saddled up and rode out for eight hours to the core hunting area called Moldo Bel, which took us through yet more breathtaking scenery. In fact, it made landscapes featured in *The Lord of the Rings* look frankly pedestrian. Along our route my guides took turns to scout, looking at the higher reaches of the cliffs for ibex. By mid-morning we had seen our first group of females, which showed the promise of this area. Each day, the hunt followed the same pattern of scanning from a lower level then riding above to hunt down to them. Ibex are never naturally predated from above and when pushed will always run higher, so our hunting technique made total sense.

### ***The overnight temperature dropped to -10 degrees***

By the end of the first day's hunting, we had reached a high plateau where we made camp for the night in a cave. Our evening meal consisted of cold tinned

sardines and dry pitta together with hot chai, a type of Kyrgyz tea. This basic diet was all that was available until we bagged our prize and some more interesting protein became available. The overnight temperature dropped to -10 degrees testing my mettle when the call of nature meant I had to leave the comfort of my sleeping bag at 3am.

The next four days were full of sightings, wild goose chases and physical exertion but no real chances. Although beautiful, the high altitude environment was hostile. We were living on our wit's edge and our lives were in the hooves of our steeds. A devastating fall was only a small slip away. Thankfully, the horses and nomads gave me extreme confidence in their ability.

The most promising sighting of a mature ibex came on the morning of the sixth day. Three animals were resting in the shadows on a ledge some metres beneath the skyline of the mountain. It would take all day to get above the trio of bearded beasts, but this would offer a mighty firing position if only the ibex would stay in position.

To get to the top of this mountain was without doubt the hardest thing I have ever put my body through. With the thin air at 12,000ft, my heart felt like it was going to explode. My

breathing burnt my lungs and chest. The terrain was so steep that we were forced to dismount the horses and climb, hand over hand, up the sheer rock face. How the horses followed us, I have no idea. This was the first time my mind had wandered to the Global Rescue field medical evacuation insurance my sporting agent had recommended a must-have for a hunting trip of this nature.

### ***To my amazement, I heard the unmistakable echo of grouse***

My lead-filled limbs were relieved the brutal climb was nearly done. A couple more oxygen-sapping steps took me over the top of the vertical scramble. Before my lungs could pull any light air in a pack of 20 dusty birds, camouflaged until they moved, exploded like a box of match heads combusting their way across the falling gradient. To my amazement, I heard the unmistakable echo of grouse. Not the soundtrack I had quite expected at high altitude in the Tien Shan Mountains. These wily birds were in fact a pack of Pallas's Sandgrouse and my goodness did they fly well. These gobby little game birds rocketed off, hugging the contours of the mountaintop like miniature fighter jets, pivoting their wings on their bodies on a low flying sortie. My eyes soon lost sight of these feathery specs amid this panoramic landscape that's sheer size made it impossible to scale anything against.

From a few hundred metres away, the fittest scout came galloping back towards us having located the three ibex we had been pursuing. He pantomimed with his arms for me to get my gun ready and follow him then ushered me towards the drop he had been overlooking. A big moment was coming. Peering down at the ibex, they were completely unaware of our presence.

Undetected, I was able to select the most mature from the group. The animals were starting to naturally stir as



A much needed protein rich ibex heart and lung stew, washed down with some ropey Russian vodka.

the light fell. I had taken advantage of the ballistic calculator on the binoculars which calculates the exact number of clicks I would need to adjust my scope based on angle, barometric pressure, temperature, distance and the ballistic curve of my bullet. This cutting edge technology would give me the best chance of making my first shot count after six days hard hunting. I ranged the animal at 305 metres and set the trigger on the Mauser. The reading on the binoculars told me to dial in eight clicks of elevation so that my point of aim matched my illuminated crosshair.

The wait was unbearably intense but with the mathematics done and the animal in a suitable position, I clenched my fist and gently squeezed off the trigger. The bullet offered back a thudding, positive report as it struck the beast firmly. The ibex lurched forward onto some shale and fell further down the mountain out of our sight. For safety, our recovery of the carcass would have to wait until the morning as it was too dangerous at night. I hoped my shot had been conclusive and we would find my animal in one piece. The signs were good but it was still an agonising wait until morning.

After another cold night in a spike camp, daylight finally arrived. We hurriedly made our descent to the scene of the previous night's excitement. The

shale was one of the most dangerous surfaces I have ever hunted over. Sheer drops all around meant we were forced to move slowly and surely to ensure none of us slipped. After some hair-raising minutes we arrived where the beast had been stood.

The strike area was flicked in evidence of a good shot and over a ledge we could see the ibex wedged by its 42-inch horns in a stone funnel with a 500ft sheer drop below it. A sense of relief and satisfaction surged through me as I had cleanly killed this magnificent creature and it had not fallen all the way to the valley floor. Five of us then carefully hoisted an entire 150kg beast, horns and all, to the top of the cliff so every part of the animal could be used. The whole experience was quite overwhelming and I now could not wait to get back to camp to call my wife with the news via the satellite phone.

The meat and horns were loaded onto our horses, reminding me of a familiar Scottish scene where garron ponies are used to transport red stags off the hill. A triumphant six-hour ride back to camp was rounded off with a well-needed protein rich ibex heart and lung stew that was washed down with some ropey Russian vodka. This concluded a truly epic hunt, unquestionably the best of my life. On returning home, it was hard to

explain every aspect of this trip. It was such an incredible experience, most of it sounds made up, I only hope the photos do it some justice. Although more reasonably priced than you might expect, this expedition is not for everyone. An appetite for adventure, good physical fitness and no need for luxury are bare minimum. But if that is you and you are bored of drawing duff pegs on your pheasant shoot or your nemesis crossing bird has finally gotten the better of you, I would strongly recommend setting yourself a proper challenge with an amazing reward at the end of it. To find out more about hunting in Krygyzstan visit [www.artemis-hunting.com](http://www.artemis-hunting.com)

*Simon supports sustainable and ethical hunting worldwide but is opposed to all illegal hunting and condemns any form of hunting that threatens a species or habitat. Before embarking on a hunting expedition, Simon conducts thorough research to ensure that the hunt is fair chase, there is a proper wildlife management plan in place, the carcass is fully utilised and the local community benefit from the hunt.*

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# The Winter's Tale

*Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end.*

In early December Noel and I took a walk in the Upper Blackwater Valley to see if we could spot any fish spawning. We were very fortunate to come across a beautiful salmon under the bridge in Ballydesmond. The fish was lying dead with exhaustion from making new life.

This salmon reminded me of the wonder of nature and this miraculous life cycle, the life long fight for survival, thousands of miles travelled in search for food and the long journey home to her birthplace in the Upper Blackwater to spawn. The end and the beginning at the same time in the same place. This adult salmon and the juvenile will never meet.

Many of our Atlantic Salmon do make it back to the sea after spawning to rejuvenate and spawn again, whereas all Pacific Salmon die after spawning, however this fish paid the ultimate sacrifice to give new life. This is a

powerful and poignant story of survival.

Later, we hiked up Knockanefune in the Mullaghareirk mountains to find the source of the Mighty Blackwater. This is a most beautiful walk and it was incredible to see that out of a little spring in the mountains this mighty river is born, and just a couple of miles downstream new life is buried in the gravel waiting patiently for Spring to arrive.

I love the photograph of Zoe with her first ever salmon caught on the Blackwater in May. It is such a privilege for me to be present when this happens to one of our guests and I find that it is a life changing moment for everyone involved. Many men and women go fishing all of their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after, God never did make a more calm, quiet, innocent recreation than angling.

The lucky angler captures more than

fish, and then he or she also recaptures a sense of perspective born from the wise counsel of quiet waters.

## *Waiting and Wondering*

There is a rhythm to an angler's life and a rhythm to his year. We find ourselves waiting for the fishing season to open, waiting to meet up with our fishing friends again who we miss terribly during the closed season, waiting to try out our new gear that we got for Christmas. Oh how we wonder if the new killer-fly we so patiently tied at the vice in the darkness of winter will swim as we have expected and hoped it would. We wonder if we will catch the first salmon on the river we fish. We wonder if we will see the robin and the otter that were there at the end of last year, and we wait with anticipation to wet our lines again.

The waiting for us on the River





Zoe and I are holding a Spring Salmon caught in May.

Blackwater is over as we opened on the first of February. But we do wait patiently to see all our friends again, and we wonder if you who are reading this will also be joining us at the Blackwater Salmon Fishery this year? The majestic Munster Blackwater is waiting to be discovered.

Let us learn from Izaak Walton, who said: "I have laid aside business and gone a-fishing."

### ***Kelt or Spring Salmon***

You'll see that I have included a picture of Noel and I fishing on the River Drowes on their opening day on

the 1st January. In the picture at the top of this page I am holding a kelt, which is a salmon that has made its way upriver and spawned. This salmon should not be killed and should be returned unharmed. Please remember to record this catch on your log card of your licence before you begin fishing again.

It is sometimes not easy to know the difference between a Spring Salmon and a Kelt so here are a few pointers to look for.

- A kelt is normally in poor condition
- Kelts can be fully silver which often catches the beginner (and sometimes

the more experienced angler out)

- The vent is often distended due to spawning and the belly is hollow.
- A Spring salmon will have the body shape of a rugby ball
- The kelt's head will look bigger than it should for the size of the body.
- The fins or tail may be damaged
- Kelts often rest in slower water and start feeding on the way back to sea.

### ***How Much will a Salmon Fishing Day or Trip Cost?***

This is a question that I am asked a lot. How much is it to fish per day? Where will I stay? What do I need to bring with me? Where is the nearest airport?

The cost of fishing per day varies from month to month. Our fishing season opens on 1st February and closes on 30th September. In February the fishing costs €15 per day, and in August and September it costs €80 per day. You will also require to purchase a State Salmon Fishing Licence which you can purchase from us when you arrive. The prices shown below depend upon which type you wish to buy.

The type of accommodation that you book depends on your own personal requirements and preferences. Some people prefer the flexibility of self catering, others prefer a comfortable B&B, or maybe a hotel or country house.

We can help you with booking the correct accommodation to suit you and your groups requirements.

Generally, the cost of self catering cottages range from €400-€600 per week, the cost of a B&B is between €35-€60 and a hotel or country house costs between €60-€130 per night.

As an example, if we took two people coming fishing in May for 6 days fishing and staying in a B&B for 7 nights, including the salmon fishing licence it would cost a total of €1170. The breakdown is €50 per person fishing per day, €40 per person for a state salmon fishing licence for the week, and €35 per person per night sharing for a B&B. We also welcome



On our doorstep - set in beautiful countryside it's where the River Blackwater first comes out of the ground.

people who wish to fish for a day or come on a short break. The nearest airport is Cork which is 1 hour from

Lismore and Dublin is 2.5 hours from Lismore.

If you wish to borrow our equipment

then you are welcome to do so at no extra cost and we can also provide tuition/guiding and packed lunches for the river bank if required. Here is a link to our price list for fishing and guiding/tuition  
[www.blackwatersalmonfishery.com/price-list/](http://www.blackwatersalmonfishery.com/price-list/)

We would be happy to answer any questions that you may have regarding fishing, accommodation or other activities in the area.

### ***Salmon Licence Fees***

- All Districts (i.e. all Regions)  
Annual: €100
- Juvenile (under the age of 18 years) All Districts Annual: €10
- One District, Annual: €56
- All districts, 21 Days: €40
- All districts, 1 Day: €20
- Foyle Area Extension: €80
- Special local licence: €24

[www.glendapowellguiding.com](http://www.glendapowellguiding.com)  
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# ART & ANTIQUES

*Over the past thirty years I have attended hundreds of auctions, of practically every kind, observing at close quarters almost as many auctioneers' conducting their business. I believed I had seen them all, the good, the not so good and a few who should never have been allowed near an auction house rostrum for any reason.*

Then I saw freelance auctioneer Clarke McCartney in action late last year at an outstanding sale in Co Down. And the performance of this Antrim based 'gavel raiser' was equally exceptional in its own right. Undaunted by the task before him he started in good humour, carried the sale throughout with spontaneous jollity and ended it all on a happy note too.

And to top it all he dealt with 943 lots, did his own clerking and took only six and three quarter hours to dispense with everything.

"I was a little disappointed I wasn't able to keep to the 200 lots an hour but it was a sale I was nevertheless proud to have conducted," he told me afterwards. "In every sense it was a genuine sale. Everything in it came from the one house, collected over a long time by the vendors and it did not include anything from a trade source."

Yes, the sale was an exceptional one in every way for all the lots which went



Freelance auctioneer  
Clarke McCartney.

under the hammer had been lovingly collected by a husband and wife team who, had they been awarded air miles for their efforts, would have been flying for ever.

There was something for everyone, from old hot water bottles and crockery jars which made a few pounds to Basil Blackshaw paintings, one of which was estimated in excess of £20,000. But among it all was a fine selection of oil lamps of every shape, size and colour. And they sold well. "So wide was the range I had lamps coming under the hammer as low as £15 while others shot up to £420 and £450 each", Clarke adds. "I've never seen so many lamps sell so well for over ten years which proves there are people out there who cherish such items from the past," he told me.

## *The cheque for a 'wee grey Fergie'*

For me, several items from long ago were worth having but I wasn't able to procure them all. I did get a reasonably rare Victorian wasp trap, but missed out

on a nice Chatelaine chain which went, no doubt, to a good home. For some reason or other I would have liked the cheque made out by Harry Ferguson of 'Wee Grey Fergie' fame but I wasn't prepared to pay almost £300 for it.

Well stacked jewellery display stands carried contents which also sold well and Clarke had no difficulty in selling half and full sovereigns. A full George V sovereign dated 1911 went at £230 while a 1912 half sovereign realised £130 but was beaten by a 1869 half sovereign which realised £140. And the art expert who told me the R B Higgins would be lucky to make £150 was nowhere to be seen when it came under the hammer at £625.

Yes, as I've said earlier an exceptional sale, an outstanding auctioneer and a long but rewarding day in every way.

Clarke McCartney, however is no newcomer to the auction scene having been involved with several Northern Ireland sales houses before deciding to go freelance just under ten years ago. And for years too he was a familiar figure at the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society's annual Balmoral show where his talents were appreciated as he



A William Moorcroft, Burslem, china pair of circular baluster tapering slender vases (sold for €6,000 Adams)



A French gilt metal and porcelain mounted three piece Garniture, C.1880 (sold for €1,800 Adams)



A 19th Century inlaid marble top circular centre table (sold for €1,800 Adams)

commentated on the Hunt Chase and the sheep shearing competitions.

His heart still lies in the auctioneering business and he likes the feel of his feet on the floor of the rostrum, or anything else he is standing on during a sale. But he observes. "It is a pretty precarious business running an auction house these days. "Overheads are crippling, then there are staff wages, heating and lighting premises and countless other bills to be met.

"I spend quite a bit of my time conducting auctions throughout England, particularly around the Doncaster and Hemel Hemstead areas and I meet a wide variety of people. "Yes, every day is a school day. There is always something new to learn.

"The auction scene has changed a lot over the years and people too have found a new education when it comes to auctions and antiques, particularly from the many television

programmes being aired day and daily. Sadly, a lot of them are a bit misguided because of what they are picking up from some of these programmes which in some cases are repeats, two or three years old and the values mentioned in them are a bit out of kilter with those of today.

"Of course there will always be auctions so long as people have a need to sell and of course, a need to buy.



19th century Standard of the Kingdom of Ireland, a gold harp on a blue ground (sold for €1,600 Whytes)

But fashions change and so do fads. My advice to most people is, 'buy what you need and appreciate it when you bring it home. I'm talking of course about the general auction-goer. Traders, collectors and specialists have their own agenda and work to them.

"But in essence everyone should support their local auction houses and help keep them in business. Auctions and sales of every kind are part and parcel of our culture and must be kept alive. I would like to see more younger people attending local auctions, getting themselves interested in what is selling and what isn't selling. It is part of life's education. It also provides a lot of enjoyment and good craic too."

## AROUND THE SALES



1916 Rising Medal to Joseph Plunkett (sold €40,000 Whytes)

After reasonable sales last year Irish auction houses are looking for even better things in the months to come. And veteran auctioneer George Mealy is of the belief that after the Biblical seven years of famine we could be in for seven years or more of plenty. But he insists buyers still have the upper hand and with some prices at historic lows it is a very good time to invest.

There was some fears a while back that Scotland's

most famous painting, "The Monarch of the Glen" would leave the country when consigned to sale with expectations of making £10m last autumn. It was withdrawn, however and will remain with the National Galleries of Scotland allowing the painting to pass from private to public hands for the first time in its history.

Also withdrawn from sale in London were two 17th century Flemish Old Masters, worth at least £5m from the Alfred Beit Collection at Russborough House and they were scheduled to go on public view at the National Gallery of Ireland.

**ADAMS** January sale saw a pair of William Moorcroft Burslem vases coming under the hammer at €6,000 well in advance of an estimate of €500.

A French gilt metal three piece garniture, mantle clock and two urns sold for €1,800 while a 19th century inlaid marble top centre table made 1,300 euros.

An Iranian Bakhtiari wool carpet made €1,000 while a pair of French ormolu ceiling lights went at 850 euros, a similar price being paid for a George IV mahogany bookcase.

**MEALY'S** Autumn sale was a good one with sales realising €910,000 and 87pc of the items coming under the hammer going to new homes.

**WHYTE'S 'Eclectic Collector'** sale produced some great results with the auction grossing €250,000 and 80pc of the lots offered being sold.



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# Country Chat

*Some great dog work and shooting impress but moving heavy partridge crates reminds Billy he's hit a 'special birthday' age!*

Last year, I thought it would be fun to turn the whole year into my 60th birthday year — not just the day of my birthday, which ironically went by quietly with nothing more than the odd card or two depicting the big 60 - but celebrating the whole year with a series of events. So as you would expect, leastways from me anyhow, I spent a lot of the time in Scotland.

For nine days at the end of March I hunted the five pointers on the Dell Estate doing the spring pair counts on grouse and, once again, snow on the high ground hampered play for myself and the pointers, although I did get quite a few solid points on the lower ground.

I 'ran' the two young English pointers individually and truly they were breathtaking to watch. Yes, they bumped birds all over the place and yes, they held birds for a matter of seconds, but that wasn't what I was looking for. They were actually hunting, searching for game and they were doing it at an incredible distance from me, the handler.

It was back to Scotland at the end of July for two weeks, this time for more serious dog work, the covey counts, counting on two different estates. The two Germans, Sally and Heidi, in all probability would have been all that I needed with me, but they were backed up by the three English pointers, giving the two Germans a break every now and then. Ellie is a year older than her two half-siblings Jack and Jill and as she hunts and holds point, including backing whatever dog or dogs are on point, I was able to run her with the two Germans. To be fair, she was credited with some spectacular finds. The two pups held point much longer on the grouse than they did back in March, although still belting after any birds that flushed along with everything else that



Gordon Grey with his team behind the guns on the Dell estate.

got up for that matter, all of which only time will heal. But I would like to believe that I left Scotland with five happy pointers, all the better and more experienced for another fortnight on managed grouse moors.

Six days later, just before the Glorious Twelfth, I was joined on the ferry from Belfast to Cairnryan by three friends John, Chris and Davy, I have

travelled several times before with them to shoot in Scotland. We had great craic on the boat and, contrary to my usual uneventful trips on the ferry, on this occasion the lead in to the opening day for grouse on the Glorious Twelfth was all the more enriched for being with them. There is no denying whatever your sport, how much more thrilling it can be whenever you are in good





Alistair Little's spaniel Buster waiting for the drive to begin on the Dell Estate

company. That said, we had to say our farewells before disembarkation at Cairnryan, as I was travelling further afield than they were, although all four of us were in pursuit of that wonderful gamebird - the King of Gamebirds - the red grouse.

### ***He loves shooting grouse over pointers***

I wasn't entirely alone however, being more of a 'doggy man' than a 'shooting man,' I had two German pointers with me, Heidi and Sally, Ellie the English pointer and Pippa and Polly, the two cockers. Next day, the opening day of the grouse season, I worked the two Germans for the owner of the Dell estate, Mr Jeremy Finnis. He loves shooting grouse over pointers and is a real gentleman and sportsman to work dogs for.

Another day, I shot over the three pointers on a bit of the moor that the estate has set aside for forestation. I had some fantastic dog work and shot three brace of grouse, but if you have ever carried six grouse in a game bag over a long distance, you will need no reminding from me that it can be quite painful on the shoulders. So,

unashamedly I hightailed it back to the wee jeep with my six grouse, ignoring further flushes by the three pointers on my way back. When I finally got back to the jeep, I felt sorry for the two little cockers, they had been cooped up all morning, so I thought a quick dash around the vicinity, fifteen minutes maximum in heather up to my knees, should be enough to tire them out.

Although it's perhaps stating the obvious, Cocker spaniels are unique, different in lots of weird and wonderful ways to other breeds of gundogs. The pair of them took to the task in hand — hunting through the thickest and tallest of heather that ever befell two small dogs less than thirteen inches high with the gusto of a competition spaniel. Less than five minutes after leaving the jeep, the pair put up a single cock grouse. I waited as long as I could before shooting, dropping the bird into high heather.

Now then, what followed was one of the longest marked retrieves through knee-high heather that I have ever seen by any small dog, let alone my own two. No sooner had they flushed the grouse than they were following up for the retrieve, through a combination of

hops and leaps and unbelievable as it seemed at the time, they went straight to the fall. Had they 'hopped' to the flush and waited to be sent, they would have comfortably earned themselves an A plus at any spaniel trial.

Less than five minutes later they did exactly the same, only this time the bird had moved from where it fell and they picked it up a good ten or fifteen paces away. Unfortunately, as so often is the case, there was only me to witness the little dogs performance. I say they because, as I have said before, when hunting or retrieving they both hunt as one and it then depends which one of them gets to the retrieve first. I made a beeline for the nearby track, very much on a high, I was so pleased with them. That ten minutes or so of dog work would easily have equalled, if not surpassed the three hours previously with the three pointers.

A few day's later, I helped the two keepers on the Dell estate, father and son, move a few thousand partridge from crates to pens. I say a few thousand, but that was only a small follow up to what they had already received prior to my visit. If ever I needed reminding that I had reached the big 60, that day was it folks!

Soon after I was back on the grouse moor working the two Germans for a father and son duo, part of a team of guns out that day. Parents, sons and girlfriends, daughters and boyfriends, it was lovely to see so many young 'guns' out on the moor, the young ladies admiringly kitted out as indeed were the young men, with impeccable manners to go with their attire. The weather was picture perfect for being out on the moor, especially so at lunch break when we all sat under a blue sky, taking in the lovely setting down the valley of purple heather and towards Whitebridge and Loch Ness in the distance.

The same procedure was repeated later on that week, with me working the two pointers for a father and son team in the morning, whilst the rest of the young guns lined out and walked the





The picking-up team resting between a drive.

moor. I joined the line of guns after lunch with the two little spaniels and really enjoyed watching them and the other spaniels hunting and retrieving. With a large audience listening in, one of the ladies asked me how could I possibly tell which one is Polly. "Oh no bother" says I with a smile, "they are both called Polly".

On the Saturday I again worked the two pointers for two guns, the day a birthday treat for one of them. We had only walked a hundred yards or so from the parked vehicles when Heidi and Sally were already amongst the birds and it continued like that throughout the morning. The two pointers pulled off some fantastic long retrieves, so much so that the two guns congratulated me

many times over and told me they enjoyed watching the two bitches as much as the shooting itself.

I went back to Scotland in the second week of November, staying there for four weeks, picking up on five different estates including Dell. The only days I was off were Wednesdays and obviously Sundays. I used the two Germans for marked retrieves and runners, Heidi excelled at the runners. After a 'drive' was over I swept with the two cockers and they too found runners.

I also had Roxy the flatcoat with me, she has had five homes before she was thirteen months old, six if you count the breeder. I trained her up as a non-slip retriever and she performed really well. She really loves retrieving and did me

proud, especially with so many eyes on her, for a lot of people have never before set eyes on a flatcoat, let alone one retrieving on a Scottish estate.

Standing behind three guns on a lakeside drive, it was obvious that some of her retrieves would be from the water, in this case, all partridge. She made so much noise splashing about that someone asked on the two-way radio what the noise was. "It's Billy's young flatcoat" replied one of the pickers up to much amusement.

I took eight dogs and ten bags of dog food with me, booked a single trip out and told friends that I will be back when the dog food runs out and they thought I was joking. I came home a few days before Christmas!



# Rusa hunt in Mauritius



*‘Conscientious hunters are the caretakers of this vulnerable species.’*

The demographic of hunters has changed considerably over the past decade. Once upon a time, there were very few women that took part and men traditionally favoured adult-only, male-only hunting trips. Times have changed, however. Not only is there now a growing number of female hunters, but the modern-day father’s attitude has altered as well. As a result, an increasing number of young families are

wanting to incorporate hunting into their annual vacation. But here’s the rub: there are very few venues around the world that are able to cater for the needs of a family wanting both wilderness hunting and a luxury resort. So, dear reader, we are delighted to reveal that we have uncovered one such place: Heritage Resorts in Mauritius has formed a close working relationship with Le Chasseur Mauricien, the

island’s longest established hunting outfitter.

Part of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World group, Heritage Resorts has two neighbouring five-star hotels located on the Domaine de Bel Ombre in the wild southern part of Mauritius. The African-themed Heritage Awali Golf & Spa Resort is most suited to families and the colonial-themed Heritage Le Telfair Golf & Spa Resort is geared towards couples and gastronomes.

When I visited with my husband and 11-month old baby we stayed at Heritage Le Telfair. Our stay was in mid-June, so it was low season meaning the hotel was far from full and the temperature was a comfortable 25-27°C each day, plus there were hardly any mosquitos. Rooms are equipped with every baby amenity imaginable including steriliser, changing mat and cot. Plus there’s a free-of-charge kids’ club to look after tiny ones so that parents can enjoy some child-free hunting in the hills directly behind the resort. Heritage Resorts’ purpose-built Timomo Kids’ Club is run by highly



Few venues around the world are able to cater for the needs of a family wanting both wilderness hunting and a luxury resort.





Grazing rusa gave us the impression the hunt might be easy - how wrong we were!

trained nurses and can cater for children aged 0-11 years old. I felt instantly at ease leaving my baby with the hotel staff, I never once worried about her when I was out all day hunting.

The tiny tropical island boasts a variety of quarry including majestic rusa deer, wild boar and a range of exotic winged-game species such as francolin. My primary focus was rusa. Sometimes known as 'Java deer,' rusa were introduced to Mauritius in 1639 by the island's Dutch colonial governor to provide meat. With no predators, rusa adapted well. Today, the population is

estimated to number 60,000 mature animals. However, in its native Indonesian homeland, on the remote islands of Java, Bali and Timor, rusa are classified as 'vulnerable' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). This is due to habitat loss, habitat degradation and poaching.

### ***Rosa can damage valuable sugar cane crops***

In Mauritius, where the non-native species is thriving thanks to sustainable hunting, the island is home to around 40% of the world population. In fact,

the IUCN states that rusa in Mauritius are an 'economical problem' due to the damage they can cause to valuable sugar cane crops. For this reason, the rusa must be contained within fenced areas, by law. Le Chasseur Mauricien has managed 4,000 hectares on the Frédérica Nature Reserve since 2003.

Run by Frenchman Lionel Berthault, he explained: "One of the most important Mauritian exports is sugar, so the government made it mandatory to contain the deer to stop them eating and trampling the sugar cane, which covers a third of the island. Hunters should not be concerned by the fence, our hunting area is vast and they will not encounter any wire. The fence exists for the good of the herd, the farmers and the island. It does not detract from the overall hunting experience."

Fourteen years ago, Lionel joined Nicolas Chauveau, who has now been managing the area for 26 years. Together they have created a very slick, professional outfitting business. To protect the herd of 2,500 animals from poachers and stray dogs, they employ 11 watchmen and four gamekeepers. By tirelessly exhibiting at hunting shows around the world, Le Chasseur Mauricien has helped turn Mauritius into a first class hunting destination and they now welcome more than 1,000 hunters each year. A qualified



Rusa antlers are quite large in comparison with its body size with a very distinctive lyre shape.





For four hours we stalked along forest edge, waded through swamps, crossed rivers and negotiated dense jungle.

Professional Hunter, Lionel has hunted almost every continent with his bow and rifle. "I have experienced both good and bad hunts, so I understand what is required by hunters when they are visiting a foreign country for the first time with their family in tow. I get that spouses and children also need to be catered for. Joining forces with Heritage Resorts was a no-brainer. I don't know of any other hunting destination that can offer visitors the same service."

The Fr  d  rica Nature Reserve Lodge is located atop a hill that commands breathtaking views of the Indian Ocean. All around the lodge were grazing rusa, giving us the impression the hunt might be easy. How wrong we were! Before setting off, we were served a simple – but utterly delicious – lunch of pan-fried rusa and freshly baked bread. Cooked the traditional Mauritian way using soy and oyster sauce, the venison was tender and tasty.

### ***Lionel was keen that I cull an old stag past its breeding best***

The island has a population of about 1 million people, most of which are Muslims, Christians or Hindus. Some do not eat beef, and others do not eat pork, but they all eat venison. For me, hunting is about harvesting organic wild meat – medal-class trophies are never my sole goal. That said, Lionel was keen that I cull an old gold medal stag

with 34 inch antlers as part of his management plan. Ideally he wanted an animal aged at least eight years old that had already passed on its good genes and was now past its breeding best. Rusa antlers are quite large in comparison with its body size, and very distinctive with a typical lyre shape. There is a brow tine, which is often curved, and a terminal fork at the end of the main beam. The thicker part of the main beam continues on into the back tine and this is normally considerably larger than the front tine. The resident population are not perturbed by vehicles, but are super wily and spooky around humans.

We drove along an unmade dirt track for around 45 minutes, which took us high up into the mountains. With my nose permanently pressed up against the truck window, the views back down to the ocean were incredible. The island is teeming with wildlife, we spotted numerous bizarre-looking flying foxes, colourful parakeets, and playful long tail macaques. Lionel and I abandoned the car and set off on foot in search of our quarry. The plan was to hunt an area around a derelict 300-year old sugar cane processing plant. First off we perused the hunting ground from a high seat, of which there are 250 in total. Then, without warning, torrential rain started to fall from the sky.

We took shelter under a low lying palm but just as quickly as the rain

started, it finished. Ten minutes later and the skies were back to cloudless azure which encouraged the rusa to graze out in the open. For four hours we stalked along forest edge, waded through swamps, crossed rivers and negotiated dense jungle until we eventually glassed a herd with an appropriate stag. We saw many beasts, stalked into a few, but they were never quite right. In this herd there were 12 beasts in total, nine of which were grazing and three were twitchy and on the look-out for danger.

They definitely could not see us as we were hidden inside the dark, leafy forest. There was no wind either, so they could not smell us. We now needed to examine the herd closely to ensure the stag in question would meet the requirements of the management plan. Suddenly, a pesky raven spotted us and alerted the herd to our presence. Dammit! The deer instantly stopped feeding and became jumpy, moving back inside the forest. My heart sank. Lionel ushered me to move off again. We walked quickly, hunched over, trying to disguise our silhouettes.



Lionel directed me onto a lone stag, which was facing us.



Lying prone, I used Lionel's binoculars as a makeshift bipod.

### ***Hunting is a fantastic bedfellow to conservation***

Lionel whispered to me that he knew a short cut over another river so that we could make up ground. I was already soaking wet and covered in mud, so one more river would not hurt. Once across, we scrambled up a steep, muddy embankment to a vantage point. Sure enough, the herd was below us, just 80 metres away. Lionel directed me onto a lone stag, which was facing us. Lying prone, I used Lionel's binoculars as a makeshift bipod to support the forend of my rifle. Two-seconds later the stag turned broadside. I gently squeezed off a round. The stag hunched its front shoulders before running off – a classic double lung reaction. Sure enough, we found the expired beast just inside the forest. I felt immensely proud for harvesting my first rusa deer and I felt pleased that I had honoured the stag by shooting it cleanly. Despite what the media may say about sport hunting, I feel content that conscientious hunters are the caretakers of this vulnerable species and hope that they continue to flourish here. It may be a bitter pill for some to swallow but hunting is a fantastic bedfellow to conservation.

Two of the gamekeepers, Olivier Marot and Xavier de Baritault, met us at the purpose built larder to butcher and process the carcass. After helping as much as I could, we then departed back to the hotel to collect my daughter from the kids' club. The hunting ground was

just a 10-minute car ride away. What makes this offering so unique is that the jungle-clad hills that hold the game are just two miles from the award-winning resorts and pristine beaches. A quick shower and change, and suddenly the three of us were in Annabella's restaurant enjoying local delicacies like palm heart and venison gravlax, recounting the hunt step by step. What a day!

The next day we decided to relax and enjoy the hotel facilities as a family. Our Deluxe Room opened out onto an immaculate beach with calm water, there was a heated pool for the little one, and luxury massages for me and my husband in the couples' suite at the Seven Colours Spa. What more could an avid hunting family want from a vacation?

A two-day hunt for a representative



I had shot the old stag shooting cleanly.

rusa stag costs €5,500, this includes seven-nights accommodation for 2 adults and 2 children (under 12) at Heritage Le Telfair Golf & Spa Resort on a half-board basis or at Heritage Awali Golf & Spa Resort on a full-board basis. This also includes trophy preparation, transfers, permit, rifle hire, ammunition and a small game hunt. For more information, visit [www.heritage-resorts.com](http://www.heritage-resorts.com) or email Lionel Berthault via [lechasseur.mauricien@csbo.mu](mailto:lechasseur.mauricien@csbo.mu).

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*Selena supports sustainable and ethical hunting worldwide but is opposed to all illegal hunting and condemns any form of hunting that threatens a species or habitat. Before embarking on a hunting expedition, Selena conducts thorough research to ensure that the hunt is fair chase, there is a proper wildlife management plan in place, the carcass is fully utilised and the local community benefit from the hunt.*



# RIP-ROARING HUNTING AFTER SLOW START



Kieran Lambert and the Balgarrett Beagles near Killucan Westmeath on a cold December day.

*Derek Fanning shares his experiences with two foot packs during the 2016/2017 season.*

It was the final weekend of October and at last the long wait was over. Across the country most of the packs were holding their opening meets and for all those of us who hadn't had the pleasure of following packs of hounds since last March it was great to be back out again. It was great to be fording streams, climbing hills, jumping over wire fences, sinking to one's ankles in mud. It was great to be chatting with old friends and acquaintances, to be joking with them, to be talking seriously with them, and to be sharing the stirrup cup once more.

A frosty morning would have been the desired start as it would give that authentic hunting day feel but alas it was mild with the temperatures hovering in the high teens. It was also dry underfoot. Scenting was going to be difficult.

And so it proved. Although the pack I was out with still managed to pick up the scent of a couple of foxes in fits and starts, thus averting a complete blank.

For the opening meet I was out with the Rockview Harriers in Kilkenny, led by that wise doyen of Irish huntsmen Rory Dicker. Rory has been hunting for many moons and can regale you with

fascinating stories of hunting characters he once knew, who have since passed on to the great hunting hereafter. He and his followers are also very keen hunting people and as fit as fiddles. Days with this pack can begin not long after daylight and keep going to dusk.

We met in the village of Johnswell at 9am. Johnswell is located in undulating country a few miles from Kilkenny. It's a pleasant, well kept place. On the village green there's a well dedicated to John the Baptist where religious fairs used to be held. A bonfire used to be lit near the village on St John's Eve, a Christian replacement for the previous

pagan solstice celebrations.

There were ten followers in the field and we walked half a mile to the first covert, flanked on either side by trees in their autumnal mellow beauty. The views of the hill country around and the plain surrounding Kilkenny City were lovely. We could also see the prominent landmark of St Mary's Cathedral in Kilkenny.

After an hour of no scent, the hounds finally picked up something and pursued Rénard through woodland, making decent music, and across a couple of cattle-fields where the quarry ran to ground in a copse of birch and



The Huntsman chats with Kieran Guinness at Halston House, Westmeath prior to the off.

holly beside an abandoned, handsome two storey house. One of the pleasures of hunting is the revelation of some of the hidden buildings of the countryside, including attractive, abandoned edifices. These empty places can be sad and I often wonder who lived in them and what their story was.

### *After a while the scent went sour again*

We moved on from this fox's den but drew a blank for another couple of hours. Nonetheless we persevered and finally found at a sand and gravel quarry. Here, the hounds went streaming up and down the steep slopes, an impressive sight. However, after a while the scent went sour again and Rory called it a day after six hours in the field.

We returned to our cars in the village for soup and sandwiches and Rory reminisced about the Kilkenny foxhounds who used to hold their Stephen's Day meet in Johnswell. The Kilkenny Foxhounds date from 1797 when Sir John Power brought a pack from Tipperary and, settling at Derrynahinch, near Ballyhale, established the hunt in conjunction with his brother Richard. In 1976 the south-west of the county, which had been on loan since 1918 to the Kilmoganny Hunt, was ceded to them. A history of the Kilkenny Hunt, "Hunting in County

Kilkenny", was published in June 1999 by Caroline Corballis. The country is 45 miles long by 30 miles wide, with stone walls south of Thomastown and thick bank country in the north.

The following weekend I joined the Balgarrett Beagles at Halston House in Westmeath, near Loughnavalley. Halston is an elegant early 19th Century house and a charming place. Like many similar houses in Ireland it has the feel of being slightly decaying, but that is part of the charm. In England these type of houses would be spick and span. In Ireland, as so often, we do things differently. The owner of the house is a tall, grey haired man called Kieran Guinness, one of the famous Guinness clan, and every year he is very friendly to us, providing us with port, sausages and fruitcake. Kieran is a cattle breeder, chairman of the Westmeath Foxhounds and joint-owner of the Dunlewey Connemara Ponies. Kieran and his family have bred the Connemara for many years bringing a succession of stallions to Dunlewey, in the mountains of north-west County Donegal. Some of the ponies have found fame in the hunting field and in the show ring.

As we stood chatting in the hallway we admired a fantastic picture which showed dozens and dozens of people in their hunting regalia who loved the sport of fox hunting over the decades; many of them were in bowlers and top



This cross marks the grave of a baby who died before being baptised. For generations the Catholic Church ruled that babies who died before being baptised could not enter heaven, but were relegated to limbo. They were denied funerals and could not be buried in church graveyards.

hats. Different times. Characterful people. Good stories long forgotten.

Finally, feeling warmed by the port, we set off. The weather was mild again, but the ground was wetter which gave one hope for better scent than the previous weekend, but alas it was not to be. A blank was drawn, despite three hours of trying. After many years hunting with them this was the first time I had ever drawn a complete blank with the Balgarretts. We searched every possible place where hares would normally be found lying but time after time the beagles remained silent. Never mind. The followers (about 20 people) were friendly and chatty. The views were lovely (especially from a rocky rise overlooking a vast expanse of near-empty Westmeath plain and forestry), and it was really good to be watching beagles working again. They are a wonderful dog, being very enthusiastic, full of energy, and producing an attractive music.

A couple of Saturdays later I met Rory Dicker at the entrance of Lyrath Hotel near Kilkenny City, and drove to the townland of Kilmogar, parking at the entrance of Kilmogar House. Kilmogar no longer exists. An eighteenth century building, it ran into disrepair and was pulled down by its owner a few years ago.

Driving to the meet the back roads were very slippery as we were day ten into a period of freezing nights. We drove slowly hoping to avoid the



With the Balgarrett Beagles in lovely hill country near Mullaghmeen, North Westmeath.





Anxious to get going! dreaded feeling of the skid. When we stopped at Kilmogar and got out of the cars, we proceeded gingerly on the road as the surface was lethally slippery. Once we walked into the frost-covered fields everything was ok.

***The fox disappointed went to ground after only a minute, but we soon found another***

We soon found at a small, very narrow valley covered with young deciduous trees, briars and furze. The fox disappointed us because it went to ground after only a minute, but we soon found another. However, this too didn't want to leave the protection of the woodland and we soon lost it. The scent for the fourth weekend in a row was proving to be a disappointment.

For the next hours we walked up hill and down dale, drawing woodland, but always drawing a blank. Some of the time we were walking through a freezing fog, which was atmospheric. Eventually we encountered the three o'clock fox and enjoyed a decent half-hour spin across the countryside, some

of which hadn't thawed and was still frozen.

I met the Balgarretts the last Sunday of November at Lisnabin, a place I had never been before. It's a fine, 19th Century, gothic pile owned by the Wentsch family and is located near Killucan, Westmeath. The land around is heavily wired which presents its own challenges for foot followers, including the dreaded electric shock. Dogs hate getting electric shocks from wire fences and howl with disapprobation. Some fences are coursing with stronger electric currents than others. A long walking stick with two prongs significantly reduces your chances of getting a shock.

After half an hour we put up a hare in woodland, the beagles began their lovely speaking and we pursued, jogging across the seeded fields for 10 minutes or so. The scent was lost near a large farmyard owned by Michael O'Leary of Ryanair. And that was it for the day. We continued trying for another two hours but no luck.

Scentwise, November was something of a damp squib. I was out five times

during the month and each time, bar one, the hounds locked onto a scent but lost it after several minutes. Patchy, unsatisfactory scent was the order of the day. Not that I minded. I just love being out. However, I was hoping that things would improve in December. And so it proved.

The first two weekends of December were crackers. I joined the Balgarretts in the Mullaghmeen hill area in the townland of Ballymanus, North Westmeath, which is lovely hill country and a real pleasure to hunt. The beagles made a lot of music here and went on long runs around, up and down the hills. Three hares were flushed and chased and gave excellent sport. This was more like it.

The previous day the Rockview enjoyed a decent seven hour day in the townland of Conahy near Ballyragget. The views were pleasant here on the side of a hill, looking over to the small town of Ballyragget and beyond, far beyond, the long line of the Slieve Bloom Mountains. The hounds gave extensive chase to four foxes but without catching anything. As we



Foot harriers chasing a fox in a sand and gravel quarry.

finished in the twilight and headed for home our aching limbs told us we had enjoyed a long, energetic day.

The following Saturday with the Rock View, in the townland of Moon Hall, was even better with the hounds finding within ten-seconds of entering the first covert. This first hunt of the day went on for an hour. Again we finished in the low light of dusk, tired but content with a good day. One of the day's hunts was a lung-bursting half-hour run across the fields and woods starting from sacred Freestone Hill and finishing at a den beneath the roots of a tree in a hedgerow. Great fun. I think it is one of the definitions of happiness.

Freestone Hill looked atmospheric in the evening dimness with its solitary hawthorn tree and trigonometry pillar standing stark against the sky. Freestone hill is situated on the southern ridge of the Castlecomer Plateau and is an important prehistoric, archaeological monument. An Iron Age hill-fort was located here. Many Roman coins were discovered on the hill. The bodies of 16 people were also discovered, all of them burned except for the body of a child. It is not possible to say if they died of natural causes or suffered violent deaths. Freestone was also the first place in Ireland where evidence of mining or ore prospecting from the Bronze Age was found. The locals treat the tree and the hill with respect and it is considered bad luck to cut down the hawthorn tree. Archaeologists believe the hill was the location for a cult type community in the 4th or 5th centuries AD. It's similar to sites in south western Britain where shrines were built to a number of deities. It's thought that the Roman finds (which include a decorated bracelet, a possible buckle stud, a strip of decorated bronze and three rings, and a copper coin of Constantine the Great (circa 337 to 340AD) were votive offerings made by a community who were well versed in the ritual practices of Roman Britain. Probably the people who lived here in the 4th or 5th centuries also enjoyed hunting foxes on foot with scenting hounds, because it

was a widespread practice in the Celtic world.

### *The hounds found swiftly in the first cover and from there the action didn't stop*

The final hunt before Christmas was a real red letter day, where the hounds hunted uninterrupted for an incredible two and a half hours. It began in South Kilkenny, in a small village called Templeorum, surrounded by rolling countryside, on a bright frosty morning with fantastic views across Kilkenny and Tipperary to the beautiful Comeragh Mountains. The hounds found swiftly, within a minute, in the first cover and from there the action didn't stop for 150 minutes. At the outset of this incredible run I puffed up an endless slope in pursuit of the action and when I finally came to a rest in the midst of a sitka spruce wood atop the crown of a small hill, I realised that I had lost contact with the hounds. I hung around there for a long while hoping they would reappear but all I could hear was the wind sighing in the tall trees, branches creaking and house dogs barking in the distance. The views were fantastic from this vantage point, stretching across the gorgeous green tapestry of pastureland and low lying hills all the way to the sea.

Mobile phones are invaluable to hunters because we are constantly trying to figure out where the hounds are heading towards. We rang around and one of the followers in a jeep said the

pack had swept through the wood and were a few miles away in another wood. We jogged in this direction. When we reached tarmac we managed to hitch a lift to the next wood. There we could hear again the pack music. Were they on the same fox? Some followers said it was the same fox. Others weren't sure.

Eventually some of the pack broke out of the wood and we could see Rénard stopping a few fields away, briefly surveying his pursuers and then continuing his journey. We jogged after the action, heading towards the magnificent shape of Slievenamon. Some minutes after, when we were only a short distance away, we saw Rénard make an error of judgement at a hedge and ditch, and head in the wrong direction. The lead hounds caught up with him. It was all over in a second. The huntsman blew the horn sound denoting a kill.

As I listened to him I reflected on the fact that being a huntsman is like being a craftsman or artisan, in that there is a considerable amount of skill and knowledge attached to the job. The hunting horn is a case in point. There are several different horn calls for different moments in a day's hunt, all of them reminding followers that a hunt is not just good exercise and a social outlet. It is also a ceremony, a performance, a piece of theatre. There is something theatrical and ceremonial in fox-hunting, in its dress, its rules and its conventions; all of which are part of the pastime's charm.



The Rockview Foot Harriers near Freestone Hill, Kilkenny.



# HUNTING ROUNDUP

## *Tynan and Armagh Hunt Club - Annual Children's Meet for Charity*

Tynan and Armagh Hunt Club held their annual Charity Fundraising Children's Meet on Monday 2nd January 2017 from Richhill, Co. Armagh with over 85 ponies and horses taking part in what turned out to be a fun packed day following the Huntsman Keith McCall, with 12½ couple of Old English Fox Founds.

The day was extremely successful raising £1,000 for this year's chosen charity, Friends of the Cancer Centre, Belfast. This charity has a long and proud history of helping local cancer patients across Northern Ireland over the last 30 years. Based at Belfast City Hospital the charity funds life-saving and life changing projects that make a real and lasting difference to the lives of thousands of local people affected by cancer.

Field Master Andrew Phillips canvassed local landowners who gave their support to the event, allowing the field to cross rivers, orchards, laneways and land, where they encountered over (number of fences) which had been constructed by Andrew and fellow members from the Hunt Club.



Thumbs up for charity - fundraising for The Cancer Centre by the Tynan & Armagh Hunt Club!

The field proved their determination and horsemanship mastering each obstacle, with the encouragement of the Masters Brian Dougan, Wilson Faloon and Roy McCall along with several members of the Hunt who provided excellent stewarding of the field watching over each participant ensuring each child was returned safely to their parents.

## *Around the meets*

The **Tynan and Armagh Hunt's** opening meet, at Seavaghan Co

Armagh, was especially significant as it was their first as a Foxhound pack, as they have now joined the Irish Masters of Foxhounds Association and Roy McCall, a long serving field master, has now joined the mastership, but was not out on the day.

Huntsman Keith McCall had on a 16½ couple mixed pack with some further Hurworth blood on view, as he had had another draft from the North Yorkshire pack this summer. The huntsman was assisted by Philip Singleton and Andrew Philips, the latter being fieldmaster in charge of a thirty three strong mounted field, which included joint masters Brian Dougan and Wilson Faloon.

This first Saturday in November was bright and sunny but cold to stand out in while, early on, scent was seemingly at an absolute premium which was underlined by a series of blank draws around Seavaghan lake and on behind the kennels as far as Davy Gray's. Keith McCall drew on across Sammy Dickson's and through there to his twin brothers Kyle McCall's.

Hounds found on Kyle's but got only a very short hunt before this customer went to ground in what appeared to be scent that wasn't holding. A second fox



An excellent result indeed.





Nicely over Alex!



Samuel and Amber smile for the camera.



India jumping in style.

went afoot in the glen to give a 15-20 minute hunt before he, too, went to ground.

A move to Dickson's chicken houses yielded our third fox but he went to ground in the same place as the second fox, after another short, but sharp, hunt.

Hounds moved to the far side of Kyle McCall's and quickly put their fourth fox afoot in patchy scenting conditions. This presaged a fast 55 minute hunt at the end of which this good fox went to ground and was deservedly given best.

Keith McCall then blew for home and everyone repaired to O'Toole's bar where warm soup can rarely have been so welcome.

**The North Down Foxhounds'** meet at Ballymorran, outside Killinchy, saw bright sunny weather which lasted all day, though it was cool later on. Hostess and fieldmaster Helen Pannell had a twenty strong mounted field, including a number of very keen youngsters, to oversee while huntsman Barry Jones had on a fourteen couple mixed pack with Charlie McPoland whipping-in.

The first draw, at Adrian McGowan's, proved blank which set the tone for a series of draws at Ringland Morrison's, Tom Morris's and back into Helen Pannell's. A move to Quarterlands Road suddenly saw one customer afoot but hounds stopped just as suddenly on open land.

Hounds then drew the watching Billy Caves's land and put another fox afoot. They pushed him across the road into Dynes's then through the stubble in Gordon Flynn's, where he went to ground. Another fox then left the stubble to give a good hunt right across Morrow's then Flynn's and towards Dessie Neill's where hounds were stopped as there were cattle out.

This had been a brisk day's hunting where the pony riders excelled, never more than when jumping out of a field set well below the level of the road and via a very narrow gap with a stone surface.

**The Co Down Hunt** had a mild day for this last Saturday in November meet at Cluntagh, outside Crossgar, but it also





Sarah O'Shea is flying!

proved to be a very bad scenting day.

Huntsman Ian Donoghue, in his first season here, assisted by James Black, took a 15½ couple mixed pack including some Dumfriesshire blood to the first draw at Max Ervine's. Joint

masters Britt Megahey, on a new chestnut horse from the Going for Gold Select Sales at Gores Bridge where the family had such a good outcome in selling their horse Cornascriebe Glenpatrick and Ross McCandless had a

twenty-five strong mounted field under their charge.

Max Ervine's entire property was blank and Ian Donoghue fared no better on moving across Edgar's and Roy Carlisle's. He drew on across



Homeward bound from the Charity Day.

Armstrong's, then David McClurg's, before going back into Max Ervine's with a continuing lack of success.

There had been some occasional, brief hound music with no pilot seen by anyone, but there was a very clear, resonant note to hounds' cry no doubt greatly enhanced by the Dumfriesshire blood on view. Sadly, this proved to be a blank day, albeit a very enjoyable one.

One particularly impressive performance was that of the huntsman who, involuntarily, dismounted at one of Max Ervine's Galway-like stone walls. He landed on his feet, retained his grip on the reins and imitated a 'Strictly Come Dancing' star as he kept in step with his horse until he got him stopped. It is no doubt a comfort to Ian Donoghue that his watching mother Tricia and younger brother Ross got it on video!

The **Fermanagh Harriers'** meet at the lovely Belle Isle estate outside Lisbellaw, by kind permission of the Duke and Duchess of Abercorn, took place on a bright first Saturday in February, a day which did not seem to promise good scenting conditions.

Huntsman Patrick Murphy MH had on a 13½ couple mixed pack, comprised of both Modern English and Old English hounds and was assisted by Gerry Mullarkey and Frankie Quigley, while field master Pdraig Sheridan had a fifteen strong mounted field to oversee.

The first draw, at the lake, saw a fox go afoot and a short, sharp hunt ensued back towards the house. This hunt proceeded at a fast pace with hounds in good voice in going which was, in places, soft but it ended with hounds losing their fox in fading scenting conditions.

The huntsman then drew Temple Hill Wood where a hare rose to give a sharp, but brief, hunt before this pilot, too, was lost. A series of blank draws, to a backdrop of the Cuillagh Mountains suddenly ended at Bridge Wood from where hounds raised another hare. At this point hounds were in excellent voice and we car followers were treated

to a view of this good hare racing uphill in suddenly fading scenting conditions.

Hounds found another customer, unseen to us, in the plantation and they pushed him hard, in continuing good voice as far as West Island where he is believed to have gone to ground on George South's, so Patrick Murphy blew for home.

It was good to see that the coach houses, dairy and milking parlours have been painstakingly restored and turned into a cookery school and self catering facilities, while the house is now used for corporate events and weddings.

This was the first meet on the estate for fifty years and retired gamekeeper John Stubbs was out and able to tell us that he watched that last meet, as a child, thus adding another historical note to the day.

The **West Meath Foxhounds'** meet at Castletown Geoghegan was preceded by a presentation to Jack Flynn, to mark his 100th birthday. Mr Flynn was clerk of the course for the Hunt's point to point for over fifty years and has an even longer association with the Hunt, which is being continued as his daughter Cabrini, his son Kieran and his grandson David all hunt on a regular basis with the pack. Point to point Committee honorary secretary Ita Kiernan presented Mr Flynn with a framed photograph of the Committee to mark the occasion in front of a huge crowd, there to honour this very popular gentleman.

The presentation over, huntsman Niall Mahon, assisted by whippers-in Adrienne Copithorne and amateurs Gary Reilly and Adam Bouabbse, took a 13½ couple mixed pack to the first draw at Leavy's Wood, while a forty-five strong mounted field, including a number of visitors from other packs and Mona Ferentschik revisiting the West Meath's from Germany having "done" the Hunt horses last year, followed on.

At Leavy's Wood hounds put a fox afoot but he only ran for one field before going to ground. At Gerard Dunne's blackthorns another fox went afoot for a second short hunt before he

too went into Leavy's Wood and went to ground.

The third draw, at Dillon's furze, saw a third fox afoot to give a twenty minute hunt, in and out of the coverts during which he was headed twice before being lost. Niall Mahon's series of successful draws continued at Michael Jones's with this fox also giving a short, brisk hunt before going to ground.

No sooner did everyone think that the huntsman could do no wrong than hounds drew Carey's Fort blank, but it balanced out at Glengorm where a brace went afoot. One immediately turned right at the stud farm and the hounds hunted the second fox across Tullanasleek Road, into Split Hills for a brisk twenty minutes before hounds reached one of the few live electric fences at the meet. Here, Niall Mahon stopped them to give this fox best.

Hounds drew behind Tim Carey's stud farm where the first fox from the brace at the fort went afoot to give the best hunt of the day, a fast and furious forty minutes. He skirted Glengorm Bog, turned left handed to Carey's Fort, then ran through Michael Jones's, Fintan O'Brien's and Tommy Fallon's before going back into Dalton's and going to ground in the furze, enabling Niall Mahon to blow for home.

This cold, sometimes bright day had some brief skiffs of rain, saw foxes aplenty with a lot of wire and walls being encountered - successfully - while hounds only checked once, in one field at O'Brien's, before hitting the line again themselves.

Niall Mahon was keen to stress to me the excellent work done by brothers Adam and Andree Bouabbse, including turning off at least thirty electric fences which, he says, is typical of their contribution to the Hunt. He also, proudly, told me that Wacker 16, who won the Doghound Championship as an unentered hound, last July, was out today and is, like his siblings, working very well. All in all, this had been a fitting way to mark Jack Flynn's birthday and his place in the Hunt's history.



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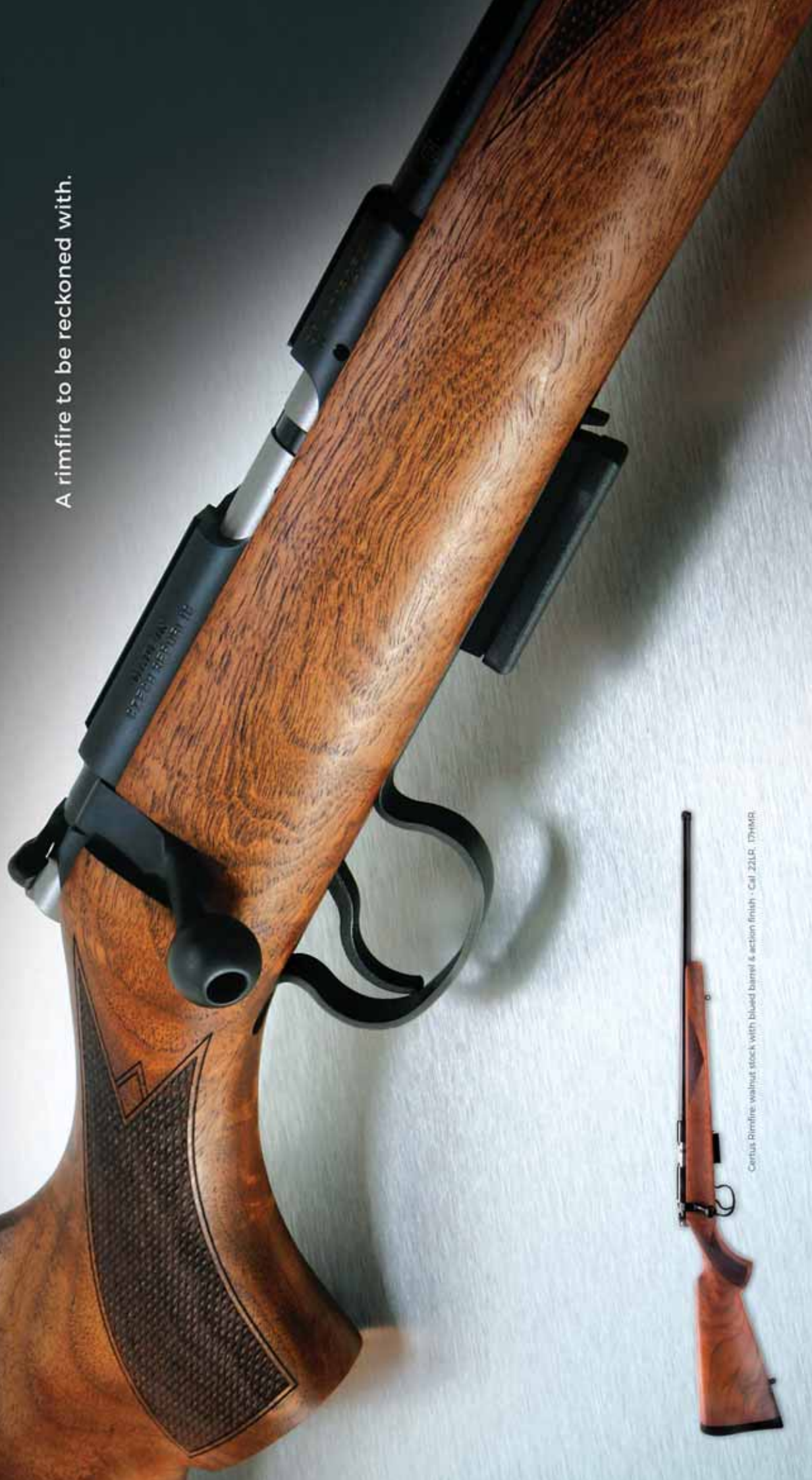
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