

Irish COUNTRY SPORTS and COUNTRY LIFE



Volume 23 Number 1 Spring/Summer 2024 £7.50/€7.50 (incl P&P)



The Voice of Irish Hunting, Shooting & Fishing since 1985



THE GAME FAIR 2024 IN BLENHEIM PALACE

4 DAY TOUR • 26 - 29 JULY 2024



TOUR INCLUDES:

- Luxury Coach Transport throughout with experienced Driver;
- Return Ferry Crossings Dublin-Holyhead-Dublin;
- 3 Nights' Half-Board 4* Hotel Accommodation (Dinner, Bed & Breakfast);
- 2 days entrance to The Game Fair (Admission included).

HOTEL:

DELTA BY MARRIOTT WARWICK, WARWICK

The Game Fair 2024 is taking place against the stunning backdrop of Blenheim Palace, and the weekend is set to be an exciting celebration of outdoor activity and country life. A great event for all the family who will enjoy demonstrations on gardening, food, cookery, conservation, and nature. Alongside the Main Arena, there are Gunmakers Row, Shooting, Gundogs, Falconry, Fishing, Archery, Horse & Hounds, and lots more to thrill all the visitors. Loads of fun activities ensuring there is something for everyone!

ITINERARY

FRIDAY 26TH JULY

Pick you up by luxury coach from your designated pick-up point and travel to Dublin for the Irish Ferries crossing to Holyhead. Continue to your hotel just outside the Midlands town of Warwick for a three-night stay. Dinner will be served in the hotel restaurant.

SATURDAY 27TH JULY

After breakfast set off for Blenheim Palace and the first full day at the Game Fair which boasts the most comprehensive array of field-sports in the UK, including archery, air gunning, falconry, fishing, ferrets, gun dogs, horses & hounds and Europe's longest clay shooting line. Return to the hotel for evening dinner, followed by an evening at leisure.

SUNDAY 28TH JULY

A second full day at the event to take in all there is to see. A 2-day entrance ticket is included. Return to the hotel for evening dinner, followed by an evening at leisure.

MONDAY 29TH JULY

Depart after breakfast for the return journey to Holyhead with a rest and coffee stop en route. Return to Dublin, followed by immediate transfers to original pick-up points.

TOUR PRICE:

€575.00 PER
PERSON SHARING A
TWIN/DOUBLE ROOM

€105.00 SINGLE
ROOM SUPPLEMENT

LOCAL PICK-UPS ON ALL MAIN ROUTES NORTH AND SOUTH OF DUBLIN



DM TOURS, MONAGHAN H18 FF90

FOR BOOKINGS OR GENERAL ENQUIRIES

• CALL: 047 80568 • MOBILE: 087 2826977 •

• Email: dmtours2013@gmail.com •



Front Cover:

From a superb action photograph
by Jan Evans.

Contents

- 4** Editorial Comment
- 5** Game Fair Directors
announce retirement –
the 2024 Irish Game Fair
postponed
- 6** My personal thanks -
By Albert J. Titterington
- 8** Golden Retriever Inter-club
Working Test - Preview By
Shauna McGroarty
- 14** FISSTA's News & Views
- 18** Fantastic Opportunities for
Women in Fly Fishing -
By Madeline Kelly
- 20** A New Fishing Season
Beckons -
By Michael Martin,
Six Mile Water Trust
- 24** Shooting Season Ends as
Hard Work Begins -
By John Toal
- 26** *INTERNATIONAL FEATURE*
Nebraska Whitetail -
By Simon K. Barr
- 30** INTERNATIONAL FEATURE*
Shotgun (and) Weddings at
the The Château du Val -
By Alasdair Crosby
- 33** *EXCLUSIVE* The McGrath
Racing Club Dog Show and
Raceday, Sunday 25th
August 24 - Previewed By
Margaret McStay
- 34** *INTERNATIONAL FEATURE*
A Vintage Flight for Doves -
By Simon K. Barr
- 38** Review of Pointer and Setter
Trials in 2023 -
By Hugh Brady
- 44** 93rd Kennel Club Any Variety
Spaniel Championship -
Report By Paul Cassidy
- 48** The 5th Irish Cocker
Championships 2023 -
Mark Stewart Reviews
- 52** Irish Kennel Club AV Spaniel
Championship 2023 -
Report By Paul Cassidy

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

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

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

Available by ORDER/SUBSCRIPTION or FREE to READ at www.countrysportsandcountrylife.com and our ARCHIVE of 12 years of magazines <https://issuu.com/bluegator/docs/The> views expressed by the contributors are not necessarily those of the editor or the publishers. Whilst every care is taken to ensure that information published is accurate and reliable, the publishers cannot be held responsible or accept liability for any errors or omissions in this publication. ALL RIGHTS ARE RESERVED. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written consent of the owner. No liability is accepted for the safe custody of unsolicited materials and manuscripts. Publication of accepted articles is not always guaranteed and the publishers will not be held liable for any manuscripts, photographs or other materials lost or damaged while in their possession, although every care will be taken. The editor reserves the right to amend any such articles as necessary.



The news that Albert Titterington and I are stepping down from the Great Game Fairs of Ireland came as a shock to many people. Let there be no doubt there was only one reason - our current health. Two reasons if you count the fact that we are not getting any younger and, if truth be told, both of us are in our late 70s. The annual Game Fair at Shanes Castle and at different venues across Ireland had become something of an institution in the calendar of country folk and visitors from across the world.

Areas surrounding these venues, such as at Shanes Castle, Antrim, Birr County Offaly and Galway had become accustomed to the annual influx of visitors at what became known as 'Game Fair Weekend.' There is no doubt that the boost to the local economy was substantial. Shopkeepers welcomed the 'out-of-towners,' hotels and guest houses could count on solid bookings in the days leading up to the game fair and the weekend itself. And the game fair public would take advantage of their journey to take in the many visitor attractions in the surrounding area. When 'game fair weekend' arrived you could definitely detect the happy buzz, not just at the fair, but in the neighbourhood.

So what next? Will the events be taken over and will the thousands of fair-goers still get their annual dose of country sports and country life? Well I really wish I could answer that. Elsewhere in the magazine you can read what we announced to the media, the thanks to our hosts, sponsors and local councils, MPs and MLAs etc., but at this stage I cannot provide an update.

I will miss the Game Fairs very much. I coined the phrase the 'game fair family' for that it had become between everyone involved. Thank you one and all - you know who you are.

While we are both retiring from organising and promoting the Game Fair, there is still much to be achieved for traditional country sports through our

significant presence on social media and other outlets. And you are reading one such vital tool in our armoury - Irish Country Sports & Country Life magazine.

In an earlier Editorial I wrote about Nature Deficit Disorder, an unofficial 'condition' originally coined by author Richard Louv (*Last Child in the Woods*, 2008). It may not be a medically recognised ailment, but I am sure we all have seen its impact on young people.

They seem to live in a world that does not exist outside the front door. Instead they inhabit virtual worlds of Minecraft and killing Zombies with an ever-impressive array of virtual military weapons, all the while shouting into a microphone at whoever they are gaming with in this virtual world.

From what I've seen it's pretty common so what can be done to get that youngster out into nature? My 'solution' at the time I first wrote of this, was to bring them along to the Irish Game Fair at Shane's Castle. It is no longer an option, but it's up to each of us to do what we can to introduce kids to the country way of life, traditional country sports and practical conservation. And 'naturally' you'll have a wonderful time yourself.

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

particular pleasure, as did training and trialling spaniels for a short time in the 70s and long before the picking up bug took hold.

You will have your own story to tell. In a nutshell what I said in my editorial was this: we have a unique sporting history that should be treasured and built upon. Yet day and daily we read of an attack by antis or others on some element of our completely legal country sports. They want it banned or they want it altered to suit their own agenda.

First they take a poke at one country sport. 'Oh we don't mind shooting, or 'oh no fishing is safe with us' etc. But I see it differently. Let's just say for a moment that one person is indeed genuine in only wanting to do away with one type of country sport, but if they succeed then the hardliners egging them on will turn their eye to yet another country sport ripe for the picking off. So what I asked for is unity.

Support ALL country sports as numbers are the only thing that a politician understands. And support the bodies that are YOUR representative bodies of what you enjoy. They are all that is standing between country sports as we know them now and country sports that YOUR children will read about in history books.

At the Game Fairs, we could see thousands of folk bringing their children, grandchildren great grandchildren to the Game Fairs where they could see for themselves each country sport in action and could wander round the conservation exhibits and chat to those on the stands about the sport, or the conservation project and its effect on the countryside.

While there may not be a Game Fair, please do take the time to introduce young folk to country sports and show them what's best for the countryside. And you won't get that with their noses stuck in a computer or scrolling on a phone.

Paul Pringle
Editor

Game Fair Directors announce retirement – the 2024 Irish Game Fair postponed

Game Fair directors Albert Titterington and Paul Pringle have announced their retirement from organising the Irish Game Fair due to personal health issues.

In total they have organised 69 Game Fairs and several other award winning events throughout Ireland over the past 43 years.

They have also been responsible for promoting traditional Irish country sports in Ireland and throughout the world by publishing Irish Country Sports & Country Life magazine, ‘the voice of Irish hunting, shooting & fishing since 1985.’ Uniquely, the magazine was available in hard copy while also being FREE to READ online which accounted in part for its huge international readership.

They also published a number of books including two books which are widely recognised as being the definitive books on Irish country sports, the Irish Fieldsports & Angling Handbook (1984) and ‘Irish Country Sports – A HERITAGE’ in 2021.

After taking early retirement from their original careers - Albert was a senior university academic and international marketing consultant and Paul was a senior PR advisor - they brought their expertise and flair to the passionate promotion and defence of country sports.

The 2023 Game Fair had to be postponed due to illness across the organising team and unfortunately plans to ensure the future of the fair in 2024 and beyond through an orderly transfer to a leading UK events company have not come to fruition. Now with Albert and Paul, both personally ‘under doctors orders’, plans for the 2024 Irish Game Fair have had to be cancelled.

In a joint statement released today, Albert and Paul said: **“We appreciate that this will be very disappointing for**

the c20,000 people who regularly attend the Fair. For many it was an annual family pilgrimage, and there have been several thousand competitors who took part on the Game Fair’s international standard competitions, such as gundog handling, terriers & lurchers, flycasting, and clay pigeon shooting. It will also be disappointing to the hundreds of regular trade exhibitors who found it an important market place for a wide range of rural products, and the Antrim area will not have the important financial boost which the Fair generated over what became known as ‘Game Fair Weekend.’ We thank all of these people for their loyal support.

”Over the years, we have used the fair to not only be a flagship event for country sports and the rural way of life but also to allow us to voluntarily support many areas of country sports to the tune of no less than c£400k through direct sponsorship of clubs and events, and by means of our professionally promoted and subsidised platform for the various sporting organisations. However, going

forward without the Game Fair, this support will unfortunately cease, and we realise that its loss will be felt by many clubs, event organisers and individuals. We will of course do everything we can to ensure that whoever takes the Fair over recognises the need to support country sports, just as we have done over the years.

“We would like to pay tribute to all of these supporters plus our hosts at Shanes Castle and other venues, as well as the fair event organisers, the many contributors to Irish Country Sports & Country Life magazine, the fair sponsors and of course the current host council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Council.

Finally, Albert and Paul said: “We sincerely hope that a new team will come forward to take over the running of this well established event and we stand ready to give them our maximum support and assistance to keep this country sports traditional event alive. Whilst we will be retiring from organising and promoting the Game Fair, there is still much to be achieved for traditional country sports through our significant presence on social media and other outlets.”



Some of the individuals who have contributed to the success of the fair over its 43 year history.

MY PERSONAL THANKS

Thanks to all for the kind messages of support and acknowledgement of the important role the Irish Game Fair has played in the promotion and defence of Irish country sports.

I would love to list all of the individuals, clubs, companies and organisations that have supported the fair over its 45 year history – the late Derek Laverty’s collage gives a flavour of just how many people contribute to a successful event.

However looking back 45 years, I would firstly pay a tribute to my co-founders Michael Dickey, Major William Brownlow & Stanley Scott from the BFSS, and Clandeboye estate agent Major Donald Hoy who enthusiastically supported my vision of an Irish Game Fair. Stanley Scott was replaced by the late John Beach as a co Director who in turn was replaced by John McClelland. In the ROI we launched Birr Castle with my wife Irene, David Wilkinson and the late Philip Lawton as directors..

Our first event directors in the North were Victor McDevitt, Michael Kennedy and the late Brian McClean (gundogs), Derryboye Gun Club and Brian Anderson on behalf of Strangford Lough Wildfowlers organised the clay pigeon shooting, Ken Perrott and SLWA (air rifles) and the angling was headed up by Eddie Hopkins and Pat Mulholland from APGAI who brought across World Champion Jack Martin. Terriers & Lurchers were initially organised by

Eddie Dash on behalf of the Ulster Game & Wildfowl Society before being taken over for several years by Seamus Erwin and Matt Lee.

As these moved on we added new event directors all of whom brought increased energy, enthusiasm and professionalism to what had become truly international class events. Our latest team Ken Lindsay, Joe Johnston and Ricky Johnston (Gundogs) ; Kenny Thomas (Clays); Kieran Young and the McGrath family terrier & Lurchers; Darren Moore & Graham Fyffe Ferrets; APGAI, Bobby Bryans, Paul Smith and Stevie Munn (angling); Philip Titterington, the Whip & Collar Club and the Donkey Breed Society NI (equestrian) were truly of international calibre.

Over the years I grew the brand image with the help of amongst others Paul Pringle, Emma Cowan and our designer Gary Leacock – although a special mention must be made of Ingrid Houwers who put ‘into costume’ many of the themes we developed.

We also broadened the base of the fair and its family appeal by the introduction of cognate areas such as the Fine Food Festival, headed up by Emmett McCourt and described by the Daily Telegraph as ‘one of the best in Ireland’ and The Living History Festival headed up by George Logan and featuring the Muzzle loaders led by Dave McCullough. Harry Cook (filming), the late Derek Laverty and Jim Masson (photography) have

provided a great visual record of the fairs. And Arena Director Johnnie McCoy and Chief Steward Tom Fulton delivered one of the best arena programmes seen at any Game Fair in the British Isles.

However the real power house of any event is the ‘team on the ground behind the scenes’ and these included Liz McCracken, my wife Irene, three sons Johnny, David & Michael and a wide range of grandchildren; my brothers Philip & Paul; Irene’s extended family including her late father & mother, her late brother Robert, his wife, daughters, son in laws and grandchildren; Ops Director Edwin Dash who came as a volunteer in year 2 and joined the team in year 3 – he and Peter Ayre on maintenance were involved in virtually all of the fairs and Edwin even used his expertise to help in several Scottish fairs; finally the build /in house car parking team headed up by the Monaghan family built up so much expertise that the fair was able to be built, delivered and disassembled in good order by a small team and with minimal ground damage in 14 days.

All of the people mentioned and too many more to mention created the Irish Game Fair which I was privileged to have the honour of ‘heading up’ for 45 years. All have my gratitude and I feel they can be proud of the role they played in giving pleasure to so many and in promoting and defending the sports that we all love.



A happy family crowd at Shanes Castle

ULTIMATE PERFORMANCE



SWAROVSKI
OPTIK



*PERFECTLY
DESIGNED*

Z8i

SEE THE UNSEEN



The Z8i rifle scope completely redefines performance with its 8x zoom and outstanding optics. Its optimum detail recognition is impressive, based on high magnification, uncompromising image definition across the whole field of view, and exceptional viewing comfort facilitating rapid target acquisition.

The Z8i family is made impressively versatile thanks to the

flexible, easily attachable ballistic turret, the switchable reticle, and its powerful 8x zoom. A rifle scope to suit every hunting scenario.

The slim 30-mm (1.2 in) central tube blends seamlessly with any hunting firearm. The perfectly ergonomic illumination unit and large operating features make it quick and reliable to handle.

GREAT NEWS FOR GUNDOGS

On 29th June 2024 - Golden Retriever Inter-club Working Test (open only to Golden Retrievers).

The Ulster Golden Retriever Club will once again take its turn to host this annual event.

The last time Ulster hosted this event was back in June 2011 at Shane's Castle and Lord O'Neil has kindly agreed to the event being held again on the same beautiful grounds.

The competing teams of Golden Retrievers will have 4 dogs and handlers consisting of two open dogs and 2 novice dogs. The teams will compete over the course of the day, ultimately competing for the best team and overall top dog.

In 2011, the top dog was won by Field Trial Champion Nordenlights Cherokee, handled by John Williamson, who competed for Ulster.

The winning team were the Ulster Golden Retriever Club. Can they do it again in 2024?

On Sunday 30th June the Ulster Golden Retriever Club will also hold an AV working test. This test will be open to any variety gun dog which will give our UK visitors a chance to mix,

By Shauna McGroarty

mingle and compete with some of Ireland's gun dog enthusiasts.

We look forward to a weekend of welcoming our visitors once again to Northern Ireland, and let's hope for a wee bit of sunshine.

Spectators are welcome on both days!



The winning Ulster Team in 2011



SKYLINE

TREE SURGERY IRELAND LTD

Specialists in

- Ash Dieback Removal
- Tree Dismantling/Removal
- Stump Grinding
- Branching
- Chipping
- Blocking

All aspects of tree surgery
including traffic management

Contact:

Kenny 07763 859243 Bartley 07900 133752

www.skylinetreesurgeryireland.com

E: info@skylinetreesurgeryireland.com



**FULLY
INSURED &
EXPERIENCED
STAFF**

**THE EASIEST &
SAFEST OPTION FOR
LOWERING YOUR
TREES TO THE
GROUND!**

The National Association of Regional Game Councils



The habitat in Finland is a key breeding ground and we are calling on the Minister to match this amount.

€25,000 Donated by Irish Hunters to Finnish SOTKA Project.

At the Waterfowlers Network meeting held on February 12th, 2024, the NARGC, represented by the Irish Habitat Trust, generously donated €25,000 towards the Finnish SOTKA-project and various other pivotal projects managed by The Waterfowlers Network.

This contribution solidifies NARGC's dedication to this project. The SOTKA project's objective is to rehabilitate 400 hectares of crucial brood habitat by rewetting bogs in the waterfowl breeding regions of Finland and Scandinavia, essential breeding grounds for Ireland's migratory waterfowl. Species such as Widgeon, Teal, which migrate to Ireland during the winter months will greatly benefit from enhanced productivity on their breeding grounds.

John Butler, Chairman of NARGC, expressed delight in their involvement, emphasising the collaborative nature of initiatives like the SOTKA project and The Waterfowlers Network, which illustrate how hunters and wildlife agencies can cooperate to benefit species conservation, particularly on a European scale.

NARGC among core partners

NARGC, representing Ireland, is among the core partners of the seven organisations forming The Waterfowlers Network. These partners aim to unite with other stakeholders, coordinating efforts and addressing gaps in current waterbird conservation initiatives.

Mr. Butler further noted the significance of hosting The Waterfowlers Network in County Wexford, renowned for its waterfowling traditions. The gathering brought together representatives from hunting associations, national wildlife agencies, data



scientists, ecologists, and hunters from across Europe to strategise future projects and evaluate existing work over two days.

Such collaborative efforts should be central to management plans

Such collaborative efforts across borders for migratory birds should be central to the management plans by all the countries and agencies on the birds migratory path. Arbitrary or isolated knee-jerk actions by individual countries or ministries do nothing for the species other than

isolate and marginalise the hunters who do most for the birds conservation

The NARGC further noted that Minister for state Malcolm Noonan, and the National Parks & Wildlife Service had been given substantial additional Funding in the last budget, and the Chairman John Butler called on the Minister to match the €25,000 committed to by the NARGC, to advance these projects on the breeding grounds of these species. Mr Butler further stated "This is an opportunity for this Green Party Minister to show his commitment to real Migratory Duck Conservation"

The presence of Verona Murphy TD underscored her commitment to understanding the importance of European partnerships in advancing conservation efforts, highlighting the valuable contributions of The Waterfowlers Network, the Irish Habitat Trust, and NARGC.

The Waterfowlers Network receives support from Aarhus University, the Finnish Wildlife Agency, FACE, AEWA, and Wetlands International, all integral members of the coordination group actively participating in the meeting.



Gundog Rescue & Rehoming

"Making Sad Dogs Happy"

We Specialize in Rescuing and Rehoming Gundog Breeds throughout the UK and Ireland to working and pet homes.

Every dog has a purpose



**Find us on Facebook
Gundog Rescue & Rehoming**

We are a Non-Profit Organization based in Northern Ireland and all funds go to rescuing and rehoming Gundog Breeds.

Ballygillen Labradors



**Int FTCH Eelburn
Flavius of Ballygillen
Winner of the IKC
Retriever Championships**

At Stud - contact Oliver Bell

Tel: 07960 508301

Autumn - Winter Christmas Edition

Irish
**COUNTRY SPORTS
and COUNTRY LIFE**

Out August

**Book YOUR advert to reach
a MASSIVE audience
from just £55**

Call

028 (from ROI 048) 44839167

PACDOG
Experts in Pet Control Systems Since 1989



www.pacdog.com
sales@pacdog.com
Tel: +353 (0)59 97 24690
WhatsApp: +353 (0)87 7903008



COUNTRY SPORTS IRELAND

Country Sports Ireland is at the very forefront of training provision for the shooting sports community throughout Ireland and springtime marks the commencement of delivery of an extensive programme of industry leading courses including the following.

Deer Stalking Training Courses on 3rd & 4th February and 23rd & 24th March

The Country Sports Ireland Deer Stalking Training Course is approved by National Parks and Wildlife Service as meeting the requirements for mandatory training and certification and is acceptable to Coillte for any person hunting deer under licence on Coillte lands.

Learners enjoyed detailed presentations and practical demonstrations covering all relevant aspects of deer hunting and management - delivered in a learner friendly way by a knowledgeable and experienced team of instructors.



extremely popular Trained Hunter - Large Wild Game (Deer) meat hygiene course, on 17th February in Kilbehenny Community Centre, Mitchelstown, Co. Cork. This event includes a unique practical session on gralloching and carcass inspection on freshly shot deer carcasses hosted by in nearby Premier Game Ltd.

The Country Sports Ireland Large Wild Game (Deer) meat hygiene course enables learners to develop their knowledge and confidence in areas such as gralloching, carcass handling & inspection, parasites, disease recognition, food safety and all relevant legislation. The practical session on freshly shot deer carcasses is always greatly appreciated by learners and is a very effective form of training.

The Country Sports Ireland Trained Hunter Large Wild Game (Deer) game meat hygiene course is always extremely popular and well attended. The recent course on 17th February was no exception.



Country Sports Ireland Instructors Daniel Fryday (left) and Ricky Kent (right) pictured with some of the young learners who attended the Country Sports Ireland Deer Stalking Training Course on 23rd & 24th March.

NI Deer Stalking Training Courses on 24th & 25th February and 27th & 28th April

The Country Sports Ireland team delivered another two instalments of our extremely popular NI Deer Stalking Training Course on 24th & 25th February and 27th and 28th April at Creggagh Field Target Club, Co. Derry.

It is approved by the PSNI and the Food Standards Agency NI which means that learners who achieve the award may successfully apply for a firearms certificate for a deer legal calibre rifle. A Trained Hunter Large Wild Game meat hygiene award is included in the course, and this is unique to the Country Sports Ireland NI Deer Stalking Training Course.

Trained Hunter Course Large Wild Game 17th February

Another event in our busy training calendar was the



The Country Sports Ireland NI Deer Stalking Training Course is unique. It has been developed specifically to meet the needs of local deer hunters and is delivered by a team of local experts.

Night Shooting Training Events 8th March & 22nd March

Country Sports Ireland delivered two interesting and well attended Night Shooting Training Events on 8th March in Creggagh Field Target Club, Co. Derry and on 22nd March in the Midlands National Shooting Centre, Tullamore.

Learners enjoyed presentations on law, safety and suitable firearms and ammunition for night shooting, followed by a practical simulated hunt, putting their newly acquired knowledge into practice. The ability to judge distance at night-time was also a popular part of the simulated hunt.

The event in Creggagh Field Target Club was supported by practical demonstration of the very latest thermal and night vision equipment expertly delivered by Ashley Thompson from Scott Country International. Hikmicro very generously provided goodie bags for all learners at this event.

Further information on Country Sports Ireland's leading programme of training courses is available via the Country Sports Ireland website using the link: <https://countrysportsireland.org>



Benefits of Membership of Country Sports Ireland include:

- Outstanding insurance cover for members whilst participating in insured country sports activities.
- Subsidised access to a leading programme of training courses and events.
- FREE expert advice and support on a broad range of country sports matters.
- Representation at the very highest levels of government decision-making.
- Exclusive member discount schemes.
- Exceptional value for money.

For more information or to join visit:

www.countrysportsireland.org

Clonleame Woodcrafts

Quality chopping boards, coasters and wooden gifts made to your specifications from native Irish hardwoods



Clonleame Woodcrafts, Clonleame, Delvin, Westmeath

Tel: +353 87 711 7076 Email: dermotmcentroe@gmail.com WhatsApp: 00353877117076

Facebook: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100083163227081

Federation of Irish Salmon & Sea Trout Anglers

Conaidhm na Slat Iascairí Bradáin agus Breac Geal

VISIT US AT www.fissta.com



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

SALMON SEASON 2024 KICKS OFF

The 2024 salmon and seatrout season is now well underway with our congratulations going to James Kenny for taking the first salmon of around 8lb. The fish was landed at Watts Pool on the Leannon River on January 1st around lunchtime close to Ramelton in County Donegal.

It has been a while since a New Years Day salmon was landed, but thanks to the good fortune and skill of James from Donegal, the catch of the first salmon in Europe, hopefully heralds a return to times past, although things will never be the same for angling again unless some radical changes are made at management level.

Many first river salmon have now been landed and we say congratulations to one and all as we face our beloved waters with the same hope and enthusiasm we had in our youth. Our National Executive Council wish your club members a happy, prosperous and successful 2024 season.

The new salmon regulations have just been published by the Minister and we now embrace the returning of our sport with an optimism that rejuvenates us all at this opening time of the season, as we make the important preparations for our members once again.

While we will have a total of 81 rivers open for salmon angling, only 42 will allow a salmon to be taken, while the remaining 39 will only be open to catch and release, while the rest of the

66 Irish rivers will be closed completely as they have no sustainable surplus available.

NO INCREASE IN REGISTRATION OR CLUB INSURANCE RATES FOR 2024

We are fortunate to have sourced our upgraded insurance cover once again at the same price and without the bureaucracy that some quotes are seeking on health and safety assurances on a river by river basis. The cover once again complies with state bodies requirements who may give grants and seek indemnifications for such works on habitat enhancement or access development projects that your fishery may need.

MORE CHANGES THAT WILL IMPACT ON OUR ANGLING AND WATERS

It is vital that we all play our part together and that all your members are registered and the necessary insurance cover is in place from now onwards so see the accompanying advertisement for details to contact the FISSTA desk for a quotation.

For those who may not know, our Federation are campaigning for the lot of the salmon and seatrout angler to be enhanced and to ensure the implications of the various developments do not impact on our salmon stocks and habitat.

MINING IN THE SPERRINS MOVING AGAIN AT STORMONT

In a previous column, I asked the question “Cyanide to be used in gold mining in Tyrone - what could possibly go wrong?” To date, FISSTA oppose the Gold mining in the Sperrins by Dalriada and we support the GPO and colleagues campaign to protect our environment from the impending destruction the mining companies will bring.

The state bodies embarrassed themselves at the Stormont inquiry recently when they failed to answer the basic question they have had years to prepare answers for, and the news that Dalriada Mining had reportedly already caused a number of pollution incidents in their nearby waterways left local protesters angry, as they were consistently told they were legally mining in accordance with procedure, when apparently it would seem they were not.

The press reports, from that incredible journalist Shauna Kerr in particular, highlighted the lack of faith in public bodies that surfaced at the meeting on Wednesday 20th March as Stormont departments were accused of being less than transparent with the information they hold on the mine, in relation to freedom of information requests. Perhaps the pre-inquiry meetings will flush out the defensive stance of civil servants that had no ministerial direction for the past few years.

IFI GRANTS ALLOCATION 2024

FISSTA have campaigned for our club applications to be awarded the habitat enhancement grants from our rod licence stamp revenue so that it will help put more salmon back in our depleted rivers. FISSTA Chairman Paul Lawton has led the campaign to get our clubs as much of the revenue as possible while state bodies attempt to claim some of the budget for projects that may not comply with the criteria.

FISSTA CAMPAIGN TO HALT THE 66 RIVER CLOSING PLAN

We have received assurances from IFI that they agree to our proposals for a return to the old salmonid habitat development programmes of the 1990's and we await an announcement on the detail very soon. FISSTA will continue to campaign for the opening of these 66 closed rivers once again, if only to confront the upsurge in poaching, which we are glad to see increased evidence of IFI staff tackling last year for a change.

Along with these major issues, the protection of our stocks has taken a huge hit in their migration out of our sea lice infested bays, in the feeding grounds and on their return to our native rivers. We acknowledge the commitment of IFI to join with us in defence of the habitat in the High Court

Judicial Review last April to protect Shot Head against Mowi salmon farmers.

We are still awaiting the Judicial decision as we go to print. Our actions to defend the habitat has clearly influenced others to support the conservation of our wild Atlantic salmon and we will continue to use every legal weapon to do so on every salmon farming application that is lodged.

On all three areas of the habitat there was only hand wringing by the state until now, citing climatic problems that were outside our territorial limits to take any action. We will, as ever, continue to campaign for some of our rod licence revenue to finance the protection of our salmon in the feeding grounds, as this buyout in the North Atlantic has proven in the last two seasons that greater numbers of salmon in good condition are returning. This is due to the 2018 private buyout agreement kicking in between the Greenland and Faroese nets men and the formidable North Atlantic Salmon Fund NASF programme, of which FISSTA is a founding member.

If we are to see this progress continue, we must all convince our Minister in the coming season to support this scheme as previous ministers have sadly refused to in the

past. Thankfully, we are now benefiting from a good contract that was agreed on our behalf by ASF and NASF in 2018, so we must acknowledge the generosity of NASF in paying Ireland's share in the meantime, until we get our Minister on board.

We will continue to lobby the IFI to conclude its legal challenges against our anglers on the Gweebarra River which IFI use our rod licence funds to pursue. We will keep fighting to protect our angling rights and fishing as long as your valued support of our angling members is forthcoming.

NORTH ATLANTIC SALMON CONSERVATION ORGANISATION

The next NASCO meeting is set to take place in Westport this June and FISSTA have devised a plan of campaign in conjunction with a majority of our 40 Non Government Organisations to remind our government to improve their efforts for the wild Atlantic salmon in both our natal and feeding grounds on both sides of the Atlantic.

SHANNON SALMON MIGRATION

FISSTA has championed the Kingfisher plan for the migration barriers on the River Shannon and while progress to date is slow we have been working steadily to obtain progress with the ESB and the DECC to come to some serious and long standing agreement.

NATIONAL INLAND FISHERIES FORUM

FISSTA, asked the National Inland Fisheries Forum to record that despite intensive lobbying to close some draft fisheries last year, the 2023 commercial netting season opened up with IFI's commercial draft net licenses being issued against the scientific evidence that the fisheries be closed in Cork harbour area and other bays. FISSTA objected and noted that the issuing of these licences were contrary to NASCO guidelines and our members raised this



This classroom unit, funded by BIM from EU educational funds, is controversial because it does not explain at schools the serious wildlife damage which open net cage causes.

issue at our Fishery District Committee, Cork, Kerry region to no avail in 2023. Also we tried to bring the basic procedures (such as briefing documents and minutes) to the Fishery District.

Committees in the form of terms of reference/constitution which are now urgently required as the absence of one has resulted in reopening of closed fisheries to the detriment of wild Atlantic salmon stocks. FISSTA proposed that for the next NIFF meeting agenda that IFI present a policy paper so that the Chair of NIFF host a discussion to explore the feasibility of an outright purchase of all draft nets and this is now happening in May, but will be too late to have effect for this season.

FISSTA are members of the AGAF – Alliance of Game Anglers Federation along with NARA and TAFI who meet regularly at many events where they discuss the many mutual concerns in which they have policy agreements on National Inland Fisheries Forum and ACCI issues.

Following pressure from AGAF to get a new initiative on the existing salmon netting policy at NIFF, we discovered an old document titled “Irish Atlantic Salmon Managemnt November 2019 Green Paper” which had been buried in the bowels of the IFI library under an obscure file which previous members of the IFI board had approved but never publicised until one member announced its existence recently. FISSTA will consult with all members before attending the next day long session on the report in May. In the

meantime the NIFF Biosecurity Options Report for lakes like Loch Corrib will be published very soon.

FISSTA ATTENDS IFA AQUACULTURE CONFERENCE

FISSTA have campaigned against net cage salmon farms since they were first located on our bays in the early nineties to no avail. Even when the scientific evidence became clear in the noughties the the IFA Aquaculture salmon farm lobby opposed us and have been successful at doing this ever since.

IFA Aquaculture once again hosted its annual conference and AGM at the Kilmurry Lodge Hotel, Limerick on the eve of the Irish Skipper Expo taking place at the University of Limerick Sport Arena. The agenda included:

- Update from DAFM Officials on Aquaculture policy & licensing
- Offshore Renewable Energy & Irish Aquaculture
- Nature Restoration Law & Irish Aquaculture
- Updates on Funding programmes & upcoming EMFAF schemes

The National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development 2030 or NSPSAD – 2030 was launched by the keynote speaker Minister Charlie Mac Conalogue TD who outlined the same old policy that previous ministers had unveiled in the past. He gave much the same speech the following day at the Irish Skipper Expo where he launched the same document again.

FISSTA told those attending that we had objected in our submissions to the

two new licence applications for salmon farming in Deenish and Inishfarad which we hope will be rejected by Aquaculture Licenses Appeals Board next year. Our consistent argument and objective was and always will be to end open net cage salmon farming but at conferences such as these annual events, our objective was always to try and divide the shellfish farmers from the fin fish farmers who cause all the pollution and wild Atlantic salmon decimation. Their united defence (under “aquaculture”) of each other is always admirable, but every year the chinks are getting bigger as shellfish farmers realise the damage that fin-fish farmers are doing their industry and prices.

Sooner or later there has to be a serious division in the market place as fin fish is seriously holding back the shellfish sector, if only on market prices alone. Bord Iascaigh Mhara – the seafood agency along with Bord Bia – the export agency must have relayed this market feedback and proposed new considerations to IFA Aquaculture to tackle this buyer problem, but it will take a political decision to remove sea-licenced netcages from the aquaculture family as they can no longer argue sustainability for salmon farming while open sea net cages are in the water around our wild Atlantic shores.

PAY NETS-MEN IN NORTH ATLANTIC TO SAVE SALMON

FISSTA attended the NASCO conference last year in New Brunswick, Canada where we are glad to report the continued support for our fish in the feeding grounds which we intend to copper fasten this year in Westport. Thanks to the partnership of Atlantic Salmon Federation and North Atlantic Salmon Fund (of which which we are founding members) the 2018 deal made with the Greenland and Faeroes netsmen to sign an agreement that compensates for protection of our stocks in the feeding ground’s continues with new provisions being agreed.

FISSTA met up with Bill Taylor



Irish Skipper Expo attendees with Minister Charlie Mac Conalogue in Limerick, February 2024

Chairman of ASF and Fridliefur Gudmundsson Chairman of NASF at the beginning of the 40th NASCO meeting to review ICES stocks data and we were assured of their continued support for us in Ireland. Therefore the protection of our fish deal will be renewed for another year in

Westport, thus allowing for stocks to return stronger than the amount this past three years. ASF and NASF were very pleased to learn of FISSTA's fight against sea-lice and our multi pronged strategy that included challenging Mowi at every step in the courts. So heres to the next couple of years of improving

returns and hopefully a little bit earlier than before so that, in the true spirit of Orri Vigfusson RIP, his memory and vision for our wild salmon lives on for us all to embrace.

In closing here are two photographs to make you think again when you are describing your 'biggest ever' salmon!



70 foot Sperm Whale on Glencolmcille beach since 23rd March. See the size of one tooth which the scientific experts removed for sampling.



Federation of Irish Salmon & Sea Trout Anglers

Conaidhm na Slat Iascairí Bradáin agus Breac Geal

VISIT US AT www.fissta.com



RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION & INSURANCE FOR 2024

JOIN FISSTA TO SUPPORT OUR CAMPAIGNS AND LOBBYING FOR IMPROVED SALMONID STOCKS AND HABITAT – COMMITTED TO CONSERVATION



Federation of Irish Salmon & Sea Trout Anglers

Conaidhm na Slat Iascairí Bradáin agus Breac Geal

Secretary: NOEL CARR, Teelin Rd, Carrick, Co. Donegal
 Tel: 074 9730300. Email: fissta2017@gmail.com

By Madeleine Kelly

Opportunities for Women to be involved in Fly Fishing

I started fly fishing in 1988, during the Mayfly season on Lough Mask and most of my fishing trips over the next few years were to Co Mayo, or to stocked fisheries in Northern Ireland. I met no women out fly fishing.

By 1991, I'd discovered the Irish competition scene and took part in many lough-style competitions throughout most of Ireland. Again I met very few women. I heard about the Irish Ladies Flyfishing Association (ILFA) in 1993, when I took part in their first organised trial to select a women's team to represent Ireland the following year at the International Ladies Flyfishing Championship, which is fished between teams from

Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales.

This was then a relatively new international competition and had resulted in the ILFA being set up in 1990 to manage the Irish Ladies Flyfishing Team and to promote fly fishing amongst women. The ILFA achieves that by running a series of introductory days on an annual basis.

There are many women in Ireland who love to immerse themselves in nature, which is evident from posts on social media. I'd really hope to encourage some of them to experience the peace and tranquillity that comes from spending a day on the water, or the camaraderie that stems from attending a women's fly fishing event.

The benefits of angling have been known for a long time, but it's been a well kept secret. To be outdoors with nature surrounding you, in beautiful places, really gives a boost to your inner-being.

A fish is just a bonus - there's so much more to enjoy

And most times it doesn't matter if a fish is caught or not. The fish is a bonus and it's also great exercise. Scrambling 5 miles up along a river bank and wading really works the inner core and angling is one of the best ways to get your vitamin D.

When you cast you just never know what you'll reel in and research shows the real catch isn't something you can hold or see, but something you can feel. I hope that this encourages women to think about trying out fly fishing.

Research from various countries shows that women are taking on more leadership roles within the angling industry and Ireland is no different. Julie Gerry has recently been appointed as the Youth Officer for the Irish Trout Fly Fishing Association (ITFFA) and also as the Chair of Leinster ITFFA.

Support is growing for women's fly fishing and Lough Rowan Angling Club are running a weekend dedicated to women's fly fishing on 15/16 June with Saturday 15th offering training and casting instruction for women at all abilities from beginners to advanced level and on Sunday 16th the club will host an open lough-style competition to be held in memory of a past member, Ruth Mettlar.

Reel Women Northern Ireland

I set up Reel Women Northern Ireland with Susan Brown in 2017. We



A team training day in 2003 with coach Noel Lowry

run beginner's programmes to introduce women to fly fishing and have also run a successful Intermediate programme of 10 days over the 2019 season aimed at women who had already learned the basics. I'd love to see funding available to encourage more women into all of the angling disciplines and to encourage them to become coaches and instructors.

To find out more about women's fly fishing or to take part in an introductory day please contact:

Susan Brown via
nireelwomen@gmail.com or

Liz Dermott ILFA, PRO via
irishladiesflyfishing@gmail.com

For information on International Women's Fly Fishing Day contact Madeleine Kelly via Maddy@iwffd.org

About the author: Madeleine Kelly (Maddy) has been fly fishing for over 30 years. While she loves fishing the wild Irish loughs especially Lough Mask her real passion is to introduce women to fly fishing. To bring the



A first fish for Dorothy Sellers at a Reel Women beginners' day at Straid Fishery international community of fly fishing-women together over the Covid pandemic she devised the idea of International Women's Fly Fishing Day (IWFFD) and co founded it with a friend Pamela Dunlap from West Virginia whom she met on a women's flyfishing chat group. IWFFD, now an annual event happens on the 2nd Saturday of September.



Irish Ladies Flyfishing Association



Hollywood stars...
Ginger Rogers
and Bette Davis




Women have been flyfishing for many years, yet the activity is still male-dominated.
Let's work together to change that!
Join us for training day, learn to fish with women from all over Ireland & make new friends.

Introduction to Flyfishing for Women

- 6th July Laois Angling Centre
- 21st July Venue TBC
- 14th Sept Venue TBC
- 6th Oct Venue TBC

Intermediate Day

- 19th October Laois Angling Centre



For the experienced flyfisher we run a league to select the team that will represent Ireland.

Donations of items that can be raffled gratefully received.

For more information and booking, visit
www.irishladiesflyfishing.com
or email: ilfa9008@gmail.com
Follow us on Facebook and Instagram!



IRISH LADIES FLYFISHING



The New Season Beckons

The spring trout is a jewel to behold

As anglers we are fortunate to witness the countryside and natural environments, walk through the changing seasons and experience nature's rhythms as the year waxes and wanes. Christmas becomes a memory and the shooting season draws to an end, thoughts of pheasant, mallard and woodcock are replaced by a yearning to explore our beautiful rivers and loughs in search of those jewels of Irish waters – our wild brown trout. With the lengthening days comes the urge to be abroad with rod in hand, the rods are dusted down, waders checked for damage and the fly-tying bench gets a visit. This year I have discovered fellow Antrim Anglers' Andy McClelland's website, 'Chuck'n'Duck', and am indulging in some of his exquisite fly-tying materials and barbless hooks, his dubbing is so fine and well blended that even my flies look

moderately tidy!

So it was that I found myself on the river bank on a blustery day in early April, dark sheets of cloud glowering under a foreboding sky, intermittent squalls strafing the river valley, I was glad of the shelter of a blackthorn hedge, its white flowers mingling with the bright yellow-greens of the alder catkins, green shoots of leaves starting to unfold at last. At the foot of the hedge some yellow primrose and lesser celandine brought colour to an otherwise barren landscape, the wild garlic sprouting green underfoot. From my vantage I glimpsed a flock of lapwings, quite rare now, they used to be a common sight before the advent of silage cutting.

Around mid-day the wind eased a little and shafts of sunlight pierced the dark cloud, instantly the complexion of the landscape was transformed, 'a smile

from a vale' as Pink Floyd put it. I put away the flask and picked up the rod, it was time to search for an opportunity of that first trout of the season!

In previous weeks we had been engaged in litter lifts, work parties and cormorant patrols, the true extent of the damage from winter of continuous floods became apparent as the water subsided – fences dislodged, trees washed away, bridges destroyed. Some of the best pools had been changed but the way of a watercourse is continuous transformation and there were some lovely runs formed by deposited rock and gravel, undercut banks and new back-eddies to provide great habitat and shelter for trout. A river course is dynamic and with each flood the damage done by the catastrophic 1960s drainage plan is eased, as the river gradually tries to return to its natural course rather than the barren canals

which government and farmers believed to be more beneficial, the only outcome of their efforts was to flood areas downstream and denude the countryside of the most valuable wildlife habitat.

A stream of large dark olives emerged

In a newly formed pool a deep seam ran under an undercut bank - willow, birch and alder overhung providing shade and shelter from the breeze, their roots holding the bank secure and any submerged roots providing cover for resting trout. The stream at the head of the pool filtered under the left bank, paused and slowed as it merged with the deeper water. From the golden gravel and bright strands of water crowfoot in the streams emerged a stream of Spring, or large dark olives. The flies rode jauntily in the surface currents, buffeted by the upstream breeze as the current tried to carry them downstream, many



Olives form the basis of spring dry fly angling

were knocked over as they fluttered helplessly, providing easy prey for waiting trout and salmon parr.

Those that did manage to take the air fell prey to a couple of wagtails who stationed themselves in the branches above the pool and were deftly picking off the flies as they lifted from the

Those that did manage to take the air



With winter behind us, a new season stretches ahead

surface. Toward the tail of the pool, where the current ran deep under the undercut bank, two of the larger residents were at work, mopping up the straggling olives, easy prey.

Large dark olives don't hatch steadily, they appear in batches, little flotillas which provide a few moments of frenzied activity then a lull before the next little hatch. I could feel the warm sun on my back as I carefully eased into position, overhead the cloud was breaking, allowing some welcome heat to warm the landscape.

The hatches of fly became more frequent, the activity on the river was building, a chaffinch which had been singing in the blackthorn hedge joined the wagtails and was flitting over the runs at the head of the pool, performing aerobatics as it too nailed the hatching flies on their maiden flight. The trout were feeding steadily, the little troutlings and parr at the head of the pool jumped and splashed at the emerging fly but the two larger trout are quietly sipping down the flies with the minimum of fuss.

Crouching low in a hollow on the bank, I opened the fly box and selected my favourite fly for this time of year – a Greenwell body (waxed primrose Pearsell's silk), fine gold rib, a rough hare's ear thorax and a little tuft of CDC for the wing, more of an emerger than a true dry fly which sits jauntily on cock hackles such as a Kites Imperial.

My rod is a nine foot, four weight Guideline, coupled with an old Marquis reel. I use a tapered leader and connect four or five feet of 3 or 4lb tippet to the tiny metal ring. Anointing the tip of the fly line and half the tapered leader with Mucillin floatant, I degreased the tippet, melted a little Loop floatant on my fingertip and gave the CDC and thorax of the fly a rub, wiped it off with a tissue and we were ready to tackle the trout.

I bided my time until the next flotilla of olives sailed down

The larger trout seem to have a feeding rhythm, there is a flurry of

activity then a quiet period so I bided my time until the next flotilla of olives sailed down, initiating a rise. Pitching my fly over the nearest trout, it took a natural beside my fly, but the current dragged the artificial off line, the fly was ignored and the trout stopped feeding.

Luckily the second fish continued to feed steadily and for this one I halted the cast early to introduce a series of wiggles into the fly line in order to give a longer drag-free drift. This time, just as I thought I'm about to get a second refusal, the trout turned back and rolled over the fly in a lovely turning rise. A gentle strike set the hook and the trout bolted for cover into the depths of the pool.

After thrashing for a while the little Hardy Marquis drag sang out as the trout shot up the pool making for the exposed roots of an old willow tree. I applied side strain to stop him and he jumped clear of the water, thankfully the hook holding and I was just able to guide him back down to the quieter water at the tail of the pool where I could net him.

The first trout of the season is a special fish, this pristine, wild brown trout that lay in the net, golden sides, black and red spots glowing. I slipped

out the barbless fly and eased its head over the rim of the net gently holding him until the strength returned and he streaked across the pool to the shelter of the undercut bank.

Finally the new season has begun and we can look forward to warmer days, rising trout, dollaghan and maybe even salmon; as the new season stretches before us there will be thoughts of buzzer fishing, black gnat and Hawthorne flies, dancing clouds of mayfly on the shores of the limestone loughs, explosive rises to sedge in the dark and - for those of us fortunate to fish the Lough Neagh tributaries - the promise of sport as the nomads of the Lough, the Dollaghan, return from that vast expanse of water.

We in Ireland are amazingly fortunate to have access to such a diverse range of angling opportunities available to us, from tiny streams to huge limestone loughs. Unfortunately these environments are under incredible pressures from agricultural effluent, sewage, open cage fish farming, housing development and destruction of valuable spawning tributaries for drainage.

As custodians of these precious environments it's our responsibility to



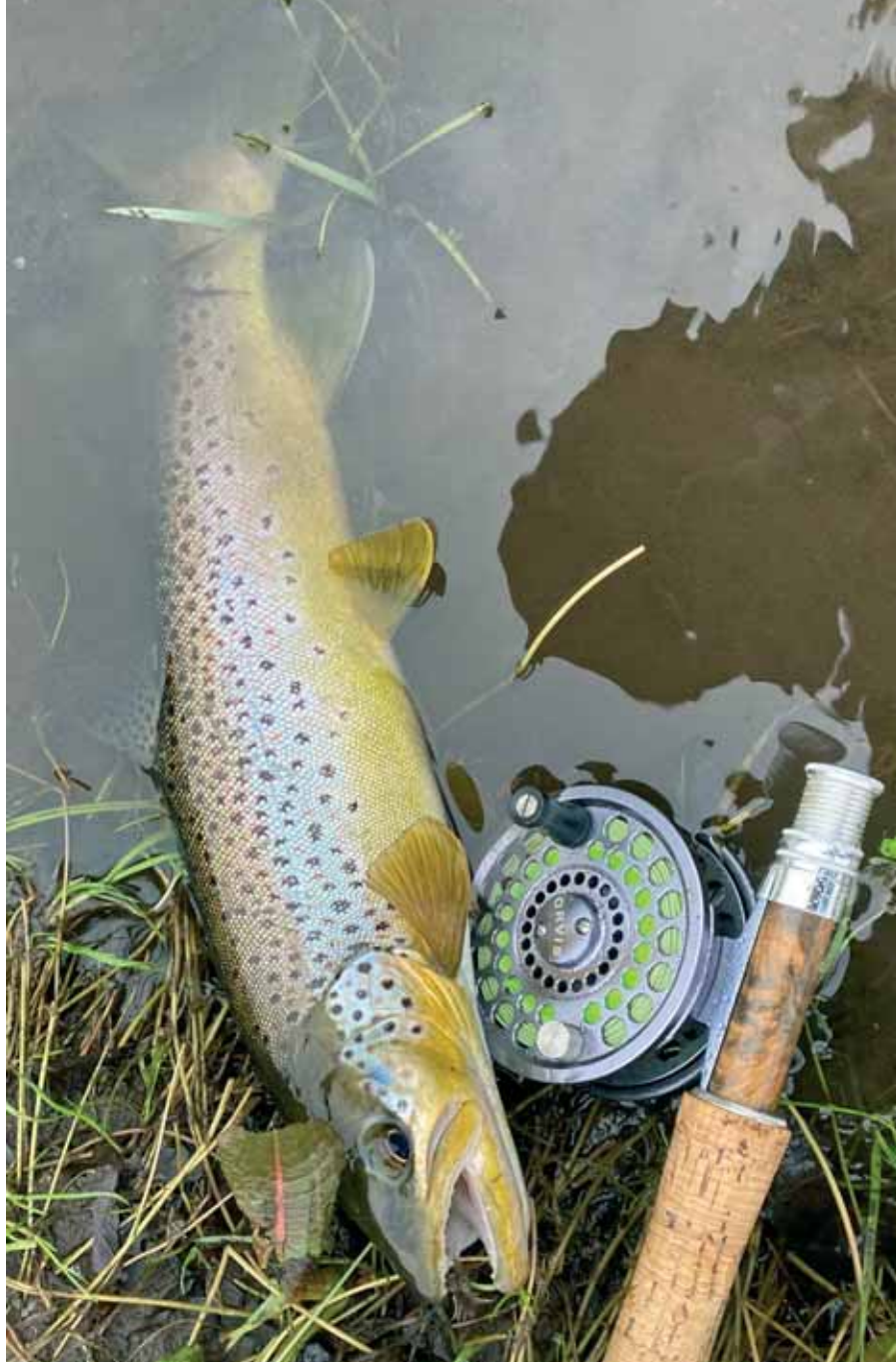
A conservation project with saplings planted to protect the river bank and provide cover

protect them and this means joining an angling club or federation, engaging in campaigning and protesting, reporting pollution. At a local level we've got to be improving habitats, fencing buffer zones and planting trees to filter farming effluent, providing spawning gravel, controlling cormorants and mink, protecting broodstock from poachers and returning large trout to perform their duty on the spawning redds, the science is all there, check out the Wild Trout Trust website, these guys have been improving habitats and fisheries for years, you can get a free consultation, it's amazing!

The Lough Neagh crisis is a prime example of how intensive farming is impacting the environment and also highlights the inability and impotence of NIEA, DAERA and Northern Ireland Water to control this: how can Northern Ireland have an Environment Agency, which is controlled by Department of Agriculture, arguably the worst polluter?

Anglers are vital to conservation

We have an inept and inadequate environmental protection so it's up to us to petition, lobby and influence what happens to our waterways, join the Ulster Angling Federation, send representatives, mobilise club bailiffs, report pollution incidents, contact local newspapers. South of the border we have Inland Fisheries Ireland and the Federation of Irish Salmon and Seatrout Anglers, both incredible organisations with drive and ambition, though it has to be said that angling is given a much higher priority south of the border than it is in the North, but then agricultural policy in Northern Ireland gives scant recognition to environmental heritage in the drive for profit as the agricultural initiative 'Going for Growth' amply demonstrates. We are already submerged in slurry with too many cattle, pig and poultry plants, not enough ground to dispose of the effluent, but still our government is supporting initiatives for yet more



Wild brown trout, a pristine prize for all the effort that has gone into river enhancement by angling club members

livestock. Surely it should be no surprise that Lough Neagh is an environmental disaster, it's the culmination of what is happening in every watercourse?

Angling clubs must work closely with farmers and landowners, the agricultural policy is flawed but with a little diplomacy most farmers are receptive to working with anglers. My own club, Antrim & District Angling Association, have been fencing buffer zones for years - one farmer paid the fencing for us, another did his own project, planting native hazel, alder and willow along the banks. The work parties are fantastic craic and a great way for members to get to know each other, and we always seem to find

something new about the river, sharing the knowledge. The offer of a few fox drives before spring lambing, a bottle of amber dew, or a voucher for a meal at a local restaurant at Christmas can go a long way to cementing good working relationships with landowners and farmers to ensure access for years to come.

Unfortunately, to maintain good fishing, the modern angler will have to step up and work for it, but fortunately we in Ireland have access to fantastic resources, and it's up to us to preserve and nurture them from the ravages of pollution, agricultural practices, sewage and poaching. Good luck and I hope you have a great new season, tight lines to my 'brothers of the angle'.

The season ends - now the work begins

Many years ago when I worked the evening shift in Dundalk Engineering Works and yes I was a keen shooter back then, a young turner also a shooter commented that as the hunting season was drawing to a close one should put the gun away and let nature take its course. Au contraire said I, or words to that effect, now the real work begins. I went into one of my diatribes on the lazy approach of some sports men. I cited fox control and club fox drives and general vermin control.

We were just getting to grips with Larsen traps back in 1979, huge unwieldy wooden and wire netting affairs with the spring loaded trap door and the sawn through wooden perch peg that was the very devil to set. Still they were very effective and club members took a week or two at minding the trap.

Back to my young colleague then and his laissez faire approach to game keeping, this is the doctrine adopted by

the so called environmentalists and conservationists, who are so prevalent in the print media and of course on social media.

Conservation takes hard work

It is total nonsense of course. Nature is not pure and unspoiled. Far from it human activity has shaped this planet and how flora and fauna survive and prosper is now down to hard work and positive action by the real conservationists, we the hunters, who understand that the right conditions for game to prosper have the knock on effect on supporting all wildlife. Yes, conservation takes hard work and we in the gun clubs are to the fore in this crucially important effort. I have spoken before about re-wilding. In my view this is a cop out and is of little benefit to real biodiversity.

Nature is cruel and encompasses the survival of the fittest. The fittest in the

Irish context being, mink, pine martens, foxes, rats and stoats. These voracious predators devastate the nests of ground nesting waders and game birds while killing birds sitting on eggs. They are opportunists killing small mammals and hedge birds. Avian predators, and here I will exclude the protected raptors (unwisely reintroduced by so called bird lovers to lay waste endangered wader species). I am referring of course to grey crows, magpies, rooks and other corvids who raid nests for eggs and chicks. These are nature's fittest. They are the alpha predators and, left unchecked, will mop up the population of song and garden birds, along with pheasant, partridge, grouse and domestic waterfowl.

Last year, I witnessed the destruction of a group of mallard released on a local stream. I looked on in horror at twelve fine ducks killed - but not eaten - in one night. There are those misinformed



Your author wielding a hammer sets to some practical work.



Securing a non slip surface will help in the wetter conditions



Brushings will be put to good use later and help provide cover in the pens



The pens are finally ready to accommodate their new residents

animal lovers who see the mink (a horrid invasive species) as a beautiful animal with the right to live. People are now talking about nature justice and animal rights being greater than human rights. The madness is spreading.

The sooner we set to our work as the season closes the better

OK, so what can hunters do to redress the balance? We know that our activities are the real support for nature and biodiversity. The sooner we set to our work as the season closes the better. Next year's breeding programme starts immediately. Pheasant/partridge pens must be repaired, limed and replanted to provide good cover for birds arriving in June and July. Equipment must also be repaired. Drinkers and feed hoppers will have to be cleaned and sterilised. Estimates of the future release program will be arrived at, with new pens or



Putting the first of the birds safely into one of the new pens

expansion of existing pens undertaken. When possible, and with the farmer's co-operation, game cover crops will be planted.

Many clubs will survey their grounds and having taken note of birds on the ground may release some adult birds to augment the wild breeding stocks. Duck breeding tubes are becoming popular and now in early spring is the time to refurbish and to install new ones at chosen sites.

The work is unending

As the breeding programme progresses, daily egg collection is required. Incubators and brooders must be attended to and shortly we will need volunteers to bring the chicks on. The work is unending, with nine months toil going on before three month's harvesting.

Spring has come earlier and earlier each year. Farmers with crops in the

fields are already calling on club members to deal with a scourge of crows attacking the sprouting plants. This vital crop protection will continue right up to harvest time.

We have a busy year in prospect and I cannot end this article without comment on the latest derogation signed by the relevant minister, which now imposes the imperative on crop protectors and fauna protectors to submit a bag return (a complicated one at that) to the NPWS at the end of the period.

My advice, for what it is worth, is to purchase a good hardback diary and log the date, place and quantity of pest species controlled on an ongoing basis. We understand that the 'service' has recruited additional rangers. Anecdotally we understand that these fine people are to focus on wildlife crime. No doubt they will be vigilant in the pursuit of their duties.



Some hens assessing their new feeder and drinker



The birds have taken well to their surroundings



Nebraska whitetail

Each year, the owner allows six bucks to be shot on his 700-acre patch with a strict one person, one tag policy.

Scotland-based writer Simon K. Barr was invited to Nebraska by Hornady to hunt whitetail using a rifle in 300 PRC, a calibre developed by the ammunition brand. This is the story of a fascinating hunt

It doesn't get much more of a mid-western cliché than my week of hunting whitetail in Nebraska. We were staying near Arapahoe, in the Frenchman unit of south-central Nebraska, where you take your deer to the local bowling alley to be checked-in by an official, and a Trump shop flies and sells 'Trump Won' flags. Even the river is called the Republican.

The landscape, too, is what one imagines for the great agricultural mid-west. The rifle deer season here is short, just nine days long in the middle of November, and it is a strict one person, one tag policy. It is almost religion and a rite of passage to harvest your annual buck if you come from these parts and I was privileged to be taking part in this annual ritual. One thing that really stood out to me is the respect with which people treated the hunting regulations and laws.

With vast corn fields harvested now it was November, and huge herds of cattle, the flatness of the landscape was not going to be conducive to walking off all the burgers we had eaten – more in a week than I had in the previous year.

I loved it. The people are friendly, and the hunting was fascinating. With other outdoor writers to chat to once the hunting was done for the day, there was never a dull moment. We were hunting on a private property, a farm full of rusting machinery that the owner couldn't bear to throw away.

Each year, the owner allows six bucks to be shot on his 700-acre patch, and this is done from an array of blinds that differed dramatically, from a barely-standing hut to the luxury suite, heating and comfortable chairs included. The latter was definitely the one you wanted first thing in the morning with temperatures of -7°C to contend with.

As the week went on and I saw my fellow hunters returning from successful hunts, I started to have my doubts. The aim of the week was, of course, for a

mature buck, but was I being too picky? After all, maturity wouldn't count for much if I didn't get anything at all. As the days wore on, and the bucks started reacting to the colder mornings, rutting, scraping and chasing does, I started honing my identification skills as far as the bucks were concerned. And while I worried that I'd miss my chance, I was also enjoying watching and getting to know this species, so similar yet so different to its European cousin, the roe deer.

I was starting to recognise the features that characterise a truly mature buck – sure, there should be four beams on the antlers (somewhat unromantically named G1, G2 etc), but it was more than that. There was a weightiness to the neck, a mass particularly lower down that seemed to get pumped up during the rutting season, a bit of a pot belly, a big brisket and a slight dewlap, almost like an Adam's apple, as well as a slightly more "Roman" nose. And the antlers definitely take on a different look as the buck matures. Much like the roe deer, the balance seems to go back towards



The aim of the week was for a mature buck.

the skull – the weight is pulled back, with the coronets looking more and more like someone forgot to blow out a candle, and wax has dripped down. This pronounced pearling and more interesting characteristics of the coronet is what I started looking for.

The area we were hunting in was famous for its big bucks – a result of, surprisingly, slightly poorer arable soil.

While there were still endless acres of corn, the poorer land meant that this was broken up with rough, shrubby areas, giving the whitetail the perfect combination of the rich food they so like but also sufficient cover to give them good bedding and rutting areas. Like my precious European roebuck, they don't hold a herd of females. By far the most widespread of the US's

deer species, whitetail are specialists of arable land, but they also want timber forest for cover.

As the week wore on, and hunter after hunter returned with a big buck, I started to feel the pressure mounting. I had, however, caught a glimpse of a buck that looked suitable – with large, hefty coronets and a pronounced Roman nose. Then someone else described him,



The perfect combination of rich food and sufficient cover.

and I knew my waiting game might pay off. Now that some of the other big bucks had been taken, this old boy might put in an appearance. And sure enough he did.

I was in a high blind, the same one that fellow hunter Tom Beckstrand (from Outdoor Sportsman Group) had been in when he shot his buck at more than 400 yards. I'd been sitting there for a while, waiting for the light, but also for the legal time to shoot – 30 minutes

before official sunrise which, that morning was at 06.52. The cold, cold minutes seemed to creep by, but the cold, clear weather was good for the rut, so I wouldn't complain.

Then, at 07.00 precisely, the buck appeared, walking straight toward the blind. He stood, snorting and sniffing, and I saw the doe that had led him here. The doe was pretty calm, browsing at the low ground cover, but the buck was not. The faint breeze was behind us, and

towards him, so not ideal, but we were up high. Then I remembered - the deer in the US are used to predators from on high, mountain lions and such – something British species aren't aware of. Our deer don't look up, whitetail do. I sat, frozen, as the buck snorted, and looked around.

He was definitely on edge, but I'm not sure why. For 10 minutes, the buck only presented me with a face on view. I stayed calm, and just bided my time, trying to keep relaxed but also knowing I might need to be quick.

At around 170 yards, I was comfortable with the distance, but the cold wasn't helping, nor was the tension. It was almost like a staring match, like playing chicken. Who would blink first? In the end, the buck did. He turned, just a fraction, giving me a small window and a small target. I took the shot, low neck, knowing it was likely my only chance. The buck dropped like a stone.

It had been a tense waiting game, but worth it. This was an old, stately buck, weighing in at around 200lb, and with coronets so pearly and textured I knew I'd been right to hold off. This buck would mean so much more to me, knowing that he was old, and of knowing that he'd lived a long and, I hoped for future hunters, fruitful life in the grand old Mid-West.



Making my way to the blind.

Kit box

Hornady 190gr CX Outfitter ammunition in 300 PRC

Leica 3-18x44 Amplus 6i riflescope

Leica Geovid Pro 32 binoculars

Swazi Wapiti XP coat in Tussock

Swazi Forest pants in Tussock

Hornady's Outfitter ammunition

I was using a rifle in 300 PRC, a calibre developed by Hornady recently aimed specifically at long range work – its popularity is evident by the number of rifle makers who have chambered rifles in this calibre.

What was new to me is the Outfitter ammunition featuring the new monolithic copper alloy 190 gr. CX (Copper alloy eXpanding) bullet. This new bullet uses clever pressure relief grooves with rounded edges on the bearing surface of the bullet.

Unlike conventional lead core bullets, all mono-metal copper or copper alloy bullets require some form of groove be etched into the bullet to allow the material to move as it's scraped from the bullet as it twists on the rifling in the bore. These grooves provide a location for the material to go instead of staying in place and creating unsafe pressure levels.

Through Doppler radar testing, Hornady tested a variety of designs and found that by putting a radius on the grooves, the bullets became more efficient and held a higher ballistic coefficient. This higher ballistic coefficient means that the bullets will have a flatter trajectory and higher retained energy at further distances. In addition to the radiused grooves on the CX, Hornady also added the Heat Shield tip into this bullet. Several years ago, through Doppler radar testing, Hornady discovered that conventional polymer tips were melting in flight due to aerodynamic heating.

The Hornady engineering team then set about to identify a heat resistant polymer that would help the bullets retain their shape during flight. Inconsistent bullets leads to inconsistent grouping showcased primarily by vertical stringing as each bullet tip may melt differently.

The Heat Shield tip coupled with advanced pressure relief groove technology enhances the CX such that it is now a copper alloy bullet option for extended range opportunities. The accuracy potential of the new CX bullet loaded in Outfitter ammunition was born out by our warm up at the Hornady shooting tunnel – with the over the counter ammunition I fired 10 shots, and the standard deviation was just eight. Remarkable for factory ammunition.



The distance of 170 yards was fine, but the cold wasn't helping, nor was the tension.



An old stately buck weighing in at around 200 lbs.



SHOTGUN (AND) WEDDINGS

The Château du Val, between Rennes and Vannes

The Château du Val, between Rennes and Vannes, is a place for shooting parties and wedding parties (if not, perhaps, on the same occasion). Alasdair Crosby went visiting.

I woke up early and looked out from the windows of my bedroom on to a quiet and very rural landscape: hills and woods, small villages and farmland. Wraiths of mist hung low over the fields; below the windows of the chateau were two deer, peacefully grazing. The sun, at first a dark red smudgy ball without brightness or heat, slowly drove away the wraiths as daybreak gave way to morning and the sun's might grew stronger.

I trod over wet grass to admire again a statue of the goddess Diana, bow in one hand, fondling a hound with the other; the dog looks up at her adoringly. It was given as a present to the owners of the Château du Val, Jas and Jocelyn (Joss) Saini, by the sculptor Peter Howard and his wife, Papychette; the model for Diana's hound was none other than their own departed black

Labrador, Arti.

Although maybe 'loosely' modelled might be a better term, as Arti possessed a fondness for French cooking that manifested in a pleasantly plump figure. The statue also serves as a gentle tribute to their beloved companion.

The woods of Château du Val in Brittany would be a perfect place for Diana and her hounds to hunt and indeed they are, in modern times, the venue for shooting parties – and equally, wedding parties – organised by Jas and Joss. This quiet, green country is just an easy drive from Saint Malo: take the fast road south, drive a short way round the Rennes ring road and turn off towards Redon on the D117. Once back in the countryside, turn off at the exit marked 'Saint-Just' and start threading country lanes in the heart of rural Brittany.

Then the Château du Val comes into view. The original owner built the chateau not so much as a family home as a place for sporting and 'country house'-type parties. It incorporated all the latest and most luxurious features of

the late 19th Century – as well as requiring an army of servants to run.

The 20th Century was not kind to big houses that required maintenance by an army of servants, but as far as the Château du Val is concerned, in some senses nothing essential has changed too much: after a decline in its fortunes it is now once again an oasis for leisure, field sports and convivial enjoyment.

Jas Saini owns a company connected with public healthcare IT, his wife has family connections with the Duke of Richmond Hotel in Guernsey and grew up on a Wiltshire farm (which had a herd of Jersey cows). They divide their time between their home at Château du Val and Jas' working address in Geneva.

Restoring the Château has been an ambitious project for them. It was very run down, but Jas and Joss now run tailor-made shooting breaks: rough pheasant shooting for corporate and private parties. They have also made it a venue for weddings: two fiancé couples from the USA happened to be there during our visit, casing the joint for their own wedding parties in 2025.

The guests, depending on their number, can take over accommodation in the château (nine bedrooms sleeping 22) or the ‘lodge’ – the old stable block, an imposing building in itself, which sleeps 19 in six bedrooms. The lodge has recently been restored and provides very comfortable accommodation for groups.

‘We are neither an hotel nor a bed and breakfast,’ Jas said, ‘we are not geared up for individuals just passing through and staying for the night. But we think it is ideal for parties – perhaps shooting parties, perhaps wedding parties, perhaps family get-togethers for important celebrations. There is a great deal of space available, both inside and outside – in the grounds and the estate’s woods and surrounding countryside - and plenty to do on the estate and nearby.’

The on-site facilities include a 15m swimming pool with cover, an all-weather tennis court, private forest (with marked trails) and a lake with the possibility of coarse fishing. The estate’s woodlands sweep down to the lake’s edge, from there the paths lead uphill to a tangle of gorse and brambles, where the pheasant pens are located.

The estate rears Reeves pheasants, a beautiful bird where the cocks have a spectacular black, white, and gold plumage and tails that can reach five ft in length. The chicks are bought in at 10



Jas and Jocelyn Saini now run tailor-made shooting break at the Chateau du Val

weeks old and grow up in the safe tangle of undergrowth – about three acres – enclosed by fox-proof fencing

and raptor-proof net covering. When they are adult, they are let out of their ‘pen’, but the environment outside is just the same as the environment inside: furze and bramble and bushes. In this tanglewood, the pheasants continue to live as wild pheasants should, enjoying presumably happy pheasant lives until one day they meet a hunter with a gun.

But: ‘With our hunters, the pheasants win most of the time,’ joked Jas. ‘This area is really a halfway house for the birds. They are wild still - it’s not as if they are kept in small crates. We try to keep the same environment outside the pens as well as inside, so that they continue to feel at home. They know how to hide and how to nest.’

He continued: ‘We like people to have a good time, so they have to see the birds and have to have a chance to



The beautiful Lodge kitchen

shoot them. Everyone shoots a lot of cartridges and no one goes away saying “we didn’t see anything; we didn’t shoot anything.”

‘It’s difficult to shoot the pheasants, but it’s good sport. When you do bag one, you feel a sense of achievement – it’s not easy. There are no beaters employed to drive the game to the guns, and the number of guns is limited to a maximum of six, for security reasons. The guns have to stay in line and wear thin pink jackets – for their own safety.’ The estate is also known for its woodcock- the woodland scrub is ideal for them. The estate also offers clay-pigeon shooting.

Visitors from abroad who have difficulty in bringing their own guns through border controls can rent one inexpensively from the local gun

shop. ‘It’s a great day out, physically and mentally,’ he said, ‘and there’s a great sense of camaraderie. Sometimes the guns walk some 20 kms – after that you feel like a whisky or two.’

This leads on to the question: ‘what can a non-shooter do at Château du Val?’ (Apart from getting married there).

‘Alternative activities’ include horse riding at a nearby stables, or visiting the charming little town of Le Gacilly – home of the late Yves Rocher and the base of his world-famous company. Its narrow, cobbled streets are full of arts and crafts, people, and flowers.

But for me, (admittedly an archaeologist manqué), especially fascinating were the many megaliths in the area; at one minor crossroads near the château are signposts pointing to

megaliths in all four directions. It seems as if the area was more populated in the third millennium BC than it is in the third millennium AD.

Altogether, Le Val is an hospitable, interesting and attractive destination in the midst of charming countryside – both for those who shoot and for those who are looking for a spectacular wedding venue – within easy driving distance from Saint-Malo. This article first appeared in RURAL - Jersey Country Life magazine (www.ruraljersey.co.uk) and is republished with their permission.

Contact details:

Jas and Jocelyn Saini, Chateau du Val

Phone +41 79 948 52 22 E-mail: joss.saini@yahoo.com.

Website: www.chateauval.com



Dog tired - this spaniel knew how to relax after a strenuous day in the field



The goddess Diana bow in hand as the dog looks up at her adoringly

The McGrath Racing Club Dog Show and Raceday, Sunday 25th August 24



Mick the Millar Champion 2023 Errol Gardiner with Chase & Reserve Michael McGrath with Chance

After a very successful show at Ballinabranagh, Co Carlow in 2023, the McGrath Lurcher Racing Club will be back again this year with more of the same - along with some added extras!

The McGrath Racing Club Dog Show and Raceday will be on Sunday 25th August 2024. This is a very important day for all our dog enthusiasts and will be held at the same venue again this year.

With kind permission from Mr A J Titterington, Director of The Great Game Fairs of Ireland, the McGrath Lurcher Racing Club will be accommodating the following major Championships this year, along with a full programme of showing and racing.

Here is a list of these Major Championships happening on the day:

- * The Master McGrath Championship Final
- * Mick The Millar Championship Final
- * All Ireland Racing Final
- * The Five Nations Championship Finals for Whippets/Lurchers /Terriers.

This will be a very important date for your sporting calendar this year, so with all the dog shows and race days which will be coming up this season, make sure you go along and get your dogs qualified.

I am looking forward to this wonderful event and meeting up with you all again.



Niall O'Cloghan with Nan alongside Judge Joyce Scott



Michael McGrath Calypso Reserve Jan Sen Whippy

A Vintage Flight for Doves



We picked our birds, choosing to shoot only the most sporting ones

Simon K. Barr joined Marc Newton of John Rigby & Co. on a mission to use only vintage Rigby shotguns on red-eyed doves in South Africa. South Africa is a sportsman's dream: not only is it bursting with some of the most exciting hunting in the world, but flying from Europe, there's no jet-lag. Less well-known are the fantastic opportunities for wing-shooting, notably red-eyed doves and rock pigeon. These birds' prey on crops and the damage done to precious yields of soya and grains can be devastating. I headed out there with Marc Newton, MD of John Rigby & Co., to help protect soya crops in May.

Red-eyed doves and rock pigeon are native to South Africa, and flight between cities and towns and their feeding grounds, and we were able to base ourselves just 45 minutes' drive away from the airport at Pretoria, in the luxurious Ingaadi Spa, which has individual cabins with all the comfort you could wish for. The plan was to join Andrew Tonkin, an authorised Rigby dealer in South Africa, who specialises

in high-end shotguns and rifles, and has a tremendous stock of historic and antique guns, including some made by Rigby. Johan van Wyk, a writer and gun aficionado, would also be joining the team of shooters at two evening flights.

Johan talked us through the process: "We're going after red-eyed dove and rock pigeon, just outside Pretoria East, about 10km outside town. These birds

aren't migratory in the true sense, but they live in the city, and fly out to feed. This gives us the chance to flight them as they head in and out of their feeding grounds – this is crop protection and harvesting wild meat. All the birds shot are collected and the meat will be distributed among the staff at Ingaadi Spa, where you are staying, so nothing goes to waste."



The red-eyed dove is native to South Africa

It's normal to shoot these crop-raiders on flight lines, according to Johan: "We don't need to decoy, and mostly you'll be shooting high incoming birds. If there are a lot of them, they keep coming in until it is dark. We're right at the beginning of the season now, which runs from May to September. As the season goes on, the shooting gets better. There's a 30-bird limit for the rock pigeon, but there's no limit on the red-eyed doves."

As we drove to the area we'd be shooting over, which held soya crops, Johan explained: "When you are going for pigeon, you need to select your venue according to crops. You also need to consider that the birds like to fly into the wind, so that will determine where you set up, too." Judging by the numbers of birds lifting from the field as we approached, this was going to be an extraordinary flight for pigeon. There were thousands of them!



Not just any old guns – these were shotguns made by John Rigby & Co. Which performed just as well as the modern guns being used by other members of the party.



History in action

Andrew Tonkin, whose collection and knowledge of historic guns is impressive, had brought guns for Marc to use. These weren't just any old guns, either – these were shotguns made by John Rigby & Co. "We've got a Rising Bite, probably made just after the patent was taken out, so that was built in the 1880s. Then we've got a sidelock ejector from the 1930s and a top-lever hammer gun with bar-locks from 1877, which is a very uncommon Rigby to find." Not a bad spread of guns, and all in 12-bore. Andrew shoots vintage guns

We used the smokeless equivalent of 3g or 1/8th oz load

every week: "Because I'm a collector, it just wouldn't feel right to use a modern gun over-and-under. My group of shooting friends calls itself the 'Practical Eccentrics'. It's very seldom that we shoot any guns that are less than 100 years old."

We were likely to be shooting a heavy volume of cartridges, but Andrew knew this wasn't a problem: "We stick to the loads the guns were built for, rather than using heavier modern loads. We use the smokeless equivalent of 3g or 1/8th oz load, which

equates to 550 bar of pressure. If you use that, your old shotguns will last forever. Our pigeon here in South Africa are smaller than the UK wood pigeon, so in terms of cartridges, we use 30 or 32g of number 7 or even 7.5 shot, which gives you 1,250ft/lb. We also sometimes shoot red-breasted doves, which are even smaller, so for those we use 21g of 9s. That load is really easy on the shoulder, and when we have the WAGs (wives and girlfriends) along, they like it because there's no recoil."

A Vintage Flight

Using a historic gun is always a treat, and particularly so when it is a Rigby and the pigeon are flying fast and hard. We picked our birds, choosing to shoot sporting ones rather than volumes of easy targets. It's pretty rare to be able to shoot 250 cartridges an hour on any birds, but when the red-eyed doves are really flying, you'd certainly be able to do that. With so much shooting, the evening passed all too quickly.

The following day, we enjoyed a braai before the action, admiring Andrew's stock and talking vintage guns as we ate. Andrew's encyclopaedic knowledge of the history of firearms was fantastic, and his enthusiasm was catching. As he explained, shotguns haven't changed all that much since the guns we were using were built: "As far as guns go, a vintage shotgun is the one that is closest to its modern counterpart. Rifles have improved a lot, handguns have improved a lot, but shotguns not really. If you could shoot a gun well in 1900, the same gun will serve you well in 2000. You can't say the same for rifles or handguns or any other firearms."

The second evening passed in the same flurry of action as the first, and again we were able to pick and choose the most challenging birds, with the Rigby shotguns performing just as well as the modern guns being used by other members of the party. Marc was impressed and delighted: "It was very good and very interesting. We had some seriously high-volume shooting, and it pays credit to the craftsmen of yesteryear that the guns they made up to 120 years ago are still fit to do the job they were made for. They worked just as well as the new guns that other people were shooting." It's interesting to think what those old guns have been used for by previous owners. We're really just custodians of guns like these, and Andrew Tonkin is a fantastic representative of Rigby's past, present and future."

(Right) Reaching for a high and wide singleton



The same flurry of action continued each day





A happy group photo with the bag for one day

How to go dove shooting in South Africa?

George Digweed has shot red-eyed doves with Andrew in South Africa, and said it was better than the shooting he'd had in Argentina. It's also closer and there's no jetlag. There are a few outfitters who can accommodate red-eyed dove shooting. Your outfitter should be able to organise all the paperwork for you to bring your shotguns into South Africa, as well as any permits or licences required. Andrews suggested outfitter is: Henk Engelbrecht, Rawhide Safaris, Mobile +27 83 280 0470 or info@rawhidesafaris.com. For more information about John Rigby & Co., visit: www.johnrigbyandco.com



Chatting around the campfire brought the shooting day to a close

Red-eyed doves:

The red-eyed dove, or *Streptopelia semitorquata*, is a pigeon indigenous to Africa south of the Sahara. The red-eyed dove is around 12in in length, stocky, and has a pale brown back, wings and tail, with blackish flight feathers, while the head and underparts are dark pink to pale grey around the face. A black patch edged with white appears on the back of the neck. The name comes from a bare patch of skin around the eyes, which is red.

The bird's main diet is seeds, grains and other

vegetation. The breeding season is all year round, though there is a clear spring/summer peak in some areas. Females lay two eggs, which are incubated by both parents for between 14 and 17 days before hatching.

The chicks stay in the nest a further 15 to 20 days before fledging. The population is healthy, and the bird is listed as a species of least concern. Numbers have increased considerably, and the red-eyed dove has expanded its range since the early 20th century thanks to the planting of trees and digging of watering points.

Review of Pointer and setter trials in 2023

FTCh Ballydavid Artemis of the Kingdom achieving her title

We are absolutely delighted that Albert and Paul have continued to publish the Irish Country Sports & Country Life magazine as an important voice for field sports in Ireland.

The few remaining trials not covered in the last issue took place at the end of October and in November. The Irish Red Setter Club held its confined stake on Saturday 28th October in Mountbellew. Judges for the day were Pat Dooley and Jason Benson. The ground was fantastic and snipe were spread evenly and sparsely across the ground allowing dogs to display their quartering without too much scent.

The results were all classified as excellent on snipe with Raymond O'Dwyer's Sheantullagh Nina winning the stake, with my own Ballydavid Artemis in second place and third place to Kevin Quinn's Sheantullagh Recharge.

The following day at the same venue was the Irish red setter clubs open stake judged by Anthony Mulhall,

Pat Reape and your scribe. Snipe were a bit more plentiful and some runners and riders came to grief. The winner was Raymond O'Dwyer's Sheantullagh Nina with second to Dr. Stephen Clarke's pointer dog Gannochy Milo of Fauloon.

The following day in the Dublin

mountains, once again your scribe took the notebook, this time with the highly experienced Michael Houston.

Glencree always provides a great days sport and opportunity for dogs. The winner was announced as Jim Sheridan's Irish Red and White Setter FTCh Craigrua Loki with second place



*Pat Dooley, George Forbes and Hugh Brady waiting their turn
(photo credit: R. Monroe)*



Anthony Mulhall with Mountbay Dexter. (photo credit: R. Monroe)

to Aidan Dunne's Irish Setter Maodhog Sceilig and third to Eugene Moriarty's English Setter Moonhill Ahiga and reserve to Jim Sheridan's Irish Red and White Setter dog FTCh Craigrua Devin.

There was a break of two weeks as traditionally the end of October heralded the end of the pointer and setter field trial season. Alan Bartley, new secretary of the Irish Breeds Society Club held two stakes over the weekend of the 11th and 12th November in the midlands bogs, specifically on snipe.

The confined stake limited to Irish breeds, judged by Aidan Dunne and Pat Dooley, had an entry of twenty-eight dogs and Raymond Monroe's Irish Setter dog Ballydavid An Dagda was announced as the winner with Michael Houston's Irish setter Sheantullagh Noble in second and Jason Benson's Irish Setter Maodhog Saoiste in third place with Raymond O'Dwyer's Sheantullagh Grace in reserve. COMS were announced for the following Irish Setters, Anthony Mulhall's Mountbay Milo, Dave Bell's Lily's Blossom and Raymond O'Dwyers Sheantullagh Dart.

The following day the open stake was run on another beautiful crisp morning. Judges were Michael Houston and Raymond Monroe and another high-quality stake was produced. The winner was Billy Grace's English Setter Capparoe Nevada with second to Joe O'Sullivan's Irish Setter Gardenfield Jarvey Girl with third to Dr. Stephen Clarke's English Pointer dog Gannochoy Milo of Fauloon and reserve to Bill Connolly's Irish Setter Ballyellen April. There were COMs awarded to Jim Sheridan's Irish Red and White setter FTCh Craigrua Devin, Raymond O'Dwyer's Irish Setter Sheantullagh Nina and your scribe's team of Irish setters Int. FTCh Ballydavid Gaelforce, FTCh Ballydavid Artemis, FTCh Ballydavid The Morrigan and my English pointer Wildfield Kruella d'Eville.

The final trial of the circuit was the two-day 5th Irish Snipe Championship held in county Roscommon in 18th and 19th November. Like the Irish Grouse Championship, dogs had to qualify with an excellent award in an open stake. The judges were Raymond Monroe (Granaghburn), Jim Sheridan (Craigrua) and Colin Forde (Bownard). Conditions on the bog the first day were very wet, making it difficult for dogs both in scenting and quartering the ground. This was understandable given the heavy rain we have endured for months. It makes you appreciate the critical role of the bogs in our flooding defences.

After two enjoyable days and a social evening in between, the results were awarded at the end of the second day after two rounds. As it turned out, the awards reflected a lot of the big winning dogs of 2023. First was Aidan Dunne's Irish Setter dog Maodhog Sceilig, with second awarded to Joe O'Sullivan's Irish Setter Gardenfield Jarvey Girl. Third was my own Int. FTCh Ballydavid Nemesis with reserve to Billy Grace's English Setter dog FTCh Capparoe Jao. There was a COM for Davy O'Neill's Irish Setter



Colin Forde (judge), Davy O'Neill with Shanrycon Casey, Billy Grace with FTCh Capparoe Jao, Aidan Dunne with winner Irish Snipe Ch. Maodhog Sceilig, Jim Sheridan (judge), Joe O'Sullivan with FTCh Gardenfield Jarvey Girl, Raymond Monroe (judge) and Hugh Brady with Int. FTCh Ballydavid Nemesis



George Forbes English setter FTCh Zico Shanrycon Casey.

So that concluded the pointer and setter field trials of 2023 and everyone deserves a well-earned rest until it all begins again in February 2024.

So, what of 2023. The good: by my records the following dogs have achieved sufficient championship points to claim their FTCh title, subject to an award at an Irish Kennel Club show.

Billy Grace's English setter Capparoo Jao sprinted to his title. Jao had a brilliant year winning four trials, including the Irish Pointer Club trial in



FTCh Capparoo Jao winner of four open stakes



Hugh Brady's Irish setter Ballydavid The Morrigan of the Kingdom won the 65th Irish Championship on grouse

Spring on grouse, the English Tillage trial on pheasant, the Irish Red Setter Club trials, and the premier county field trials on grouse.

George Forbes' English setter Zico was incredible on the mountains achieving his title (subject to show qualification) winning three trials, namely the Cill Dara trial in the Wicklow mountains, Irish Pointer Club trials in Kippure and premier field trials in Kinnity.

Joe O'Sullivan's Irish setter Gardenfield Jarvey Girl achieved her title (subject to show qualification) by winning the first trial of the summer circuit at the Irish Red and White Setter stake, second in the Irish Red Setter Club stake and the Irish Breeds Society while having an unbelievable record in both Irish Championships with third place in the 65th Irish Grouse Ghampionship and second in the Irish Snipe championship.

My own Irish setter Ballydavid

Nemesis won the Connaught field trial club trial in Spring and the Premier County in Kinnity on the Northern Irish pointer club 75th anniversary trial in Glarryford and was second in Cashel field trials association, Ulster Irish Red Setter club trials and third in the most recent Irish Snipe Championship. She also picked up her Snipe Champion title.

Joan McGillicuddy's Irish setter Ballydavid Artemis achieved her FTCh title winning the Irish Red and White Setter stake in spring on grouse and recorded two second places.

Aidan Dunne's Irish Setter dog Maodhog Sceilig achieved his snipe champion title by winning the Irish Snipe Championship with several other placings throughout the year.

Raymond Monroe's Irish Setter dog Ballydavid The Dagda, if he not had already done so, achieved his Snipe Champion title leaving him a win away from the FTCh title.



New competitors to field trials. To the right is Anthony Healy with Craigrua Ualtar

(photo credit: R. Monroe)

The Irish Championships are the highlight of our sporting year and the cooler weather, in my opinion, certainly helped the standard of the trial. In recent years there have been one or two awards where there were seven awards in 2023. The winner was my own Ballydavid The Morrigan who achieved two other wins and two seconds in a successful year for her.

As usual we look at kennels who have had great success in the year. Capparoe's Billy Grace had a fantastic year, winning seven stakes spread across a team of dogs. FTCh Capparoe Jao won four stakes, while Capparoe Sian was the winner in Cashel, Underwood Resolution was the winner of English Setter confined while Capparoe Nevada won a hot Irish breeds society stake.

Ballydavid had a good year winning nine stakes with as many seconds and thirds including the winning of Irish Grouse Championship. The team of six dogs FTCh Ballydavid The Morrigan, Int. FTCh Malstabodarna Embla of Ballydavid, Int FTCh Ballydavid

Nemesis, FTCh Ballydavid Artemis and Int. FTCh Ballydavid Starjet of the Kingdom all won open stakes, while Int. FTCh Ballydavid Gaelforce recorded two seconds and a third. The team has three triple crowns where the dogs were placed first, second and third at the same trial namely in the Connaught Field Trial Club and Premier County Spring Trials and the Northern Irish Pointer Club trials in autumn.

Hugh Brady's Irish setter Ballydavid The Morrigan of the Kingdom won the 65th Irish Championship on grouse

Other positive news in the year was that grouse numbers were generally very good and, as usual, the standard of dogs remains very high with some very skilled new handlers such as Anthony Healy who won his first trial in the Irish Red and White Setter confined with Craigrua Ualtar, Paddy Fleming with a nice Red and White Setter and Gareth Flanagan who has a very polished English Pointer. Entries seem to have returned generally to pre COVID levels and some well-known and skilled trainers are competing a lot

more on the circuit which is a very welcome development.

We had a lot of international support in our trials this year, most notably at the Irish Grouse Championship with competitors from Denmark and a number from Germany which is to be welcomed, while several new English competitors also competed at the trials in Ulster.

To the disappointments: it is always sad when the Irish Derby does not go ahead, particularly when you feel you have a decent prospect ready. Obviously, you cannot create pups to enter but I think it relates to a hangover from COVID. Hopefully it will take place in 2024.

The shortage of judges remains an issue, with several folks going above and beyond completing numerous judging appointments. There are some very astute handlers who many believe would be welcome additions to the judging panel. We really need them now. Some people, including myself, are running more than one club, which long-term is not good for the sport.

Every club has its own history and personality, and that is in peril with the same secretary. Secretaries of multiple clubs become increasingly unpopular

as they are always in a state of looking for judges!

So, all in all, a very successful year for the sport with superb quality of dog

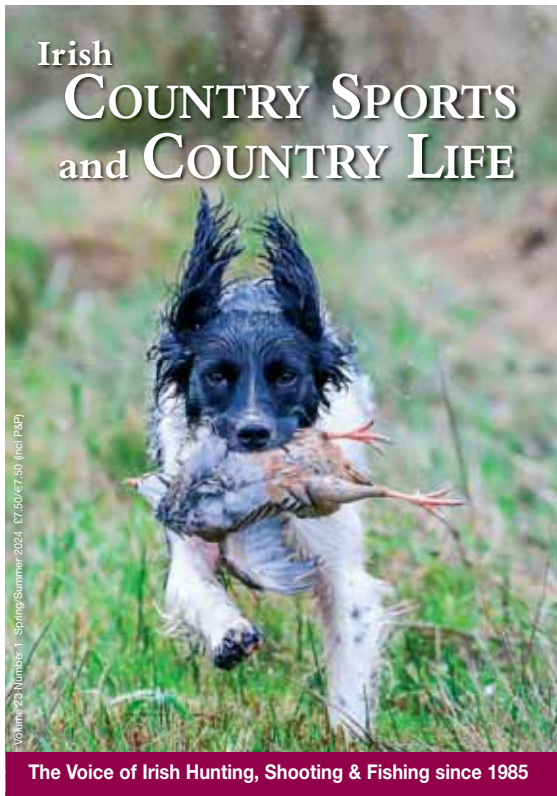
work. The next issue will update on the spring 2024 results.

A memorable year for me also getting married!



Joan and myself on the day with International FTCh Ballydavid Nemesis, FTCh Ballydavid The Morrigan, International FTCh Ballydavid Gaelforce, FTW Kruella d'Evile, International FTCh Malstabodarna Embla of Ballydavid, Ch. Forfarian Red or Dead at Ballydavid, International FTCh Ballydavid Starjet and FTCh Ballydavid Artemis.

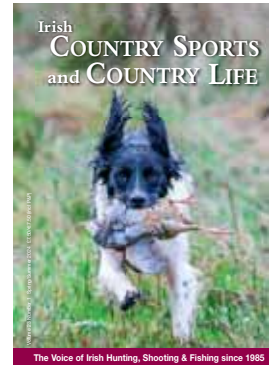
Hours of great reading



Order Ireland's most read country sports magazine for £/Euro 7.50 incl P&P Order through Paypal Account
irishcountrylifestyle@btinternet.com
or call 028 (from 048) 44839167

Or A really fantastic present:

The Irish Country Sports – A HERITAGE book PLUS a copy of the Irish Country Sports & Country Life magazine



The HERITAGE BOOK has been described as ‘the most important Irish country sports publication for a generation’. A large format 30cm x 30cm book where no expense was spared in its lavish production – a true heavyweight (2.2Kg) book which should be part of EVERY Irish country sports person’s library.

To clear the last few copies we are offering the Book PLUS the Magazine posted out to you or your friends for just £30 incl Post & Packing.

To order Tel 028 (from ROI 048) 44839167
Or through Paypal.co.uk (make payment to account: irishcountrylifestyle@btinternet.com) or
Ebay <https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/165586186540>

Anti Hunting Petition

Publishers Note

John’s original Bill was democratically defeated in the Assembly. A subsequent petition which was supposed to demonstrate for a re-run on an anti hunting Bill only received 3,300 signatures. Against a backdrop of the huge challenges facing the

Assembly this is hardly the basis on which John and the Alliance party should waste Assembly time on an issue which cannot command any real support from within NI or even within the Alliance party!

The results of the petition!

Our petition:

'Northern Ireland is the only part of the United Kingdom without a ban on hunting with dogs. It is a cruel and unnecessary sport, that causes immeasurable suffering for both the hunted animal and the hunting dogs. It is high time that Northern Ireland brings our legislation in line with that in England, Scotland and Wales where the practice has been illegal for nearly 20 years. Sign our petition below and show your support for a ban on all hunting of wild mammals with dogs.'

This petition will close on 10th January 2022.

Who's signing

3,068 signatures

Will you sign?



93rd Kennel Club Any Variety Spaniel Championship



Commonshall Mayfly going through the gears during her 2nd run at the 93rd Kennel Club Any Variety Spaniel Championship.

The 93rd Kennel Club Championship for English Springer Spaniels, formally known as the Any Variety Spaniel (except Cocker) Championship took place on 15th 16th & 17th January 2024 at Warden Hill Farm, Co. Durham by kind permission of Mr Robert Morley. Warden Hill Farm consists of approximately 750 acres of upland habitat, in the beautiful North Pennines, and Robert Morley graciously stepped in at very short notice to host this year's championship when the original venue became unable to host the event.

The Kennel Club Any Variety Spaniel Championship attracts worldwide interest and this year spectators travelled from many European countries, USA and New Zealand. It is one of the most prestigious competitions of its kind in the world and is an important opportunity for Irish handlers to share

knowledge and of course, make or renew friendships. Additionally, final placings often have a significant bearing on breeding policies and

therefore can have a significant impact on the future development of English Springer Spaniels globally.

A total of 64 runners qualified for



David Cairns passes a lively hen bird retrieved by Flaxdale West to Jeff Rayner



Ready for the 1st Place Run-Off (L to R) Simon Dixon, Aubrey Ladyman and Ronan Gorman



Aubrey Ladyman was a popular winner of the 93rd Kennel Club Any Variety Spaniel Championship

this year's championship comprising of 51 bitches and 13 dogs. There were 6 handlers who qualified in Ireland: being the winners the 5 Kennel Club open stakes and the winner of the Irish AV Spaniel Championship. Raymond Wilson also qualified a second dog, Saxonvale Bo at a trial in England.

This year, Irish interest was not confined solely to competitors with the vastly experienced Ivan Wilson from Gortin, Co. Tyrone judging together with Dave Rayner, Jeff Rayner, and Gary Smith. Wayne Greig from Suffolk was the reserve judge.

The weather was bitterly cold with sub-zero temperatures throughout all 3 days, meaning that ground was permanently frozen and scenting conditions challenging for competing dogs. There was a slight improvement in scent on the second day which coincided with snowfall and a slight increase in temperature. Ground consisted of rushes and white grass and game was predominantly pheasant with a welcome sprinkling of brown hares and woodcock making up the bag. Game was not overly abundant, and it was clear from early on that the judges were looking for and crediting dogs that could produce game without excessive handler input.

The results begin to emerge

After three competitive days trialling, Ronan Gorman emerged as the top Irish representative and indeed one of the leading handlers in the entire competition. Ronan put together 2 spectacular runs with his very consistent bitch, Commonshall Mayfly justifying his involvement in a 3-dog run-off for first place. Only a handful of Irish handlers have won or been involved in a run-off for first place in the 93-year history of this event, so this was a notable achievement.

Running at number 16, Commonshall Mayfly's first run took

place in tall rushes on a sloping hillside. After a longish hunt she flushed a cock pheasant which was shot approximately 60 yards out over a brow, so the fall was unsighted to the dog and handler. However, Mayfly displayed admirable gun sense and made short work of a potentially difficult retrieve. On day two, Commonshall Mayfly delivered another top-class performance.

Hunting a snow-covered hilltop with pace, drive, and textbook ground treatment, she dug out two cock pheasants and again made a tidy job of both resulting marked retrieves.

This capped a highly successful year for Ronan Gorman who also ran off for first place at the 2023 Irish Kennel Club AV Spaniel Championship, with Bishwell Barrett of Commonshall, sire of Commonshall Mayfly.

Raymond Wilson's Saxonvale Bo emerged from the 93rd Kennel Club Any Variety Spaniel Championship with credit, gaining a Diploma of Merit. In her first run on the afternoon of the first day, Bo hunted well, with a lovely, wide, flowing action before flushing and retrieving two brown hares. Her hunting in her second run was equally impressive but a little work on the retrieve of a duck precluded any chance of a top award. Raymond's other bitch Kilhopemoss Harlequin, at number 35 on the right side of the line was hunting with pace and style in her first run but unfortunately passed a hen pheasant sitting tight in rushes at the foot of a stone wall, which closed the books for her.

Running at number 13, Rytex Reo of Hollydrive with the experienced Mick Walsh handling was also awarded a Diploma of Merit. Reo had a short, sharp hunt in the corner of a large rushy field, enclosed by a stone wall on the morning of the first day. Reo's hunting was fast and stylish throughout his run, and he was well 'with' Mick. He had a positive find on a cock pheasant which he retrieved in

a single cast. Hunting on, a second cock pheasant rose loose and was shot. Reo was sent and made a relatively straightforward job of the retrieve. On the second day Reo hunted a narrow strip of rushes with purpose and finished this run with a retrieve on a loose rabbit.

The oldest dog at the 93rd Kennel Club Any Variety Spaniel Championship was Louis Rice's Sliabh Aoife, running at number 59. Fresh from her 2nd place at the Irish Championship, Aoife had to wait until the morning of the second day to get off the lead. She hunted rushes along a stone wall in heavy snow with purpose and was rewarded with a find and a retrieve of a brown hare. She successfully completed her second run on the last day of the Championship with a positive find and clean retrieve of a hen pheasant from rushes; earning her a Diploma of Merit.

Luck deserted the other 2 Irish entrants; Gary Wilson's Skronedale Sabina of Lisnalinchy and David Cairn's dog Flaxdale West. Gary had a long run in open ground early on the first morning with his recent Irish Championship winner. Birds rose ahead of the line but were missed, so they finished their first run without a retrieve. Sabina finished her second run without game, meaning she would not be called back for the last day. Meanwhile David Cairns was unlucky to be eliminated during his second run with Flaxdale West for failing on a runner. The dog had previously flushed and retrieved a hen pheasant in his first run which was satisfactory.

The Run-Off

At the end of the trial, the judges called 3 dogs for a run-off for first place: Simon Dixon's Dawsonlee Maddy, Ronan Gorman's Commonshall Mayfly and Aubrey Ladyman's Rosebay Meadow.

The results of the 93rd Kennel Club Any Variety Spaniel (except

Cocker) Championships were subsequently declared as follows:

RESULTS

1st) FTCh Rosebay Meadow, Aubrey Ladyman

2nd) FTCh Dawsonlee Maddy, Simon Dixon

3rd) Commonshall Mayfly, Ronan Gorman

4th) FTCh Borransfell Moneypenny, Dave Massey

Diplomas of Merit

FTCh Broomfield Sarafina, Eddie Scott

Menewa Daisy, Steve Bates

Skronedale Milly of Quailhollow, Adam Kerr

FTCh Rytex Reo of Hollydrive, Mick Walsh

Dawsonlee Oddessy, Steve Tyson

FTCh Rytex Rapeds, Simon Dixon

Broomfield Jackie, Mr Eddie Scott

FTCh Meikleburn Dark Island,

Alan Clouston

Broomfield Humboldt, Steve

Blackwell

FTCh Saxonvale Bo, Raymond

Wilson

Skitters Waggy, Barry Faley

Rosebay Blue, Tom Tanner

Kenxtwen Sweet Topaz, Bill

Johnstone

FTCh Churchview Cortinio, Jon

Bailey

FTCh Shiveck Primat, Terri Sivek

FTCh Sliabh Aoife, Louis Rice

FTCh Broomfield Vera at

Taykimoor, Kim Stewart

Gorsebay Rue of Belvden, Mark

Clifford

Guns Choice

FTCh Rosebay Meadow, Aubrey Ladyman

Best Dog

FTCh Churchview Cortinio, Jon Bailey

Best New Handler

FTCh Meikleburn Dark Island, Alan Clouston



Ronan Gorman receives his award for 3rd place at the 93rd Kennel Club Any Variety Spaniel Championship from Ben Skinner of event sponsors Skinners Dog Food



Louis Rice takes a brown hare from Sliabh Aoife to complete his first run under Ivan Wilson



Raymond Wilson completes a good retrieve of a brown hare with Saxonvale Bo whilst judge, Jeff Rayner watches



Judges (L to R) Ivan Wilson, Gary Smith, Jeff Rayner and Dave Rayner



Rytxeo of Hollydrive delivers a cock bird to Mick Walsh



Gary Wilson hunting with Skronedale Sabina of Lisnalinchy on the first morning with judge, Gary Smith observing

5th Irish Cocker Championships

Sponsored by

Connolly's
RED MILLS
SINCE 1908

Thursday 14th December saw cocker enthusiasts from all over Ireland and the UK, by kind invitation of the Cushnahan family and landowners, return for the 5th Irish Cocker Championships, sponsored by RED MILLS. This was our second time back at the Rann Shoot for our Championship and as usual Kevin produced a fantastic day.

Judges were Paul Carragher (Ire) and Stevie Charlton (UK) with Trevis Crothers (Ire) as referee. Guns were Mark, John, Art, Alan and Raymond.

The ground at the Rann consists of heather, whin bushes, white grass and bramble in places. The weather was a mild spring-like day with the possibility of a late shower.

We had 19 cockers competing with 5 from overseas and broken down into 10 dogs and nine bitches. Paul and Trevis started with the odd numbers and Stevie with the even numbers.

The Championship commences

Number 1 Brian Crothers with Tamneymartin Buttercup and Maessydderwen Flame with Mick Donnelly started in low whins and bramble and Flame was first into game, with a number of flushes going un-shot before eventually getting a find and retrieve to finish his run.

Ronan Gorman with Malllowdale Emu of Commonshall was almost immediately into game and a cock pheasant was shot slightly across the line. With some handling Emu picked while Buttercup in the meantime founds and retrieved and completed her run.

Domnall Creamers bitch Rowston Mai hunted a good beat and was straight into game making it look



The winner Damian Kelly receiving the New Keeperscourt trophy in memory of Adam Wilson from Adam's mother Gail and daughter Lillia.

easy, while a nice find for Emu flew across the line being shot into a small wood. It looked as if it could have run and after a few minutes Emu picked

the bird which had moved from where it had fallen.

Next odd number was 5 UK visitor John Sexton with UK FTCh

Connolly's
RED MILLS
STORE



RED MILLS STORE OUTLET

Online - redmillsstore.ie

In-store - Cillin Hill, Dublin Road, Kilkenny



Cymceiliog Skid of Mongea who hunted his ground well. After a longish run in a mix of whins and whitegrass he had a nice find and retrieve to complete his run. Domnall with a nice find on a partridge completed his run.

In came No7 Ivan Wilson's homebred Keeperscourt Katie along with our Welsh friend Jon Rees with his dog UK FTCh Bryblll Peaky Blinders. Ivan's bitch Katie hunted tough ground along a ditch and handled it with ease, finishing her run with a good find and tricky retrieve that was made look easy.

Jonny Rees was going well with a number of loose retrieves before getting a good find to finish his run.

Louis Rice was next with FTCh Sliabh Nugget along with John Healey from the UK with Endawood Indiana. These two bitches went really well and made not only the hunting look easy, but retrieves were picked effortlessly and with little handling, two really nice bitches completing runs.

No 11 Mallowdale Jaffa with Mick Walsh was a powerful hunting dog who made short work of the ground he was given and picked a number of birds cleanly. Unfortunately a loose shot bird needed a bit of handling and took the shine off his run.

No 12 Adrian Doris' bitch Heathcroft Faith came in and she was flying. Lightning fast with nice finds and retrieves, she was putting in a claim to be on the podium.

No13 Another UK visitor was Jason Atkinson with UKFTCh Centrewood Speckled Wood of Surefly had a longish with some nice hunting topped off with good retrieves.

No14 Mick Finglas with Killymarley Bran had nice run, a big strong cocker he got down into a nice hunting style and had his handler well pleased with a good clean run.

No15 last year's winner Int FTCh Clentohill Jessie Jay was next up and this was a really nice hunting cocker

with lots of style and pace, accompanied by quiet handling a find in thick cover produced a brilliant retrieve which she made look easy as she came back through a crowd of people proudly carrying her bird back to Damian to complete another great run

No16 Larry McCormick's dog Sliabh Archie had been a very consistent dog this season, winning and placed in nearly all he ran in. Nice ground treatment and a find and retrieve saw Archie into the next round.

No 17 Declan Connelly's dog Mallowdale Final hunted tough cover completing a good run with a find and a very tricky retrieve over a drain.

No18 Jason McGonigle with Coill Leathan, one of the nicest cockers on the circuit at the minute, were next in line. A hard going bitch that will hunt any cover and with loads of drive, finds and retrieves finished a good run.

No19 Int FTCh Clentohill Georgie showed how to hunt brambles and tight whins. She found and retrieved and was looking like the one to beat going into 2nd round.

Jonny Rees' No 20 Rowston Stylistic of Bryblll had finds and retrieves completing the 1st round.

The Second Round

Going into the second round, it was looking like there were at least 6 or 7 that could be there or there about in the awards. I will give a break down of those that made the podium and these are only the observations of author and as we all know we don't see or claim to see everything at trials.

No 7 Ivan Wilson's Keeperscourt Katie hunted with style and drive and had a good clean run.

No 9 Louis Rice's bitch hunted stick piles and brambles with ease and a loose bird, shot while going to pick a retrieve, distracted her enough to have her marked back.

No10 John Healy's Endowood Indiana was stylish and fast over the ground, and a nice retrieve on a cock bird saw good clean run.

No 15 Int FTCh Clentohill Jessie Jay was a beautiful hunting bitch with multiple finds and retrieves, along with an eye-wipe on the laneway.

As in every trial, there are hard luck stories - a mis-marked bird, a dog running in and a failed retrieve were some of the things that happened to some of the contenders, but I will leave it for you to watch on the DVD.

This year, was also a special day for the family of the late Adam Wilson, who the organisers honoured with a Memorial Trophy which was presented alongside the Winner's Cup for 1st place. We were honoured when all of the Adams family came along to the presentation.

There were many to thank but I will highlight the sponsors RED MILLS, especially their representatives Jenny Crozier and Niahm McElhinney, who cannot be thanked enough by all our clubs. Thanks too goes to Countrysports Ireland who do lots for us, as well as all the competitors, owners and everyone else who provided assistance.

Results

1st Int FTCh Clentohill Jessie Jay - Damian Kelly

2ND Keeperscourt Katie - Ivan Wilson

3RD FTCh Sliabh Nugget - Louis Rice

4th Endowed Indiana - John Heeley

CoM

No 3. Rowston Mai - Domnall Creamer

No 4. Mallowdale Emu of Commonshall - Ronan Gorman

No 5. UK FTCh Cwmceiliog Skid of Monagea - John Sexton

No 8. UK FTCh Byrblll Peaky Blinder - Jon & Dana Rees

No 11. Mallowdale Jaffa - Mick Walsh

No 13. UK FTCh Centrewalk Speckled Wood of Sure Fly - Jaseon Atkinson

No 17. Mallowdale Final - Declan Connolly



The winner in action



2nd place Ivan Wilson with granddaughter Lillia



3rd place winner was Louis Rice



4th place went to John Heely



The Judges



The Guns



2023 Irish Kennel Club AV Spaniel Championship Report

Winner of the 47th Irish Kennel Club (AV) Spaniel Championship, Gary Wilson (right) being congratulated by Mickey McCullagh (left) on behalf of event sponsors Feedwell dog food.

The 47th Irish Kennel Club Championship for Any Variety (Springer) Spaniels took place on 28th and 29th December 2023 at Shanes Castle Estate, Co. Antrim by kind invitation of the Honourable Shane O'Neill.

Shanes Castle needs little introduction to Irish Country Sports & Country Life readers, having hosted the Game Fair for decades. Estate gamekeeper, Bill Storer is also a familiar sight and he, together with assistant Paul Allen capably steered the trial around the beautiful Shane's Castle estate over the two days.

A total of 37 runners were listed on the championship programme and with 3 withdrawals, 34 dogs made it to the starting post. Of these 22 were bitches and 12 were dogs. Handlers with most dogs qualified were Louis Rice with

four and Ronan Gorman with three.

Several bitches had two offspring qualified, including Clodahill Quiv, Sliabh Cushla, Garrisoncullin Tio, Meadowbeat Neala of Greenbrush, Rytex Riggle and Glenhestbeg Della. Top producing sires with three or more qualifiers were Hollydrive Defoe, Hollydrive Kurt, and Bishwell Barrett of Commonshall.

Feedwell dog food continued their generous sponsorship of the IKC AV Spaniel Championship and judges were Peter Avery, Andrew Cunningham, Des Donnelly, and Anthony Smyth.

Day one started crisp and cold but temperatures became milder as the day progressed, so scenting conditions were generally good for competing dogs. Ground consisted of open woodland with isolated clumps of bramble and rhododendron. Game was not overly

abundant and birds tended to run on, so dogs had to work hard for their game.

First in on the left side of the line was Michael Frank Rasmussen all the way from Denmark with number 1, Rytex Rupture. Dog number 2 was a non-runner, so the first dog in on the right was Raymond Wilson's Kilhopemoss Harlequin at number 4. Rytex Rupture started in bracken which enabled her to demonstrate her pace and style. She concluded her first run with a tidy retrieve of a hen pheasant from cover which she had pushed. Meanwhile, Kilhopemoss Harlequin was delivering a very polished hunting performance for Raymond Wilson. She hunted a mixture of bramble and sticks with textbook ground treatment but a little work on a retrieve, following a positive find in a stick pile took the shine off an otherwise satisfactory run.

Number 3, Skronedale Sabina of Lisnality, handled by Gary Wilson had a long unproductive run amongst wet rushes and concluded with a retrieve of a hen bird from open grassland, flushed by another dog. Ivan Hanna with number 6, Glenhestbeg Ella found 2 hens, one of which she picked from a stream.

Raymond Wilson was quickly back in line with number 8, Saxonvale Bo. She was going well in bracken before having the misfortune of being eliminated for passing a tight sitting bird.

Meanwhile on the left, the youngest competitor in the 2023 IKC AV Spaniel Championships, 16-year-old Odhran Bell delivered a competent run, finding and retrieving without complication at number 5, with Hollydrive Zak.

Game was coming to hand much

more readily on the right side of the line during this part of the day, so even numbered dogs were well ahead of the odd numbers. Number 10, Sliabh Bonnie had a find on a bird which was shot forward into woodland where visibility was limited. However, handler Louis Rice was well able to put her into the area, pick and return without fuss.

Number 12 Clodahill Uimhir, with the experienced Damian Kelly at the wheel had an actioned packed run on the face of a steep bank. Uimhir flushed several pheasants, completed a smart seen retrieve through cover and handled a tricky blind retrieve across a lane very capably.

Next up at number 14 was Ronan Gorman with Clodahill Usain of Commonshall. His beat consisted of a nice, sun kissed, bracken bank and birds seem to favour it. Usain had a

spectacular double flush of a woodcock and a hen pheasant from the same seat and made a smart retrieve of the woodcock which was shot down a steep bank. He finished an eye-catching run with another positive find on a tight sitting hen, which was shot and offered to the other side.

Ronan Gorman was then immediately required on the left of the line with number 7, Commonshall Mayfly whilst Peter McKearney replaced him on the right with Portcaman Dixon at number 16. Commonshall Mayfly was able to show her pace and drive in a nice area of open woodland and made short work of two marked retrieves. Meanwhile, Portcaman Dixon had a find on a woodcock in bracken and made a decent job of the subsequent marked retrieve.

Number 9, Richard Doherty's Special Star flushed a cock pheasant and a woodcock, in his run making a decent job of both retrieves, whilst on the right, Louis Rice was hunting well with number 18, Sliabh Butcher. A loose woodcock was missed by the Guns, but this was quickly followed by a find on another woodcock which was not so lucky. Butcher had work on the resultant retrieve but picked to complete his run.

Running at number 11, Pat Greene's dog Dooleague Buddy found and retrieved a woodcock. On the other side at number 20, Shane Gainley and Garrisoncullin Holly had a little work on the retrieve of a loose woodcock.

Last year's winner, Tweedbrae Dees Young Star defended her title at number 13. Jim Wardrobe's bitch had a retrieve of a loose woodcock before recording an 'eye wipe' on another woodcock. She was followed at number 15 by Garrisoncullin Shannagh, handled by Tom Moloney who found and retrieved a woodcock.

Number 22, Rytex Rie with Trevis Crothers handling had more work on the retrieve of a loose woodcock than he would have liked. Adrian Doris's Gort Busy Bee was hunting well at number 24 before enthusiasm got the better of her on the flush of a woodcock and



Louis Rice had an excellent Championship, finishing 2nd with Sliabh Aoife, being awarded a Diploma of Merit with Swifhill Major of Sliabh and Spaniel of the Year with Sliabh Butcher.

James Casey was also eliminated with Beechgrove Roxy at number 28.

Pat Brennan's Clodahill Shauna caught the eye at number 17. Her hunting was tidy and had pace, drive, and style. Her retrieving was of a similarly high standard, picking a cock pheasant and a then woodcock, second dog down without complication.

Cornermarsh Comet running at number 30 for Paul McKearney flushed a cock pheasant but would probably have wanted to pick the retrieve a little cleaner. On the other side David Cairn's Flaxdale West at number 19 was brought across for the retrieve of a loose cock pheasant which he picked.

Gavin McAteer's Freecrow Piper did little wrong at number 32. He hunted well and concluded his run with the retrieve of a cock pheasant. Number 21, Gardenrath Commanche was quickly in amongst game with a smart find and retrieve literally within seconds of being cast off, pleasing handler, Maurice McAuley.

The next pair of dogs were Trevis Crothers with his second dog Rokedene Amy at number 36 and number 25, Stevie Nickell's Gort Bomber. Stevie's dog was given plenty of time on the retrieve of a cock pheasant, but failed and was subsequently 'eye wiped' by Rokedene Amy, who had previously completed a good, marked retrieve on a woodcock.

Next up was Ronan Gorman's third entry, Bishwell Barrett of Commonshall running at number 27. He was in a woodcock hotspot and had multiple finds in quick succession. Bishwell Barrett of Commonshall's retrieving was top drawer too. He pulled off an excellent long marked retrieve with little handler input followed by a blind retrieve which he picked in a single cast.

Last dog of the first round on the right side, was number 38, Rytex Reo of Hollydrive with the experienced Mick Walsh handling. Reo had a long hunt but showed excellent stamina with his hunting remaining fast and stylish throughout his run. He had a find on a



Last year's winner, Jim Wardrobe finished third with Tweedbrae Dees Young Star.

woodcock which was missed by the guns so finished his first run without a retrieve.

Louis Rice's Sliabh Aoife at number 29 had a find on a cock bird and was moved to attempt the retrieve from over a fence and down a steep drop inside thick conifer woodland. Could she complete this tricky retrieve? With Louis Rice driving – of course she could! Eddie Byrne and Killyvocca Pearl followed at number 31. She had a find on a cock pheasant and was moved onto a lane which enabled her to complete the retrieve.

Michael Frank Rasmussen's Rytex Rupture at number 1 completed her second run of the championship without complication; finding and retrieving a hen bird.

Second day

The second day began dry and mild but heavy rain would soon set in. Ground was variable. We started in heavy cover but competing dogs had to handle a mixture of mature woodland, ditches, cover crops and rhododendron throughout the day.

The first two dogs to run on the second day were Ieva Grigaite's Castlview Alla Tyrell of Swifthill at number 35 on the left side of a tree lined avenue and number 3, Skronedale Sabina of Lisnalincy, handled by Gary Wilson on the right. Ieva was hunting nicely when a loose woodcock was shot into a field. She was lifted over the fence and made a tidy job of the retrieve. Hunting on, a hen pheasant was shot and Ieva was sent – but failed.

Number 3, Skronedale Sabina of Lisnalincy was brought across and tried without success. The judges had a look and failed to find the bird. Number 3 had already found and retrieved a cock bird and number 35 finished her run with a similar find and retrieve.

Number 5, Hollydrive Zak with young Odhran Bell handling, began his second run by picking a loose hen bird. He then had a positive find on a cock pheasant and picked the retrieve in a single cast, well out, from cover, across the avenue. An excellent retrieve which was to deservedly earn him 'retrieve of the championships.'

Louis Rice was next in on the left with his fourth entry, Swifthill Major of Sliabh at number 37. Major had a find

on a hen bird which was missed. He then produced a cock bird which was killed and made a tidy job of the retrieve.

Ronan Gorman's Commonhall Mayfly at number 7, demonstrated her honesty by allowing a trapped hen pheasant to escape from tight cover but the shot was subsequently missed, denying her the opportunity to retrieve. Number 9, Richard Doherty's Special Star found a cock pheasant in bramble and retrieved it from across the avenue.

Number 10, Louis Rice's Sliabh Bonnie gave into temptation on a hen bird that was struggling to break cover and was eliminated. Damian Kelly's black and white bitch, Clodahill Uimhir at number 12 ran in tight cover, finding

and retrieving with little complication. Number 13 Tweedbrae Dees Young Star flushed 2 birds and completed a retrieve of one from a field; the other being offered to Damian Kelly. Garrisoncullin Shannagh at number 15, like dogs that had gone immediately before her, flushed in thick cover, and had to be moved into a field to retrieve.

Clodahill Usain of Commonshall with Ronan Gorman handling hunted a tight ditch on the left at number 14. A very clever find from under a sheep wire fence and a tidy retrieve of a cock pheasant which was shot and accurately marked by championship top gun, Ivan Wilson concluded another quality run.

Number 18, Louis Rice's Sliabh Butcher failed on a retrieve and was therefore eliminated. Pat Brennan's Clodahill Shauna at number 17, was brought across and picked it. Shauna hunted on with pace and drive, positively finding a cock pheasant and retrieving quickly to hand.

Number 20, Maurice McAuley's bitch, Gardenrath Comanche failed to retrieve a cock pheasant and was eye wiped by Shane Gainley's Garrisoncullin Holly running at number 20. Holly hunted on to produce a hen which was picked on the other side and a cock which was not shot.

Ronan Gorman's Bishwell Barrett of Commonshall at number 27, hunted artichokes with considerable power and drive. A straightforward retrieve of a hen bird flushed from the other side of the line and a positive find on another hen bird concluded an eye-catching run. Number 29, Louis Rice's Sliabh Aoife also ran in artichokes. She hunted with purpose, finding two birds which were both missed. Louis was relieved when a third bird was shot and retrieved to hand.

Meanwhile on the left number 30, Paul McKearney's Cornermarsh Comet flushed a hen pheasant from a ditch and completed the retrieve. Gavin McAteer's Freecrow Piper at 32 also found and retrieved, completing a competent run. Number 36, Trevis Crother's Rokedene Amy had a long run



Ronan Gorman had a fantastic championship, qualifying 3 dogs and gaining an award with all 3 of them. Ronan finished 4th with Bishwell Barrett of Commonshall and was awarded Diplomas of Merit with his progeny Commonshall Mayfly and Clodahill Usain of Commonshall.



16-year-old Odhran Bell finished the 47th Irish Kennel Club (AV) Spaniel Championship and was awarded 'Retrieve of the Championships'. A fantastic achievement. His father Oliver won the 2023 IKC Retriever Championship – so he has the pedigree!

but found game and made a decent job of the retrieve of a cock pheasant from water. Final dog on the right was number 38, Mick Walsh's Rytex Reo of Hollydrive. Reo had a difficult beat - a steep bank of rhododendron, but he hunted it in textbook fashion flushing two birds, remaining honest when out of sight and making an excellent job of a retrieve across a river.

On the right side of the line, game was becoming scarce. Number 31, Eddie Byrne's Killyvocca Pearl had a long dry run as did number 35, Castleview Alla Tyrell of Swifthill handled by Ieva Grigaite. Number 37, Swifthill Major of Sliabh handled by Louis Rice was the last dog to run in the 47th Irish Kennel Club Championship for Any Variety Spaniels. Major flushed a cock bird, which was shot and landed on water, but the retrieve presented no problems.

After conferring, judges called 4 dogs for a run-off for first place; number 3, Skronedale Sabina of Lisnalincy, number 13 Tweedbrae Dees Young Star, number 27 Bishwell Barrett of Commonshall and number 29 Sliabh Aoife.

Championship secretary Ivan McAlister thanked sponsors Feedwell dog food for their much-appreciated support. He also thanked hosts, Shanes Castle Estate, gamekeeper Bill Storer, assistant Paul Allen, judges, guns, officials, volunteers, and anyone else who had helped deliver a successful event.

Results

The results of the 47th Irish Kennel Club (AV) Spaniel Championship were then announced as follows:

1st Skronedale Sabina of Lisnalincy, Gary Wilson

2nd Sliabh Aoife, Louis Rice

3rd Tweedbrae Dees Young Star, Jim Wardrobe

4th Bishwell Barrett of Commonshall, Ronan Gorman

Diplomas of Merit:

Rytex Rupture, Michael Frank Rasmussen

Commonshall Mayfly, Ronan Gorman

Special Star, Richard Doherty
Clodahill Uimhir, Damian Kelly
Clodahill Usain of Commonshall, Ronan Gorman

Clodahill Shauna, Pat Brennan
Garrisoncullin Holly, Shane Gainley
Killyvocca Pearl, Eddie Byrne
Freecrow Piper, Gavin McAteer
Rokedene Amy, Trevis Crothers
Swifthill Major of Sliabh, Louis Rice
Rytex Reo of Hollydrive, Mick Walsh

Guns Awards:

Garrisoncullin Shannagh, Tom Moloney

Retrieve of the Championships:

Hollydrive Zak, Odhran Bell

Spaniel of the Year:

Sliabh Butcher, Louis Rice

Best Gun at Championship:

Ivan Wilson



Championship Secretary Ivan McAlister (centre) with judges (L-R) Peter Avery, Anthony Smyth, Des Donnelly and Andrew Cunningham.



Guns at the 2023 IKC (AV) Spaniel Championship (L-R) Stevie Marsden, Fintan Kelly, Ivan Wilson & Stephen Boyle. The award for the gun that the handlers most enjoyed shooting over their dogs went to Ivan Wilson.

COMPLETE NUTRITIOUS FOOD FOR EVERY DOG, EVERY DAY.

For over 60 years and through three generations we have been feeding dogs quality dog food. Jimmy Clegg, the founder of the Feedwell brand, had a simple desire to create a family of products that delivered high quality nutrition at affordable prices to all types of dogs. This is still what we do today.

- ✓ **THE ONLY DOG NUTS MADE IN NORTHERN IRELAND**
- ✓ **NO ARTIFICIAL COLOURS OR PRESERVATIVES**
- ✓ **QUALITY LOCAL INGREDIENTS**
- ✓ **SUITABLE FOR ALL BREEDS**



Quality natural
tasty nutrition



Omega oils for a
shiny, healthy coat



No artificial colours/
preservatives



Probiotics for
healthy digestion



PRODUCT RANGE



FEEDWELL SUPREME

Available in 2.5kg, 8kg and 15kg bags

Feedwell Supreme pet product formulated to meet the needs of a normal active adult dog.

- ✓ Wheat Gluten Free.
- ✓ FOS/MOS prebiotics to support healthy digestion.
- ✓ Optimum Protein levels for an active life.
- ✓ Omega Oils for a Shiny Healthy Coat.
- ✓ No Artificial Colours or preservatives.



FEEDWELL SPORT

Available in 15kg bags

Feedwell Sport formulated high energy complete diet suitable for dogs with high energy requirements such as working and sporting dogs.

- ✓ 26% Protein.
- ✓ With Carnitine to Support Athletic Recovery.
- ✓ Omega Oils for sustained energy and Coat Health.
- ✓ Used by Champions in their field.
- ✓ No Artificial colours or preservatives.



FEEDWELL PUPPY

Available in 2.5kg and 8kg bags

Feedwell Puppy is a complete food formulated to meet the needs of any puppy in its first months.

- ✓ Small bite-size kibble suitable for puppy mouths.
- ✓ Wheat gluten-free.
- ✓ Optimum protein and calcium levels for strong bone and muscle development.
- ✓ Coated in natural omega 3 and 6 oils.
- ✓ Key Amino acids to support muscle growth.



FEEDWELL MAINTENANCE

Available in 2.5kg, 10kg, 15kg bags

Feedwell Maintenance is a delicious natural kibble which has been formulated to provide a quality complete food for your dog.

- ✓ Low Fat.
- ✓ Lower protein 18%.
- ✓ Natural omega 3 and 6 oils for a shiny and healthy coat.
- ✓ Suitable for dogs with lower energy requirement.
- ✓ No artificial colours or preservatives.



FEEDWELL MUESLI

Available in 15kg bags

Feedwell Muesli is a delicious natural kibble that has been formulated to provide a quality complete food for your dog.

- ✓ Suitable for the fussy eater.
- ✓ Lower protein 18%.
- ✓ Natural omega 3 and 6 oils for a shiny and healthy coat.
- ✓ Satisfaction guaranteed.

SHANES CASTLE MAY DAY STEAM RALLY

SUNDAY 5TH & MONDAY 6TH MAY 2024

SHANES CASTLE ESTATE, ANTRIM OPEN 10.00AM - 5.00PM DAILY

- Steam & Vintage Engine Working Demonstrations - threshing, baling, timber sawing, stone breaking
- Vintage Tractors, Commercials, Cars, Motorcycles, Stationary Engines and Yesteryear
- Trade Village, Autojumble, Crafts & Artisan Foods
- Live Music & Entertainment All Day
- Main Arena Events, Steam Rides, Fairground
- Petting Farms, Punch & Judy, Magic Shows
- Hospitality (Food, Drinks & Bar) Comfort Facilities
- Live Music Festival in the Evening (Acts include Paul Kelly, Altagore, Tartan Riot & More)
- Public Caravan and Camping Site
- **NEW:** Castlewood Holiday Park - Adjacent



A COMPLETE FAMILY DAY OUT! DON'T MISS IT!

ADMISSION:



Adults £12.00 · Concessions £10.00 Children £6.00
Family ticket £30.00 (2 adults and up to 3 children)



**BUY TICKETS ONLINE AT WWW.SHANESCASTLESTEAMRALLY.CO.UK
OR PAY AT THE GATES ON THE DAY**

Pre-Booking Essential for Campsite Stays (up to 4 nights) www.shanescastlesteamrally.co.uk

For further information contact +44 (0)28 9084 3605 | Walter +44 (0)7712 769072

www.shanescastlesteamrally.co.uk  / Shanes Castle Steam Rally  @shanescastlesteamrally



Sponsored by Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council and Castlewood Holiday Park

SCAN ME



- **Qualified Auctioneers & Valuers**
- **Experts in Corporate Recovery**
- **Liquidation & Disposal Auctions**
- **Complete Valuation Service**
 - **Farm Dispersal & Probate Sale Specialists**



07836 339033 | james@armstrongauctions.co.uk
Clandeboye Estate, Bangor, BT19 1RN

armstrongauctions.co.uk