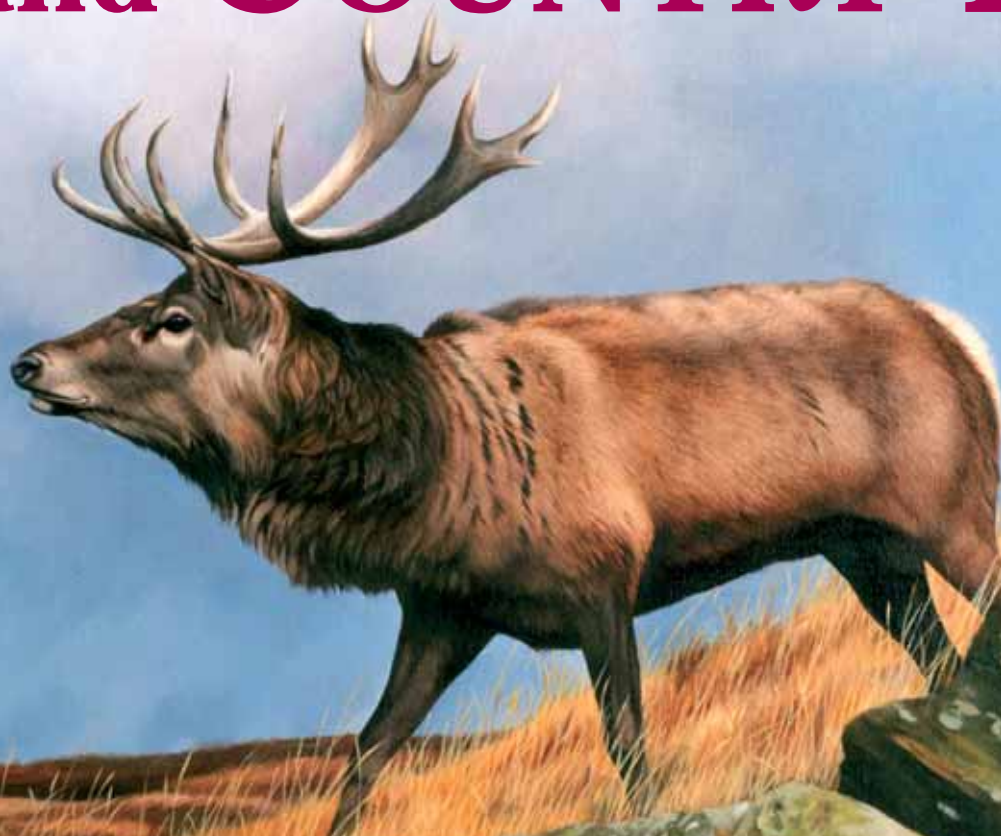
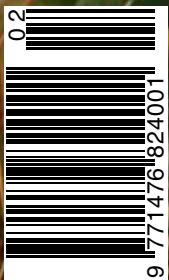


Irish COUNTRY SPORTS and COUNTRY LIFE

ON SALE TO
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Front Cover: An iconic painting of 'The Stag In Moorland' by John R. Moore, Irish Sporting & Wildlife Artist.

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Biro. Coke. Hoover. And here in Ireland there's Irish Game Fair, Irish Game and Country Fair, Shanes or Birr.

What's the connection? Well, each of these words denotes a particular class leading product and at the same time is used generically as well. We want a cola — we ask for a coke. Some dusting to do — get out the Hoover. Simple.

It's the same with game fairs in Ireland. So much so, that all you need do is ask 'Are you going to Shanes or Birr?' and the chances are the other person knows exactly what you mean. It really means enjoying the very best in countrysports and country lifestyle entertainment at one of the events put on by the Great Game Fairs of Ireland.

In spite of less than ideal weather, the Irish Game Fair & Fine Food Festival at Shanes Castle was a huge success. The weather forecasts which predicting poor weather of almost Biblical proportions did not deter the public who came along in their thousands as usual.

Then along came some wonderful weather as soft warm breezes and blue skies arrived for the magical Irish Game & Country Fair and Fine Food festival at Birr, County Offaly. Set in the glorious Irish midlands countryside with its fabled castles and history, Birr Game Fair has an atmosphere and character all its own. Almost equivalent in size to the Shanes Castle's event, it offered so much that you won't find elsewhere — plus the stunning world-renowned estate gardens to enjoy as well while you are there.

Finally, just as the countrysports season began in earnest it was time for Ballynahinch Game & Harvest Festival. Held only once previously, it really was something different, and thousands came along to the very stylish event in Montalto Estate.

This time it really was a case of 'big guns' blazing at Montalto. Direct from the UK came international shooting expert Mike Yardley and from Strangford Lough to the Lake at Montalto Estate, a puntgun operated by the only female puntgunner in the world - Liz Edgar all the way from the Highlands of Scotland.

Despite only being in her twenties, Liz was no stranger to game shooting, wildfowling and stalking having practised them all since childhood. We were delighted that she is made the special trip to Montalto Estate where, along with her brother Mark, she demonstrated the puntgunning and wildfowling skills which her forebears practised over 100 years ago.

We had a real coup at Montalto with the presence of Mike Yardley, one of the biggest 'big guns' in shooting and one of best known personalities in the shooting world. Along with gunsmith Chis Symonds, Mike fitted guns and tested eye dominance, using the unique methods that have led him to write two books on the subject.

Montalto echoed once more to the sounds of pipe and drum as the boom of cannon and musket signalled a battle royal with scenes from the 1798 Rebellion in the estate. It was actually in Montalto's grounds that the rebels made their last stand on Ednavaddy Hill. And visitors also saw more scenes of the Battle of Ballynahinch with a re-enactment staged in the town square on the Saturday morning.

And while the thousands enjoyed the Fairs - there was also a very real dividend for countrysports and the country way of life. Our PR and advertising campaigns captured the airwaves and pages of the newspapers. We had a large number of politicians involved in the launch of the fairs and many enjoyed them so much they stayed for hours to meet and mingle with the crowds and soak up the



atmosphere. Now that really was some 'good news' for a change!

On another topic, shooters got some good news when the government decided against putting a ban on lead shot anytime soon.

We learned of the decision with the release of a letter from DEFRA's Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP to John Swift, who had chaired the Lead Advisory Group on the use of lead ammunition. It stated that with regard to the impact of lead ammunition on wildlife, the report did not provide evidence of causation linking possible impacts of lead ammunition with sizes of bird populations in England.

Furthermore, it said that following receipt of the LAG report, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) sought independent scientific advice from the Committee on Toxicity about the human health risk assessment within it. This has led the FSA to conclude that the evidence provided in the LAG report does not affect their current advice.

The report gave no evidence of causation linking possible impacts of lead ammunition with sizes of bird populations in England. In both instances — human health and wildlife — the LAG did not show that the impacts of lead ammunition were significant enough to justify changing current policy; therefore the government did not accept the LAG's recommendation to ban the use of lead ammunition.

This advice, in place since 2012, states: 'To minimise the risk of lead intake, people who frequently eat lead-shot game, particularly small game, should cut down their consumption. This advice is especially important for vulnerable groups such as toddlers and children, pregnant women and women trying for a baby'.

The Minister added that the FSA will be considering if action is required to raise awareness of their advice amongst the at-risk population. In this regard, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) has been asked by the European Commission to gather information on the potential risks presented by metallic lead, to establish if there is a case for regulating its use within the European Union and the evidence presented by the ECHA will be kept under review.

However, there appeared to be an issue with poor compliance with the Lead Shot Regulations. As a result, the Minister confirmed that DEFRA will look at how the existing regulations on wildfowling can be better implemented.

In Northern Ireland the lead shot regulations prohibit the use of lead shot on or over any area of wetland for any shooting activity. Wetlands are defined as, regardless of size, any areas of foreshore, marsh, fen, peatland with standing water, regularly or seasonally flooded fields, and other water sources whether they be natural or man-made, static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt. As BASC and others clearly state, we must all take responsibility for ensuring that the regulations are adhered to.

They remind shooters to comply with the very simple laws on the use of lead ammunition, because those who do not clearly put the future use of lead ammunition for all purposes at risk. The answer lies in our own hands. It should be unacceptable to all of us who obey the law that others put our sport in jeopardy by ignoring it. Flout the law and a ban will follow.

Don't give ammunition to the antis.

**Paul Pringle,
Northern Editor**

Country Sports and Country Life Rol Comment

In July the Spanish bullfighter Victor Barrio was pierced several times by a bull's horns and died. It was the first death in the Spanish bullfighting world since 1992. Instead of maintaining a respectful silence or offering their condolences, many anti bullfighting people expressed their gratitude that Barrio had been gored to death.

The fact they used this opportunity to react in such a way shows what a tasteless and unpleasant crew they are, taking every opportunity to flaunt their hypocritical purity while at the same time overlooking the basic rules of common decency. Whether you like bullfighting or not you don't gloat and celebrate when one of its practitioners meets a grisly end. The shocking abuse was so bad that Barrio's Facebook page was deleted. 'I hope he suffered a long painful death,' one wrote. 'I'm glad, he deserved it,' wrote another. One man even wrote to the bull: 'Delighted to see that instead of you being slowly tortured to death in front of a baying crowd of savages, it was your tormentor with his guts spilled in the sand. Let us hope for many more such outcomes.'

It is important to be clear on the position which I and most hunting people will agree with. It is highly unlikely that any of the anti-hunters will agree with this position but it's important to state it nonetheless: Nobody likes killing animals. It's an unpleasant business. People who hunt are not driven by the kill. What drives them is the fun and enjoyment of the chase, appreciating pleasant countryside, watching the activity of the animal world, being surrounded by friends. These things are pleasurable. But the kill itself is an unpleasant business.

There are lots of things in life which are unpleasant. They are tasks which we don't take any enjoyment in, but we carry them out because they have to be done. If you ask a hunter what drives him or her they will invariably speak about many things, but never about the kill itself.

Unless you are a vegetarian you are also implicated in the unpleasant task of killing animals. To eat meat and at the same time decry the hunting world is in fact hypocrisy. It is puritanical, jump-on-the-bandwagon cant; a dishonest, go-with-the-sheep attitude to things.

Personally, I have no problem with vegetarians or vegans. Some of them are my friends. I believe in live and let live. Unfortunately, when it comes to issues such as hunting or bullfighting many don't believe in live and let live. They believe in attacking the characters of others and banning their pastimes.

I have never attended a bullfight and I don't know if I ever would. It doesn't appeal to me sufficiently to pay money for a seat in the crowd. But in spite of the fact that there are some things about it of which I am not overly fond, my instinct is not to ban, it's not to disparage; it's simply to let the practitioners and supporters get on with their pastime.

I like the writings of Ernest Hemingway who of course



wrote splendidly about bullfighting. Hemingway is sometimes portrayed as being macho and a bit vacuous. He was anything but and could be surprisingly sensitive in his reactions to life.

In 1932 he published 'Death in the Afternoon' which is a non-fiction book about the ceremony and traditions of Spanish bullfighting. He pointed out that the bullfighter is in fact an artist: 'Bullfighting is the only art in which the artist is in danger of death and in which the degree of brilliance in the performance is left to the fighter's honour.' He also said, 'There are only three sports: bullfighting, motor racing, and mountaineering; all the rest are merely games.'

The English comedian and travel writer Michael Palin is a big Hemingway aficionado and in his book 'Hemingway Adventure' he describes meeting a bullfighter in Pamplona. This bullfighter is Vicente Barrera who is 'softly spoken' and has 'almost solemn politeness.' However, he becomes passionate when Palin puts it to him that many people think bullfighting cruel. He points out that bullfighting is something that cannot be done without passion; that technique is nothing without passion. 'He grabs at his cashmere sweater,' says Palin, 'as if wanting to tear out the heart beating beneath it and show me the passion inside.'

'You live your passion all of the day, you know,' comments Barrera. 'You don't have holidays, you don't have weekends, you don't have family, you only have your passion and the toro and the fiesta and no more.' 'Do you still have fear?' asks Michael. 'Of course!' replies Vicente. 'If they don't have fear, they are crazy people! Matador is a person I think normally very intelligent and normal. A brave person is not someone who has no fear!'

To many in Spain, bullfighting is an art form and those who participate are considered heroes. A romance with bullfighting is embedded in the nation's culture. Artist Pablo Picasso, poet Federico Garcia Lorca and philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset are among respected Spanish intellectuals who have glorified the spectacle. The running of the bulls in Pamplona still attracts thousands from across the world.

The kind of people who oppose bullfighting can be found causing problems around the world. Therefore, many conservationists have helped over the years to destroy the very wildlife they claim to love.

In his book 'The Hunting Gene,' Robin Page points out that the number of predators is probably higher today in Britain than for several hundred years. It was not just game-shooters who were controlling predators — it started long before that. Animals and birds were controlled to protect food production — free range hens in particular — which were so important to ordinary country people, cottagers and crofters.

'How do members,' Page asks, 'of the Conservation Taliban think the "hen harrier" got its name or the "sparrow hawk"? The truth is that they don't think.' The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in Page's view seems to have become a marketing organisation and not a conservation body 'and I am writing this as a member of many years standing.'

The RSPB did confirm to Page that predator control was

taking place on RSPB reserves, to protect those birds that were not behind anti predator fencing. However in general the RSPB's attitude is risk averse. 'It seems that they must mention nothing,' he comments, 'that will adversely affect cash flow or upset bunny-huggers.'

Page argues that the fate of the countryside — its wildlife, its people and its culture, seems to have drifted into the hands of the politicians, conservation fundamentalists (who he refers to as 'the conservation Taliban') and their marketing men, and away from practical conservationists and the people who live and work on the land. 'Conservation is increasingly seen as a marketing opportunity rather than a way of making a real and positive impact on wildlife and landscape.' 'But all is not gloom and doom,' he concludes, pointing to the organisation which he founded, The Countryside Restoration Trust, which, he says 'offers hope.'

Derek Fanning
ROI Editor

Rigby showcases first ever small calibre London Best at Adihex

London gunmaker John Rigby & Co., well-known for its large calibre big game rifles, has unveiled a unique London Best in .223. The exquisite rifle is the smallest made by Rigby since the firm's return to London in 2013 and was created especially for the Abu Dhabi International Hunting and Equestrian Exhibition 2016 (Adihex), which took place earlier this month.

To create this elegant masterpiece, the team scaled down every element of Rigby's classic .275 design — including scope mounts, stock shape and action — with painstaking care and attention to detail. In addition to being the smallest bolt-action rifle built at the Pensbury Place workshop, the .223 is also the first built by Rigby's gunmakers on a mini-Mauser action. Weighing just 5lb, the perfectly proportioned action contributes to the elegance



The unique Rigby London Best .223

of the rifle's appearance and, more importantly, to effortless handling in the field.

The .223 boasts an eye-catching finish that includes

semi-carved scroll with a 24ct gold background by master engravers Hendrik Frühauf and James Kulczyk.

"Rigby is best known today for big game rifles," commented Rigby's managing director, Marc Newton, adding: "But that doesn't mean we can't produce exquisite firearms for smaller quarry. I'm extremely proud of the team for all the work they have put into this .223, which handles like a magic wand. Yet again, they have shown that they possess the talent and commitment to produce rifles of the highest quality, whatever the calibre." The rifle was sold at Adihex for an undisclosed sum.

Inland Fisheries Ireland announces agreement with Angling Federations on trout production

The Board of Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) met yesterday with a joint delegation from the National Anglers Representative Association and Trout Anglers Federation of Ireland to discuss IFI's proposal to exit the production of trout for the re-stocking of angling lakes.

As a result of these discussions the Board of IFI has agreed to defer its proposal indefinitely. However, in the discussions the parties

recognised that there are significant economic, environmental and biological issues surrounding the current production facilities which IFI needs to resolve. Inland Fisheries Ireland is committed to developing and seeking funding for a comprehensive strategy to meet current and future trout production needs, contingent on obtaining the significant investment required. The

parties to the discussions agreed to continue to work closely together to deliver this strategy.

The Board of IFI wishes to acknowledge and thank all those who have made submissions to the public consultation on IFI's exiting from freshwater trout production. This consultation process is now closed.

PSNI Online Firearm Application Process – Information Events

Firearms & Explosives Branch in partnership with NI Direct with the support of Ignite.it are hosting a series of information events to share with you the new PSNI online Firearm application form.

PSNI FEB will be presenting in a number of venues across Northern Ireland from 21 November 2016. Laptops and tablets are available to allow you to complete the application form yourself. You are not required to bring any documentation with you to complete the application form.

You will require an email address in order to complete the online application form. If you do not currently have an email address the personnel on hand will be pleased to assist you in creating one. Alternatively, you can forward your details to paul@ignite.it or contact him on 08000 488638 and it will be set up for you by the time of the event.

The online events are at the following locations. (There will be 2 events per day at each location.)

- Monday 21 November 2016 – Derry Central Library - 4pm – 5.45pm, 6.30pm – 8.15pm
- Tuesday 22 November 2016 – Antrim Civic Centre (Steeple Centre) - 4pm – 5.45pm, 6.30pm – 8.15pm
- Thursday 24 November 2016 – Dungannon Library – 3.45pm – 5.30pm, 6.15pm – 7.45pm
- Tuesday 29 November 2016 – Omagh Library - 4pm – 5.45pm, 6.30pm – 8.15pm
- Thursday 1 December 2016 – Lisburn City Library - 4pm – 5.45pm, 6.30pm – 8.15pm

PSNI FEB would appreciate it if you could notify them of your attendance. Please email Gwen Sweeney at gwen.sweeney@psni.pnn.police.uk of your attendance by Monday 14 November 2016. Or contact the non-emergency number telephone – 101 EXT 33650

Applications for a Northern Ireland Visitor's Permit – Reminder

R of I members who wish CAI to act as sponsor in their application for a Northern Ireland Visitor's Permit should note the following:

Documentation required:

- A copy (front and back) of the firearm certificate/s pertaining to the firearm/s you wish to bring to NI
- Your original EFP (or a copy of ALL pages including front & back cover)
- Payment (cheque made payable to Countryside Alliance Ireland for €25 or alternatively a £stg cheque or bank draft made payable to PSNI for £16)
- Your current Northern Ireland Visitor's Permit (if applicable) NB Please ensure your firearm certificate/s and European Firearms Pass are up to date!

COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE IRELAND

Love the countryside

Please post the relevant documentation to our NI office:
Countryside Alliance Ireland
64a Dows Road
Belfast
BT8 8LB

A minimum of 6 weeks should be allowed for the application process once CAI has received your documentation, as per PSNI FEB guidelines.

Altarichard Test Benefits Alzheimers Society NI

The Labrador Retriever Working Test held in Armoy during the summer was a huge success and raised £1,527 for Alzheimers Society NI. The weather was kind and the searing heat of the previous days had died down to more acceptable temperatures which the competitors were indeed thankful for. There was a great ambience throughout the day and as well as some serious competition, the craic was good! Countryside Alliance



Altarichard Test – Fionnula Graham on behalf of Alzheimers Society NI receiving a cheque from Derek Anderson.

Ireland were in attendance and made the draw for the Open event.

The winner of the Open was Billy Lundy, second prize went to Roy Rankin and David Beattie was third. P&O Ferries, Irish Sea, Larne generously donated the main prize of a free ferry crossing for a car and two passengers to Scotland for 5 days. Rita Corr, who was second in the Novice class was also winner of the Top Finishing Countryside Alliance Ireland Member Perpetual Trophy. Everyone present agreed the event (held with the kind permission of Blakiston Houston Estates), was superbly organised by Derek Anderson.

The date for next year's Test has already been set – Saturday 3 June 2017, so please put it in your diary and support this most worthy event.

CAI attend Montalto with PSNI FEB and Wildlife Liaison

Countryside Alliance Ireland (CAI) was delighted to host representatives of PSNI Firearms and Explosives Branch and the Wildlife Liaison Officer on our stand at the final Fair of the season – the Ballynahinch Game and Harvest Festival at Montalto on the last weekend of September.

Michaela Fox and Emma Newell from FEB were on hand to offer advice on all firearms related topics and they were kept busy with a steady stream of enquiries.

Emma Meredith, PSNI Wildlife Liaison Officer, attended on the Sunday and generated much interest and debate on wildlife crime in Northern Ireland, as well as highlighting specific initiatives aimed at reducing incidents; including 'Operation Wild Deer'.

CAI works closely with FEB and indeed is an active member of the Northern Ireland Firearms Forum, hosted by PSNI. It was of great benefit not only to our members but indeed all firearms certificate holders to have FEB representatives at the Fair as this gives the public the opportunity to engage freely with them and to have their



CAI Chairman John Clarke with Darren Clements, Under 17 prize winner and his Grandfather, Philip Gilmore.

queries dealt with at first hand.

CAI was also pleased to sponsor a prize for a competition that Gundog Rescue were running at the Fair. Gundog Rescue have rehomed more than 284 dogs so far this year. The lucky Under 17 winner was Darren Clements, who was given free CAI membership for one year.

There was great camaraderie between the stallholders and CAI are particularly grateful to Elite Guns from Newry (www.eliteguns.co.uk) for providing endless tea and coffee!

Countryside Alliance Christmas Cards

The CA 2016 Christmas card collection is available online. This year there are eight beautiful, top quality Christmas cards to choose from as well as the 2017 Countryside Alliance calendar. shop.countryside-alliance.org To order your Christmas cards and calendars over the telephone, please call +44 (0) 370 270 9011.



The CAI stand at Montalto

Grouse Debate Held in Westminster

MPs from across the UK debated grouse shooting in Westminster Hall on Monday 31 October, following an e-petition on the issue. The support for grouse shooting was overwhelming which resulted in a very positive outcome for our rural way of life.

Prior to the debate, Countryside Alliance sent a brief to all MPs and we list below some highlights.

- Grouse moor management has played a key role in creating and maintaining our upland landscape, preserving and improving heather habitat and peatland, sustaining some of our rarest plants and wildlife, and promoting biodiversity.
- Grouse shooting is already heavily regulated and controlled. There is extensive legislation in place that has an impact on almost every aspect of grouse shooting and grouse moor management, and licensing requirements are in place across many areas such as firearms possession and heather burning in environmentally sensitive areas. Any additional legislation, or licensing requirements, would need to be consistent, evidence-based and principled, recognising that further controls would add to the cost and bureaucracy of grouse moor management, without necessarily improving outcomes.
- The theory and practice of modern gamekeeping is focused on conservation and a respect for biodiversity. Modern gamekeepers are increasingly expected, and often required, to undertake formal apprenticeships or college courses, gain practical qualifications, and attend best-practice courses.
- For many upland communities, grouse shooting plays a pivotal role in the local economy, providing a valuable source of jobs and income for local businesses. It also underpins the social life of these communities and helps to tackle rural isolation.
- Those calling for a ban on driven grouse shooting need to set out a viable, alternative vision for our uplands, considering that heather moorland in the UK is internationally important and it is widely recognised that grouse shooting has helped preserve it.
- The main alternative land uses to driven grouse shooting such as forestry, sheep farming, abandonment, 'eco-tourism', or 'walked-up' grouse shooting, would all have

serious consequences for the future of our uplands as well as the communities in these areas.

- Improvements in grouse moor management continue to be made on the basis of evidence and principle, and stakeholders working together.

Also included in the brief are sections on Moorland Management, Financing and Economics, Human and Environmental Health, Legislation and Proposals. The brief may be downloaded in full at countryside-alliance.org

DEFRA Rejects Flawed Report on Lead Ammunition – No Further Restrictions

There has been a significant development in the protracted considerations of the Lead Ammunition Group (LAG) set up by Defra in 2010. As those who have been following closely will know, the LAG process has been mind-numbingly slow and increasingly controversial.

However, Countryside Alliance are pleased to report that the previous Secretary of State for Environment, Liz Truss, responded to LAG Chairman John Swift's report. In her letter the Secretary of State rejects any further restrictions on the use of lead ammunition, let alone the total ban that John Swift proposed in his report.

The letter confirms that the Food Standards Agency will not be changing its advice on the consumption of game shot with lead ammunition and notes that "the report does not provide evidence of causation linking possible impacts of lead ammunition with sizes of bird populations". In relation to both human health and wildlife the Secretary of State is clear: "the report did not show that the impacts of lead ammunition were significant enough to justify changing current policy; we therefore do not accept your recommendation to ban the use of lead ammunition".

There is one further important point for those who have endured this debate over the last 6 years. The letter confirms absolutely that the LAG process is at an end.

Liz Truss does raise concerns that there may not be complete compliance with current regulations prohibiting the use of lead ammunition for shooting wildfowl or over wetlands, depending on the country in which you are shooting. Countryside Alliance endorse her message that those restrictions must be adhered to, and will continue to work for 100% compliance with our colleagues in other shooting organisations.

McIlveen publishes action plan on tackling animal neglect and abuse

Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Michelle McIlveen has unveiled an action plan aimed at improving animal welfare enforcement and at protecting animals from neglect and abuse.

The plan sets out how 68 recommendations, made in the Review of the Implementation of the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011, will be brought in. It will enable the animal welfare enforcement bodies to work together to ensure that the recommendations are fully implemented.

Miss McIlveen said: "I am pleased to say that a number of the

recommendations in the Action Plan have already been implemented. For example, legislation has been amended to substantially increase the maximum penalties available to the courts for the most serious animal welfare offences to five years imprisonment.

"In addition, serious animal welfare offences have been added to the Unduly Lenient Sentencing Scheme. This allows the Director of Public Prosecutions to refer sentences for animal welfare offences, tried in the Crown Court, to the Court of Appeal if he considers them to be unduly lenient. We have also secured access

to conviction data for DAERA inspectors, to help with animal welfare investigations. These are important steps in ensuring that the welfare needs of animals are met."

The Minister went on to say: "Another important recommendation that I am pleased to say is already completed is the establishment of a single animal welfare presence on the nirect website. This provides information on buying and caring for animals, and is a single source of information on animal welfare enforcement. It helps members of public to understand who to contact if they are concerned about the welfare of an animal."

Barbour Harnesses its Expertise to Produce the Ultimate Waterproof Sporting Knits

This season, Barbour's Sporting collection focuses its attention on producing the very best knits for wet days in the field. Technical innovation and high performance pieces are at the heart of the Barbour Sporting collection, resulting in practical and versatile sweaters, perfect for the unpredictable British winter.

Barbour's waterproof knits are relaxed and incredibly comfortable to wear, creating the ideal layer for a day in the field. One of the stand out jumpers this season is the Carlton knit. Worn either by itself on milder, damp days, or layered under one of our Sporting jackets when the British winter begins to bite, the Barbour Carlton Knit is a versatile and functional piece. When worn alone, the Carlton successfully provides unbeatable protection against the elements due to the Teflon lining that acts as a barrier, stopping water at entry by allowing water to bounce off the surface of the Merino wool fabric. The Carlton also features a fully breathable lining which further protects against wind and rain, providing double protection. The 100% Merino wool composition of the Carlton provides a lightweight yet warm jumper.

The Fellan Sports Half Zip takes all of these features with a zip through funnel neck, adding an extra layer of protection. Contrast shoulder and elbow patches create the traditional sporting look while adding superb durability. Both sweaters are wardrobe staples this season.

For colder days, the Ayton Half Zip is a heavier weight lambswool knit. Smart and easy to coordinate, it's available in a choice of navy or olive Tweed. This chunky knit is crafted in 100% lambswool for natural warmth and softness without being overly bulky to ensure freedom of movement. The Ayton Half Zip



Mens Sporting - Carlton Knit

also features a zipped chest pocket, providing a handy place to store essential items. With its waterproof and windproof lining, the Barbour Ayton Half Zip is sure to become a go to piece this winter.

This season, Barbour's Sporting Knits offer the best in protection and functionality whilst ensuring superior performance.



Carlton Knit



Ayton Half Zip



Fellan Sports Half Zip

Introducing Snugpak's Paratex Micro Terrain Pattern

Snugpak, the UK's leading sleeping bag and insulated clothing manufacturer, has introduced a brand new Paratex Micro Terrain pattern to its Basecamp sleeping bag range.

Designed for use in a wide range of environmental conditions, Snugpak's new Paratex Micro Terrain pattern will be available on the Basecamp Sleepers (Lite, Extreme and Expedition) in the adult range, as well as the Basecamp Explorer (£29.95), which has been especially designed for children.

The warm, comfortable, mummy shaped Basecamp Sleeper bags are constructed with Aqualight (outer), SuperSoft (inner) and Isofibre (filling) - all highly siliconised synthetic fibres which provide an extremely soft touch and a prolonged lifespan in comparison to products filled with traditional fibres.

Snugpak's Sleeper Expedition (RRP £62.50 in Paratex Micro Terrain Pattern) is the top end bag of the range, which provides comfort and warmth in temperatures as low as -12°C (Extreme -17°C). This four

season bag is perfect for autumn and winter camping, where high insulation is a must. As with the rest of the collection, the Sleeper Expedition sleeping bag is 80cm x 220cm in dimension when unpacked, and supplied with a compression sack for convenient and compact storage when not in use.

For further information or to buy online via one of Snugpak's preferred stockists, please visit www.snugpak.com or call 01535 654479.



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(+44) 02870343970

Homefield & Stream, 18 Church Street, Enniskillen BT74 7EJ N. Ireland
(+44) 02866322114

Courtclough Shooting Grounds, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin Ireland
(+353) 018413096

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Angling Licence Digital Transformation



The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Inland Fisheries team undertook a major reorganisation of the Angling Licence systems and processes this year culminating in a new, modern and paperless e-l licence system which has transformed how the angler's licence will be issued and recorded. DAERA Public Angling Estate permits are also available on this new system.

The task in hand was to deliver a first class digital service through an exceptionally well-managed end user project. This was planned in accordance with four category criteria of professionalism, excellence, innovation and measurable outcomes. This project was a major expansion of the online sales system previously offered for the purchase of angling licences and permits and 'went live' on 8th May 2016.

This new system has removed the need for printing thousands of licence and permit books each year, many of which would remain part used or unused, all information is available to the Department from the point of purchase and Fisheries Protection Officers have this information, through a smart phone app, at their fingertips.

Consultation

DAERA Inland Fisheries engaged in the earliest stages with the angling community and the retail distributor sector and organised workshops across NI. This ensured that anglers and retailers were fully involved directly with the development team and were able to share their expertise with DAERA and private sector design and delivery partners. Consultees were shown a prototype of the new system at each event and their ideas contributed to ongoing updates.

In addition to the more efficient customer process this new licence system has also brought additional accountability and risk management benefits to DAERA as the new system has a built in and more regular invoicing system for retail distributors.

Disabled anglers have also benefitted considerably through this modernisation

of systems as they can now apply online like everyone else. Previously Disabled Anglers had to make a written application for their licence and permit, a process which took up to three weeks to complete due to checking systems which existed before introduction of the e-l licence.

Success Story

DAERA Inland Fisheries has received much positive feedback since the system change, online sales have increased by 250% and, as if statistical evidence of success was not enough, the team members involved in this project have been nominated for a UK wide IT award and have already attended the first round presentation at the famous White Hart Lane soccer stadium in London. This national award nomination has provided a boost to Inland Fisheries and given confidence to those who will review the system moving forward and create additions where required.

Online Shopping

Another benefit of the new e-l licence system is that the facility for online shopping for DAERA Angling Licences and Permits is in the same place on the Angling Website. Anglers can access the online sales system by simply visiting www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/buy-rod-licences-permits-and-river-bush-day-tickets



2016 Mid Ulster Angling Schools at which licences and permits for participants were issued using the new DAERA licence system.

Contact Details – New Department

Inland Fisheries moved from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in the Northern Ireland departmental restructuring which took place earlier this year. Inland Fisheries management is pleased to report that this transition was seamless and presented no major problems in customer service delivery.

Contact details for DAERA Inland Fisheries remain mostly unchanged and are as follows:

DAERA Inland Fisheries HQ,
Causeway Exchange, 1-7 Bedford Street,
Belfast BT2 7EG

Telephone Enquiries – 0300 200 7860

Email Enquiries –

anglingcorrespondence@daera-ni.gov.uk



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Irish researchers help solve mystery of one of the great animal migrations as part of new international research

Eels from Ireland travel as far as Azores in new study

Irish researchers from Inland Fisheries Ireland have contributed to an EU funded research which has helped solve the deepest secrets of oceanic migration and behaviour of one of Europe's most mysterious fish, the European eel. The international research team, led by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) in the UK, tracked more than 700 eels as they made their annual mass migration from Europe to the Sargasso Sea. Over 200 tags were recovered, allowing the scientists to map more than 5,000 kilometres of the migration route.

Ireland was one of four countries alongside Sweden, France and Germany which released eels between 2006 and 2012 for tracking purposes. The study allowed scientists to map migration routes from Europe to the Azores region, approximately half the distance to the area where they spawn in the Sargasso Sea. Forty four eels were successfully tracked from Ireland with pop up satellite tags. This study monitored eels further and longer than any previous research with one of the tags from an Irish eel registering a journey of 6,982 kilometres and 273 days at sea.

The study has overturned previously accepted theories on the

European eel which believed that eels made one large journey to the Sargasso Sea, located in the Western Atlantic near the Bahamas, to breed once before they die. This new research shows that their arrival to the Sargasso Sea is more staggered; a finding which will have impact on how this critically endangered species will be managed and conserved in the future.

While some eels do take the quickest route available, travelling from Europe and spawning in early spring within six months of departure, the evidence suggests that the majority of eels undertake a slower paced migration which enables them to arrive in the Sargasso Sea a year later than previously thought. This means that the eels are at sea for longer and exposed to a higher risk of predation and other mortality events.

The life cycle and migration of the eel continues to puzzle scientists as they are born into and spawn in the remote ocean, making them difficult to study. While previously it was understood that eels travelled to the Sargasso Sea to spawn, we did not understand the duration and the dangers our eels are exposed to

during this migration. We now know more also about their behaviour patterns as all eels exhibited diel vertical migrations, swimming though deeper water during the day and moving closer to the surface at night. This understanding of eel biology will help manage and conserve their population across Europe and beyond more effectively."

The study relied on two different types of tags, 'pop up' satellite tags and internal and external data storage tags, to track the eels. Satellite pop up tags are attached to the eel and pop off on a predefined date, automatically transmitting migration data to researchers via a satellite link. The data storage tags, which are bright orange in colour, need to be physically recovered when they float back to land on the tides. Researchers rely on citizens recovering and returning the tag to help them complete their research. To date, 82 data storage tags have been collected and returned by citizens in several countries, including in Ireland.

For further information on this research and on Inland Fisheries Ireland, visit www.fisheriesireland.ie



Pictured is a Galway eel. New research will impact on how this critically endangered species will be conserved in the future.





Iascach Intíre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland

Funding Opportunities Sponsorship Fund 2017



Inland Fisheries Ireland has launched its Sponsorship Fund for 2017. Applications are invited for angling events and initiatives which help grow Ireland's angling tourism product and support novice anglers.

**For more information and to apply, visit www.fisheriesireland.ie/funding.
Closing date is Friday, 9th of December 2016.**

More funding opportunities will be available in the New Year with funding for complex capital works projects expected early in 2017.

www.fisheriesireland.ie/funding

Design your own rifle with Rigby's sophisticated new website

London gunmaker John Rigby and Co. has launched a state-of-the-art website that allows customers around the world to explore its current range of rifles and shooting accessories, plus keep up-to-date with news and developments.

The easy to navigate website features a sophisticated gun configurator tool that enables users to explore the full range of options available and design a Rigby rifle to suit their own personal requirements and preferences. The configurator tool is available for use with Rigby's full range, including Big Game, London Best and Rising Bite double rifles.

With a brand new 'Shikar Store' ecommerce area, fans of the multi-award-winning gunmaker can now view and buy Rigby-branded clothing and shooting accessories online for the first time. Users can also stay abreast of latest news, discover more about the team behind the cult brand, locate local dealers, and download a copy of the latest Rigby brochure.

Managing Director Marc Newton commented: "We've come a long way in the past few years and now have so much to offer our customers. I'm very pleased with the new website, which does a great job of allowing people to have a closer look at what we're doing and the history and passion that fuels all of our projects."

To view the new website, visit:
www.johnrigbyandco.com



Configure your choice of gun on the Rigby website.

Purdey and Dickson hammerguns made for prolific Scottish collector Charles Gordon



The magnificent Purdey and Dickson hammer guns.

Holt's Auctioneers' is selling two eye-catching hammerguns that were originally made for famous Scottish gun collector Charles Gordon.

The first, with an estimate of £5,000-7,000, is an unusual 12-bore rotary-underlever double-barrelled hammergun made in 1899 by London gunmaker James Purdey & Sons. The second, with an estimate of £8,000-12,000, is a fine 4-bore single-barrelled rotary-underlever hammer 'duck gun' made by Edinburgh gunmaker John Dickson & Son.

Between 1868 and 1906 Charles Gordon ordered more than 300 new guns, rifles and pistols from the finest makers Scotland and England had to offer. According to historian Donald Dallas, Gordon "was a gentleman of substantial means, profligate in his purchase of hundreds of guns, yet very eccentric, eventually losing his estate, wealth and personal power, ending his days alone and humble, living in a small cottage on his once large estate."

Holt's say: "Charles Gordon undoubtedly rates as one of the most prolific collectors the British gun trade has ever encountered. John Dickson and Son was a particular favourite of his and for some years he was responsible for between a quarter and a third of their entire output. What makes his patronage particularly extraordinary was his love of 'obsolete' gun designs. When the world had firmly moved into modern breech loading guns, Gordon was ordering muzzle loading guns with percussion, tubelock and even flintlock mechanisms. In the same year the Dickson 4-bore was ordered (for him an unusually contemporary piece) he redressed the balance by ordering a pair of flintlock blunderbusses...the like of which had probably not been ordered by anyone for over 80 years!"

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Fine Tope off Haulbowline Lighthouse

Exhibitors at the Great Game Fairs of Ireland may be familiar with our electrical expert Robert Kee. What they may not know is that Robert is a very keen salt water angler and recently he let us know of a tope he caught not far from Haulbowline Lighthouse.

Peyton Cunningham was the skipper of the Pisces 2 which brought Robert out fishing, after his task of removing the solar lighting system temporarily installed to commemorate a shipping disaster that occurred around one hundred years ago.

Robert writes: "We finished our clear up of the temporary lighting installation on Haulbowline lighthouse around 13:00, but the tide was due to turn at 13:30 so time was tight to get out there and catch some mackerel for bait. Thirty minutes and two mackerel later we began to fish.

"The previous night saw a harvest moon and our luck should be in if I could get those mackerel baits back in before the fish went off the feed. Lines were now down and the waiting game began. A lonely seal surveyed us as he patrolled by, we waited, jiggling for more mackerel. Ten minutes passed, then my reel clicked. Was it a tope? I hesitated as the reel drag clicked now more loudly as the fish headed off on a run with my mackerel bait. Just like a tope, I



Robert Kee caught this very fine tope weighing over 44 lb off Haulbowline Lighthouse thought.

"Peyton, an old hand at tope fishing, directed us as to what should be done. I wound down any slack that I could muster from the fish. It was surprisingly strong, the gear was heavy and after a gallant fight the fish was at the side of the boat. My mate reached through the railings to grab it, and soon a lovely male tope was aboard. It was very quickly restrained to stop it injuring itself, and Cleyton tagged the fish and weighed it at 44lbs 8ozs. A quick photograph later

and it was eased gently back in again to fight another day.

'To live to fight another day,' is a fairly common saying amongst conservation-minded anglers, and fish tagged in the waters around Carlingford Lough have been re-caught less than a year later as far away as 3000 km off Spain and another off the coast of Norway.

"I too look forward to fighting with these fish again another day, but time and tide waits for no man, so at 14:30 we reluctantly headed back to port."

Applications invited for new €500,000 fund available to improve access to angling facilities

A new fund to support projects that will contribute to the delivery of an accessible and sustainable, world class inland fisheries resource has been established. Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) has announced an overall Capital Works Fund of €500,000 available for angling groups and clubs who are looking to improve access and infrastructure for angling.

The fund is aimed specifically at capital improvement works with grants available to all groups and individuals including local development associations, tidy towns, angling clubs and others looking to improve access to angling. The types of projects eligible for funding must provide for public access and include the following:

- Clearing and fencing along rivers/ lakes to allow access for angling
- Able and disabled friendly angling stands
- Car parks to improve access for anglers (new car parks and upgrades to existing carparks)
- Walkways to improve access for anglers
- Stands, styles, footbridges and boat slips
- Accessible angling boats / angling boats

The funding scheme forms part of Inland Fisheries Ireland's National Strategy for Angling Development which aims to ensure that Ireland's fish stocks and angling infrastructure are protected and enhanced for the

economic value and recreational benefit which they offer to communities across Ireland. The fisheries resource is worth €836 million to the Irish economy annually and supports upwards of 11,000 jobs, often in rural and peripheral communities.

Suzanne Campion, Head of Business Development at Inland Fisheries Ireland said: "We are now inviting applications for funding for 'shovel ready' projects which will improve access to angling. This is a vital step in developing facilities for the 273,600 anglers currently in Ireland and the 163,000 international visitors who fished here in 2015. By improving access, we can help grow domestic participation in angling and encourage more visitors to our country every year.

The National Strategy for Angling Development aims to grow the annual economic contribution of angling by €96 million over the next five years, creating an additional 1,800 jobs and attracting 40,000 more tourists annually. We are calling on angling development groups to apply for funding through this scheme. Together, we can ensure our angling infrastructure is developed and we can help remove any barriers to participating in this valuable activity."

Applications for funding should be submitted via the online application form available at www.fisheriesireland.ie/funding



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Leica's new CRF 1600-R compact laser rangefinder

Versatile and compact, this new model combines essential ballistic functions with expanded technical features, making it ideal for hunters seeking reliable distance measurement and equivalent horizontal range determination to make precise, ethical shots.

Linear distances are displayed from 10 metres/yards to a maximum range of 1425 metres/1600 yards. The CRF 1600-R also takes the angle of elevation or depression into account to display the equivalent horizontal range for distances up to 1100 metres/1200 yards.

Measurement accuracy is complimented by high-performance 7x24 mm precision optics with integrated dioptre compensation. The 7x magnification offers a wide field of view for quick, easy target identification and ensures a bright and steady view that makes the CRF 1600-R extremely dependable, even in poor light and limited visibility. Its improved LED readout, with automatic brightness correction, displays readings with optimum clarity in any conditions.

Compact, ergonomic and weighing only 180g, the ambidextrous CRF 1600-R fits easily in either hand and offers intuitive handling. The Leica AquaDura® coating protects exposed lens surfaces from dirt and water droplets and makes them very easy to clean.

Built-in dioptre compensation and special rubber eyecups make the Rangemaster ideal for use by spectacle wearers. The new model comes complete with a carrying strap, Cordura case and battery. RRP: £470



Steyr rifle with royal provenance achieves regal sum

Holt's Auctioneers' recently sold a fine Mannlicher Schoenauer 'MOD 1924' full-stocked take-down bolt-magazine sporting rifle made by iconic gunmaker Steyr in 1943 for the late King Alfonso XIII of Spain.

With an estimate of £3,500-4,500, it eventually sold for £6,400 to an anonymous international collector.

Holt's Auctioneers' Chris Beaumont enthused that this rifle is an excellent example of the 'quality, condition and provenance' credo auctioneers often refer to. He added: "This particular rifle was one of the best examples of its type we've ever seen - hardly surprising as it was made for the Royal Household of Spain. Royal commissions will almost certainly guarantee the highest level of workmanship because repeat orders - and the possibility of obtaining a Royal Warrant (or similar status) has long been the ambition of gunmakers the world over. It's not simply the financial gain from such orders that matters - having the Royal seal of approval is hard to match when you are



Royal connections - the iconic Steyr rifle

promoting your wares. This rifle was sold to an international collector - who I'm pleased to say makes a point of using what he buys. This rifle won't sit collecting dust but will be out in the field, working (albeit gently) for a living.

The Irish Kennel Club's 41st Championship for AV Spaniels

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This year's Irish spaniel championship will be hosted by Mr. Stuart Greaves on the beautiful grounds of the Awbeg Sports Shoot on Quitrent Mountain, situated near Kildorrery, Mallow Co.Cork.

The event will take place on Wed 28th & Thurs 29th of December 2016.

The meet will take place at 7.30am each day at The Hibernian Hotel, Main Street Mallow, Co. Cork. (Which will also be the headquarters for the event).

Judges this year are Mr. Pat Brennan (Clodahill Spaniels)

from Drom, Co.Tipperary & Mr. Eddie Scott (Broomfield Spaniels) from Fife in Scotland, with Mr. Tom O'Connor (Bremarville Spaniels) from Tralee, Co.Kerry acting as Referee.

The event is very kindly sponsored by Roger and Jamie Clegg of Feedwell Dog Foods Castlewellan, Co.Down.

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

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Stevie Munn joins the Fishing Matters Team

Well known angling journalist, international fly casting demonstrator / instructor and renowned game angling consultant, Stevie Munn has joined the FishingMatters' Team in support of their new focus on Marryat Rods!

Stevie has worked with FishingMatters for many years and has enjoyed being part of the Partridge PRO-Team so this is a logical direction to go for both parties. Managing Director Mark Hamnett commented: "These days FishingMatters represents brands internationally and Europe-wide, so our recent appointment by Marryat to distribute their Rods in Benelux, Scandinavia and the USA has meant that we had to up our game in terms of sales and promotion. Stevie's reputation in the rod business speaks for itself and he is confident about the product so it seems like a perfect fit for us! Of course he remains involved in FishingMatters' fly tying business with Partridge and Regal brands."

Stevie Munn said: "This is a perfect move for me, working with fantastic products and an enlightened team means that I can give my best from the get go. I am looking forward to getting involved in the development, testing and promotion of both Marryat and a number of other new products that are already in the pipeline."



Stevie Munn says he's 'working with fantastic products.'

Mid-Ulster Whippet Derby 2015 Winner's 'Tragic Loss'



The Whippet Derby Winner 2015 Killyforde Flash

A very closely fought final of the 2015 Mid-Ulster Whippet Derby was staged at Drumbo Greyhound Park, Lisburn kindly supported by John Connors, Racing Manager. The finalists were delighted to see the names of their dogs on the official programme – a keepsake forever.

The winner of the Derby was Killyforde Flash (aka Junior) owned and trained by Davy Boyd. A delighted Davy and wife, Kate, thought the whole night and event was fantastic and well supported by the Whippet folk, who came from throughout the North on the night.

Junior was a very well-bred dog, brought from Scotland and Davy had a breeding programme set out for this future superstar. Unfortunately Junior while out exercising set off on a trail and never returned. Davy found him lying breathless with no explanation for the dog's death - a tragic loss for the Whippet scene in Northern Ireland.

National pike and trout policies review

Ireland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) has published the indicative timetable for the review of the National Pike and Trout Policies. Following the appointment of a Policy Review Group later this month, the review process will commence with a scoping consultation which will be open to all interested parties.

IFI has long recognised that public policy-making can be enhanced through the active involvement and contribution of all stakeholders and has set out how it will develop policies and consult with stakeholders in its IFI Procedure on Policy Development and IFI Stakeholder Consultation Policy. It is expected that the updated Pike and Trout policy documents will be available in July 2017.

A policy group will be appointed shortly and will comprise of five IFI staff from the Research, Operations and Business Development divisions.

Dr Byrne, CEO of IFI said: "IFI is committed to consulting with stakeholders and the general public on matters of inland fisheries policy. I expect the forthcoming scoping consultation process to gather useful information that will provide an evidence base for the update of the pike and trout policies in tandem.

"An agreed view from angler stakeholder groups would be most welcome and I urge the representative groups to work for such an outcome. I encourage all domestic and tourist anglers, tourism providers and the general public to provide their views on the important issues regarding the management of our important pike and trout species."

IFI acknowledges the upcoming protest being staged by pike interests and can confirm that no decision has been taken regarding the cessation or otherwise of pike management operations in designated trout waters for 2017. IFI has accelerated the review of the policies and is working to ensure the completion of this exercise in as consultative way as possible that ensures all interested parties have input to policy formulation

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MPG figures are official EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. †Official fuel figures for the Isuzu D-Max Fury Manual in mpg (l/100km): Urban 31.7 (8.9), Extra Urban 44.1 (6.4), Combined 38.7 (7.3). CO2 emissions 192g/km. Fury Auto: Urban 26.9 (10.5), Extra Urban 39.2 (7.2), Combined 33.6 (8.4). CO2 emissions 220g/km. For model specific figures please contact us directly or visit www.isuzu.co.uk

†Price shown is an Isuzu D-Max Fury Double Cab £19,999 CVOTR with manual transmission available only in Magma Red. Automatic transmission also available at £20,999 CVOTR. Commercial Vehicle OTR price includes delivery, number plates, 12 months road fund licence and first registration fee, excludes VAT. *3.5 tonne towing capacity applies to all 4x4 models. **5 year/125,000 miles (whichever comes first) warranty applies to all new Isuzu D-Max models.



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A presentation walking cane made from rhino horn shot by F. C. Selous in 1872

Holt's Auctioneers had a rare presentation silver-mounted walking cane for sale in London a couple of months ago. It was made from rhino horn that was shot by legendary British explorer Frederick Courteney Selous in Zimbabwe in 1872.

Chris Beaumont explains why this cane was so noteworthy: "Good provenance can raise the most mundane of items to quite spectacular levels - as we saw with the success of the presentation gemsbok horn presented to F.C. Selous by Cecil Rhodes in our March sale (selling for £15,500 against an estimate of £1,000-1,500). It also brings things 'out of the woodwork' that have similar links - and here we have an even more exotic cane linked to the great man."

The stem of the cane is formed from sectioned white rhinoceros horn, silver-mounted handle inscribed "WHITE RHINOCEROS SHOT BY F.C. SELOUS, CWELO RIVER, MATABELELAND OCT. 1872" and hallmarked for Brigg, London 1894 and likely Thomas Johnson (makers mark partially obscured), with separate silver collar hallmarked for Brigg and bearing makers mark CC, for Charles Cooke



The cane was sold for £15,000

(chief mounter of gold and silver ornaments to Thos. Brigg & Sons 1888-1890).

Wild Salmon Now Available From Sustainable Irish Fisheries

Wild Atlantic Salmon is now available at fish counters around Ireland. This salmon comes from sustainably-managed traditional net fisheries on estuaries and rivers around Ireland, where the number of returning salmon allows fish to be harvested, while maintaining a healthy stock of spawning fish for future generations.

Farmed salmon and organic farmed salmon is a very different product to wild salmon. Farmed salmon is widely available year round. If consumers have any doubts as to the origin of the salmon please ask the supplier and help conserve Ireland's wonderful wild salmon resource. Farmed salmon being sold as wild should be reported to the Food Safety Authority.

In total, the commercial quota for wild Atlantic salmon harvest is just 11,131 from a total of 58,599 (angling and commercial combined), which makes it a premium and sought-after product. Wild Irish salmon can be regarded as truly organic, having lived its life in the wild, fed on wild fish

and krill, and travelling thousands of miles on its long ocean migration, ensuring firm flesh and high levels of healthy Omega-3 oils.

Salmon conservation measures ensure that only appropriately tagged and recorded wild salmon, commercially caught within the state, may be sold. As part of the wild salmon and sea trout tagging regulations, all legally caught wild salmon must have a valid gill-tag (green in the case of draft net, white in the case of snap net fishing) or tail-tag, in the case of imported wild salmon, before processing, and only authorised dealers or commercial licensed salmon fishermen may sell them. It is not permitted to sell rod caught wild salmon within the state or sell wild salmon without a valid gill or tail tag attached.

A hotline is in place to report illegal fishing including the purchase/sale of illegally caught salmon. Please call 1890 34 74 24 if you have information that may help preserve our wild salmon stocks.

IRISH KENNEL CLUB RETRIEVER CHAMPIONSHIP 2016

The 50th IKC Retriever Championship will take place on the Thursday 29th and Friday 30th of December 2016. This year's event will be held in Ballincor Estate, Co Wicklow by kind invitation of Mr Robert Goff and family. This is magnificent ground for the event and it will be the fourth time the Retriever Championship will be held there.

Approximately 40 of the top retrievers in Ireland will compete in this year's Championship.

The Judges for this year are Mr Jimmy Black (Meath), Mr Damien Newman (Down),

Mr David Latham (England) and Mr Jamie Bettinson (Wales). All four Judges have a wealth of knowledge and experience, Jimmy Black won the Championship in 2015. Damien has won it twice, in 2004 and 2006. David has won the IGL three times and Jamie came third in IGL and has judged the IGL in recent years. This will be Jimmy's third

time judging the Championship and it is the second time for Damien.

Once again the Sponsor of this year's IKC Retriever Championship is RED MILLS ENGAGE Premium dog food, the internationally well-known animal food manufacturer. RED MILLS are also very generous in their support of gundog tests and trials throughout the country and we are very grateful for their continued support.

The Headquarters for the IKC Retriever Championships is the Woodenbridge Hotel, Avoca, Co. Wicklow. For reservations, they can be contacted on 040235146 or email reservations@woodenbridgehotel.com

The Meet on both mornings will be in the Hotel Car park 7.30am sharp.

For any further information contact Declan Boyle on 00 44 7590 611947

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Inland Fisheries Ireland Corporate Plan - boost angling sector worth €836 million to Irish economy

Inland Fisheries Ireland's Corporate Plan 2016-2020 sees IFI setting out ambitious goals to drive its work around the protection, conservation, promotion and development of Ireland's fisheries resource over the next five years. Among these goals is the growth of angling with a view to increasing the number of domestic and international anglers in Ireland. Angling in Ireland is currently worth €836 million to Ireland's economy annually, supporting upwards of 11,000 jobs.

The Corporate Plan also focuses on the protection and conservation of freshwater fish species in Ireland and it outlines how modern protection services incorporating technology will efficiently protect the resource. Staff have recently adopted new technologies to help them protect

Ireland's rivers and lakes with Fisheries Officers now routinely using equipment such as spotting scopes, night sights, thermal imaging equipment and mobile phone apps to assist them in their work. They are also using kayaks, all-terrain vehicles, quads and bikes on fisheries patrols. IFI has also outlined a greater focus on fish habitats and their development to ensure fish populations thrive, an objective which will be progressed as part of the implementation of the National Strategy for Angling Development (NSAD), the first comprehensive framework for the development of the Irish angling resource.

The future health of Ireland's angling resource is dependent on

ensuring that Ireland's fish populations and habitats are protected and conserved. This Strategy will deliver significant economic benefits in rural communities where much of angling takes place. It also offers the opportunity to improve the current economic impact of angling by €60 million per year and to support an extra 1,400 Irish jobs.

Inland Fisheries Ireland has a huge jurisdiction with 74,000 kilometres of rivers and streams, 128,000 hectares of lakes and over 5,500 kilometres of coastline. Over the next five years, IFI will utilise information and communication technologies and equipment to secure greater efficiencies in the protection of these fisheries.

Hornady launches a new rimfire calibre into the UK

British vermin controllers can look forward to Hornady's innovative new rimfire calibre being launched, the .17WSM.

Designed to sit between the .17HMR and the centrefire round .17 Hornet, the brand new .17WSM (Winchester Super Magnum) is cheaper to shoot than the majority of vermin calibres on the market today, while still offering excellent ballistic qualities.

With a 20-grain V-Max bullet, which has Hornady's trademark polymer tip, the .17WSM has a muzzle velocity of 3,000fps, and can maintain velocities of more than 2,000fps at 200 yards, an excellent ballistic performance.

Distributed by Edgar Brothers, the UK's largest wholesaler of firearms and ammunition, Hornady's .17WSM is the ideal



bullet for dealing with foxes, rabbits and rats, allowing the vermin controller to deal with pests at all distances. MSRP: £38.50/100

Public asked to complete online survey which will inform future of funding programmes for angling development, conservation and promotional initiatives

IFI is looking for public feedback on its current funding programmes. The organisation has awarded over €3.4 million to angling projects and fisheries initiatives in communities nationwide over the past five years. It is now looking for feedback via an online survey (www.fisheriesireland.ie/fundingsurvey) which will help inform the future direction of funding schemes.

Funding from Inland Fisheries Ireland is available to anglers and fisheries interests for development and conservation projects alongside other sponsorship initiatives through a

number of annual funding programmes. The current funding channels include the Salmon Conservation Fund and the Midlands Fisheries Fund which see Inland Fisheries Ireland redistribute income gained from permits and licenses as well as IFI's Sponsorship Programme.

Inland Fisheries Ireland is looking to consult with previous recipients of funding alongside interested parties and potential applicants, on whether the funding programmes are meeting requirements and if there are any changes which could be made to

improve them. The aim is to engage with stakeholders on how to develop the programmes from project identification and design to funding application and evaluation.

The funding survey should take less than five minutes to complete with all participants entered into a draw to win one of three €50 tackle shop vouchers. To find out more information about Inland Fisheries Ireland's funding programmes and to take the short funding survey, visit www.fisheriesireland.ie/fundingsurvey

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Shooting NI Photographic Competition Attracts Top Entrants

Irish Country Sports & Country Life Editor Paul Pringle had a difficult task selecting the overall winner. Presenting the prizes at the Game Fair at Shanes Castle to each of the category winners who made it through to the final stages of the

competition, Paul said: "This has been an amazing competition with such a high standard of photography and each of the category winners could easily have made it to the top position."

"I think however that we have a worthy overall winner in Mary Murray's picture entitled Chesapeake Bay Trainer. I am delighted that Irish Country Sports & Country Life were able to support the excellent work of Shooting NI and its 'main man' John Warrener Wray by donating the prizes for this excellent competition for countrysports enthusiasts," he added. John also received a Game Fairs print and special Game Fairs mug from the magazine as a token thank you for the hard work involved.



(Above) Shooting NI's John Warrener Wray (3rd from left) receives a collectible Game Fairs print from Paul Pringle alongside some of the photography competition prize winners. (Photo: David Campbell)



WINNER Mary Murray: 'Chesapeake Bay Trainer'



Stuart Spratt : 'An early start'

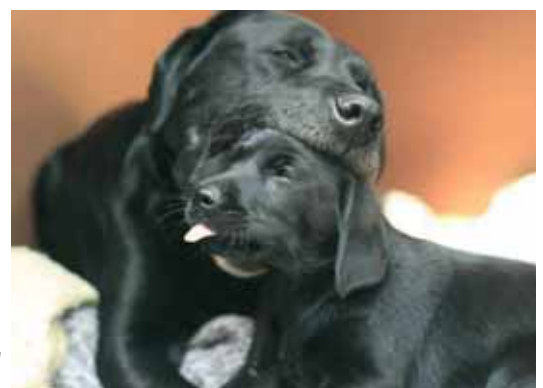


(Above) Andrea Cowan: 'GDR&R Display'

(Left) Jonny Copey: 'Buddy having a laugh'



(Left) Runner up John Rafferty: 'Mother feeding chick'



(Right) Ryan Hill 'Motherly Love'

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Inland Fisheries Ireland awarded half a million funding for development of rural angling projects

Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) has secured funding of €536,886 to develop key angling projects in rural areas. The investment will see development of new recreational facilities and the maintenance of existing angling infrastructure across eight significant projects. Inland Fisheries Ireland collaborated with county councils, chambers of commerce and other local community organisations in the development of these projects to proposal stage and will now continue to work closely with them through the implementation of the initiatives. The funding was awarded by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs as part of the Government's programme to support rural development.

The package will see projects delivered in Athlone, Co. Westmeath, Cloone, Co. Leitrim, Claremorris, Co. Mayo, Newcastle, Co. Tipperary, Carrick-On-Shannon and Donamon, Co. Roscommon, Kilconnell, Co. Galway, Gweebarra, Co. Donegal and Ballinalee, Co. Longford. It will invest in projects such as river bank restoration, a fishery recreation hub, access for coarse angling and fishing points (fishing stands, jetties, boat slips, car parking) which will allow for international match events and upgrade of existing disabled angling facility to include attractive, accessible lakeside and river bank walks.

The projects form part of the National Strategy for Angling Development (NSAD), the comprehensive national framework for the development of Ireland's angling resource. This will ensure that Ireland's fish stocks and angling infrastructure are protected and enhanced for both their economic value and recreational benefit to the communities and visitors they serve across Ireland.

Inland Fisheries Ireland says the investment in rural angling is crucial in order to realise the benefits which can accrue from the natural fisheries resource. In 2015, Ireland attracted 163,000 overseas visitors who fished with a further 273,000 domestic anglers in the country. The sector contributes €836 million to the Irish economy and supports over 11,000 jobs, often in rural and peripheral communities. Effective and sustainable implementation of the NSAD will ensure stability of existing jobs and businesses reliant on angling, and the creation of new jobs as the economic impact of angling grows.

Inland Fisheries Ireland has been awarded funding for the following projects:

Improved access on Sli na Finne, Gweebarra River, Doochary, Co. Donegal. Extension of designated wheelchair accessible path for anglers and trail walkers along the Gweebarra river/ valley. €31,450.00

Facilitate angling on Bothar na Naomh Heritage & Nature Trail

Annaghmacanway Lough, Cloone, Co. Leitrim. Extension of existing nature trail to facilitate access for coarse angling and kayaking along with a number of fishing points plus extension of current walking trail. €113,659.59

Maintenance of Angling Facilities at 'The Meadows' Athlone, Co. Westmeath

Improve existing infrastructure in place to support river bank angling for major international match events. €73,000.00

Accessible Angling at Suck Valley Way West Roscommon

and East Galway adjacent to Donamon and Kilconnell

Provide a new match angling stretch to provide a further space for international competitions close to the current wheelchair facility. €89,230.00

Development at Lough Nanannagh Knock Road, Claremorris, Co. Mayo

To develop Lough Nanannagh as a Stocked Trout Fishery aimed at providing an ideal location for young people and novice anglers to try the pursuit. A recreation hub will be included incorporating an accessible walk around the lake and upgrade of building to include canteen and toilet facilities. €85,346.90

Improve access at Curry Grange Lake Edgeworthstown Road, Ballinalee, Co. Longford

Provision of a boat jetty to improve access and provision of fencing to allow access to the lakeshore for anglers while also protecting the land and livestock. €29,100.00

Upgrade of facilities at The Mudflats Elphin Road, Carrick On Shannon, Co. Roscommon

Upgrade of existing mudflats angling location to include provision of floating fish stands for angling, upgrade of facilities including toilets, roadway, carpark areas, signage and fencing. €103,100.00

River Bank restoration to a tributary of the Suir River/Graveyard Wall at Newcastle, Co. Tipperary

Restoration of a stone wall that is adjacent to a loop walk along a tributary of the River Suir and is currently in danger of collapse into the river. €12,000.00

Public consultation period on freshwater trout production extended

Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) has announced the extension of its public consultation on freshwater trout production to facilitate the fullest possible consideration by the Board of IFI of the views of stakeholders.

The Board of IFI recognises the depth of stakeholders' viewpoints on this issue and wants to allow for their complete consideration and comprehensive participation in the process. The consultation period, which was originally due to close on 19 August, has now been extended until 19 September.

Stakeholders are encouraged to make a submission through the consultation process, the findings of which will be comprehensively reviewed and considered by IFI, and a report made to Minister Kyne's Department, before any further steps are taken. There will be no disruption to the supply of fish during this process.

Information on the consultation is available at <http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/Public-Consultation/fish-farm-consultation.html> or from any IFI office. Submissions should be made in writing on or before 5pm on 19th of September 2016 to the following address: Fish Farm Consultation, Inland Fisheries Ireland, 3044 Lake Drive, Citywest Business Campus, Dublin D24 Y265, Ireland, or in electronic form to fishfarmconsultation@fisheriesireland.ie

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Sligo School takes first place at National 'Something Fishy' Competition 2016

Scoil Chroí Naofa of Bunninadden, Sligo has been named the national winners of Inland Fisheries Ireland's 'Something Fishy' 2016 competition. The students from the senior class in the school were awarded the prize at an event in the Clarion Hotel, Sligo today. The 'Something Fishy' programme is an educational initiative of Inland Fisheries Ireland, in partnership with Blackrock Education Centre, which allows students to learn about fish and the environment in a local context.

The 2016 'Something Fishy' programme saw 3,776 children from across the country taking part in 118 schools and 11 education centres nationwide. Students were invited to submit project entries into the competition with this year's entries addressing the theme 'Focus on Learning.'

The winning group of 24 students from Bunninadden, Sligo wrote, edited and produced a digital and artistic photo story during the previous school term along with their teacher Mr Adrian Ormsby. They were commended for their impressive animation video of the life cycle of the salmon. The students received the National 'Something Fishy' Award and a €700 prize for the class.



Students of Scoil Chroí Naofa, Bunninadden with their teacher Mr Adrian Ormsby, after they were announced national winners of Inland Fisheries Ireland's 'Something Fishy' 2016 competition.

As part of the educational programme, Inland Fisheries Ireland's Fisheries Officers visit schools and provide classroom based assistance with a full range of resources for teachers and children also available on the 'Something Fishy' website (www.somethingfishy.ie). Together, they explore the themes of fish, habitats, angling, water environment and the protection and conservation of Ireland's rivers and lakes. Aside from school based learning, Fisheries Officers take students into the field to give them some practical experience of their work.

BRITISH SHOOTING SHOW

The eagerly anticipated British Shooting Show makes a welcome return to Stoneleigh Park Exhibition Centre, Warwickshire on the 10th, 11th & 12th February 2017.

For three full days, the might of the shooting industry come together to form Europe's largest public shooting and retail show, a 'Global gunroom' showcasing thousands of shooting related products for all shooting disciplines, where visitors can see current and new product ranges from all the leading brands and speak directly with the manufacturers.

Now in its ninth successful year, the British Shooting Show is regarded by many as the unmissable event on the shooting calendar. The entire show takes place within a heated indoor exhibition area of 450,000 square feet with over 350 exhibitor trade stands, brimming with thousands of guns, rifles, airguns, optics and shooting related products.

For 2017 the Gamekeeping Hall has been sponsored by the National Gamekeepers Organisation (NGO) and supported by Countryman's Weekly. The hall will feature more quality equipment and related services than a gamekeeper

could shake a stick at! The Arena is located nearby with a continuous programme of displays including gun-dog training, wildfowling, trapping and game cooking.

Apart from delivering the shooting industry's largest public retail platform, the show has a myriad of attractions to interest visitors including air rifle ranges, night vision ranges, historic arms collections, shooting simulators, working demonstrations from master craftsmen, hand engravers, gunsmiths and much more.

Visit the British Shooting Show and see everything the shooting industry has to offer in the warm surroundings of Stoneleigh Park and in the company of experts, enthusiasts, professionals and friends.

For more information and to order discounted tickets visit the British Shooting Show website www.shootingshow.co.uk



The British Shooting Show - Europe's largest public shooting and retail show.

RINGED PORTUGUESE SCAUP BAGGED AT LOUGH NEAGH

John Warrener Wray of Shooting NI was kind enough to forward details of a ringed duck bagged recently by Brian Loughran.

The Scaup had certainly travelled a considerable distance — all the way from Portugal in fact — as can be seen from the report which Brian received. Well done Brian and many thanks to you and John for sending us the information.

CEMFA - Central Nacional de Anillagem
Portuguese Bird Ringing Center
Av. Comendador da Grande Guerra, 1
2890-015 Alcabidega

Brian Loughran

6221

Spec: 55-10-2078
Ref: -05N-01011

Small Bites

Report concerning a control/recovery of a ringed bird

We are grateful for your report concerning the ringed bird. You will find more information about the bird in the table.

Ringed data for POL LV1538

Ring number	POL LV1538	Wing	227 mm
Species	Aythya Aythya (Aythya aythya)	Weight	741 g
Age/sex	1 yr (1) Male (M)		
Ringing date	20.12.2016	Time	—
Ringing locality	Reserva Nat. do S. Joao (Portugal, Aveiro, f)		
Coordinates	41°41'27N, 10°58'34W		Somebody in a circle with radius 50m
Status	Unknown or unrecorded (U)		
Catching method	Unknown (Z)		
Ringer/group	Rodrigues, David		
Comments			

Recovery data for POL LV1538

Species	Aythya Aythya (Aythya aythya)
Age/sex	2 yr (2) Male (M)
Recovery date	10.03.2017
Time	—
Location	—

Details were sent from the ringing site in Portugal.



The ringed Scaup shot on Lough Neagh.

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THE GREAT GAME FAIRS LIFETIME COMMITMENT AWARDS 2016

Great Game Fair of Ireland Lifetime Commitment Awards are presented to individuals and groups for their expertise, enthusiasm and frankly 'for jobs well done,' sometimes during a professional career, or as voluntary work, which reaps significant benefits for countrysports.

Often their activities are carried out well away from the public's gaze and that is why we would like to bring you some 'snapshots' from the Award Presentations and a brief description of their tireless work.

We congratulate them, each and every one, and know that their passion for what they do will continue apace.

SHOWCASING FERRETS IMPROVES PUBLIC PERCEPTION

The passion which two Newtownabbey men have demonstrated for ferrets has earned them an accolade from The Great Game Fairs of Ireland. Graham Fyffe and Darren Moore from Newtownabbey have brought the beauty and charm of this occasionally maligned mammal to positive public attention and have showcased ferrets to audiences at successive Irish Game Fairs.

Albert Titterington, Director of The Great Game Fairs of Ireland, said: "Any negativity about ferrets is quickly dispelled when Graham and Darren bring their animals to our Game Fairs. From encouraging small children to interact with ferrets to staging ferret racing and working ferret demonstrations, this pair tirelessly work to put ferrets centre stage ... and all with a lively sense of fun and great good humour. This Award recognises

their amazing skills in animal handling and their outstanding commitment to ferret welfare, and their contribution to country sports and heritage."

ANGLING AND LOCAL FISH PROTECTION

Paul Smith's lifetime passion for angling and his work to protect local fish stocks was acknowledged, notably as a determined and highly effective campaigner for angling conservation as an 'energetic member of the No Salmon Netting organisation, opposing salmon netting in Irish waters.'

"A superb ambassador for angling, Paul has also done sterling work to introduce the sport of angling to increasing numbers of young people. The innovative NSN Put & Take Lake at the Game Fair and Fine Food Festival at Shanes Castle has, in particular, introduced a huge number of children and young people to the sport and many of those who had their first experience of

fishing there will, I am sure, continue to enjoy the sport and, in doing so, they will also learn to appreciate our wonderful natural environment," said Albert Titterington.

TWO OTHER MEMBERS OF NSN WERE SIMILARLY HONOURED

North Belfast man Bobby Bryans' lifetime passion for angling and his determination to protect local fish stocks have earned him an accolade from The Great Game Fairs of Ireland. Also receiving recognition was well known angler and conservationist Willie Darragh.

These long-time champion of angling conservation were praised by Albert Titterington who paid tribute to their quiet determination and unwavering support for the No Salmon Netting organisation, opposing salmon netting in Irish waters and for their work in promoting angling to the young at the Shanes Castle Fair.



Graham Fyffe (left) and Darren Moore (right) are pictured receiving their awards from Paul Pringle, NI Editor of Irish Country Sports & Country Life magazine and web portal.



Paul Smith is pictured (left) receiving his award from Paul Pringle, NI Editor of Irish Country Sports & Country Life magazine and web portal.



Bobby Bryans is pictured (right) receiving his award from Paul Pringle.



Willie Darragh receives his Award at the Irish Fly Fair from Game Fair Director Irene Titterington. Also in the photograph is Noel Carr, FISSTA

GUNSMITHS ON TARGET FOR COUNTRY SPORTS

Ballycarry gunsmith, Derek Beattie, a long-time champion of the sport of shooting was praised by Albert Titterington for his considerable expertise and his willingness to share his knowledge with others. His campaigning work on behalf of both the gun trade and shooters through his work as secretary of the NI Firearms Dealers Association was also singled out as an outstanding contribution to country sports.

Vaughan Harkness, owner of Country Sports & Tackle was another top award recipient whose long-standing championing and commitment to country sports was acknowledged as was his influential role as Honorary Chairman of the Northern Ireland Firearms Dealers and Shooters Association.



Derek Beattie is pictured (left) receiving his award from Paul Pringle,

Albert Titterington said: "Their expertise and knowledge, combined with their love of the sport, make them superb ambassadors for shooting. We are delighted to recognise their outstanding contribution to the sporting community at a local, regional and national level especially as their work for the Association was done in an entirely voluntary capacity."



Vaughan Harkness is pictured (centre) receiving his award from Paul Pringle and enjoying the congratulations of the Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey, Councillor John Scott.

TOPS IN GUNDOG TRAINING, BREEDING AND COMPETITION

The passion which Louis Rice has demonstrated for breeding, training and trialling gundogs was highlighted by Albert Titterington. Louis' sporting career has seen compete successfully across Great Britain and Ireland carrying off the coveted British Championship.

Albert said: "The understanding and skill which Louis brings to training would be astonishing in any circumstances, but it is all the more amazing because of the relatively short time he has been associated with this aspect of country sports. Today he has one of the most successful kennels in the country and is also a much-appreciated stalwart behind the scenes at our show, helping to shape a gundog programme which grows in popularity year-on-year.



Louis Rice is pictured (left) receiving his award from Paul Pringle.

HONOURS FOR PHOTOGRAPHER AND GUNDOG ENTHUSIASTS

Two local countrymen also receiving recognition were photographer and businessman David Campbell, and gundog enthusiast Tim Crothers.

Tim Crothers has owned and trained gundogs since 1974, breeding and exporting

dogs all over the world. Albert Titterington said of the top international competitor, breeder and judge of Springer Spaniels: "Over the years Tim has really made his mark in his sport, as a respected judge, breeder and competitor he is held in the highest esteem by the sporting fraternity.

David Campbell was the founder of Venture photography, now a global leader in the contemporary photography market and his reputation as a portrait photographer and his success in that genre speak for themselves. He photographed wildlife right around the globe; indeed, on his travels David even managed to become the first European to win the Hemmingway Cup in Cuba - the oldest Big Game Fishing competition in the world. However, this honour is for his contribution in photographing nature rather nearer to home.

Albert Titterington added: "The very first issue of our magazine — then called 'Irish Hunting, Shooting & Fishing' — carried a cover shot by David and many more wonderful and inspiring images have followed over the years. David's wonderful eye for detail and light give his work a superb quality, but it is his innate love of nature which take them to a higher plane. His understanding and love of wildlife are evident in every frame."



Tim Crothers is pictured (right) receiving his award from Paul Pringle



Paul Pringle also presented David Campbell with his award: a cast representation of his much-loved (and much-photographed) Spinone, Max.

IT'S A 'FAMILY AFFAIR' - GAME FAIRS DIASPORA ROOTS ROCKET AFTER BIRR LAUNCH



We launched the idea of a Great Game Fairs Diaspora at the Birr Fair and what a fantastic result!

The idea was to encourage countrysports people from around the world with a family background linked to Ireland - in particular Birr/Co Offaly area — to come along to the Fair and get an extra special 'Great Game Fairs Welcome'

Great Game Fairs Director Albert Titterington explains: "We received 'pump priming' funds from the Taoiseach's Local Engagement Diaspora fund to help create a Diaspora around our events. This enabled us to start building links amongst countrysports enthusiasts of Irish extraction throughout the world.

"Apart from the Game Fairs held in Antrim and Offaly which attract thousands of people to their annual events, the Great Game Fairs of Ireland brand also includes Irish Countrysports and Country Life magazine in both hard copy and online versions, with around 80,000 readers per issue. And of course we work with virtually all the major field sports organisations and associations in Ireland all with their own international links.

"We also interact worldwide through international competitions, Social Media and our other web-based activities. This puts us in a unique position to reach out on a global basis and create Irish forums whose common interest is

the countryside or countrysports."

And at the 2016 Birr Fair we made a great start with great benefits for the local area as accommodation was 'booked out' to a 40Km radius of the event."

We had 'Diaspora' folk from as far away as Australia and America collect their special FREE tickets and stop by the busy Irish Country Sports & Country Life stand to say hello. And apart from our international friends, we had some great folk from just 'across the pond,' who were excited to take in all the fun of a really 'Great' Game Fair during their Irish holiday — and receive Great Game Fair mementos and hospitality into the bargain.

Launched at Birr, it now also swings into action for the Fair at Shanes Castle - so any ex-pat from the Antrim area (especially anyone with an O'Neill family background) or the Irish Midlands area - WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Waiting for you are free tickets to the Fairs, special hospitality, mementos of your visit and more!

We are so pleased with how things are going that we intend to set aside a special Pavilion Wing at both fairs for "Diaspora Guests," somewhere to meet our team, members of your far-flung families and other Diaspora guests.

We will also have a VERY SPECIAL Game Fair gift for you (hint: it might just take pride of place on your wall) but more details of that in due course.

All the major countrysports bodies are behind us on our Diaspora, along with input from various government bodies.

The Great Game Fairs team have always been part of what many see as countrysports 'family.' Now we are spreading our wings worldwide to share our very special 'family' welcome for ex-pats with roots in Antrim or Birr.

So, if you are planning to come 'home' to Ireland next summer — why not take in one of our Fairs as well!

There's an extra special Great Game Fairs welcome for you and yours at our events!

You can find out more by contacting Albert Titterington E: irishgamefair@btinternet.com or call 028 (048 from ROI) 44839167 /44615416



Carol Hanson (right) popped in with her family to see our editor Paul Pringle and his wife Jill on the magazine stand at Birr. And there was a delightful surprise for us when she produced specially brewed local beer as presents for the Great Game Fairs Team. Thanks again Carol!

The Bettie Town Glen Prosen Challenge

Mrs Bettie Town was one of the best known personalities on the Pointer and Setter Field Trial circuit for well over fifty years. On 13th August 2016 four teams of bird dogs gathered at the glorious Glen Prosen Estate near Kirriemuir in order to celebrate the life of Bettie Town in the way that she would most have enjoyed: a day's grouse shooting over dogs.

English setters were her speciality though her first field trial award, back in 1949 was with a pointer, Eilian Boss. She worked for many years for Captain Parlour, famed for his Sharnberry English setters and was a good shot as well as an excellent trainer and handler of setters and pointers. She played a very full role in various clubs and societies including being President of the English Setter Club, President of the Yorkshire Gundog Club, Vice-President of the IGL Pointer and Setter Society a member of the Kennel Club for nearly forty years and the first lady to serve on the Kennel Club Field Trials sub-committee. Mrs Town died in 2013 aged 89 just eleven years after winning her last field trial award.

This was not just a shooting day though for there was to be an element of competition. The four teams consisted of pointers, English, Gordon and Irish setters and the aim of the day was to be a competition between the four breeds. Normal field trial rules did not apply, though all the runners were drawn from the ranks of field triallers. There were six dogs on each team, one of which was designated as a 'down-wind' dog. The down-wind dogs would run last and



The Pointer team were Jon Kean, Carol Brown, Richard MacNicol, Linda Westron, Steve Lound and Elisbet Thorin.

singly while the other five would each run in a brace with a dog from one of the other breeds. There would be no eliminating faults and each brace would run for fifteen minutes. If fifteen minutes doesn't sound very long, in practice most dogs were down for considerably longer as the Judges' watches stopped when shot birds were being picked or the dogs and handlers were coming back to the centre of the beat.

Those Judges were Colin Organ and Mrs Town's daughter Fiona Kirk who had taken over from Wilson Young after

Wilson had some recent health problems. Our host — and a most generous host — was Robin Batchelor who was also shooting, along with John Billett Snr., John Billett Jnr., and James Shelmerdine. Headkeeper Bruce Cooper was Steward of the Beat and chief picker-up ably assisted in this by Greg Sinclair. The team captains were Richard MacNicol (Pointers), Dominic Goutorbe (English setters), Sara Chichester (Gordon setters) and Steve Robinson (Irish setters) and among the runners were the winners of the last two Champion Stakes: Gerry Devine with Bill Connolly's English setter Ballyellen Cara and Davy O'Neill's Irish setter Glynlark Aramis.

We started the day coffee at Glen Prosen Lodge where the details of the Challenge were explained to the runners and spectators and introductions made by Chief Steward David Hall then made a very long climb up the hill to where the Guns were waiting for the action to begin.



Dominic Goutorbe's English setter Upperwood Clover working out a point.

A nice covey well back down the hill and then a right and left

The grouse have done well on Glen Prosen this year and there were plenty of birds for a day over dogs, but not so many that the dogs did not have to get out and work in order to find their coveys. The first point went to Gerry Devine with his English setter Gortinreagh Eppie: a nice covey well back down the hill we had just climbed which yielded a brace of birds for John Billett Snr. and Jnr. After the birds were picked Gerry and Maddy Raynor with her Gordon setter Ensay Selkie were cast off again and Eppie had a second find from which James Shelmerdine took a right and left.

At the briefing Colin Organ had made it clear that it was the responsibility of the handlers to ensure that the Guns had the best chance of shooting their grouse when a dog pointed. For those handlers who regularly work their dogs on the moors for shooting parties this is almost second nature and it was noticeable that Dom Goutorbe, in particular, was always conscious of exactly where the Guns were when his dogs came on to point. One or two of the other handlers seemed to be more in Field Trial mode being primarily concerned with their dog and what it was doing rather than whether the Guns were aware and on their way when a dog pointed. Since there were marks to be gained for 'Handlers instructing the Guns' this was potentially a match-winning part of the overall performance.

The main marks were, of course, for the dog work: a maximum of 20 points for Ground Treatment, 15 for Game Handling and 10 for Overall Performance plus 5 for Gun Instructing and a possible bonus of 10 points for Outstanding Work. The Judges were allowed a fair bit of discretion in their handling of the day and could cut a run short if they felt a dog's work was not up to the standard that the Guns might reasonably expect, or extend a dog's run if it was working well but had not had the chance of a point. In fact, the day ran smoothly and amicably with regular finds by the dogs and some good shooting by the Guns.



The victorious English setter team were Gerry Devine, Dominic Goutorbe and Meryl Asbury.

The ground at Glen Prosen where the event was run was not overly steep but it was quite challenging in places, particularly where the dogs were running up and down the sides of the glen. A couple of dogs ran out of steam before their fifteen minutes under the Judges was completed and, after a gentle hint from the Judges were picked up early, but the majority of the runners coped with ease whatever the steepness of the hill or the depth of the heather.

Some of the coveys sat tightly as would be expected on a warm day this early in the season but odd birds were running and making life hard for Guns and dogs alike. Dom Goutorbe's English setter Upperwood Hera had a very long rode in on a pair of old birds that ran and ran before finally getting up out of shot, then found a covey that stayed tucked down in the heather until forced to fly by

the close presence of the dog. That's grouse shooting and the very fact that you never know how these truly wild birds will react is part of the fascination of the sport.

We saw several coveys of black grouse

Gerry Devine with Champion Stake winner Bill Connolly's Ballyellen Cara and Elisbet Thorin with pointer Vastanans Wee Scunner both found a covey of blackgame with the pointer handling the birds rather the better of the two. We saw several coveys of black grouse over the course of the day, though this first lot were a late brood and the chicks were still quite small which may have made things a little difficult for the dogs. The morning was well advanced by now and it was a relief to see the lunch hut away down the slope in front of us.



Elisbet Thorin's Vastanans Wee Scunner on point.

Lunch was enlivened by the appearance of three hill ponies bringing supplies out for the Guns and competitors and taking the grouse back in wicker panniers. The teams were gathered up for photographs once lunch was over, then we headed out again with two more brace plus the four downwind dogs to see to complete the day.

There had been a tendency for some of the grouse to run rather than sit during the morning, but the afternoon birds seemed to have decided en masse that running was the way to go. Richard MacNicol and Davy O'Neill both had several points where the grouse were twisting and turning unseen through the heather and eventually rising well in front of the dog and the Guns. The same thing happened when Dom Goutorbe and Sara Chichester took the field for the last brace of the day and as a result it was getting quite late by the time the four down-wind dogs were called for their run.

There are times when running downwind can be a positive advantage, despite the danger of birds being flushed. With the dog pointing back towards the Guns and handler the grouse are squeezed between two forms of danger and will sometimes sit long enough for the Guns to get in range when working a conventional up-wind beat simply allows them to run off ahead of the pointing dog.

The last grouse was shot after a point from Steve's Irish setter Coldcoats Rapid Meg

So it proved as Meryl Asbury, Maddy Raynor, Jon Kean and finally Steve Robinson each took their turn and the day ended with the last grouse being shot after a point from Steve's Irish setter Coldcoats Rapid Meg. We were by now handily near the hill track where the vehicles were ready to take us back to the lodge where Robin Batchelor had arranged a barbecue for Guns, competitors, Judges and spectators alike.

Once the Judges marks were totted up the results were announced with the English setter team taking first place: a particularly appropriate result given Mrs



Maddy Raynor and Sara Chichester ran all six Gordon setters between them.

Town's lifelong association with the breed. The Irish setter team came second followed by the Pointers and finally the Gordon setters. The Guns had picked their favourite dog from each breed with the top English setter being Dom Goutorbe's Upperwood Hera, top Gordon setter Sara Chichester's Whitepaw of Gawcott, top Irish setter Steve Robinson's Coldcoats Rapid Meg and the top Pointer Steve Lound's Frosted Elfin of Fleetstalk who was also the Keepers' Choice of best dog on the day. Judges Colin Organ and Fiona Kirk had picked Dom Goutorbe's English setter Upperwood Hera as their Top Dog and finally the best down-wind dog was Jon Kean's pointer Fearn Questron. The prizes were presented to the winners by Elisabeth Kallevig from Norway and Jimmy Dalton from Ireland.

This was a super day's sport for

everyone fortunate enough to be there with the Guns having some goodshooting and the spectators getting a great view of every moment. The English Setter Club, and particularly Dominic Gourtorbe and Fiona Kirk had put a tremendous amount of work into organizing the day and everything ran faultlessly from start to finish. Host Robin Batchelor, Headkeeper Bruce Cooper and the rest of the estate staff went out of their way to make this a special day and one that Bettie Town undoubtedly would have enjoyed enormously. The event was sponsored by The Gift of Grouse, the Angus Glens Moorland Group, the Countryside Alliance and the Gamekeepers Welfare Trust for whom over £500 was raised in a collection at the barbecue. It was a long drive home for me but I understand that the celebrations went on far into the night.



Irish setters were represented by Davy O'Neill, Colin Forde, Steve Robinson, Brian Morris and Mark Adams.



Casting off: Mark Adams and Irish setter Ballydavid Spitfire.



Carol Brown's pointer Ardcinis Emerald of Crahan racing through burnt heather.



Gerry Devine's English setter Ballyellen Cody running through burnt heather.



Maddy Raynor working her Gordon setter Ensay Selkie.



Colin Forde's Irish setter Bownard Cherry Cherry on the move.



Steve Lound takes a moment to relax with Keepers' Choice pointer Frosted Elfin of Fleetstalk.



The Guns were John Billett Jnr, John Billett Snr, Robin Batchelor and James Shelmerdine.



The Judges were Colin Organ and Fiona Kirk.



For working and active dogs

A black dog, possibly a Labrador Retriever, is standing in a grassy field. In the foreground, there is a branch with small red and yellow flowers, likely a rose. The background is a soft-focus landscape with trees and a blue sky.

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The 91st Irish Red Setter Derby

One of the oldest, if not oldest clubs in Ireland, the Irish Red Setter Club, founded in 1882, held the 91st running of the Irish Puppy Derby.

The Derby rates second only to the championship in many people's eyes and it is definitely up there in terms of importance along with the Grand All-Aged Stake for Irish setters and the Open International Stake also on grouse which is always held the day following the Derby. Part of the attraction of the Derby Stake is that it is a window into the new crop of talent and is unique in that a dog can only run in it once.

This year it was back to one of its ancestral homes in Kilchreest, county Galway, by kind permission of the local gun club and landowners. The judges were the active renowned English setter men Christy Davitt of Blackstairs kennels and Kieran Walsh of Blackmoor kennels. Both men have produced outstanding dogs over the years with Christy making his name with FTCh Loggorman Sorcerer and latterly with the outstanding FTCh

Blackstairs Spice. Kieran Walsh made his name with the excellent FTCh Capparoe Tintreach but will forever be associated with the legendary FTCh Geronimo, probably the most outstanding English setter of his time.

Eighteen pups went to post after the draw in the picturesque village over Loughrea, in the shadow of Roxburgh house which also provided the name to the hill we would trial on. The morning was warm, with some heavy downpours making it less than ideal conditions for either the pups or for grouse who would likely sit up on the heather as they do in rain. Joe Tannion, a keen trialler and a local man was steward of the beat for the day. The crowd dispersed at the draw made by Irish red setter club secretary Revd. Seamus O'Neill, a double Derby winner himself. It was good to see new faces in the competitor line up. There is

a lot of excitement annually with the Derby as the potential of the next generation of dogs is demonstrated. Jack Nash, the famous red setter promoter said once he preferred the Derby to any other stake. In our calendar it is run the week before the Irish Championship stake with the winner, if receiving an excellent award, getting access to this blue riband event.

The terrain is difficult but never has the hill been in such excellent condition. The first brace were Declan O'Rourke's red setter dog Malstabodarna Locke and Billy Grace's Capparoe English setter dog. There was good groundwork with the English setter showing excellent speed. Next brace was Pat Reape's red setter bitch Lisduvoge Lilly and Pdraig Kiely's Gordon setter bitch Birchvalley Rusty tipped who showed themselves as an excellent brace of dogs.

Showing plenty of appetite for the elevated ground

The red setter is a stylish tall dog with the characteristic high loins and deep chest of the Lisduvoge line blessed with tremendous athleticism. The Gordon's ground work was perfect and is a fast and stylish dog. Though there was some scent on the run, it didn't detract from the overall performance. Third brace was Pat Reape's red setter bitch Ballinahemmy Red who was one of three pups from the same litter competing. The Ballinahemmy line is Alan Bartley's and this prefix should become well known if the quality of this litter are representative. Pat Reape's Ballinahemmy Mike won the Derby in 2015. Vincent Flannelly's Irish red &



2016 Puppy Derby Judges Christy Davitt and Kieran Walsh.



The competitors - Aisling Reape, Pat Reape, Anthony Mulhall, Hugh Brady, Joe Tannion, Vincent Flannelly, Declan O'Rourke, David Bell, Eric Lynch, Billy Grace, Frank Sweeney, Revd. Seamus O'Neill (Club Secretary), Kieran Walsh, Christy Davitt, Mandy Brennan, Ray Monroe, Padraig Kiely.



Winner of 2016 Derby Stake was Ballydavid Gaelforce of the Kingdom.

white setter dog Craigrua Indie made up this brace. Both dogs went well showing a lot of promise. The fourth brace were both English setters with Mandy Brennan's Italian import dog Chieftain showing plenty of appetite for the elevated ground.

Frank Sweeney's tall, rangy bitch Lefanta Louise did some immaculate groundwork. Both were pleasing on the eye and showed great range. The standard was incredible for a puppy stake. Recently the age for entry was increased to all pups less than 2 years at the date of the Derby, which may have impacted the quality.

Fifth brace was Joan McGillicuddy's Irish setter bitch Ballydavid Gaelforce of the Kingdom with Eric Lynch's Irish setter bitch Gardenfield Sheilin. The ground was split with banks but both dogs showed drive in their seek for game. The judges were generous with their time and indeed decided to give the brace additional time on less broken ground. Both dogs showed range and

intensity in the search. Gaelforce had a find on a covey with a good workout and a good clean out of the ground that held two further birds.

The sixth brace was David Bells red setter dog Sheenmel Dream with Padraig Kiely's red setter dog Ballinahemmy Junior. Junior is a tall, beautifully made dog, he showed enormous turn of pace and width of his search. The ground was particularly arduous for this brace, showing heavy vegetation and significant elevation. Both dogs did not shirk these obstacles and performed very well. The seventh brace was Hugh Brady's bitch Malstabodarna Idun of Ballydavid with Padraig Kiely's red setter bitch Ballinahemmy Rose. Rose is an extremely impressive bitch who performed better in every round. A dog with an undoubted future. Both dogs enjoyed a good run.

The penultimate brace was Ray Monroe's red & white setter Granaghburn Nebraska and Johnny

Geoghegan's Lefanta Lemon. Ray Monroe has enjoyed enormous success with his dogs FTCh's Craigrua Rampant and Rosie Jim and this is another dog who will deliver this success. It was great to see the famous English setter kennel Lefanta back on a field trial programme. Johnny's dog was handled by Frank Sweeney but hopefully we will see the man himself competing soon. Johnny Geoghegan has been the most successful English setter man in the history of the sport in Ireland and through his breeding and especially his import of Storkesars G'Snorre has revolutionised the English setter breed as a hunting dog. It would be fair to say he is the modern Percy Llewellyn.

The final brace before lunch was Declan O'Rourke's Ballydavid Thunder with Anthony Mulhall's pointer bitch Gardenfield Riva. Some grouse had lifted ahead of the dogs and the scent proved a distraction for one of the pups. Riva had excelled the previous weekend in an open stake getting a second excellent award. Indeed two of these Derby pups had second excellent awards, the other being the Irish setter Ballydavid Gaelforce.

The second run

The second round was reduced to six and a half brace. First out was Pat Reape's Lisduvoge Lilly, who is a daughter of his double Irish Championship winner FTCh Lisduvoge Aileen, with Hugh Brady's Malstabodarna Idun of Ballydavid. Both dogs acquitted themselves well and were unlucky as birds had risen before the cast-off.

The second brace was Joan McGillicuddy's Gaelforce and Padraig Kiely's Ballinahemmy Rose. This was an extremely exciting brace, where both pups seemed to accelerate and run very wide in their quest while keeping a flat pattern. Billy Grace English setter and Anthony Mulhall's pointer made up the next brace which performed without incident. Mandy Brennan and Eric Lynch were fourth brace and had a cracking run. Padraig Kiely's Gordon



Joan McGillicuddy and Ethan being presented with the James MacNeill trophy by Eric Lynch in Kilchreest.

setter and Frank Sweeney's Lefanta Louise were performing well until possibly deer scent thwarted one of the pups efforts.

The last dog making up the second round was Pdraig Kiely's rangy dog Ballinahemmy Junior and Mandy Brennan's Chieftain, whose run was cut short earlier and was invited to make up the brace. Again both dogs went well with possibly the English setter suffering from his previous exertions. For the second round the weather had deteriorated noticeably and was not congenial to either man or beast. The fog rolled in and with it intense wet weather with no little breeze.

The judges are fit and definitely enthusiastic and two further brace were requested for an extension to the second round. First up was Hugh Brady's red setter bitch Malstabodarna Idun of Ballydavid with Pdraig Kiely's Ballinahemmy Rose. Both dogs at this stage were warmed to the task and on severe inclines and rocky drops, they showed great determination and pattern in trying conditions while it was apparent either dog would take any opportunity presented.

The next brace was Pat Reape's Lisduvoge Lilly and Anthony Mulhall's Gardenfield Riva. Both dogs quested using the breeze, however one of the pups got disoriented in the foggy weather. There was a further extension to the second round of just one brace,

the aforementioned Idun of Ballydavid and Ballinahemmy Rose. They covered a wide beat, respectful of each other combining to produce a mature performance however there was no game to avail.

In a sodden presentation Joan McGillicuddy's Gaelforce was declared the winner with an excellent award. The judges noted the style and drive of the pup and in particular the quality of the find on the grouse. Joan also received the Moanruad Gin trophy for most stylish red setter. They also highlighted Pdraig Kiely's Ballinahemmy Rose as an enormous talent and one to watch for the future. Pat Reape's Lisduvoge Lilly also drew great praise as did Hugh Brady's Malstabodarna Idun of Ballydavid. Mandy Brennan's training and handling was also positively commented on. In general the judges were hugely impressed at the high standard of the stake.

The highest standard seen at the top level

Vice President of the Irish Red Setter club, Eric Lynch, himself twice a winner of this stake with a diminutive English setter bitch FTCh Briar Rose and an Irish setter Bright Dawn spoke eloquently as always as Gaeilge thanking the Kilchreest Gun Club, specifically Joe Tannion as Chief Steward and the judges who walked endlessly all day. As a veteran of many

Derby stakes, he spoke of the standard as: "a revelation and the highest he had seen in his years competing at the top level."

Of interest, the Irish Red Setter club as one of the most prestigious clubs in the land has undoubtedly the finest trophies. One of the club's trademarks is the Marquis of Waterford trophy, a unique tall Armada jug made of Irish silver, handcrafted dating back to the 1800s. The Derby trophy is of similar ilk and size however of interest is that it is engraved presented by James MacNeill, second Governor General of the Irish Free State. James MacNeill was brother to Eoin MacNeill, the nationalist leader who cancelled the Easter Rising, and served in this role from 1928 to 1932. King George V appointed James as Governor-General and first High Commissioner to London. Born in Glenarm, county Antrim he also served as a high-ranking member of the Indian civil service in Calcutta. He also served as a member under Michael Collins, the chairman of the Provisional Government. Collins himself organised the Dublin Irish Blue Terrier show in 1920 which broke from the English kennel club paving the way for the foundation of the Irish Kennel club in 1922.

The club is blessed to be in possession of such historical and significant prizes and unlike the major tennis or golf tournaments, the winner does not just get a photo with these priceless trophies but has the privilege of possessing them for the year. However long this custom will continue remains to be seen.

Special congratulations to Ger Devine who both won the British Derby stake with his own Gortinreagh Tango as well as handled the winner of the British Championship stake in Scotland, FTCh Ballyellen Cara, owned by Bill Connolly. This double win is a pretty unique achievement.

If you would like to join the Irish Red Setter club or receive information about its events contact details can be obtained from the Irish Kennel Club.

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Obituary

Charlie Cullen

(10.2.1936 – 30.9.15)

In 2015, we lost one of the stalwarts of our field sports. My knowledge of Charlie was through pointer and setter field trials. Renowned predominantly as an English setter man he also competed successfully with English pointers and Irish setters. He campaigned enthusiastically in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s in Ireland, Scotland and the north of England. In 1979, he was one of the founders of the English Setter Club of Ireland. He was intensely proud of that club and of its development.

From a farming background in Graddam, Casserlough, Co. Cavan, after the death of his father at a young age, he left school to manage the farm and support his younger siblings. In the 1960s, he spent some years playing GAA in the US and with a depressed Irish economy he worked on the buildings in London. On one of his trips home, he met and later married a school teacher Anne Moynihan in 1971. His interest in Gundogs sparked when he saw a litter of English setters owned by Des Martin and he and Anne thought it would be a good pet for their son Cathal. This pup was to become F.T.Ch Glenowlen Bracken who also won the English Setter Breed Stake in Alston, north of England in 1977.

Sadly Cathal passed away at 13 months and at this time his daughter Muireann was born. The halcyon days were travelling with Jimmy Dalton through all the bye ways of that 1970s, 1980s Ireland. He also campaigned with an English pointer "Bruce" whom he made up to the title of field trial champion. He later won the World Congress Trial with an English setter F.T.Ch Bragan



Charlie Cullen at the Irish Derby in the Curragh in 2013.

Beauty. This was his final champion.

He had a huge interest in blood horses and was a close friend of Richard Burridge, who owned the legendary Desert Orchid. After his participation in trialling ended, he attended a great deal of race meetings when he was not caring for his wife who passed away after a long illness in 2011. In 2013 he was awarded an Irish Country Sports and Country Life magazine Lifetime Achievement Award by Albert Titterington - a tribute he was immensely proud of. He continued to attend a great many country fairs, coursing meetings, race meets and the occasional trial, in particular

Ballitore, with which he had a long association.

He was one of the last of this generation who seemed to have the freedom to follow dogs and complete the entire field trial circuit. The distinctive Cavan accent could accentuate any place name and gave a mystique to various places on the Scottish field trialling circuit such as Amulree, Cawdor and Lochindorb where he had a great affinity. They were golden days.

Charlie was warm, Charlie was uncompromising. May he rest in peace.

Hugh Brady

Obituary

Desmond (Dessie) O'Neile

One of the great characters of field trials, Des O'Neile passed away on 12th October 2015 after an illness borne with enormous stoicism, pragmatism and ultimately acceptance.

Des was renowned for his Glencuan pointers in the UK and Ireland and his very popular blog which recited his recent training sessions and oft trial reports. While the focus was on his own dogs' performance primarily, his outspoken impartiality of the trial reports added colour to the blandness of political correctness.

There is an inherent risk of describing someone's life in words. It is a bit like an artist painting a landscape at a particular point in a day where its mood and therefore replication is affected by the light and subsequent shadow. My knowledge of Des was through field trialling over a number of years but this was just one part of his life. He was also a father, husband and work colleague. However I will limit myself to the field trialling aspect of his life. Overall, his great sportsmanship is my overriding memory of Des. Whether his dogs performed well or badly or

even received a harsh judgement he never quibbled and instead focussed on the future.

I only knew Des more closely when I competed in the north of Ireland and by then his dogs were not of the calibre of previous generations. At my first Irish Championship stake in 1997, I had the honour of been drawn in the second round against his famous pointer FTCh Prince of Darkness, an almost solid black dog, fierce in body, muscle and size. I was very young but to me he resembled the hound of the Baskervilles. I was saved that day by a lot of fog, pools of water and a find on a grouse by my setter so as not to prolong the run. I had seen the Prince on dry ground and he was a sight to behold.

Des was tall, broad and striking with a strong beard and had started his working life in the Northern Bank where he worked for 25 years. He met his wife Eleanor while working there. He also met Will Sloane (Ardoon kennels) who lived close by. Will gave Dessie his first dog, an Irish setter Ardoon Daniel. This setter did not make the grade and Dessie became drawn to

English pointers. He became fascinated by breeding particularly with Danish pointer bloodlines, which he rated as the best. His foundation bitch was Echednei Hendi who was an all-black pointer. He shared his blood with his close friends Shaun McCormack and Tony Kieran, who both competed with this line successfully. Echednei Hendi produced FTCh Prince of Darkness and then FTCh Bold as Brass for Dessie. He used Bold successfully as a sire and this produced his third field trial champion Sugarloaf Bold. He was intensely proud that he bred the sixth generation of his dog going back to the Italian Echednei Hendi. The last line of dogs he produced were from two very famous kennels in Denmark, Oksby and Fugledes. He also received a gift from Charlie Byrne of a pointer bitch Doohatty Forest who between Shaun McCormack and Dessie went on to become an International FTCh. A difficult dog to train by his own account, she was dramatic when she pulled it altogether. Doohatty Forest when bred with Prince of Darkness produced Sugarloaf Bold. In his own

words, his outstanding dog was FTCh Sugarloaf Bold which brought size, pace and game sense into his line.

Dessie's greatest moment in the sport was representing Ireland, in 2000 and again in 2010. In the millennium stake in Balmoral, Ireland won the day beating the other pointer team home nations. He handled Prince of Darkness on that successful day. The team that day was James Dalton, Maurice Getty, Des O'Neile, Eric Lynch and Tony Kieran. The winning prizes were presented by Queen Elizabeth II. To this day, it



Des (centre) judging the Ulster Red Setter trial in 2014 at Murley with Philip Moore and co-judge Ger Devine.

remains a massive achievement. In 2010, in a re-running of the event, Ireland finished second. He was due to represent the UK in the world championship in St. Hubert, Serbia but due to his failing health he was unable to keep this appointment.

Dessie's car registration was BIGXXX and it described the man in stature and character. I met Dessie for the last time in Glennoo when Ned Butler and I went to meet him for training. We went to the local pub afterwards, a quiet, empty country pub that historically used to welcome the contingent of fieldtriallers in those halcyon days. He talked of the old days, bought a round of drinks and said his goodbyes. I knew that it was the last time we would see each other. He knew it too.

Like everyone else I followed his illness; however his recovery was not to be. His writings on his popular blog did not indicate an illness or sentimentality

but hope. He arrived at the Northern Ireland Pointer Club trial about a month before his death, where the club had prepared a video of his life with dogs and field trialling. Indeed many of his own training videos still can be seen on Youtube.

Dessie loved all of his dogs, was objective about their flaws but crucially did not blame them. He organised for his beloved dogs to go to new homes in the US to ensure no burden on his family. Crucially, the day they left his house was the day he died at home. It was also his 39th wedding anniversary to Eleanor. He is survived by his wife and sons Ross and Ryan. The field trial fraternity travelled from all over Ireland and the UK to see Dessie off.

He was a kind, hospitable and entertaining man. His blog evoked fantastic imagery of his beloved Black Mountain. Recently I was browsing Facebook and I saw a link to Youtube

and a pointer being hunted on quail. It turned out to be one of Dessie's dog Toften Chris working brilliantly producing quail to the gun in a prairie. He even retrieved them.

It was melancholic watching the dog being handled by someone else, but knowing Dessie, he would not be sentimental but delighted and would say 'if there was only more game in Ireland!'

*"Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember, with advantages,
What feats he did that day. That shall
our names,*

*Familiar in his mouth as household
words -*

*Dalton the Captain, Getty and O'Neile,
Lynch and Kieran*

*Be in their flowing cups freshly
rememb'ed.*

*This story shall the good man teach his
son."*

From the blog "Glencuan Pointers"

FTCH Shimnavale Excalibur at stud

**Winner of 5 trials and member of
winning UK team at Chatsworth
and Irish CLA team in 2013.**



Hips: 3 & 3 • Elbows: 0
Clear eye certificate • PRA, CNM and EIC clear
For further information contact Richard on
07715 039 956 or rickyjohnst@hotmail
or visit
www.shimnavalegundogs.wordpress.com

AT STUD



FTW:
Waysgreen Apollo

Hips: Single Digit

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Obituary

Richard William (Dick) Heslip

The Irish Countrysports and Country Life team were saddened to hear of the death of their friend Dick Heslip and wish to convey their sincere condolences to his wife, daughter, sons and his many friends in the countrysports world.

Born in Ardaragh, Rathfriland, Co. Down on 6th Dec 1936, Dick joined the RUC on 14th June 1955 and retired 19th June 1982.

Having been reared in the country, he shot from an early age and even then displayed an entrepreneurial streak. With an ample supply of rabbits he used to lamp them at night, and left them at foot of the lane where the game dealer collected them. He was paid 2/6 per rabbit when a box of cartridges was 7/6.

Although he lost the sight in his left eye as a result of an explosion in 1957, he did not allow this to compromise his love of shooting and took up clay pigeon shooting more seriously. He won the Ulster novice DTL in 1958 and went on to represent Ireland at DTL that year and continually until 1972. He then started shooting all other forms of clay pigeon shooting and represented Ulster

at inter provincial level and Ireland at international level at Sporting, Skeet, ABT and Olympic Trench.

Throughout this time he continued pigeon and game shooting. He started picking up at Saintfield and progressed to formal game shooting, where he was a syndicate gun in Crom. He regularly organised trips to shoot in Scotland and in particular at Dunskey Castle. He also accompanied us on two grouse shooting trips to Blair Atholl and Skye and not only shot well but was great company.

On his retirement in 1982, he opened Dromara Shooting Ground, dealing in gun sales, ammunition and gun repairs. He particularly enjoyed fitting guns for clients and had 'try guns' for both S/S and O/U. He was a Senior Qualified CPSA coach in DTL, Sporting and Skeet. He and his wife hosted the magazine's Christmas Turkey Shoot and their hospitality is still remembered fondly by some of our older advertisers.

He was also passionate about fly fishing and latterly he took up photography and attended numerous shoots where he supplied the guns with discs of the activities of the day. He also



developed an interest in horse racing and, apart from the game fairs which he attended virtually every year, we used to bump into him at an occasional Downpatrick meeting.

He died on 14th July 2016 after a short battle with cancer. The funeral was held in the Presbyterian Church, Portadown and burial at Ryans Presbyterian Church, Rathfriland. He is survived by his wife Margaret, daughter Mary and sons William and Christopher.

Albert J Titterington



Dick grouse shooting in Scotland second from right with Edwin Dash, Albert Titterington, Dave McCullough and Dave Fleming.

Hunting Roundup

HANI Show goes from strength to strength

The HANI Show, held in conjunction with Armagh County Agricultural Show at Markethill, again enjoyed excellent weather and, throughout the day, attracted and retained large numbers of spectators.

Judges Tim Easby (Director of Hunting in Great Britain) and Andrew Osborne MFH, Cottesmore, had hounds from eleven packs to consider and were very quickly into their stride.

The South Tyrones served notice that they were to have a good day by taking the first two classes, for unentered doghounds, with Hardy in the singles class while Captain and Casper took the couples class before

the Meath varied things by winning the entered doghound class with Winter15.

In the Old English doghound class the Killultagh Old Rock and Chichester took first place with Dollar15 before the Meath took the open doghound couples class with Ringwood15 and Barker15.

Iveagh's Hamish12, last years' doghound Champion here, took the Stallion Hound class then the HANI member packs class saw the South Tyrones record a 1-2 with Manton13 prevailing over Pageboy15. The doghound Championship then went to the unentered South Tyrone Hardy with Meath Winter15 as Reserve Champion.

After lunch the East Downs took the

unentered bitch class with Pigtail and the Meath took the couples class with Famous and Fairy, continuing this success in the entered bitch class with Mabel13.

In the Old English bitch class the Louth took the honours with Ticket13 before the South Tyrones resumed winning ways in the open couples class with the sisters Pansy and Pastry15.

The prestigious two couples class was won by the Meaths with Mabel13, Golden14 and sisters Passion and Passive14. Meath Mabel13 continued her success by taking the brood bitch class.

The South Tyrones then took the HANI member pack bitch class with Pansy15 to mirror their morning



(Left) Sunnyland whippers-in at the NI Hound Show 2016.



(Right) NI Show - R Walker with Champion Beagle Dog, Armagh & Richhill Layman, and N Liston with Reserve, Sunnyland Islander.



(Left) Mr Kerr's Beagles showing at NI Hound Show 2016.



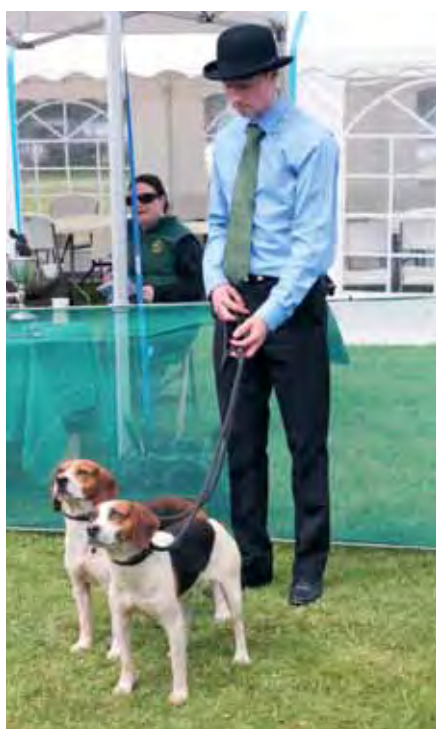
(Right) Beagle Judges Townley Angel & Robert Hutchinson at the NI Hound Show 2016.



Sunnyland's David Rodgers receiving the IMBA Championship trophy from Mrs Elaine Warne watched by Judges Liam Geary & Duncan Warne.



Maryboro Farmers' team at the National Beagle Show 2016.



Goldburn's Mark Nolan with hounds Pagent & Painter at IMBA National Show 2016.

success in the equivalent doghound class. The Champion bitch class saw Meath Mabel13 take the honours with South Tyrone Pansy15 as Reserve Champion.

As a finale the Countryside Alliance Ireland award for Supreme Champion of the Show went to South Tyrone Hardy with Meath Mabel13 named as Reserve Champion.

IMFHA Show proves bigger and better than ever.

The Cosby Family again kindly hosted the National Hound Show at

their Stradbally, Co Laois, Estate where three rings, Foxhound, Harrier and Beagle, were in use side by side.

In the Foxhound ring the doghounds were judged by Nigel Peel MFH (North Cotswold) and Andrew Cook MFH (Dumfriesshire and Stewartry) and in the afternoon the bitches were judged by Edward Foster (former Master of the Wheatland) and, rather uniquely, the niece of one of the doghound judges (Nigel Peel), Mrs William Chanter MFH (Heythrop) who is the former Nessie Lambert.

Show organiser David Lalor MFH (the Laois) and his team have presided over a developing show which now has excellent trade stands providing a good back drop to rings in which some excellent hounds were on show.

In the doghound unentered class Westmeath Whacker put down an early marker by prevailing over Wicklow Panther. In the Old English Class Limerick Packman shaded South Union Bowler. In the unentered open class South Tyrone Hardy won over Wicklow Panther then Hardy and kennelmate Captain took the unentered couples class over Westmeath Whacker and Cobbler. Cork's South Union Hunt took the entered doghound (restricted) class with Casanova15 (surely a future Stallion Hound with that name) who beat the Old English doghound Limerick Sabbath15. The Limericks

had better luck in the couples class with Sabbath and Saxon14 winning over Island Barrister15 and Bowman12.

A strong Stallion Hound class saw Beaufort Raider12 take the honours for the South Tyrones over Ballymacad Samson11 before the doghound Championship underlined the quality on show when they were all in the one place. The unentered Westmeath Whacker took the Championship with Island Barrister15 as Reserve Champion.

After lunch Edward Foster and Nessie Chanter also had some excellent hounds to appraise.

In the unentered restricted class the Westmeaths again won, with Gracie, while the Old English bitch class was decided in favour of Limerick Talent over Waterford Cosy. The couples open class saw Ballymacad Mantra and Marble shade Tipperary Pepper and Poppy with Mantra then taking the unentered bitch Championship with Limerick Talent as Reserve Champion.

Wicklow Paisley12 took the entered bitch restricted class with Tipperary Blossom14 coming second before the Ballymacads again underlined their strength on the distaff side when Ribbon13 and Sappling11 took the entered couples class ahead of Meath Passion14 and Sandwich12.

The Ballymacads continued their

successes when Bonfire14, Libby13, Ribbon13 and Sapplling11 took the two couples class with Meath Mabel13, Passion14, Picnic13 and Sandwich12 in second place.

The East Downs took the brood bitch class with Ringlet14 prevailing over Kildare Daley13 while the Old English brood bitch trophy went to Louth Ticket13 with Waterford Lady13 in second place. In the Bitch Championship the depth of quality was again well in evidence and this strong class saw Wicklow Paisley12 declared Champion with East Down Ringlet14 as Reserve Champion.

This was an excellent show which David Lalor tells me he will strive to keep improving though it is difficult to see how this could be done.

Irish Beagle Shows Summer 2016 (text by Liz Brown and photos by Patricia Gibson)

Northern Ireland Hound Show

It was a great pleasure to see beagle classes being held once again at this year's Northern Ireland Hound Show for the first time in five years. On the last occasion that beagles had been scheduled to be shown, the show had to be cancelled when only two packs entered. This year 4 packs showed, the 3 local ones being joined by Mr Kerr's Beagles, under Paul Kerr and Des Bell, who travelled north from County Kildare to enjoy some practice in the ring in advance of the National Hound Show.

There were some other new faces at the show. The Cavanapole Beagles, based in County Armagh, joined the Irish Masters of Beagles Association in 2013 and it is to their great credit that they are now competing on the flags with success under their joint master Roy Gibson. For the Sunnyland, Lee Beverland, who joined their mastership in 2015, was showing hounds assisted by whippers-in Ally Watt, Naomi Liston, Robert McIver and Daniel Vance, whilst the Armagh & Richhill presented a greater degree of continuity with veteran huntsman, George Walker, once more showing their hounds, assisted by Robert Kelly.

Judges for the beagle classes were Robert Hutchinson, master and huntsman of the Westmeath Beagles, and Townley Angel of the County Louth Foxhounds, a former whipper-in to the County Louth Beagles.

In the doghound classes, the Cavanapole's Osama won the unentered class, with Sunnyland's Islander

Beagle Classes Results

Unentered Dog:	1. Cavanapole Osama 2. Cavanapole Oswald
Entered Dog:	1. Sunnyland Islander 12 2. Armagh & Richhill Sailor N/R 3. Mr Kerr's Pirate 13
Couple of Dogs	1. Armagh & Richhill Layman 10C & Leader 10C 2. Sunnyland Mascot 14 & Midnight 14
Stallion Hound	1. Armagh & Richhill Layman 10C 2. Sunnyland Furlong 10 3. Mr Kerr's Wicklow 09
Champion Dog	1. Armagh & Richhill Layman 10C 2. Sunnyland Islander 12
Unentered Bitch	1. Sunnyland Nectar 2. Sunnyland Nearly 3. Cavanapole Native
Entered Bitch	1. Mr Kerr's Penny 15 2. Sunnyland Gentle 11 3. Mr Kerr's Coco 11
Couple of Bitches	1. Sunnyland Nearly U/E & Nectar U/E 2. Cavanapole Lively 15 & Gallant 14 3. Mr Kerr's Chorus 11 & Clover 11
Brood Bitch	1. Sunnyland Gentle 11 2. Mr Kerr's Chorus 11 3. Cavanapole Hazel 14C
Champion Bitch	1. Mr Kerr's Penny 15 2. Sunnyland Gentle 11
Dog/Bitch & Progeny	1. Sunnyland Gentle 11 with Nearly U/E & Nectar U/E 2. Cavanapole Avril 13C (S/E) with Hopeful 13C & Handful 13C 3. Mr Kerr's Chorus 11 with Placid U/E & Positive U/E
Veteran Hound	1. Sunnyland Gentle 11 2. Armagh & Richhill Layman 10C 3. Sunnyland Furlong 10

taking the entered and Armagh & Richhill winning both the couples (Layman and Leader) and stallion hound class (Layman). It was Armagh & Richhill Layman who won the dog championship from Sunnyland Islander in reserve.

In the bitch classes, Sunnyland were prevented from a clean sweep by Mr Kerr's Penny, who took both the entered class and the championship, with Sunnyland's brood bitch, Gentle, as reserve. In the final class of the day, for veteran hounds, Gentle beat Layman, giving Mr Kerr's the satisfaction of knowing that Penny was the best hound shown on the day, even though there was no formal run-off of

champion dog versus champion bitch.

National Hound Show

Three weeks later a total of 6 packs from the Irish Masters of Beagles Association competed in their National Show at Stradbally, County Laois. Unfortunately a seventh pack which had entered (the Maryboro / Middleton Beagles) were prevented from showing by a family illness. Judging were Brigadier Duncan Warne, master and huntsman of the Severn Vale Beagles, and Mr Liam Geary, joint master of the former Tory Foot Beagles.

Maryboro Farmers' Seamus O'Flynn, ably assisted by his sons Ben

and Liam, continuing a long family tradition, got off to a victorious start with Sentry taking the red rosette in the unentered dog class. Thereafter Sunnyland dogs dominated, taking entered, stallion and couples classes, and their Islander going one step further than at Gosford, to become champion dog.

In the bitch classes there was a wider spread of winners. IMBA President, Jackie O'Connor, of the Woodrock and Blackwater Valley Beagles, who was making a return to the show ring after an interval of several years due to the unavoidable absence of his huntsman, was rewarded with first place in a strong

Results

Unentered Dog 1. Maryboro Farmers' Sentry
2. Woodrock & Blackwater Valley Verdict
3. Cavanapole Osama

Entered Dog 1. Sunnyland Islander 12
2. Sunnyland Zero 07
3. Woodrock & Blackwater Valley Pegeron 14

Stallion Hound 1. Sunnyland Furlong 10
2. Maryboro Farmers' (Chilmark & Clifton Foot) Whitby 13
3. Sunnyland Zero 07

Couple of Dogs 1. Sunnyland Zero 07 & Islander 12
2. Maryboro Farmers' Sampler UE & Sentry UE
3. Sunnyland Mascot 14 & Midnight 14

Dog Hound Ch'ship
1. Sunnyland Islander 12
2. Maryboro Farmers' Sentry UE

Overheight Dog 1. Mr Kerr's Dasher 12
2. Goldburn Hardaway 15
3. Woodrock & Blackwater Valley Viscount

11

Unentered Bitch 1. Woodrock & Blackwater Valley Gaylass
2. Goldburn Pudding
3. Woodrock & Blackwater Valley Vanity

Entered Bitch 1. Mr Kerr's Penny 15
2. Sunnyland Gravity 11
3. Woodrock & Blackwater Valley Veronica 14

Brood Bitch 1. Sunnyland Gentle 11
2. Maryboro Farmers' Frantic 07
3. Woodrock & Blackwater Valley Orchard 14

Couple of Bitches 1. Cavanapole Lively 15C & Gallant 14C
2. Sunnyland Gravity 11 & Instant 12
3. Woodrock & Blackwater Valley
Veronica 14 & Banquet 12

Bitch Ch'ship 1. Mr Kerr's Penny 15
2. Woodrock & Blackwater Valley Gaylass UE

Supreme Ch'ship 1. Sunnyland Islander 12
2. Mr Kerr's Penny 15

Group of Hounds
1. Sunnyland Zero 07, Islander 12 & Instant 12
2. Woodrock & Blackwater Valley Orchard 14, Gaylass U/E & Wicklow U/E
3. Cavanapole Avril 13C (S/E), Hopeful 13C (S/E) & Handful 13C (S/E)

Best Young Handler
1. Liam O'Flynn -Maryboro Farmers'

Victor Ludorum 1. Sunnyland
2. Woodrock & Blackwater Valley
3. Maryboro Farmers'

unentered bitch class. Mr Kerr's Penny (entered) and Sunnyland Gentle (brood bitch) repeated their victories of three weeks previously, and the Cavanapole finished very strongly with Lively and Gallant being victorious in the couples of bitches class. Mr Kerr's Penny was once again champion bitch, but on this occasion was pipped by Sunnyland Islander for the title of supreme champion.

Liam O'Flynn of the Maryboro Farmers' was winner of the trophy for the best young handler, the judges having been very impressed with the calm manner in which he coaxed a reluctant hound to stand on the flags, whilst the Sunnyland were clear winners of the class for most points across the show – a great credit to joint master and huntsman, David Rodgers, who has hunted this pack for the past two seasons, and a fitting conclusion to the year in which Sunnyland celebrated the centenary of their hunt's establishment.

Northern Ireland Masters of Hounds Association presents £1,000 cheque to charity

The Annual Balmoral Show outside Lisburn, Co Antrim, is traditionally closed by the Hunt Chase sponsored by Wilson's Auctions and is always preceded by the presentation of a cheque to a Charity by NIMHA.

This year's recipient charity was the Mitre Trust at Belfast's Musgrave Park Hospital. Their representative, Terry Loughins, was presented with a £1,000 cheque by Craig Caven on behalf of NIMHA.

The presentation for the Best turned out team was deservedly declared to be the East Antrim Black team and the contest then began before a large crowd.

Sixteen teams, from eleven Hunts, embarked on a highly competitive

Hunt Chase with the Fingal Harriers' A team prevailing over the Donegal Harriers' A team, before the Tynan and Armagh accounted for the East Antrim Red team. The three times winners the Killinick Harriers then served early notice of their quality by winning against the Ward Union Staghouounds.

Matters continued apace with the Waterford Foxhounds prevailing over the Laois Foxhounds and the Donegal B team similarly progressing at the expense of the Louths before the Kildares accounted for the Wexford Foxhounds.

The first all Northern Ireland heat saw the Mid Antrims eliminating the Newrys and the second round line up was completed when the East Antrim Black team prevailed over the Fingals B team.

With the carrot of that fourth consecutive final to play for the Killinicks overcame the Waterfords before the Kildares similarly progressed at the expense of the Donegal B team. A "head to head", after a very close run contest between the Fingals and the Tynan and Armagh saw the Fingals advance. The Mid Antrims then edged their East Antrim Black team neighbours to complete the semi final line up.

The Fingals lost out to the Killinicks while, in the second semi final, the Mid Antrims, despite a stupendous effort, lost out to the Kildares.

If the early rounds had been frenetic they now seemed tame compared to the Final which kept the still large crowd entertained.

The excellent Kildare team gave the Killinicks a very good run for their money but the Killinicks proved unstoppable as they recorded their fourth consecutive victory in this competition.

RUAS president Billy Robson OBE then presented the teams with their awards to bring the 2016 Balmoral Show to an end.

IMFHA presentation to Nick McDermott

At the National Hound Show at Stradbally, Co Laois, IMFHA chairman Rupert Macauley MFH presented Nick McDermott with a sculpted silver fox to mark his retirement from involvement with the Show, though he remains an honorary life member of the Association.

Nick, as a young man, hunted the Kildare doghound pack as an amateur due to his great friendship with the late Major MW Beaumont MFH.

In his later years Nick, among other things, acted as announcer at Stradbally and built up an unrivalled knowledge of the history of the marvellous trophies presented there and of those in whose memory they are presented annually.

Nick has been an important figure in Irish hunting for a long number of years and the presentation, which was universally acclaimed, is hugely well deserved for his contribution to the sport over such a lengthy period of time.

Retirement of Steve Collins

Co Down Hounds' huntsman Steve Collins and his wife Jan, who was so supportive during his time in- post, have retired to Northumberland. Steve, who had been in- post since 1997, has been suffering declining health and he retires with everyone's best wishes, both for an improvement in his health and for a long, happy retirement for Jan and himself.

Hunt changes

Louth Foxhounds' whipper-in Ian Donoghue has been appointed huntsman of the County Down Hunt.

He has been succeeded at the Louths by Shane McGillick, who has moved there from the Westmeath Foxhounds.

Around the puppy shows

My first puppy show of the season was that of the **Meath Foxhounds** at their Nugentstown kennels, outside Kells, where Kenny Henry, who hunts the doghounds, brought forward 11 ½ couple of doghounds and 7 couple of bitches for judges Joss Hanbury MFH (the Quorn) and Ryan Carvill, huntsman of the South Tyrone Foxhounds. Interestingly, one litter was of Old English lineage, with a Limerick sire and dam to provide a contrast in this outstanding Modern English pack. After some deliberation Pat Dillon MFH made the following announcements.

Doghounds

1. Radnor Cheshire Rancher12

Picnic13

2. Radar Sibling of Radnor
3. Farrier Farrier11Harmony11

Bitches

1. Fabric Farrier11 Mable13
2. Famous Sibling of Fabric
3. Fairy Sibling of Fabric

After further deliberation the bitch, Fabric, was declared Champion Puppy with the doghound, Radnor, as Reserve.

At the **Westmeath Foxhounds'** puppy show huntsman Niall Mahon produced 11 couple of doghounds and 7 couple of bitches for the consideration of judges Tony Holdsworth (former huntsman the Duke of Beaufort's) and Alan Reilly(huntsman the Louth Foxhounds).

The judges worked their way through this large new entry before Dr David Mortell MFH announced the following results.

Doghounds

1. Whacker Morpeth Raider13
- Whimper12
2. Conman Morpeth Raider13
- Copper11
3. Sinner Morpeth Raider13
- Sickle13

Bitches

1. Gracie Ballymacad Daly13
- Morpeth Grapevine10
2. Griddle Sister of Gracie
 3. Melody Ballymacad Alfie12
- Merry10.

The bitch, Gracie, was then declared

Champion Puppy with the doghound, Whacker, as Reserve Champion.

There had been greater interest than normal in the judging as, on the previous Sunday at the **IMFHA National Show**, Whacker had won the doghound Championship and Gracie had won the unentered bitch class. Needless to say the judges left with their reputations intact!

Tynan and Armagh huntsman Keith McCall produced 2½ couple of doghounds and 3½ couple of bitches from four litters at Seavaghan as we managed to escape the rain for the duration of the event. Judges Peter Dennis (ex master of the Hurworth) and Kevin Donohue (huntsman of the Ballymacad) worked their way through the new entry before passing the following decisions to Brian Dougan MH.

Doghounds

1. Partner Partner12
- Limerick Sensible08
2. Laser Louth Logger11
- Hurworth Larkrise11

3. Pagan Sibling of Partner
- Bitches

1. Language Sibling of Laser
2. Laughter Sibling of Laser
3. Pastry Sibling of Partner

Partner was then declared Champion Puppy with Language as Reserve.

Peter Dennis said that, having been involved with the Hurworth as member, master, Chairman and, now, trustee for 65 years he was delighted to see that three of the litters on show were out of Hurworth bitches but stressed that he did not know that until after the judging was completed!

At Seaforde the **East Down Foxhounds'** new entry was judged by Rupert Macauley MFH (the West Wicklow) and Ian Donoghue, the newly appointed huntsman of the Co Down Hounds. Huntsman Declan Feeney produced 2 couple of doghounds and 4½ couple of bitches and, happily, the day stayed clear of rain until after the judging had been completed. After due deliberation the following placings were announced by James Armstrong.

Doghounds

1. Ranger Linton10 Rascal08
 2. Radar Sibling of Ranger
 3. Daniel West Wicklow Gunner13
- their Dollar11
- Bitches.

1. Piglet Cattistock Ilchester12
- Picture09

2. Pigtail Sibling of Piglet
3. Pillow Sibling of Piglet

The close ties between the neighbouring East Down and North Down Foxhound packs was underlined at the latter's puppy show, at Comber. Former East Down MFH James Armstrong and huntsman Declan Feeney were the judges as Barry Jones brought forward 2 couple of doghounds and 4½ couple of bitches. Close attention was paid to the judging before Raymond Mitchell MFH made the following announcements.

Doghounds

1. Domino Warlock12
- Portman Daydream10
2. Daybreak Sibling of Domino
 3. Hipflask Fitzwilliam (Milton)
- Stilton12 Portman Hatpin14
- Bitches

1. Hayley Sibling of Hipflask
2. Harriet Sibling of Hipflask
3. Solo Warlock12 Sonar11

The bitch, Hayley, was then declared Champion Puppy with the doghound, Domino as Reserve.

Death of Richard Filgate MFH.

Richard Filgate, joint master of the Louth Foxhounds since 1987, has died after a period of ill health. He was 83 years old.

The Filgate family have a very long standing involvement with the Louth Foxhounds and Richard, himself, was very well known in hunting and point to point circles.

Richard, whose wife Susan predeceased him, is survived by his children John, Caroline, Eva, Townley and Alex.

His funeral took place in St Mary's Church of Ireland in Ardee and he was later buried in Charlestown Churchyard.

Every sympathy is extended to the Filgate family in their very sad loss.

New IMFHA Committee Members

The Irish Masters of Foxhounds Association has a new Chairman and a number of new committee members in place for 2016/2017 season.

Chairman is David Lalor, in the Laois mastership since 1992, while Vice Chairman is Lord Waterford, a joint master of the Waterford Foxhounds since 2013 who has been joined on the committee by his joint master Ian Shanahan, in office since 2005. Also on the committee is Joe Dunne, in the Carlow Farmers' mastership since 2005, Pat Mahon, who joined the South Union mastership in 2015 and Tony Gannon, who has been in the North Galway mastership since 1996.

The office bearers who remain in post are Treasurer Martina McGrath, in the Dungarvan Foxhounds mastership since 2009 and Secretary/Administrator Sonia Purcell, while Bill Montgomery continues as the Northern Ireland representative.

Woman killed in hunting fall

Claire Lowe (39), a serving member of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, was killed while hunting with the North Down Hunt at Carrickmannon, near Ballygowan.

The field had jumped a small wall of about two foot six safely, as did Claire Lowe, but her horse apparently pecked on landing and she came out of the saddle head first. Despite immediate CPR from Hunt first aiders in the

mounted field and further attention from the ambulance service, who were on the scene very quickly, Claire died.

This was the Lowe family's second bereavement in the last year as Claire's father Gerry, a well known local businessman, died in December. Claire is survived by her fiancé Doug Stevenson, her mother Adrienne, her brothers Boyd and Philip and by her sister Kerry.

The esteem in which the Lowe family in general and Claire in particular are held was reflected in her hugely well attended funeral, at Carryduff Co Down, with representatives of hunting, eventing, Connemara breeders and the police, including the Chief Constable George Hamilton, in attendance.

TWO IRISH CANINE LEGENDS to be honoured by the Great Game Fairs of Ireland in 2017

The GGF of Ireland team have built up a largely unrivalled reputation for promoting both human and animal history. We have been running a Master McGrath tribute championship for 'Elite' lurchers for several years and, in 2017, this will be joined by a Mick the Miller Championship (at Birr) for 'Non Elite' lurchers.

As we have explained before, the connection of Shanes with Master McGrath is through our

co-founder Major William Brownlow's ancestor, Lord Lurgan from Brownlow House in Lurgan being the owner of the great dog. And of course Mick the Miller, a direct ancestor of 'the Master' was born in Killeigh, Co Offaly near our Birr Game Fair.

The statue of Master McGrath used to be at Brownlow House but has now been moved to Lurgan, while the statue of Mick the Miller stands at his birth place in Offaly.

We have acquired original photographs of the dogs together with exact measurements, and John Moore has been commissioned to produce an oil painting of the dogs, which will be unveiled at the Press Receptions to launch our 2017 working dog championships. Limited edition prints will be produced of this painting in order that working dog owners can have a little piece of Irish canine history on their walls.



A review of current championships and events

The Great Game Fairs of Ireland team has reviewed its commitment to working dog championships and shows, and has decided to make some changes to the show and racing classifications and to its Five Nations and All Ireland Championships.

Full details, including the new prize structure, will be published in the Spring issue of Irish Country Sports and Country Life magazine after their PRESS launches. But - applications are now invited from clubs throughout Ireland and the UK for qualifiers for:

- The Master McGrath Challenge to be staged at The Irish Game Fair 24/25 June for 'Elite' lurchers;
- The Mick the Miller Challenge for 'Non Elite' lurchers — very fittingly staged at the Irish Game & Country Fair on the 26/27 August as this great dog was born in Co Offaly. A special qualifying heat will also be staged at Shanes Castle;
- The Five Nations Whippet Championship to be staged at the Irish Game Fair, Shanes Castle, Antrim; and
- The Five Nations Lurcher Championships to be staged at the Irish Game & Country Fair.

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Our Poaching Past

There is a wealth of wonderful and intriguing hunting information and memorabilia in the Irish Hunting Museum near Durrow in Laois.

Regular readers of my articles in Irish Country Sports & Country Life magazine will know that I greatly enjoy writing about the history of hunting, shooting and fishing and much of my information has been gleaned from spending many hours pouring over decades-old documents housed in the museum. Walter Phelan is the custodian of this treasurehouse of hunting history which is without a doubt the best in its field in Ireland. If you are ever in the area then a visit is strongly recommended. You will not be disappointed. I often refer to it as 'the Irish Hunting Museum' for the sake of simplicity, but its full name is 'The Irish Fly Fishing and Game Shooting Museum' and it's signposted from the Durrow/Kilkenny road.

Some of the subjects which I have researched in the museum have initially seemed rather dry, but have turned out to be surprisingly engaging. One such subject was the history of the Irish

Game Protection Association (IGPA). As I delved deep into the story of this Association I unearthed a story of widespread poaching, the overhunting of game, the British Empire and the oppressed Irish tenantry, a tension between the rich and the poor.

The Irish Game Protection Association was started in 1890 by the landed gentry. A couple of its aims included preserving game and replenishing game. The organisation was partly created to meet head-on a crisis afflicting parts of the countryside which was the drastic reduction of hunted animals.

Hunters and shooters and anglers, as readers of this magazine will very well know, are conservationists and environmentalists. Our aim is not to completely eliminate the animal species which we hunt, but to preserve them in abundant numbers. However, it's a sad fact that frequently throughout history this ideal has been lost sight of and

species have been threatened with extinction or made extinct. In Ireland in the 1890s some animals in some areas were being over-hunted. The Association wanted to reverse that trend, make the numbers abundant once more, and therefore provide much more sport for fieldsports enthusiasts. Poaching was a serious problem and the men who established the Association wanted to do what they could to tackle the issue.

The problem of poaching in Ireland remained significant

Many of us have sympathy for the poacher when he is stealing from the property of much wealthier people. Many of the tenants in the 1890s were, as we know all too well, impoverished, and disliked the fact they were prevented from hunting the game of the countryside. However, Walter showed me several newspaper clippings from his massive museum collection which clearly showed that the problem of poaching in Ireland remained a significant one long after the British Empire had left. He showed me a notice published in the Kilkenny People in 1925 which stated: 'All winged and ground game on this land is strictly preserved with the cooperation and control of the occupier. Poachers will be prosecuted and wandering dogs destroyed.' Notices such as this were commonplace in newspapers during the first half of the 20th Century, and point clearly to a significant poaching problem which continued long after the British had left.

Walter showed me a small green pamphlet published in 1899. The subject matter covered by this slender pamphlet was, "The pounds, shillings and pence of Sporting Rents which farmers could make from leasing their



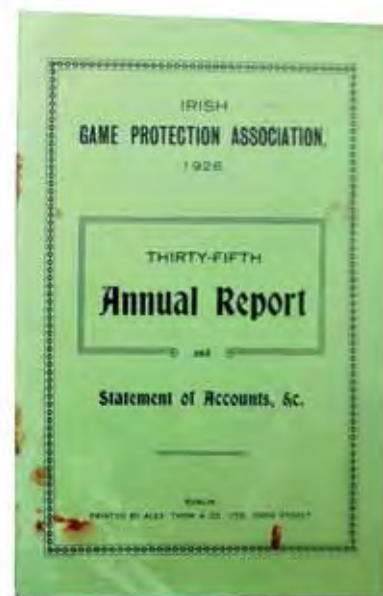
A poster from the early 20th Century printed by the Kilkenny People Ltd.

land for Sportsmen." It was a practical pamphlet published with the aim of inspiring farmers to make some more money from their land.

Another booklet listed a number of defendants who were prosecuted in 1912 in local courts as a result of charges brought against them by the IGPA. These included Henry Hill and Joseph Dunne from Edenderry who were charged with setting snares on preserved lands 'which the owner himself seized, and prosecuted in person'. Dunne was convicted and fined 21 shillings, and Hill was fined 10 shillings and 6 pence.

It's recorded that Hugh O'Reilly from Athlone was convicted of trespassing in pursuit of game on preserved lands and fined ten shillings; Michael Tynan and Michael Brady were convicted of 'beating preserved lands for game with greyhounds' and fined five shillings each; George Irvine was convicted of 'tracing hares in the snow' and fined 10 shillings; and Michael Downey was convicted of firing at a pheasant on preserved lands and fined one pound.

Other defendants (who were convicted and fined) included Michael Kelly from Gurteen Galway (for 'using a gun and firing at a snipe without a licence'); James Bourke from Ardfinnan Tipperary (for 'trespassing in pursuit of game with gun and dogs'); Denis McKinley, from Ballycastle Antrim ('shooting a hare on preserved lands'); James Higgins, James McCaul and Thomas Gorman from Omagh Tyrone (for 'beating for game with three greyhounds and a terrier'). Andrew McGowan from Kinlough Leitrim was charged with lighting a fire on a Grouse Mountain. McGowan's case was dismissed as the Magistrates deemed the evidence insufficient. 'Four witnesses swore they were working with the witness and did not see defendant light the fire'). Edward Marsh, junior, from Moate Westmeath was charged with carrying a gun in pursuit of game without a licence. This case was 'Reported to Excise. Case settled out of Court by payment of a compromise fine



Intriguing hunting history - IGPA Annual Reports 1913 and 1926.

and defendant took out a licence.' Thomas Ryan and Patrick McNerney from Limerick City were convicted of the illegal selling of a hare, without a licence. Both men were convicted. Ryan was fined 2 shillings and six pence and McNerney was fined five shillings. Michael Spain and James Flattery from Ferbane King's County were convicted of 'Shooting over preserved lands with guns, and using a dog' and fined ten shillings each. Peter McCarthy and James Davis from Longford were convicted of 'Trapping a pheasant in the close season. McCarthy took the pheasant out of trap, and Davis killed it.' They were fined five shillings each.

Another booklet listed the Patrons of the IGPA, which included the Earls of Dunraven, Meath, Mayo, Rosse; Viscounts de Vesci and Monck; Lords Ashtown, Cloncurry, Dunleath, Massy and Ardilaun. On the Executive Committee were the Earl of Mayo, Viscount Monck, Lord Massy, Lord Ashtown, Lord Rossmore, Lord Castlemaine, Thomas Talbot Power, Fletcher Moore, Col CD Guinness, Col WS Knox-Gore, and Sir FW Shaw. Looking at these lists of names reveals a very different world to ours, a world of landed gentry and wealth. Some of the members of the IGPA had interesting lives. For example the Fourth Earl of Dunraven (whose name was Windham

Thomas Wyndham-Quin) was a journalist, landowner, entrepreneur, sportsman and Conservative politician. He served as Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies under Lord Salisbury during the 1880s. After serving as a lieutenant in the 1st Life Guards, a cavalry regiment, he became, at age 26, a war correspondent for the Daily Telegraph and covered the Abyssinian War. He reported the Siege of Paris, saw the Third Carlist War in Spain and war in Turkey. He witnessed the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. He recruited a number of volunteers who could both ride and shoot well for the Boer War. Dunraven was a constructive moderate Unionist who sought to bring about a peaceful solution to the Irish land question and to the demand for Home Rule. He was also the owner of the 39,000 acre Adare Manor estate in Adare, County Limerick.

The Inspectors' presence and activity proved useful as a deterrent

Walter has a copy of the 1913 Report by the IGPA committee which lifts aside the curtain and reveals a little of that very different world of the late 19th Century. The first page of the Report begins: 'The Committee beg to submit their twenty-second Annual Report and Statement of Accounts to the

Subscribers, and are glad to state that the Association continues to fill a useful place in the interest of Sport in this country, and that its Finances are in a sound condition. Owing to the difficulty of disbursing all liabilities for Inspectors' wages, prosecutions, and other expenses within the year to 31st December, as the Shooting Season practically runs until 1st March, your committee have, at the suggestion of your Auditors, brought the Cash Account up to 28th February 1913, which explains the reason for some of the expenditure items in this year's account appearing exceptionally large. The Association's work was carried on successfully during the year in the majority of Irish Counties, though your Committee regret there are still a few Counties which do not subscribe sufficiently to the funds to secure local inspection. Over twenty Inspectors were employed in various districts and at different intervals during the past season, most of whom proved reliable men, and did their work satisfactorily; and even in cases where they did not succeed in making captures of offenders, their presence and activity proved useful as a deterrent.'

The Report lists 48 towns throughout Ireland which the IGPA's Inspectors visited 'with the object of detecting illicit sales of Game.' These Inspectors were equipped with licences, bicycles, binoculars and travelling expenses. The Report says financing these Inspectors 'costs the Association a considerable amount.' The Report adds that the income from Game and Gun Licences in Ireland amounts to 22,000 pounds per annum 'which is paid practically without any demand on the part of the Revenue, and has been very largely brought into existence and maintained through the unremitting vigilance of this Association in their efforts to prevent the extermination of Game and in reporting flagrant offences against the Excise Game Laws during many years.'

The Report regrets the loss to the Association by the death of 'the late lamented Duke of Abercorn,' who was

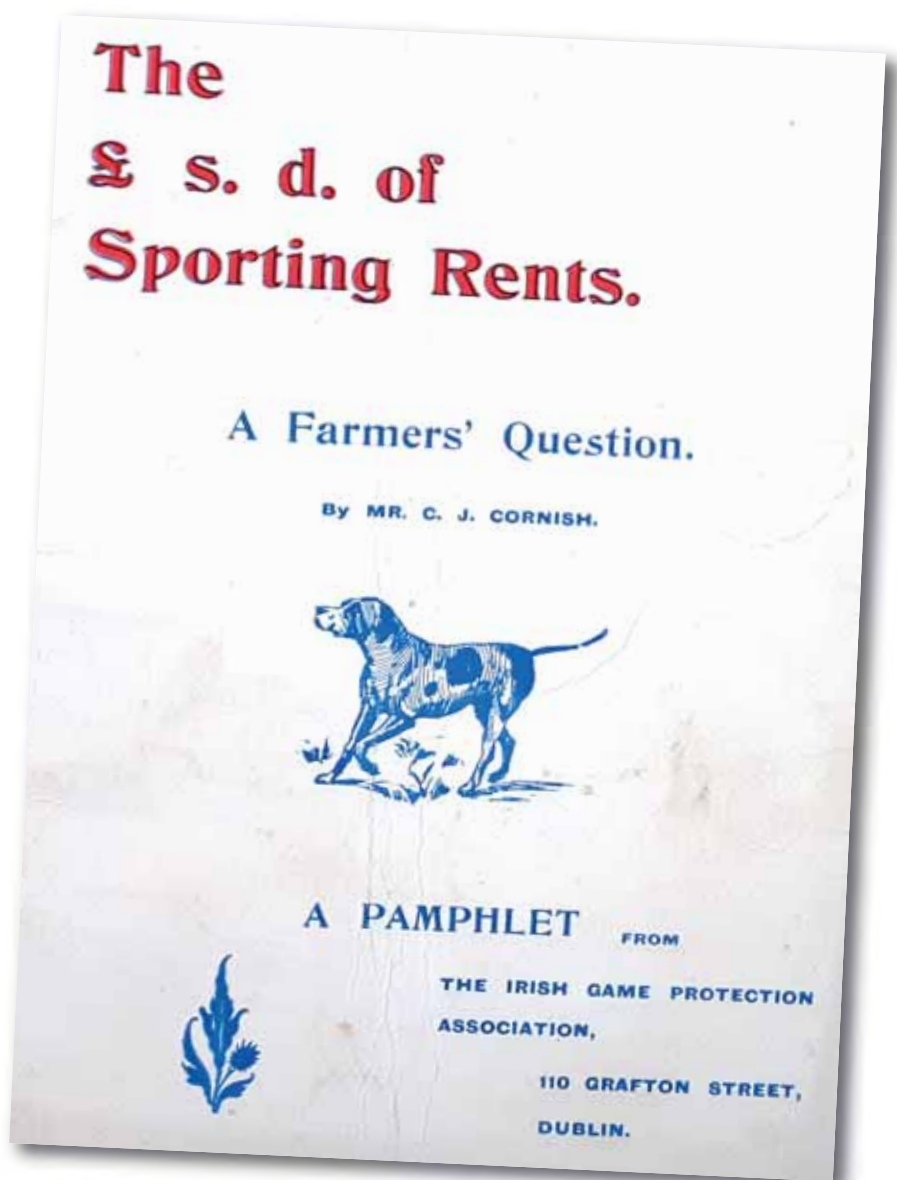
Irish Game Protection Association booklet from the Irish Fly Fishing and Game Shooting Museum.

President of the Association for 21 years, 'and warmly supported its work'. It lists several supporters who died during the year. It offers 'sincere thanks' to 'the Daily and Sporting Press of Ireland and England' for the regular publication of the reports of the IGPA's meetings, prosecutions and general work. The final paragraph states, 'In conclusion, your Committee submit that their work is entitled to a continuance and increase of the support hitherto accorded; and they especially appeal to the younger generation of shooting men, now taking the place of many old friends who have passed away, to help the Association by subscribing and recommending its work amongst their friends. Signed on behalf of the Executive Committee, Massy

(Chairman), BJ Newcombe (Secretary).
9th April 1913.'

A story of unfounded accusations of cruelty aimed at hunting, shooting and fishing

As the years progressed and society changed, other concerns were added to the IGPA's meetings. Probably the most pressing was the image of shooting, which seemed to gain more and more detractors as the years passed. Every hunting person knows the story well. A story of unfounded accusations of cruelty aimed at the hunting, shooting and fishing community during a period of Political Correctness; a story of finding yourself on the defensive and often having to remain quiet about your



pastime because the people around would probably judge you as being morally reprehensible. Ironically, the number of practitioners of fieldsports in contemporary Ireland has probably never been as high. I am reminded of the Victorian Era and sexual prudery. During the Victorian period it was estimated that at one stage there were ten thousand prostitutes in London; which points to an ageold truth - you cannot believe everything a person tells you about his or her behaviour. An IGPA Report from the late 1980s commented: 'Never before has there been such a plethora of attacks on fieldsports, many of which are extremely ill-informed. Some attacks undoubtedly come from people with the now all too common "hidden agendas" and these are far more dangerous than the concern of the genuine animal welfare supporter.'

In 2013, the Irish Game Protection

Association ceased to exist and was subsumed into the Countryside Alliance, which is strong both in Britain and Ireland. The Countryside Alliance Ireland (CAI) continues much of the good work undertaken by the IGPA during its lifetime. CAI lobbies on issues of importance to rural people. The organisation is known for its work on wildlife and management, but its agenda is far broader than that incorporating food & farming, local businesses and services and the injustices of poor mobile phone signal and broadband in the countryside. CAI is anything but a single issue organisation and represents the interests of country people from all backgrounds and geographical locations. The CAI's vision is similar to the vision espoused by the IGPA, which is a future for the countryside which both preserves its traditional values and promotes a thriving rural community and economy;

a countryside sustainably managed and sustainably enjoyed; a countryside where rural communities have equal access to the facilities and services enjoyed in urban communities; a countryside where people can pursue their businesses, activities and lives in a society that appreciates and understands their way of life.

The IGPA was also the representative body for the driven shoots of Ireland, and CAI is continuing this good work, as well as helping to conserve and protect the habitats of game birds and wildfowl. The aims of conservation and protection which were so important in the 1890s remain important in today's world.

A former Chairman of IGPA, Jack Meath, commented back in 2013: "Countryside Alliance Ireland has worked very hard to encourage and succour traditional field sports on the whole island of Ireland. It has a most efficient secretariat and lobbies hard on behalf of fieldsports and rural issues in both Leinster House and Stormont. This alliance will help to strengthen the necessary role of adopting 'Best Code of Practice' in the field by all field sport enthusiasts of whatever description. I am delighted that the Committee of the IGPA has chosen to merge with Countryside Alliance Ireland and indeed that Countryside Alliance Ireland has accepted us in this partnership."

At the same time the Countryside Alliance Ireland Chief Executive, Lyall Plant, remarked: "The IGPA must be commended for their excellent work over the years and we are delighted that this merger has taken place. We look forward to fully adopting and incorporating the IGPA's objectives within CAI's strategy and building upon their accomplishments to date."

Countryside Alliance Ireland (and its forerunner the BFSS) has been active since the early 1960s, providing Irish sportsmen and women with high levels of information and advice and representation. Over the years as the political environment has changed, the organisation has evolved into a highly effective campaigning organisation.



Another Irish Game Protection Association publication.

Terrier, Lurcher & Whippet Show Roundup

Tullylish Working Terrier Club Dog Show and Race Day, 6th August

Numbers were up again this year in the showing and racing, and all rings and races were filled with top quality dogs.

Showing Results

Overall Puppy Champion Maurice McDowell with Blue, Reserve Peter Morgan with Fiddler

Whippet Dog Janet Duke with Oscar
Whippet Bitch Conor Reynolds with Pepsi

Overall Champion Lurcher Jonny Wilson with Jack, Reserve Sean Burke with Cash

Overall Champion Terrier John Heslip with Dave, Reserve Janet Duke with Dodge

Overall Champion Bull Cross Mickey Quinn with Hoss, Reserve Charlene Rafferty with Spike

Overall Champion Strong Dog Niall McCann with Chicko, Reserve Tom Barry with Shamgar

Working Class Champion Tom Barry with Shamgar, Reserve Amy Mc Randall with Bud

Overall Show Champion Niall McCann with Chicko, Reserve John Heslip with Dave

NI Terrier Champion of Champions Martin McDonald with Saoirse, Reserve John Heslip with Dave

NI Lurcher Champion of Champions Peter Cummins with Harry, Reserve Maurice McDowell with Blue.

Some Racing Results

Under 23 Joe and Fionbar Leonard with not Scared

Under 21 Joe and Fionbar Leonard with Runaway Scared

Overall Coursing Champion was won by Adam Hughes and Nellie.

Many thanks to Judges Pat Gorman, Roy Nixon, Rab Gree, Davy Best and Tom Barry.

Tully Castle Dog Show, 13th August

The weather kept up all day as the Churchill Band serenaded the festival in true summer salsa time. These beautiful tunes added to the atmosphere and enjoyment of the Dog Show and Festival.

Showing Results

Children's Handling Class Harry Fallis with Lottie

Overall Show Champion Lurcher Kirsty Harpur with Regal

Overall Show Champion Terrier John Heslip with Dave

Overall Show Champion Whippet John McStay with Darcy

Overall Show Champion and Best In Show John Heslip with Dave Reserve Show Champion and Best in Show Kirsty Harpur with Regal

Thanks to judges Tracy Gill Whippets, Janet Duke Lurchers, Terrier Judge and the judges in ring two for a job well done.

Donnell's Working Dog Show and Race Day, 14th August

For a first time show, there was a good crowd of canine folk, all out for a good day's showing and racing with like minded people.

Showing Results

Overall Show Champion Terrier Porkie Ferguson with Sheila, Reserve Overall Show Champion Terrier Sam White with Merlin

Overall Show Champion Lurcher Lisa Beggs with Red, Reserve Overall Champion Lurcher

Douglas Hanna with Dust.

Overall Show Champion Whippet Janet Duke with Oscar Reserve Overall Show Champion

Barry Chambers with Ruby

Overall Show Champion Strong Dog Niall McCann with Ralph Reserve Overall Show Champion BM Bulls with Socks

Overall Show Champion and Best in Show Lisa Beggs with Red, Overall Reserve Show Champion and Best in Show Janet Duke with Oscar.

Pluck and Smurf Charity Dog Show and Race Day at Burdennet Cricket Club, Strabane, 21st August

As this show was for charity and in memory of two great hunting men who have left this world, the good canine folk came out in force to support this very worthy cause.

Showing Results

Overall Champion Lurcher Martin Breen with Hooch, Reserve Champion Lurcher Roy Nixon with Maximus

Overall Champion Terrier David Hunsdale with Mac, Reserve Champion Terrier Marty Mc Hugh with Polly

Overall Champion Whippet Gail Canning with Roe, Reserve Carla Wilson with Topper

Overall Champion Gun Dog Niall O Cloghan with Bella

Overall Show Champion and Best in Show Martin Breen with Hooch Reserve Show Champion and best in Show Gail Canning with Roe.

32 COUNTIES Champion of Champions Whippet Lisa Dumigan with Frankie, Reserve Conor Reynolds with Pepsi

32 Counties Champion of Champions

Lurcher Kirsty Harpur with Regal,
Reserve Mickey Quinn with Hoss
32 Counties Champion of Champions
Terrier Peter Morgan with Mick,
Reserve 32 Counties Champion of
Champions Terrier Angela Flack with
Ron.

Some Racing Results

Whippets Barry Chambers with Ruby
Bull Cross Sean Burke with Jack
Elite Overs Neil Pinky with Jake
Under 21 Michelle Rafferty with Fly
Under 23 Michelle Rafferty with Gin
Hairy Dog Christina Maguire with
Scruff

Rhino won overall run off.

Thanks the judges and their ring
stewards Whippets, Paul Reynolds,
Lurchers, Mick Doherty, Terriers,
Darren Patts, Gudogs, Geraldine
McGettigan and all three 32 Counties
Judges. Also to Tommy Melaugh,
Concepta O Goan, Toni Melaugh and all
the Melaugh family circle, Barry
Holland and the band of helpers.

Birr Castle Game Fair 27th & 28th August

I can honestly say this year was the
biggest and best event ever at Birr
Castle, and exceeded all our
expectations. Every year this Game Fair
goes from strength to strength. The
weather was beautiful, the atmosphere
was electric, and plenty of bargains to
be had along the way.

The sunshine and brilliant weather
brought out all the good country
sporting men and women for a sporting
few days out, before the summer
showing and racing season comes to an
end. I love Birr, because it gives me a
chance to meet up with so many of the
sporting fraternity that I would probably
only speak to on Facebook.

As I was given the honour this year
to judge the Whippets at Birr, it was an
extra special day for me. In all three
rings the standard this year was top
quality.

Showing Results

Lurchers

Any Variety Lurcher Pup Under 1
Year Old Jed Donagh With Chunk

Lurcher Dog or Bitch Over 1 Year
Old Karen Cummins With Conor
Best Pair of Lurchers Eoin Barnes
With Poacher And Topsy
Any Variety Lamping Lurcher Dog
Mikie Lyons With Blue
Any Variety Lamping Lurcher Bitch
Alan Crosbie With Fly

Smooth Lurcher Dog Over 23" Over
1 Year Old Paddy O'Brien With Ben
Smooth Lurcher Bitch Over 23"
Over 1 Year Old John Moriarty With
Molly

Rough Lurcher Dog Over 23" Over 1
Year Old Ned Kane With Fon
Rough Lurcher Bitch Over 23" Over
1 Year Old Eoin Barnes With Topsy
Rough or Smooth Lurcher Dog
Under 23" Over 1 Year Old Jennifer
Gately With Taz

Rough or Smooth Lurcher Bitch
Under 23" Over 1 Year Old Beauty
Collie Lurcher Over 1 Year Old Alan
Crosbie With Fly

Terrier Bred Lurcher Over 1 Year
Old Graham Brennan With Gypsy
Bull Bred Lurcher Over 1 Year Old
Eoin Barnes With Pig

Veteran Lurcher Fiona Devlin With
Maverick

Overall Champion Lurcher Rob
Hicks With Pig, Reserve Champion
Lurcher Eoin Barnes With Topsy

Terriers

Terrier Pups Under 1 Year Old John
Keane With Tan

Terrier Under 12" John Keane With
Ted

Best Pair Of Terriers John Keane
With Ted And Tan

Working Terriers John Hendrix With
Rocky

Jack Russell Type Dog Over 1 Year
Old Terence Keane With Butcher

Jack Russell Type Bitch Over 1 Year
Old Daniel Brown With Meg

Lakeland Type Dog Over 1 Year Old
Gerry Maxwell With Boo

Lakeland Type Bitch Over 1 Year
Old Jessie Carey With Lady

Fell Or Patterdale Dog/bitch Over 1
Year Old Carl Magee With Trigger

Border Bitch Over 1 Year Old
Breandan Lynch

Plummer Dog Or Bitch Michael
Slyne With Archie
Veteran Terrier Michael Styne With
Archie

Overall Champion Terrier Terence
Keane With Butcher, Reserve
Champion Terrier Daniel Brown With
Meg.

Whippets

Whippet Puppy Dog Under 1 Year
Old Sean Burke With Joe

Whippet Puppy Bitch Under 1 Year
Old Sophie Harpur With Sky, Tom
Quinn With Stripe

Whippet Dog Over 1 Year Old Janet
Duke With Oscar, Barry Chambers With
Joey

Whippet Bitch Over 1 Year Old
Karen Cummins With Maisie, Tracy
Gill With Scarlet

Working Whippet Dog Michael
Quinn With Finn, Lisa Dumigan With
Frankie

Working Whippet Bitch Tracy Gill
With Ash, Barry Chambers With Ruby
Whippet Pairs Gerard Leonard And
Sophie Harpur With Duke And Tucker
Veteran Whippet Tracy Gill With
Lola

Overall Champion Whippet Karen
Cummins With Maisie

Reserve Champion Whippet Michael
Quinn With Finn

Champion Pup and Best in Show Jed
Donagh with Chunk Reserve Champion
Pup and Best in Show Sean Burke with
Joe

Overall Show Champion and Best in
Show Terence Keane with Butcher,
Reserve Show Champion and Best in
Show Karen Cummins with Maisie.

Five Nations Championships - Lurchers and Terriers

Five Nations Lurcher Championship

Peter Cummins with Harry
Reserve Five Nations Lurcher
Champion of Champions Kirsty Harpur
with Skylar

Five Nations Terrier Championship

Five Nations Terriers Champion
Shane Gilmartin with Twister
Reserve Five Nations Champion
John Hendrix.



Winners and Judges at the Five Nations Lurcher Championship Birr 2016



Winners and Officials at the Five Nations Terrier Championship Birr 2016

I would like to thank the Judges on the day for a first class job. To Shane Lee and the Roscrea Team, your organisation was meticulous.

Heavy Bull Cross Mickey Quinn with Lady
Over 23 Kirsty Harpur with Regal
Under 23 Kirsty Harpur with Lady

DWTC Dog Show & Race Day, Annaghmore, 18 September

Showing Results

Overall Champion Whippet Davy Best with Kelly

Overall Champion Lurcher Mickey Quinn with Hoss

Overall Champion Terrier Niall McCann with Digger

Overall Champion Strong Dog Ryan O'Neill with Larkin.

Overall Show Champion and Best in Show Davy Best with Kelly.

Some Racing Results

Pups Michelle Rafferty with Zero
Whippets Charlene Rafferty with Zio

Many thanks to Tom and Leanne Barry and their team, for running another top class charity show on Sunday. I am very proud to record that although the numbers were a little light, Tom presented PIPS with a cheque for £350 on the day being proceeds from the show

Montalto Game Fair Ballynahinch 24th & 25th September

Some Ferret Results

Best in Show Callum Weir with Zorro, Eddie Sloan with Willow, Cherith Calderwood with Enya

Champion of Champions Best in Show Michael Quinn with Fred, Callum Weir with Zorro

Racing Terry Turkington with Skinner, Terry Turkington with Ernie, Michael Quinn with Sandy

Racing Champion of Champions Terry Turkington with Skinner, Rose McCoy with Conker

Darren Moore pulled out all the stops to make this a very enjoyable family orientated show.

Some Racing Results

Puppy Race Neil Pinkerton with Scruffy

Whippets Glayds, Alec Savage with Billy Bob

Bull Cross Michael Quinn with Lance

Light Bull Billy Harpur with Regal Under 21" Rose McCoy with Kyro Over 21" Neil Pinkerton with Jake
Traditional Class Stake Challenge Ned Kane with The Fonk

Terrier Race Sam White with Merlin
Edward Kane Snr and Edward Kane Jnr travelled from Carlow to come first and second in the new challenge race for lurchers staged at the Ballynahinch Game & Harvest Festival at Montalto. The Fonk was first closely followed by Scooter.

These dogs are bred as follows:

Fonk, the black dog is a mix of wheaten, borzoi, deerhound collie and greyhound. Scooter, the Fawn & white dog is wheaten/ Deerhound/ Greyhound.

Showing Results

Champion Whippet Tracy Gill with Ebony Reserve Brian Welsh with Blade
Champion Lurcher Darren Mackin with Deeler Reserve Michael Quinn with Lance

Champion Terrier Jordyn Kerr with Jack Reserve Janet Duke with George
Plummer Class Sam White with Merlin

Overall Best in Show Darren Mackin with Deeler

Overall Champion Puppy Neil Pinkerton with Scruffy

Overall Champion of Champions Whippet 2016 Janet Duke with Oscar Reserve

Irish Game Fair & Fine Food Festival



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2



7



3

1. Winners, Judges and Organisers of the Five Nations Championship.

2. Champion Lurcher: Neil Mitchell Reserve, Mickey Quinn with Hoss.

3. Champion Whippet: Davy Best with Merlin, Reserve Leeroy McCullough with Tizer.

4. Puppy Champion Shanes Castle: Wesley Scott with Terry.

5. Ferret Showing Winner.

6. Champion Terrier: Dessie Mackin with Bounty.

7. Sam White with his Champion Plummer Terrier.



4



5



OTHER SHOW WINNERS



1



4



2



5



3

1. Overall Show Champion and Best in Show: Lisa Dumigan with Frankie.

2. Overall Champion Lurcher: Lisa Beggs with Joker.

3. Champion Puppy: Chickerell O'Hanlon with Ringo.

4. Overall Champion Whippet: Kirsty Fyffe with Flynt, Reserve Leeroy McCullough with Tizer.

5. Champion Lurcher: James Woods with Bruno.

6. Overall Champion Terrier: Dessie Mackin with Seamus.



6

OTHER SHOW WINNERS



1



2



4



3



5

1. Hillside Champion Lurcher: Conor McCormac with Jack.

2. Champion Whippet: Kirsty Fyffe with Bobby, Reserve Karen Cummins with Maise.

3. Billy Craig with his winning Lurcher.

4. Overall Show Champion: Nicky Smith with Rambo.

5. Champion Whippet: Michael Quinn with Finn, Reserve Karen Cummins with Maisey and Whippet Judge John McStay.



The Fonk

Davy Best with Merlin, 3rd Gail
Canning with Roe

Overall Champion of Champions

Lurcher Billy Harpur with Regal

Reserve Peter Cummins with Harry, 3rd

Mickey Quinn with Hoss

Overall Champion of Champions



Scooter

Terrier Jordyn Kerr with Rock Reserve,
Dessie Mackin with Soda, 3rd Karen
Cummins with Flint.

Roll on 2017

To conclude, I would like to wish all
my friends in the canine fraternity many
good days in the field for the rest of the

season. Thank you all for your
friendship and companionship at the
shows during the year. God willing, I
look forward to meeting up with you all
again and helping you where I can
through my write ups, Dog Show lists
etc during 2017.

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Black Death

Strawbridge shot their lurchers and longdogs on sight and would have meted out the same punishment to their owners, had the hangman's noose not been the punishment for cold blooded murder.

Viewed from our own egalitarian age, it is perhaps hard to appreciate, just how a person's class once affected their standing within British society. Village life, in the years prior to the First World War, was much governed by hierarchy and the centuries old feudal system laid down by the Norman invader, was still very much in place. Of great standing within this rural scene, was of course, the Head Gamekeeper.

Subordinate only to his master, the Lord of the Manor, the Head Keeper was feared and respected by all and, in the case of the great East Anglian shooting estates, held sway over possibly the finest sporting acreages ever known.

John Strawbridge was just such a Head Keeper and a man responsible for guarding and managing one of the most famous estates in the County of Norfolk. Broad shouldered, thick set, and moustachioed, he was in his fifth

decade and had risen from lowly keeper's lad to his exalted rank, by sheer determination and an almost sociopathic persecution of poachers.

Sadly, however, this tweed clad nemesis was convinced that prevention was better than cure, thus passing sentence over anyone who had the potential to be a poacher, whether actually guilty or not!

What did it matter to him, if some vagrant or farm labourer received an unwarranted blow from a pick shaft? Just as long as they posed no threat to his pheasants or partridge, his paranoia was justified. Added to this, his master filled the post of local magistrate, so if legal remonstrance was made it would fall on the stoniest of ground.

Hard bitten, and with a temper like a firework, Strawbridge trusted no one, and considered any newcomer to his Breckland parish, a threat to the furred and feathered game under his

protection.

Strangers, clearly, were up to no good and, if not presently employed in the act of taking game, undeniably had the potential to do so. Pedlars, tramps, or even travelling farm salesmen were viewed with loathing and suspicion; but if he despised all of these itinerant characters, the Head Keeper nursed a special brand of hatred for gypsies.

'Gyps', or 'Gypos,' as Strawbridge referred in those days to the Romany people, were, in his jaundiced opinion, the scum of the earth and born thieves and poachers. Their lurchers and long dogs he shot on sight and would have meted out the same punishment to their owners, had the hangman's noose not been the punishment for cold blooded murder. It was with resulting fury then, that Strawbridge received word of three, horse drawn gypsy wagons, newly camped on common land adjoining



With a flick of the whip upon the animal's shoulder, Strawbridge set off at a smart trot to confront the interlopers.



If not after game birds, they would have come to course hares.

his estate.

According to the landlord of the local inn, the three Romany families were travelling to Brigg horse fair in Lincolnshire, having stopped in the Breckland to rest their horses, before pushing on through the fens. Whatever the story, the enraged keeper knew it to be a lie and merely a ruse to afford a poaching raid into his domain. If not after game birds, the 'Gypos' would certainly have come to course hares with their dogs, something which he intended to stop — with bloodshed, if necessary.

Having ordered one of his under keepers to harness his pony and gig, Strawbridge climbed aboard the well sprung vehicle and with a flick of the whip upon the animal's shoulder, set off at a smart trot to confront the

interlopers. As the vehicle moved along the unmetalled track, a set of weighty 'brass knuckles' within the keeper's pocket, bounced in time with the pony's movements.

Leaving the shade of the tree lined roadway, the grey pony trotted on under a cloudless August sky, as in the distance, John Strawbridge first caught sight of the three gypsy wagons. A thin column of wood smoke rose unhindered before the vehicles, as to the rear, on rough grassland, a number of coloured cobs took advantage of common grazing.

Brightly painted and drawn up in a semi-circle, two of the wagons showed green canvas covered 'bow tops', whilst the third was of the 'Reading' type, painted a dark maroon colour. Figures appeared to be seated

before the fire, whilst to the rear of the vehicles children played.

The Head Keeper leaped from the gig propelled by undiluted rage

Pulling up some short distance from the encampment, the Head Keeper leaped from the gig and, propelled by undiluted rage, marched across to the resting travellers. Believing attack always to be the best form of defence, Strawbridge bellowed for the head man and demanded to know what the hell they thought they were doing camped there?

Completing this scene of confrontation were four others, as seated on painted stools of indeterminate age, and closest to the fire, were an elderly man and woman. Nearer to the wagons, and at a distance from the spitting brands lay two athletic young men of olive complexion. Both sprawled

upon the grass and appearing quite relaxed, although their dark eyes were fixed unblinkingly upon the livid keeper.

Astride the fire of willow wood, stood a steel tripod supporting a blackened chain and cooking pot, and from the ancient cauldron drifted the unmistakable aroma of stewing hare meat.

Taking the aged clay pipe from the corner of his mouth, the old man spat into the flames, and without once looking up, announced that he, in fact, was head man.

Moustache bristling with anger, the Head Keeper considered his adversary. Small, wiry, and dressed in collarless shirt, fustian waistcoat and breeches, the old man wore upon his head a shapeless felt hat, and was

shod with the customary Luton boots.

Still not having made eye contact with Strawbridge, the gypsy's concentration was absorbed by the task of making a hemp long net, the fine, age smoothed elm net needle, slipping effortlessly back and forth between the old man's fingers.

Had John Strawbridge been a powder keg, this demonstration would certainly have been the flame of ignition, for considering the act of net making a blatant intention to poach game, the keeper lunged toward the old gypsy. Amid a stream of the vilest obscenities, he damned all the old man's race as thieves and liars and demanded they leave their present campsite immediately, or face a hiding.

At this, the youths, who so far had remained prone in the shade of the wagons, leaped to their feet, and in less time than it takes to tell, were nose to nose with the irate keeper. Tall, lean, and muscular, both had the look of pugilists about them and even as Strawbridge gripped the brass knuckles within his jacket pocket, he knew that the water had suddenly grown very deep. Although strong, he was no match for two gypsy prize fighters. As if to confirm the hopelessness of his situation, three sleek lurchers, hitherto unseen, slipped out from beneath a wagon axle to bare their teeth at him; all the time emitting a low growl. Throughout all of this, the old woman had remained seated by the fire, and had uttered not a word.

As Strawbridge, momentarily bested, began to back away, the shawl clad crone rose to her feet and pointed a long and bony finger at the slowly retreating keeper. As she did so, a tame crow flew from inside the Reading wagon and, as the murderous looking bird settled upon her right shoulder, the old woman began to speak: "Keeper," she croaked in a voice riven by time, "we have done you no harm, and the hare we shall eat tonight we took from common land, and not your land. I am warning you now that if you trouble us further, I will bring all the curses of hell to earth and visit them upon your head. You, would be wise to heed my words."

Backing all the way to the gig and with the bitter and unfamiliar taste of defeat upon his tongue, John Strawbridge mounted the vehicle and whipped the pony homeward. The road to his cottage seemed longer and rougher than ever he could remember, but the journey allowed his simmering wrath to be distilled into thoughts of violent revenge.

Dust filled the air of Strawbridge's shed as, in a methodical search, its contents were turned upside down. Pole traps, gin traps, lark lures and rabbit netting, all were thrown out through the open door, as recesses untouched for years by daylight were systematically explored. Finally, triumphantly, the object of his quest was uncovered and with much grunting and groaning hauled into the sunlight.

Relic or not, the mantrap's springs were still wickedly powerful

There, lying on the grass before him, was a device so terrible, that even by the standards of his own day, it was viewed with breathless horror. The 'Iron Wolf,' or man trap, had been outlawed in England for over fifty years, but Strawbridge, steeped in hatred and consumed by his desire for revenge, fully intended to re-employ the foul thing. Relic or not, the man trap's springs were still wickedly powerful, as after setting the evil device with the utmost care, the keeper sprang the trap with the fallen limb of an ash tree. Splinters flew in all directions, as the trap's steel jaws slammed shut against the dry wood limb. Greatly satisfied, Strawbridge released the shattered length of ash and then set about sharpening each of the trap's twenty, dagger-like teeth, to a bone splintering point. He would teach that old bitch to threaten him with her mumbo jumbo.

Later that same evening and under cover of darkness, John Strawbridge transported the 'Iron Wolf' to the edge of the common land. There, in grass of about knee height, he forced its great jaws open and set it in place. Carefully concealing its location with foliage, and without the slightest feelings of guilt or reproach, the keeper then slunk away to await developments.

Days passed, and still no word of gypsy calamity reached the keeper's ears. Surprised by this, Strawbridge



'The hare we shall eat tonight we took from common land,' said the gypsy.

took to frequenting the local post office, hoping to pick up some village gossip and on several occasions, asked the landlord of the inn what he knew of the 'Gypos' camped on the common. No one, it seemed, knew anything.

Then, over a week after the setting of the man trap, news came in an unexpected form.

Attending to everyday tasks, the Head Keeper was repairing arks in the rearing field, when George, the grocer's boy passed along the adjoining lane on his bicycle.

Following a squeal of dry brake blocks, the youth stopped his bike in the lane and shouting through the hedge informed the keeper that one of the gypsies on the common, was in 'A bad way'. Strawbridge ask for details and the youth informed him that the head man's leg was 'Busted up sumfin' bad!'

Without stopping to comment, and without even grabbing his jacket from the nail on the rearing shed door, Strawbridge dashed to the stable yard and demanded his pony and gig. Rushing to obey, a nervous young

under-keeper soon had the grey pony in harness and in under five minutes, John Strawbridge was aboard and trotting with all speed toward the gypsy encampment.

Grinning as he jogged along, he dwelt with twisted glee on his victory, and how he would have the 'vermin' on the move and out of the area before sunset. The sun beamed down from a cloudless blue sky, as the pony, innocent of any involvement, carried her malevolent master to his scene of triumph.

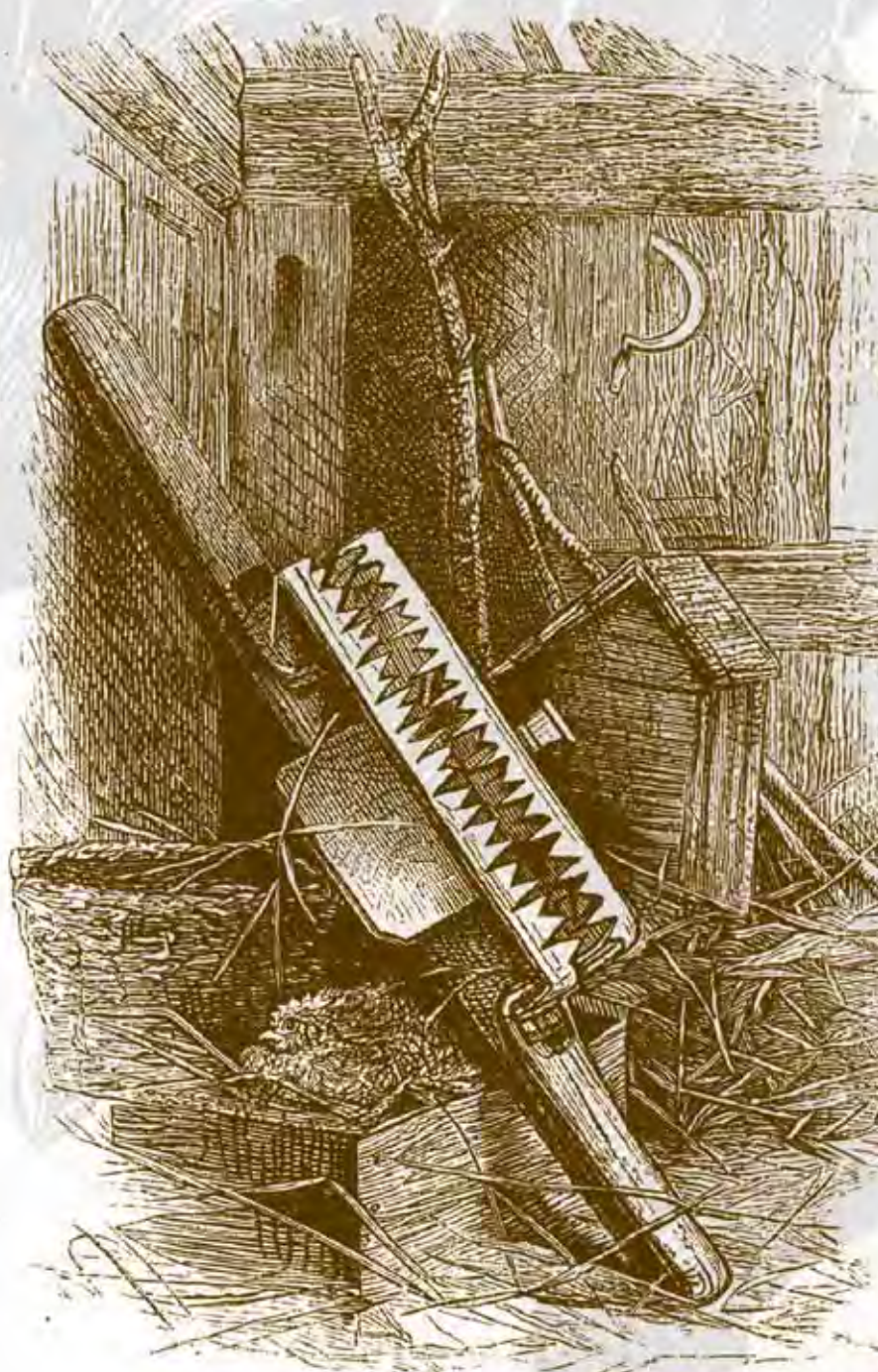
Reaching the gypsy camp, Strawbridge sprang from the gig and swaggered over to those gathered there. Several of the Romanies, including the old woman, were kneeling around a form laid out upon a blanket on the ground. It was the head man.

Ashen faced and unmoving, the old man was clearly gripped my unimaginable agony. The lower half of the blanket on which he lay was soaked with his blood, as was a shawl wrapped around his shattered right leg. Judging by the great blood loss, the wound to the leg was catastrophic and the old man close to death. Turning on Strawbridge, the old woman cried: "This is your work keeper. You have killed a good man, and for that you will pay."

Sneering, John Strawbridge looked down at the wizened crone and said the world would be a better place with one less like him in it, and that thieves and liars like them deserved no better. He wanted the lot of them off the common by sunset, or they too would suffer.

Again, the two young gypsy boxers sprang forward, bent on giving the Head Keeper the thrashing he deserved. The old woman, however, raised her hand and stopped them. As she did so, the tame crow hopped from the shaft of the reading waggon and alighted on her shoulder.

Turning, the matriarch fixed Strawbridge with a piercing glare, her dark eyes burning like coals, and



The 'Iron Wolf,' or man trap, had been outlawed in England for over fifty years.

hissed: "I warned you keeper. I warned you that hell would come down upon your head. And so it will."

The feather fell into the vehicle's interior as she recited an incantation in the Romany language

Raising her left hand to where the crow sat upon her shoulder, the old woman gently plucked a feather from its breast and then strode forward to the Head Keeper's gig. Here, as she let the feather fall like an ebony snowflake into the vehicle's interior, she recited an incantation in the Romany language that Strawbridge could not understand.

All there were hushed and looked on as the matriarch moved from the gig to the grey pony. Gently, she ran her hands over the animal, whispering to it in words of the ancient Romany tongue. At this, the crow sprang from its perch on the old woman's shoulder and, emitting a loud cawing, took to the air to quickly disappear amongst the surrounding tall trees.

Finally, the old woman turned and, pointing a bony finger Strawbridge announced: "I curse thee once. I curse thee twice. I curse thee three times Keeper."

At this, Strawbridge had had enough, and told the old woman that she could go to blazes with her spells; he wanted them off the common before dark, or they would all go the way of the head man. Barging past her, he climbed into the gig and flicked the pony into trot.

Jogging along the lane away from the encampment, Strawbridge felt smug indeed and not the least remorseful for the misery his actions had caused. He had shown those damned gypsies not to tangle with him. So much for their bloody prize fighters too; they had clearly realised he was more than a match for them; damned vermin.

Still the sun beamed from a blue sky and it was with some surprise that the keeper noticed a black cloud on

the horizon. Clearly they were in for a shower, although judging by how dark the cloud was, it was more likely to be heavy rain. Odd that, on such a clear August afternoon.

On the grey pony trotted as, in self-congratulatory mood, Strawbridge mused on how he would boast over defeating, single handed, an entire camp of gypsies. Oh, how his reputation would reach new heights, how the stories of his triumph would go about the village! He'd be a hero all right.

Jolted from his daydreaming by a large pothole in the road, the keeper glanced up, and was at once startled by the approaching storm cloud. How odd it looked, and much nearer now. And what was that sound?

With a pull on the reins he brought the pony to a halt, and stared skyward in amazement. The storm cloud was very strange indeed, for not only was it uniquely black; it was also travelling against the wind!

As Strawbridge watched transfixed, he noted that there was something oddly sinister about the cloud, and that on observation, it had at its centre, a dark, almost solid, swirling mass. Perhaps more worryingly though, the dark formation was turning through forty-five degrees and heading straight toward him.

It was hundreds of thousands of crows

That noise again. What was it? Then, in a single blood chilling moment of realisation, he knew: crows! This was no phenomenon of weather, but hundreds of thousands of crows, together, in one swirling, ferocious, airborne mass.

Turning, he whipped the pony on. It did not move. He whipped harder and shouted for the beast to 'trot on.' Still the pony did not move. The keeper's ears were now filled with raucous cawing, as suddenly all grew dark. Looking up, he saw the whole, black, savage feathered mass, descending upon him in a single,

vengeful column. Hell had indeed, been visited upon his head.

Lashing frantically with the driving whip and in blind panic, Strawbridge bellowed at the pony to move, but the animal, bewitched, remained immobile as if rooted to the spot. His screams, (for screams there were, reader) were drowned out by the roar of 100,000 wing beats as, in a diabolical feeding frenzy, living flesh was torn from bone by uncountable, stabbing black beaks. As the driving whip slipped from a bloodied hand, the struggling form of Head Keeper, John Strawbridge, descended deeper into the body of the gig, his empty eye sockets and tongueless mouth, unable to further bear witness to his own grizzly demise.

It was George, the grocer's boy, peddling along on his delivery bicycle the following morning, who discovered what remained of John Strawbridge. The grey pony, still within the shafts of the gig, grazed peacefully on the trackside herbage and all appeared serene, until that is, the delivery boy happened to glance inside the vehicle.

Once he had ceased vomiting, the ashen faced youth pedalled with all speed to the village police station, there to report having found, 'sumfin 'orrid.' The police, for their own part, were entirely baffled, for how could they possibly explain the presence of the skeletal remains of the local head gamekeeper, found in his gig, on a quiet country lane? The myriad scratch marks on his bones and skull were equally puzzling, as was the scattering of black feathers surrounding the crime scene.

The local population was questioned thoroughly and some suggested the police speak to the group of gypsies camped on the edge of the common. Of these travellers, however, there was no sign, for they were believed to have headed on across the fens, towards Brigg horse fair. They had flown, it seemed like birds in the air.



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Art & Antiques

Is it time for the hardy annuals who frequent the auction rooms to step back and look at what we have been doing?

The summer is almost over and so too is the break major auction houses have been enjoying for the past number of weeks. Of course everyone appears to get a holiday away from the hurly-burly atmosphere of the scene, which at best of times is a chaotic one. But, behind it all, there can be a very different story.

Auctioneers, antique dealers, and the various traders who all contribute to an industry — for that is what it is — which brings both pain and pleasure to those involved in it, are seldom if ever on holiday. Just like a good tradesman never being too far away from the tools that make him the craftsman he is, so too do the stalwarts of the auction scene remain close to their comfort zone.

So it is no surprise to learn that while walking down a street in New York, Miami or some other exotic tourist spot, one of our stalwarts has an idea for a new sales theme, a different venue for a sale of a different kind or, in the case of a dealer or trader, a new purchase for another addition to a sales catalogue.

Yes, the summer brings a respite from the day to day pressures of the



Jack Butler Yeats' 'By Drumcliffe Strand' sold for €80,000 (Adams)

sales world, but it also affords those involved to step back for a few short weeks to consider what has happened in the opening months of the year...and to ponder how to correct any anomalies or shortfalls before the autumn/pre-Christmas period brings it all to an end again, but only for a short time.

I suppose we, the hardy annuals who frequent the auction rooms, drop into the antique or even charity shop or car boot sale, always in the hope of picking

up a bargain overlooked by everyone else, should also step back and look at what we have been doing.

Yes, we should take stock of what we have collected in recent days, months or even years and decide what is no longer of use to us and how we will dispose of it. But, no way would I ever advocate giving something away for nothing.

HARD WON BIDDING BATTLE

Items that were hard won in the bidding battle of an auction room must pay for themselves, even if only making a paltry profit. Lots that were purchased after lengthy haggle in an antique shop or around a windy car boot stall must seek similar reward. Seldom do any of us make a fortune following the various sales scenes.

Like fox hunting or any other quarry sport much of the enjoyment is in the chase. But when the affection for the purchased item is now as rare as last year's frost it has to go. So hunt out those articles which are only taking up house room. Make them pay for themselves. Remember if you are selling say a dozen or so lots you can afford to take a loss on a few of them. Provided of course you can redeem such



Sean Keating's 'Bush Telegraph' realised €57,000 (Adams)



Gerard Dillon's 'The Dung Hill' sold at €26,000 (Adams)

collector in England and John Shinnors' Trapeze I, which brought €16,000 from a collector in Dublin.

ADAM'S WERE ACTIVE

It was a busy spring season too for Dublin based ADAM's with many choice lots coming under the hammer at several sales.

In the Important Irish Art sale, a Jack Butler Yeats, 'By Drumcliffe Strand' achieved its lower hammer price of €80,000 while Sean Keating's 'Bush Telegraph' realised €57,000 and another Yeats made €55,000. Again Paul Henry was to the fore and his 'Grand Canal Dock' was appreciated at €27,000 while Gerard Dillon's 'The Dung Hill' went over its high estimate to sell at €26,000. A Roderic O'Connor, 'Seated Woman' sold for €24,000, an Oliver Sheppard bronze made €10,000 which again was over estimate and a Patrick Collins' 'Water on a Ploughed Field' realised €10,000. A John Butler Yeats portrait made €10,000 while a Sir William Orpen portrait went at €8,000.

Adam's Fine Period Interiors sale brought a top price of €34,000 for a Pietro Fragiaco (1856-1922) painting against its top estimate of €6,000 while one by Leon de Laborde fetched €9,000.

A fine Victorian Killarney work

losses through a profit on the other items brought to sale.

If, in a financial sense, at the end of the day you only wipe your face clean, then take comfort for having tied up a few precious pounds for a time in a climate when investment elsewhere would have brought little or no reward and far less satisfaction.

Go for it. The sales world is a big wide one. And if you can buy, as most of us have found out, then you can sell. But read your market well before you dispose of anything. There are people out there who would buy practically anything. Just try to make sure you are selling in the place where they are likely to be present or where they have access to.

Thanks nowadays to the on-line coverage of many auction houses compulsive purchasers like myself can now do their bidding from the comfort of an armchair. Let's try to be compulsive sellers also, if only from the comfort of the same armchair.

DEMAND FOR QUALITY IRISH ART

Whyte's last big sale of the spring was another strong one and brought in receipts of €850,000 and an 80% sale rate, confirming the continuing demand for Irish art of quality.

Top prices paid were for two Paul Henry works at €100,000 and €82,000 respectively, both to a collector in County Clare. And the message we get from this must be how positive collectors are about Henry and his

works.

A Seán Keating, 1924 painting, entitled Salud, sold for €52,000, to another collector in County Clare, while Gerard Dillon's West Of Ireland Couple And Horses made €36,000 from a collector in County Dublin. Another Dillon, The Fish Eaters went for €24,000 to a collector in Dublin. Harry Kernoff's evocative painting of Bray Harbour in the 1930s sold for €28,000 and his busy scene at Store Street, Dublin made €16,000, both to collectors in Dublin.

More contemporary works were Tony O'Malley's Pond Reverie which brought €22,000 to a County Dublin collector, Barrie Cooke's large triptych, Forest, which sold for €18,000 to a



Seán Keating's 1924 painting, entitled Salud, sold for €52,000 (Whytes)

inlaid arbutus and yew-wood folding top game table made €8,500 which was well above its high estimate and a heavy silver two handle serving tray, Wakely & Wheeler, London, 1900 went at €5,200.

An Irish William IV silver coffee pot went at €4,400, followed by a pair of Irish Geo. III Cork provincial silver sauceboats, c. 1777 at €4,350 and another pair of sauceboats from the same era at €3,800. A pair of bouille vitrine cabinets from the 19th century made €3,000 while a W. Lindberg, oil on canvas brought in €2,800.

COMPETITIVE MARKET KICK

MEALY'S had a good spring season too with the Lotabeg sale realising €850,000 and 83pc of lots sold. Rory Guthrie, director at de Veres said they too had 'noticed a competitive kick in the market' with a May sale realising a total of €650,000 and 80 percent of the lots on offer finding new homes.



Tony O'Malley's Pond Reverie went €22,000 (Whytes)

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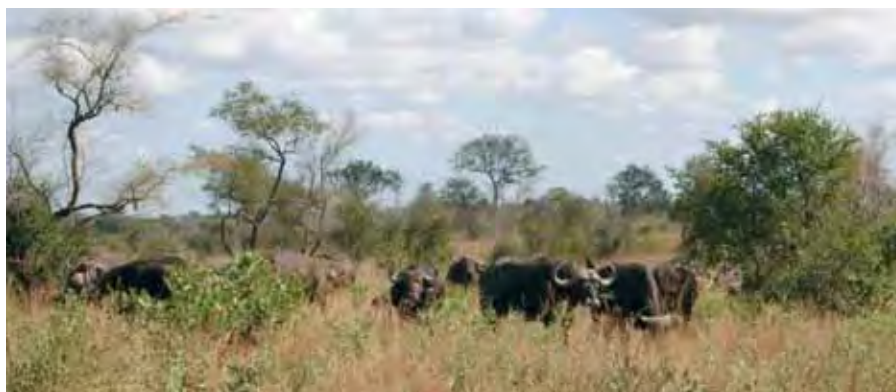
WHY WE HUNT AND SHOOT

Why we hunt and shoot is a subject that has attracted more than its fair share of attention in recent years. The legal ownership of sporting firearms by law-abiding citizens has been under the spotlight for all the wrong reasons.

Thankfully this demonising of hunting and shooting is now past history. Visible improvements have been evident since Justice Minister Mrs. Frances Fitzgerald's intervention in 2015 and the EU has just rejected proposals to impose draconian restrictions on licence-holders throughout Europe.

Minister Fitzgerald's Statutory Instrument 391 of 2015 strengthened the position of target-shooting clubs and clarified a number of contentious issues. The culling of wildlife has long been recognised and regulated by Law and hunting licences are issued by the State for hunting wildlife, so all issues were on an even keel.

Then EU Commissioner Mrs. Vicky Ford (UK) recommended amendments to EU Firearms Law that would have made it impossible for many sporting



Cape Buffalo will kill you for being in their territory.

activities to survive and restricted others to the point of it being almost impossible to comply. Even harmless wall-hangers were being put in jeopardy. The motivation for these changes was supposedly the outrages in Paris last November. The reaction throughout Europe was mind-blowing.

Practically every nation including the French rejected these proposals and

when it came to the vote in July, they came to naught. Finland was particularly active in the ensuing lobbying campaign. That country's reserve army would have been put out of business if Mrs. Ford's amendments went through and the Finns weren't having that. Currently the licensing situation in Ireland is unchanged.

So why do we hunt and shoot? The answer is simple. It's a basic instinct embedded in our genes! Long ago the earliest inhabitants of this planet rapidly discovered that to survive they had to have shelter, food and heat. They lived in caves, hunted and killed animals for food learning to make fire with which to cook and keep warm along the way. Animal pelts were used for clothing — cultivating vegetation developed into husbandry of the land. Realistically, that's where we are still at today.

Hunting for meat or food is an entirely natural activity

Despite all the progress and sophistication, these basics remain unchanged. Today's methods are no different from those engaged in by early man. We raise cattle, cultivate crops,



Hunting female deer.



Buffalo hunting in Africa.

bottle water, wear clothes and light a fire or switch on central heating if we are cold. Mankind has devised cleverer ways of mass producing literally everything and selling it in shops, supermarkets and showrooms. The only difference between hunting a wild animal and buying beef is that while it might take all day to hunt and shoot one deer, hundreds of cattle or sheep can be processed by a meat factory in a far shorter time. Hunting for meat/food is an entirely natural activity — its part of our make-up. If the cave-men hadn't hunted for food we wouldn't have survived as a species.

My colleagues and I hunt because we wish to do so and we thoroughly enjoy the experience (we are also active members of rifle and pistol clubs). Being out in the early morning with shouldered rifles, enjoying fresh scents and distant sounds, be it on the hill in Ireland or in some exotic foreign location, it's an experience that never loses its mystique. The days that we went home empty handed were just as enjoyable as those that were successful although there was an added bonus of fresh meat for the freezer. Down the years, in all kinds of weather, we hiked over mountains, trekked alongside meandering rivers through valleys or moved silently through forests. The

spectacular views and sights that we witnessed brought us closer to nature and most appreciative of the beautiful unspoilt countryside. More or less what early man also witnessed while hunting! We have huge advantages in the use of modern firearms and an understanding ballistics and marksmanship that our ancestors could never have imagined in their wildest dreams. Now that we are that bit older we have resorted to occasional use of 4 X 4's to bring us closer to the hunting area before we alight to walk and stalk. Unfortunately time moves on in every direction — the

mountain areas that we had free access to years ago are being swallowed up by national parks, afforestation and our rapidly expanding population.

The answer is to manage our game herds by culling

Human expansion is now encroaching rapidly on territory that traditionally provided habitat essential to sustaining the nation's wild animals. There's no getting away from this — many continents have a similar problem. The answer here is to manage our game herds by culling. However delicate the subject of culling may be, it is necessary to maintain a healthy deer population. If left to expand unchecked, many wild deer will literally starve due to reduced habitat and scarce feeding. Already farming interests are experiencing a huge increase in deer numbers grazing on their land. The national herd continues to expand despite reports of extensive poaching, most of which takes place after dark using powerful lamps.

No responsible hunter will condone wanton killing of wildlife, particularly so for financial reward, but it is happening. A similar situation exists on the African continent where expanding human settlement and farming is encroaching on what for centuries was traditional wild animal territory. All the while specific species, particularly



Trackers always share in the meat.

elephants are showing a marked increase in overall numbers in south central Africa. The fact is that more elephants competing for lesser feeding are killing off the capability of plant-life to recover which in turn will eventually lead to literally no feeding and the extinction of the species.

On a lesser scale this is exactly what will happen in the future to Ireland's wild deer herd. So is the answer to restrict the people or the animals? Sadly we all know the answer. Humans frequently suffer from scarcity of food too, even in developed African countries. Poaching for food is rampant in these countries, mainly at night using dogs, but it doesn't have much overall effect on numbers. When hunting on that continent my colleagues and I always ensured that the camp staff and trackers received a decent share of fresh meat. Perhaps its worth mentioning here that both the Cheetah and White Rhino are no longer on the endangered species list — thanks to breeding programmes paid for by the hunting community.

Not interested in stag trophy heads

Today we hunt deer for the freezer and in doing so ensure that we shoot only females. It's widely recognised that the correct method of containing deer numbers is to reduce the female population, and this we do in our own tin-pot way. We are not interested in stag trophy heads and indeed are of the opinion that it is not very smart to shoot out the biggest and best, thereby eliminating the blood-line. Hunting and culling are facts of life, although there are those who would have us think otherwise. I recall one particular lady who loudly proclaimed her opposition to deer hunting — until she was served roast venison with game chips in my home. Upon departure she quietly whispered to my wife "have you a joint of venison to spare?" Enough said.

One of the accompanying photographs is of two wild boars that were shot in West Wicklow a few years ago. These were most likely from the group that was unlawfully released into

the Irish countryside. Having hunted this species abroad I am aware that if they thrive in Ireland the standard .270, .243 or 6x5x55 calibre deer rifles will not be adequate for humanely despatching them. The minimum of a 180grain bullet from a .30 calibre rifle is recommended for African Warthog and similar applies to this species.

Finally, the Minister for Communications Denis Naughten TD made a startling statement during a recent RTE Radio interview concerning Ireland's new postal codes. When explaining the benefits of the system he offered as an example its usefulness in helping the Gardai to know where every privately owned firearm in the country is located. As if they didn't already know! He further compounded the gaffe by stating that postal codes will assist Gardai in getting to an emergency faster where there is a gun in the house! Many shooting folk including me, consider these comments to be unacceptable and offensive. Would it be reasonable to assume that the Minister shot himself in both

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Country Chat

A retired dog 'ducks down' in luxury, a genteel cuppa eases a breakdown and Billy's friends call a 'telephone time out.'

If I counted the dogs that have passed through my kennels over the years, without exaggeration it would run into the hundreds. That of course would include my own dogs past and present, which were usually gundog breeds. But there were also dogs in for training and what I term as 'ex-school' dogs in for boarding. Then there were the dogs brought to me for rehoming and, as you would expect, the poor little spuds through no fault of their own, were looking for another chance in life; for whatever the excuse, a reject is just that, a reject.

Now then, you could be forgiven for believing that my two kids would have had their pick over the years, indeed there would have been a large selection to choose from, but like the proverbial farmer's offspring with farm-stock, my two simply had their fill of dogs.

So, when my daughter Claire phoned me up to tell me that she got herself a five-year-old labrador from an animal shelter (council dog pound) and the usual 'sob story' that comes with them, to say I wasn't happy would be putting it mildly. Granted she was a lovely yellow labrador with a fantastic temperament, but the poor cratur' was no more five than I am, more like closer to seven or eight and had hanging teats like a breeding sow, what we doggy men sometimes refer to as deformed teats. She must have been used for breeding every year from her first heat until whoever could no longer register the pups or — more than likely — she could no longer produce an average size, healthy litter.

Of course all of this is speculation, but I would hazard a guess and say that everybody who came into contact with her all made money from her, except for the daughter that is. She actually spent a lot of money on her. But the sad irony of



Sunny was a lovely yellow labrador with a fantastic temperament.

it all, she only had her eight weeks when I got a phone call at six thirty in the morning from my hysterical daughter telling me: "Sunny went up the garden and lay down, and won't get up!"

When I got there I could see she was dead and although it was only guess work, I think she had a heart attack. My daughter's fiancé, son Alan and I buried her up the garden with a flowering shrub to mark the spot. There was no point taking her for a postmortem to confirm what the distraught youngster already knew, for I'd be damned if another outstretched hand should benefit from the poor thing, even in her death.

No mistaking the look on the wee dog's grey face.

There is light at the end of the tunnel to all of this though. Ceara, my ten-year-old retired German shorthaired pointer has been dispatched to take on the late Sunny's role as family pet, and to say she was lapping it all up would be an understatement. The crafty wee sod is putting on weight with all the treats

and good living. I had to take a measuring jug up to my daughter to show her what amount of grub she should actually get. Only the other day, she passed me in her new car and there was no mistaking the wee dog's grey face looking out of the side window like it was her sole role in life and when she saw me, I'm blown if the wee madam didn't actually duck down for me not to see her in the lap of luxury.

I retired Leo the cocker spaniel back in 2009, he was nine then and although he was a pain at times, it's fair to say he had earned his retirement. In July past he was sixteen-years-old and if we are to believe the seven dog years to every one of ours thing, the OAP is over a hundred years old. Let's hope Ceara has a long and healthy retirement as well.

Back on a Sunday afternoon, on a Bank holiday weekend and on a very busy road at that, my wee Landrover Defender jeep broke down, the first time ever since I bought it in 2006. I had just travelled a mile or so down the road with the seven dogs in the back, when it just ran out of steam and stopped. I

managed to let it freewheel onto the grass verge outside a big set of wooden gates, which was part of a high wall surrounding someone's homestead — the only grass verge along the entire road that was graced by thousands of daffodils in full yellow bloom. Without having to look I knew that all four of the jeep's huge wheels were resting on at least eight of them, having flattened treble that.

I phoned the AA and they said someone would be with me shortly. Surprisingly enough, for an English outfit, the AA's definition of 'shortly' would do us Irish proud. Not expecting anyone for at least a good hour or more, I opened the flask and poured myself a cup of coffee.

When in doubt, give George the shoot captain a shout. He is an excellent mechanic, but he is retired and as a rule I try to avoid lumbering him with any dirty jobs. I gave him the symptoms over the phone and he thought it could well be the clutch that was kaput.

Flippin' heck — it's the Billy Lewis ringtone

As I sat with the phone to my ear and my 'Royal Canine' flask cup in my hand, the big wooden gates opened. "Flipping heck," I said out loud. "I'll ring you back George," who at the time was on a day out with his wife and elderly mother. Now believe it or not, there is the odd soul scattered about here and there who doesn't mind having a chat on the phone with Billy Lewis, but my timing for such chats is usually never well-timed. A friend in Armagh used to shout, 'time up' and ended the call. But to be fair, he has advanced on that nowadays, and just goes, 'tick-tick-tick-tick.' Another friend, again from Armagh, goes even one better and has his mobile phone set to give a different ring tone if it's me he is calling. He is a builder by trade, so presumably he doesn't have to touch the phone in his pocket if it's a 'Billy Lewis ring tone' and just 'carries on trowelling.' Gordon Bennett!

Anyway, a lady came out of the gates

with one of those gardening belts on kitted out with various little pouches for small hand held garden tools, gardening gloves and a pair of secateurs protruding as well. "Can I help you?" she asked. "I have broken down and the AA are on their way and I am very sorry about your daffodils" I said, all in one sentence. "Oh that doesn't matter, would you like to come in for a cup of tea, while you're waiting." Now that is exactly the sort of response I have come to expect from the kind people in this little country of ours.

Eventually the AA man did arrive after passing me three times, and said he thought it had something to do with the 'back end' that was problem. Then he told me that the small van wasn't equipped for towing 4 x 4s and that he had passed on my plight to others who would turn up with a tow truck. "How long will that be?" I asked. "Oh they shouldn't be anymore than an hour or so" says he. And if I still have your interest dear readers, all the speculation on the breakdown was proven by those in the know a few days later to be simply the clutch, and nothing more

than the normal wear and tear expected.

Finally, I recall being out on a grouse moor in Perthshire in a beautiful part of the country between Pitlochry and Kirkmichael, accompanied by a group of friends with whom I regularly travelled to Scotland. It was the opening day of the grouse season, the Glorious Twelfth, and it was really exhilarating simply being out on the moor on the opening day, let alone with dog and gun. As we stopped for lunch on the hill, seated on a bed of August heather blossom, I chatted to Ian the hill keeper. Now Ian was typical of most Scottish gamekeepers that I have come across, very reserved in what he said, although the same could be said that could be the case with many gamekeepers. Maybe its because of the gamekeeper/client relationship, or maybe its because they believe we are all idiots and maybe who could blame them! I asked Ian why all of our dogs behaved like they were constipated all the time. Taking a sip of his tea and looking down at the ground in front of him, he spoke softly: "Because they aren't fit Billy" He was right I have never forgotten it.



Ceara, my ten-year-old retired German shorthaired pointer.

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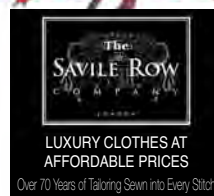
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Woodcock Hunting in Ireland Group's Clay Shoot Tops €1200 for Charity

People from the four provinces of Ireland descended on the small village of Ballivor, Co Meath on Saturday 2nd July for the Inaugural Woodcock Clay Pigeon Charity shoot.

The novel idea for the shoot had its origins in a Facebook group that has been in existence for over three years now. Biff Keenan Admin of Woodcock Hunting in Ireland explains: "We have been running a very successful and active group on social media now for over three years, and membership had expanded rapidly. The idea of the group is to see where, when and how many woodcock are being seen all over the Island of Ireland. However, as an interactive page we encourage stories and photos of members' hunting trips by the people best placed to judge the health of woodcock populations as they see them year in and year out — who better to do this than the woodcock hunter?"

From that start the idea of a clay shoot for charity by the group members emerged, as Biff explained: "The reason for the Charity shoot was simple! We wanted to give something back. Last year, we ran a raffle and members donated prizes and the proceeds went

towards cancer. This year it was decided that we should give something directly towards the conservation of our favourite sporting bird, so we decided to bring the National Woodcock Association of Ireland on board with us, and divide the funds equally between them and Our Ladies Hospital for sick children in Crumlin."

Shooting success as donations come in

The shoot itself turned out to be a great success both in terms of enjoyment and monies raised. There was a 50 bird sporting main event and a two man 25 bird flush which really tested shooters speed and accuracy.

One of the organisers Paddy Keenan said: "It was a fantastic day, most of us had never met face-to-face before except over social media. The craic on the day was mighty and we managed to raise over €1200 for our two charities."

Such was the generosity of members in terms of donating prizes and

travelling long distances to support the event (which organisers described as humbling') that they have concluded that the event will definitely be run again next year.

Reinforcing these sentiments Biff Keenan continued: "It was an auspicious day and the people that made this the stand out event and are worthy of mention. We would particularly like to thank Albert Titterington who sponsored the fabulous and unique first prize Trophy, the owners of Ballivor shooting grounds, James Coffey who supplied and cooked the food for the day, and indeed to anyone who turned up on the day to make this a great success that it was."

If you would like to become a member of Woodcock Shooting in Ireland, find out details of next year's Charity shoot and interact with like minded shooters or to contribute to research data just follow the link www.facebook.com/groups/WoodcockhuntingIreland/



The winner and runner up received their prizes from organiser Biff Keenan.

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By Margaret Annett

WINTER WONDERLAND ESCAPE



View from the Eggli.

Margaret writes that with the first fall of snow and temperatures dropping, we are all thinking about the delights of a powdery white wonderland and escaping.

Switzerland is the only destination and The Palace Hotel Gstaad is the only hotel to lay your head after a divine day enjoying the crystal clear air skiing, a gourmet dinner and perhaps a sleigh ride through the picturesque village and countryside, pass delightful churches with spires reaching up to the stars, here every building is a traditional Swiss chalet light up with festive fairy lights.

As you progress along your way behind Rascal and Ronier driven expertly by Walter, Marianne will enlighten and guide you to the essentials of Gstaad while from the top of the hill The Grand Dame will smile down on you. This simply is 'A Perfect World.'

Every detail of your vacation will be a delight: you can fly direct from Belfast to Geneva and upon arrival you

walk through the airport onto the train for Montreaux. To one side is Lake Geneva with snow clad mountain peaks rolling down to the water and on the other side vine yards rise up the hills, the railway skirts around the lake and through the steep fields. Before Vevey jetties with sailing boats nestle at the edge of the lake which continues North Eastward, here, at Montreaux we change onto The Golden Pass Train, which snakes its way ever upward, giving spectacular views of the lake and progresses through tunnels and villages, past farm houses and frozen lakes and as it does the snow falls. People travel from all over the world to absorb the delights and glories of this journey.

Don't even think about a car: the road goes over as we go underneath and

at some stations we stop to let the downward train pass. Onboard you will have time to enjoy the vista. At Alliers you are in the heart of the mountains and at Rougemont the first ski lifts appear. When you reach Gstaad your car awaits. To quote Stefanie you have arrived in 'Winter Wonderland.' The journey takes two and a half hours and the trains are on time.

'The Igloo Experience': means you stay at the Igloo one night and it is best you do so on your first night. Enjoy a hot chocolate in the Hotel, leave your luggage and take only essentials with you on The Sannenmoser Cable Car to the mountain top for your sleep over. This really is on top of the world, as there isn't anywhere much higher or much colder.



Junior Suite Tower and Deluxe Room.

‘The Snow Shoe Hike’: is essential and challenging but a hoot when you trip on your shoes and fall covered in snow one after the other elephant circus style you trek with a breathtaking view over the night lights of Gstaad in the valley. Inside the Igloo everything is ice adorned with animal skin. Your sleeping bag can cope with -20C, they have a sauna and a pool outdoors, so run fast.

When you return to ground zero: the following morning your first call will be The Palace Spa. Oh so regenerating and completely pampering! They also have a Mammam and in their pool you can decide to be either indoors or outdoors heated. Afterwards when you are cleaned up, dinner awaits in one of three restaurants offering Swiss

delicacies to International cuisine served with style and sophistication. The atmosphere is one of quiet extravagance and indulgence while all the staff are warm and welcoming.

One evening you could choose to take in a concert performed in the most beautiful church. It could be a small orchestra or a single Harpist, Coline Jaget played Mozart's Figaro fabulously last year.

You could also take a ‘Husky Expedition’: there is always a wonderful array awaiting you should you choose to shop. Schirato in the town is so Alpine and so tempting.

Don't forget to go skiing: the slopes are amazing, the mountains restaurants spectacular and when you decide you

have exercised enough your own butler will greet you with gluhwein and luscious nibbles. The only down side is three days will not be sufficient, you will wish to stay longer. And why not!!!

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Pointer & Setter Champion Stake 2016

A point for Steve Lound's pointer Frosted Elfin at Fleetstalk backed by Dominic Goutorbe's English setter Upperwood No Fly Zone.

The Pointer and Setter Champion Stake switches annually between England and Scotland and 2016 was Scotland's turn to host the event.

As usual we met at the Carfraemill Hotel where Trial Secretary Jon Kean welcomed everyone and introduced us to the Judges: Meryl Asbury, Shaun McCormack and Michael Houston; sponsor Bill Connolly of Connolly's Red Mills and Chief Steward Dr David McRobbie. Formalities over, we set off in a long convoy to drive the eleven miles of hill road to the beat selected for the first day by Headkeeper Drew Ainslie.

It was a sunny start with a good breeze for the thirty-seven runners made up of eleven dogs and twenty-six bitches: a field cut back slightly by a recent outbreak of kennel cough. There were fourteen English setters, twelve pointers and eleven Irish setters but no red and white setters or Gordons this year. It was good to see the English setters so well represented, no less than eight of the fourteen being owned or handled by Gerry Devine while Dominic Goutorbe ran five of the remaining six.

The gun was carried by James Grigg on the first day, with Rory Butler taking over his duties for the second day.

Alan Neill and Gerry Devine were the first brace into the line with an uphill run through longish heather. This was a particularly productive area for grouse, but not easy for the dogs as some coveys were running ahead of the dogs, while odd birds sat tightly tucked

into the heather making it easy for a bird to be missed. As we reached the top of the slope the heather became shorter and the grouse a little less abundant, giving the dogs a chance to get out and cover the ground. Headkeeper Drew Ainslie told me that this was typical of the stock this season: patchy with good numbers in places while other spots were short of birds.



Judge Michael Houston watches as Steve Lound casts off runner-up pointer Frosted Elfin at Fleetstalk.



Winning owner Bill Connolly, handler Gerry Devine, and English setter Ballyellen Cara.

The three Judge system was employed

The three Judge system was being used for the first time in the British Champion Stake though it is, of course, familiar in Irish pointer and setter trials. Reaction to the new system seemed mixed: some in favour and others having doubts. A single trial does not provide enough evidence to either praise or damn the system, but at the end of the two days I was not clear as to whether there was any real benefit in having an extra Judge over the usual two.

On a shooting day over pointing dogs (and all Field Trials are supposed to run 'as nearly as possible to an ordinary day's shooting' (Kennel Club Field Trial Regulations J(A)1), dog handlers will normally ask the Guns and any spectators to stay together until a dog points. If the shooting party spreads out across the hill, the dogs are liable to hunt wider and wider, taking the furthest out person as the centre of their beat. Under the two Judge system the Judges and handlers will normally walk

together in the middle of the beat, whereas with three Judges there is one central Judge and another on either wing. While this certainly helps at least one Judge to take a wider view of proceedings on each side, it also seemed to push the dogs further out than was perhaps necessary on a reasonably well-stocked moor.

At times only one Judge would have seen what was happening which meant that they would then have to inform their fellow Judges of what had been going on. In fairness, this also occurs at times under the two Judge system, particularly where the ground is uneven and dogs can disappear over the horizon without being off the beat. Overall, I was not convinced that having three Judges represented any significant advance on just having two, though nor can I say that there were any obvious disadvantages unless it was that a tripartite discussion takes up more time than when just two people are involved.

But back to the trial. As the morning progressed the weather began to

deteriorate and those of us who had left our waterproofs in the vehicles began to doubt the wisdom of that decision. Twenty-one dogs ran before lunch — ten brace plus a bye dog — and it was indicative of the difficult conditions that only six of those dogs were to make it through to the second day. Missed birds or birds that were flushed meant the end for a number of runners and though scent appeared to be strong, with some dogs taking grouse well out in front there were also times when birds were missed or flushed by experienced dogs for no apparent reason.

The cooler, wetter weather may have improved the scent

After lunch, with the rain now falling steadily, we moved to another beat where conditions seemed to be more in favour of the later runners. The cooler, wetter weather may have improved the scent or settled the grouse but whatever the reason the standard of work was somewhat higher from the last eight brace. Better groundwork and some



Mark Adams casting off Irish setter Ballydavid Spitfire.

good bird-handling meant that eight of the sixteen runners were called back to join the six from before lunch, giving us fourteen dogs to contest the second round the next morning.

A leisurely start to the second day saw us once more trekking out across the hill and through the wind-farm to the beat chosen for the final rounds. Rory Butler had taken over the gun from James Grigg as the Judges prepared to see the seven English setters, four pointers and three Irish setters that had made the cut.

It had been very wet overnight but luck was on our side and the rain eased up just as we started the day's proceedings. The standard of work was noticeably higher on the second day, probably helped by better conditions and the fact that these were the best of the dogs from the previous day. There were ample grouse for the purposes of the trial though no doubt the keepers would have been hoping to see quite a few more with this being a driven moor. The spring weather though had been less than ideal around hatching time

though a vast improvement on 2015's rain and gales.

It didn't take long to run the seven brace and we saw a mixture of top quality work leavened with the occasional flush, a few missed birds and the odd hare course. Two dogs were called back for an extension to the second round before the Judges called time on the 2016 Champion Stake and, after a short break for lunch, we wound our way back to the hotel to await the results.

The results came after two days of very good trialling

The trophies were presented by Wilson Young, Chairman of the Scottish Field Trials Association in front of the sponsor's display from Connolly's Red Mills. This was particularly appropriate when it was announced that Bill Connolly's English setter bitch Ballyellen Cara trained and handled by Gerry Devine was the winner. Steve Lound was the runner-up with his pointer dog Frosted Elfin at

Fleetstalk while Mark Adam's Irish setter dog Hunshigo Donard took third spot and Ms D Clark's Irish setter dog Bownard Cherry Cherry handled by Colin Forde was fourth. There were Diplomas of merit for three other runners: Dominic Goutorbe's English Setter bitch Upperwood Clover, David Hall's English Setter bitch Upperwood Ash Alert and Dominic Goutorbe's English Setter bitch FTCh Upperwood Hera.

Bill and Gerry were, naturally, both delighted with their win which culminated an exceptional season for Gerry with both Bill Connolly's and his own English setters. Both were off to shoot on the Twelfth, then Gerry would be back in competition on the 13th of August as a member of the English setter team at the Bettie Town Glen Prosen challenge. Two very good day's trialling, a remarkable result for the English setters which had appeared to be in serious decline just a few years ago and an interesting introduction to the three Judge system on the British trial circuit.



1.



2.

1. Runners and spectators towards the end of a wet first afternoon at the Champion Stake.
2. Alan Neill's pointer Papermill Major Don pointing grouse.
3. Headkeeper Drew Ainslie with Rory Butler who carried the gun on the second morning.
4. Mark Adams Irish setter Hunshigo Donard came third in the Champion Stake.
5. Ms D Clark's third placed Irish setter Bownard Cherry Cherry moving with pace and style.



3.



4.



5.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.

1. David Hall's English setter Upperwood Ash Alert who received a Diploma of Merit.
2. Dominic Goutorbe's English setter Upperwood No Fly Zone on point.
3. John Naylor casts off pointer Goddrib Bari of Bitternboom with Alan Neill's Amsenedy Humbug in the background.
4. Colin Forde casts off Ms D Clark's third placed Irish setter Bownard Cherry Cherry.
5. Carol Calvert with her Irish setter Glynlark Gamekeeper.
6. Judges Shaun McCormack, Michael Houston and Meryl Asbury discussing a point.
7. Dominic Goutorbe working out a point with English setter Upperwood No Fly Zone.
8. Two English setters: Dominic Goutorbe's Upperwood Clover and Gerry Devine's Gortinreagh Faith both on point in front of Judges Michael Houston and Meryl Asbury and Gun James Grigg.



8.

Driven Boar Hunting in Poland

From Selena Barr

A heavy hoar frost works in a hunter's favour when stealthily waiting for wild boar to be flushed through woodland.

A crunchy layer of frozen beech leaves are impossible for trotters to traverse without giving a waiting Rifle a handy heads up. Hunting driven boar in Poland is adrenaline-charged and super thrilling. With the beaters' voices reverberating around the eery woodland, everyone is on red alert, watching for signs of movement. With senses heightened, the challenge is to select the right animals according to the estate's management plan and kill them cleanly — ideally with just one shot.

Last year, Poland announced plans to wage war on its soaring wild boar population, after numbers of the feral animal increased by 150 per cent in just 10 years. In response, the government relaxed hunting restrictions in an attempt to take a chunk out of the boar population. The boar hunting season now runs for seven months instead of the three. It is thought that some 300,000 are now killed each year to keep the population in check.

Last December, I joined a team of 12 French hunters for a three-day trip to the remote village of Ostoja on the Poland/Czech Republic border. Organised by boar-mad outfitter Jean Philippe Bourgneuf, there was an expected bag of around 20 animals per day.

Accommodation was at the Czarny Tulipan, a traditional-style motel with spacious en-suite bedrooms situated about 45 minutes from the exclusive 15,000-hectare hunting ground. Run by father and son duo – Ryszard and Hubert – for the past 25 years, the unfenced hunting ground incorporates arable land and dense forestry where they cull 500 boar each season. English-speaking Hubert originally trained as a topnotch lawyer, but decided to divert his career to the hunting industry after he realised his unsuitability to a desk job. His team has been working with Jean Philippe for the past two years and as



Photos Tweed Media



First sighting was a dark hulking shape moving at pace.



The author with the new Sauer S404 with an Artemis stock, designed especially for women.

hunts in Eastern Europe go, this driven hunt was a very slick, professional affair.

Each day kicked off with breakfast at 6:30 so that we could make the most of the short December daylight hours. I didn't need an alarm clock however; I was already up and dressed an hour before I needed to be, buoyant with the chance to see some pigs. With the temperature well below zero I was sure to pile on the layers. It was cold but dry, so conditions were perfect. There was a real sense of anticipation.

The beaters were made up of local men along with their battle-scarred terriers. I wouldn't leave my baby daughter alone in the same room as these grizzly dogs, but they certainly knew their job in life and were insatiable for flushing wire-haired omnivores. The first drive saw the hunters surround a large area of dense cover. The trunks of the pine trees in front of me were peppered with bullet

holes, which was promising. I chambered a round into my new Sauer S404 with an Artemis stock, which has been designed especially for women.

The brush was too dense for me to see the boar

From the outset the terriers went wild, yipping ahead of the beaters in hot pursuit of game. Thankfully, all sizes, ages and sexes of boar were able to be culled. The only boar we had to avoid killing were sows with young. "Dzik! Dzik!" screamed the beaters. I understand very few words in Polish but I had made sure I knew the word for my quarry species beforehand. I could hear lots of footsteps rush past me but the brush was too dense for me to see the boar. Perhaps they would reveal themselves to my neighbour? Despite my varied and long hunting career, this was actually my first ever driven boar trip. The adrenaline was coursing through my body like I'd never experienced before.

Before arriving in Poland, I had visited Diggle Ranges near Manchester, UK for a practice shooting session on their brand new state-of-the-art running boar target. The concept of shooting a running animal is one that I found somewhat difficult to rationalise. I generally never shoot anything with a rifle unless it is static and I am steady either on sticks, bipod or from the rail of a high seat. Learning how to read a running boar and correctly place a shot requires a lot of practice. If an animal is wounded, a team of bloodhounds go out after each drive to follow up on blood trails. Even so, I was going to be certain that what I shot would be conclusive.

I was aiming for one-shot kills

My first sighting of the day was two hulking dark shapes moving at pace through the dense bramble cover. The boom of an unmoderated rifle followed



I opted for Full Boar ammunition from Hornady as they feature hard-hitting GMX bullets.



A team of bloodhounds go out after each drive to follow up on any blood trails.



Taking aim as screams of 'Dzik! Dzik!' are heard from the beaters.



Hunting horns were blown and we thanked the game.

and momentarily punctuated all other sounds. I guessed the gun 50 metres to my right had chalked up the first boar of the morning. When it came to ammunition I did not want to take any chances. Like I said, I was aiming for one-shot kills. Hunters often argue whether fast and light or slow and heavy ammunition is best. I opted for the latter as I wanted a round that was going to penetrate dense foliage. Some of the drives were in open woodland, but a few were in areas with lots of cover. After much consideration, I opted for Full Boar ammunition from Hornady as they feature hard-hitting GMX bullets for deep penetration and maximum weight retention.

My heartbeat counted the seconds as I heard another swarm of courageous little terriers in hot pursuit and coming closer. Suddenly, in my periphery, I picked up a frischling hurtling down the track behind me from the right. This was it, my turn. I had to wait until this surprisingly agile boar had created a wide enough angle away from my neighbour's peg for a safe shot. As it bolted towards me and into position, instinct took over. I picked up the line of the beast, squeezed the trigger and swung through the same as I would a pheasant. The boar's charging run was brought to an end with a dramatic cartwheel, signifying a well-placed shot in the area that mattered for a clean kill. I could see the carcass from my peg and was itching to go and inspect it, but walking off the gun line during the drive is strictly forbidden for very obvious reasons. When speed is of the essence, a Leica Magnus 1-6.3x24 scope offers an exceptionally broad field of view of 142 feet at 1x magnification making it ideal

for driven hunting when a complete overview of the terrain is needed.

After a brief lunch of barbecued boar sausages, boar stew and homemade cake, we were back outside in the cold to continue hunting. This time I was the end Rifle, so Ryszard and Hubert were both stood with me after placing everyone else out on the drive. I now felt an enormous amount of pressure to perform. So far the bag was sitting at 12 beasts, so there was an expectation that each Rifle would contribute properly. I dry mounted my rifle a couple of times and practiced my swing, then I stood as still as a statue, with only my eyes flicking from left to right repeatedly.

I mounted my rifle and fixed the red dot between its eyes

This drive was held in open woodland, with sweeping topography and plenty of backstops. I felt very comfortable shooting in this situation. “Dzik! Dzik!” screamed the beaters. My ears pricked up. Hubert whispered that the boar had doubled back and were now running towards me. Suddenly a boar appeared at the top of the hill in front of me. It was completely unaware that we were stood at the bottom, but it was super wary. I mounted my rifle and fixed the red dot between its eyes, following it as it ran towards me.

“Wait, wait,” whispered Hubert. Once it was within 20 metres I squeezed the trigger and instantly dispatched the boar. Ryszard looked at me completely shocked and started speaking animatedly

in Polish to Hubert. Worried I had culled the incorrect animal, I asked Hubert if there was a problem. He explained that Ryszard, who is in his 60s, had never actually seen a woman kill a boar before. In fact, no woman had ever shot a boar on this hunting ground. I felt quite proud for my kind. Ryszard snapped a branch from a beech tree and dipped it in the boar’s blood before ceremoniously shaking my hand over the carcass. I wore the branch in my hat all day and felt immensely satisfied with my shot — especially as I had an audience. The boar was in fact a very smart 70kg tusker, a trophy to take home.

That evening, after much slivovitz, the game was laid out in a plateau with my two boar near the front. After the hunting horns were blown and we’d thanked the game, Hubert announced the King and Queen of the hunt. Seasoned hunter Jean-Luc Mignonac was pronounced King, and to my amazement my name was called next. With a medal now adorning my neck, I felt that I had made a good account of myself on my first ever driven boar hunt.

Full package costs €3,000 per hunter, based on a private party of 12 hunters. This includes full board accommodation, three days hunting with 8-10 drives per day, hunting licence and insurance plus transfers from Berlin or Warsaw airport. Not included: drinks, flights and tips. For more information visit: www.wildboar-hunting-france.com



Announcing the author as Queen of the Hunt.

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Sauer 404 Artemis in .308 RRP: £2,955

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Harkila Kana jacket and trousers RRP: £639.98
www.harkila.com

Wild Boar Fever 7 DVD RRP: £24.99
Hunters Video www.huntersvideo.com

Running boar target
www.diggleranges.com

HUNTING TIPS AND ETIQUETTE FOR FIRST TIMERS

- Redial your scope for each drive. For close range shooting, ensure your scope is on a higher number like 8.
- Ensure you fully understand which species, sexes, sizes and ages of animals are allowed to be shot – it will vary on every hunt.
- Never shoot lead sows with young.
- Consider bringing a shooting stick with you to sit on.
- Wear as much high viz orange as you can stomach.
- Shoot in the same way you would driven grouse – only ever out in front or behind. Once the beaters are close only shoot behind.
- Only ever shoot a 15° angle from your neighbouring hunters.
- Always ensure your rifle bolt is kept fully open between drives.
- Do not make too much noise between drives. Speak quietly so that the game is undisturbed.
- Do not drink alcohol while shooting. Large calibre rifles and slivovitz do not mix well.
- Open season for boar in Poland is end of October until end of January.
- Check with your outfitter whether the hunting ground is free range or fenced.



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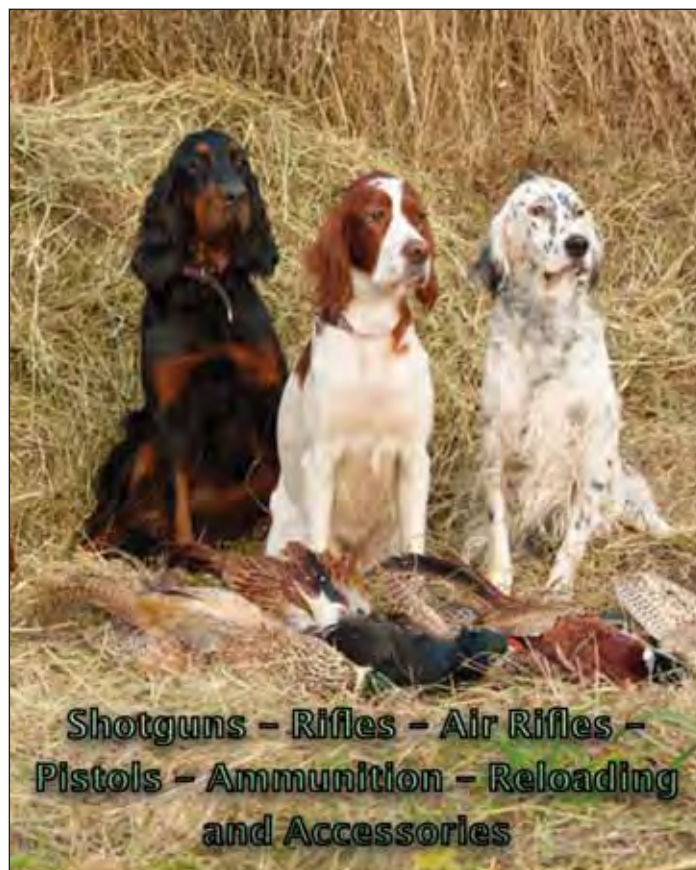
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By Derek Fanning

Hunting Mink In Cork - A Great Way To Pass The Summer

Pictured above is huntsman Brian McDonough.

I returned home after five or six hours of hunting and was filled with a warm glow and sense of satisfaction.

Over the summer this year I got out a few times with the County Cork Mink Hunt and enjoyed really fun days following a pack of 20 hounds along the watercourses of Cork and Kerry. There are only a few packs in Ireland, three which I am aware of, although there may be a few more unregistered ones. Mink Hunting has always been a minority sport in Ireland but its popularity has diminished somewhat in recent years. The same downward trend applies to beagling, another fine pursuit, which has witnessed a number of packs being disbanded over the last decade or so. Both mink hunting and beagling are great exercise, they bring you into beautiful countryside and the music of the hounds is special to hear. I followed the County Cork along the Awbeg River, the Glen River and Blackwater this summer and each evening, as I returned home after five or six hours of hunting, I was filled with a warm glow and sense of satisfaction.

The Blackwater rises in the Mullaghareirk Mountains in County Kerry and flows eastwards through County Cork, Mallow and Fermoy. It flows through County Waterford before draining into the sea at Youghal Harbour. It's 105 miles long and is renowned for being a fine salmon fishing river. The salmon numbers had been declining but in 2006 the government banned the commercial

netting of salmon off the Irish coast which led to the revitalisation of the numbers.

We hunted not far from the small town of Rathmore on the Cork / Kerry border at an early stage in the river's life when it was only ten feet across and quite shallow, no more than knee height. We found after ten minutes and the hounds pursued the mink up and down the river along the same five hundred metre stretch for an hour. We followed, up to our knees in the water, trying not to fall over on the slippery stones. At one stage the quarry left the river and headed inland for a hundred metres. After 15 minutes it decided to leave the land and return to the river. At one stage the hounds went silent and hunt followers banged the riverbank with their sticks trying to flush out the quarry again. The mink made a break for it once more, pursued by the very excited hounds whose speaking seemed amplified in the river setting. Five minutes later the lead hounds caught up with the mink and dispatched the animal. It was over in a split second. It had been a great hunt and huntsman Brian McDonagh had once again provided great sport.

Brian blew the hounds away and spent the next three hours drawing the river. The scenery was special, featuring a lush, verdant mixed scene of pasture fields, hedgerows and small woods

stretching away to the Kerry Mountains in the distance, including the distinctive shape of the Paps. There were patches of scent but nothing to rival the first excellent hunt. The sun came out and it was warm. We leaned on our long sticks, peering at the light-dappled water, looking for signs of mink; we walked in the river; bashed our way through nettles, thistles and briars on the riverbanks; and jogged through the fields. Finally, Brian had had enough and blew for home and a couple of very welcome pints.

The hounds found immediately beside the pub

A few weeks later we hunted along the Glen River, a watercourse several feet wide in the attractive location of the Boggeragh Mountains. We started at the Nead an Iolair / Eagle's nest pub at a crossroads called Nad which featured an excellent, dramatic stone sculpture of a golden eagle. Golden eagles obviously once inhabited this remote hilly spot. Eagle's Nest was a very nice pub with attractive stone walls inside and a homely feel. There was a War of Independence cross opposite the pub and a Memorial further down the road commemorating a number of men who were shot dead by the British. The hounds found immediately beside the pub and we had an excellent hunt for 30 minutes but then it went quiet with only

patches of scent for the rest of the day.

Among the 20 followers was a missionary priest who has lived in Nigeria for 30 years and was home for a couple of months. He told me about some of his experiences abroad. Mink hunting is one of the things he looks forward to doing when he returns to Ireland from the missions. The river was very scenic, sometimes wide and slow moving, sometimes narrow rocky and swift. When it went quiet for a long time a couple of the followers joked with the priest to call God and ask for better hunting, 'seeing as you have a

direct line!' said one. This was all said very good naturedly without the slightest hint of any cynicism.

He had come afoul of wasps

After four hours it was decided to blow for home which meant we would be able to see the second half of the All Ireland hurling final between Tipp and Kilkenny, one of the great matches of the year. I was glad the day hadn't been too strenuous as I was sporting a calf muscle strain. Walking back to the pub the huntsman told me he had come afoul of wasps when walking along the river.



Entering the Blackwater and casting for the quarry.



Followers pause to watch the action along the Glen River near Nad in the Boggeragh Mountains.



Another fine hunting day was enjoyed by many

He said he was stung several times including a number of times on the head.

Many years ago the County Cork was known as the Cork City Otter Hounds. Some years ago that changed to the County Cork Mink Hunt because having the word city in the name didn't represent the situation anymore. When the pack was formed in 1928 the members were all city people. But when that changed and the members were from all over the county, a different name was appropriate.

The County Cork also hunts in other parts of the country by invitation.

Therefore, in recent years it has hunted the Nore near Durrow, and the King's River in Kilkenny. The pack hunts every Sunday from May to September and occasional bye-days. They also hold, with the Desmond mink hounds, a weeklong event featuring a hunt every day.

Secretary Aiden Kearney expressed the passion which followers have for their pastime. 'We work our holidays around our hunting,' he told me. 'We are not sun people. We hunt. That's what we live for.' The number of followers each Sunday varies from ten to forty, with the higher numbers turning out for the better country. The majority of the followers either beagle or foxhunt during the winter hunting season. Brian McDonagh has been huntsman for 34 seasons. 'Brian is based in Ovens,' explained Aiden, 'and he looks after the bitches. A couple of us look after the doghounds.' Many of the hounds hunt as well during the foxhunting season. The pack includes Welsh long-haired hounds, black and tans, harriers, and foxhounds. A typical day out mink hunting begins with the unboxing of the hounds between 11 and 11.30. A day out can last from four to six hours. There are a wide variety of ages amidst the followers, from children to OAPs, as well as a few members of the fair sex. The atmosphere is friendly and the huntsman makes a big effort. He's very enthusiastic about his hunting and strives to give the best day out possible for the followers.

‘Whether the weather be good, or whether the weather be bad’ — the team from the Great Game Fairs of Ireland deliver SUPER GAME FAIRS

Shanes Castle Fair competing with international soccer and the challenges of poor weather

This year’s Irish Game Fair at Shanes Castle looked set to break all records with more trade stands than ever before including two massive new marquees 50 metres x 15 metres packed with fine food; a hugely successful preview of the Battle of Antrim re-enactment staged two weeks in advance; a huge prize fund; a real international focus and the best publicity ever for any Irish countrysports event.

Then ‘lightning struck twice’ in that, amongst a huge surge of all Ireland soccer mania, both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland qualified in the ‘Euros’ and we learned that we had to compete with the huge attractions of their qualifying matches on both days. And the weather forecast for both days didn’t look too clever either.

Saturday was a dull, overcast day and in spite of the clash with the Northern Ireland v Wales match the day went fairly well to plan, with record crowds, as visitors simply came and went a little earlier.

We had hoped that the

Sunday forecast of heavy rain showers, thunder and real lightning would not happen — in fact it was worse! Heavy persistent rain hit the fair in the morning and we feared for attendance especially as the ROI match was scheduled for just after lunch. However we were delighted and somewhat humbled to see the crowds who turned out in what was in effect a ‘two coat day.’ Yes, we had to compromise on some of the attractions — falcons don’t fly well in bad weather and our spectacular cavalry charge for our Battle of Antrim re-enactment had to be cancelled.

However most of the events went

ahead as normal and our strategy of widening the aisles, in order that ground conditions would be good, worked well. As can be seen in the [irishtv.ie/antrim-matters-85-2](http://www.irishtv.ie/antrim-matters-85-2) video of the fair on Sunday, filmed by Chris in truly appalling conditions, people simply forgot about the weather to enjoy the Irish Game Fair of the season. See <http://www.irishtv.ie/antrim-matters-85-2> In fact the Welsh gundog team in the international gundog event made the best of the conditions and Wales ‘did the double — having beaten NI in the soccer they won the international gundog event, top dog etc.

There is always a certain satisfaction



The Fine Food Pavilion



Saturday crowds



The Craft and Fine Food Pavilion

to be derived in delivering a successful event in adversity and there are always highlights to be remembered. This year for me it was how well we had 'bought into' the NI year of Food & Drink 2016 delivering one of the largest fine food festivals in NI and presenting the food impeccably in a brand new 50m x 15m marquee sponsored by North Down Marquees with the overflow joining with crafts in a marquee of the same size.

And how we gave our host area of Antrim big events over two weekends including delivering not only a very successful fair, in poor weather, and a very colourful and successful reenactment of the Battle of Antrim in the 1798 rebellion, in Castle Gardens in

great weather! The latter and re-enactments at the fair were staged with the support of the Ulster Scots Agency.

The fair was staged with the support of the Betterhomes Group; Tourism NI, YOFD, Antrim & Newtownabbey Council and the Ulster Scots Agency and plans are already in place for next year's event on the 24th & 25th June 2017

On to Birr and what a difference two sunny days make

The Irish Game & Country Fair at Birr Castle was bathed in sunshine for the two days and broke all records for the number of stands, the number of competitions and competitors and the

crowds that attended. With car parks under real pressure new plans have been already put in place for the 2017 ROI countrysports event of the year which is planned for the 26th & 27th August 2017.

Once again the fair made a real contribution to the economy of the area, with Mid Ireland Tourism reporting that accommodation was booked out to around 40Km from the venue and describing it as their busiest weekend of the year. So, if you are planning a visit next year book your accommodation of choice early.

In 2017 both fairs will have a much greater international flavour and not just in terms of the top countrysports competitions to be staged in Ireland.



Re-enactment in Castle



Enjoying Birr's day-long entertainment.

With pump priming from the Taoiseach's Local Engagement Diaspora fund we launched IRELAND'S COUNTRYSPO RTS DIASPORA initiative (full details elsewhere in the magazine and on our web site). You can play your part by inviting your friends or members of your family living outside Ireland to visit around the time of the fairs. We will send them free tickets to the fairs and invite them to join us for some light refreshments in our Diaspora Pavilion at each event.

On to Ballynahinch and the weather was like the Curate's Egg 'good in part'

The Ballynahinch Harvest Festival at Montalto faced several challenges this year including working around major building work at the estate; a number of competing events in the area and once again the vagaries of the Irish weather. The estate's building work meant that the main arena had to be moved and acts re-scheduled; a certain amount of camouflaging of piles of rubble and containers had to be carried out with cammo tarpaulins and netting and over a mile of white rope and fencing used to protect recently sown areas. This was

done so successfully that few if any visitors noticed the camouflaging and visitors respected the roped off areas.

And while we stated that the Shanes Castle event had been a little compromised by the weather — we hadn't experienced the worst yet that could befall outdoor events. The Saturday forecast was dire and the actuality worse in that heavy and persistent rain was the 'order of the day' — in fact it was a 'two coat' day for anyone having to be outdoors for the whole day.

Fortunately for our exhibitors, they enjoyed excellent conditions in the large exhibition hall with shell scheme, lighting, and even carpeting. We felt sorry for some of the competing events in the area, which were completely outdoor or tented.

Sunday arrived and the clouds had rolled back to deliver a superbly sunny day, where the crowds could enjoy the grandeur of the Montalto Estate in its autumnal livery. And a superb range of competitions and attractions including the house being open to the public; exciting re-enactments; a unique display of punt gunning by Liz Edgar and a gun fitting clinic by Michael Yardley.

Overall, the event could be described as a qualified success but unfortunately while we enjoyed the challenges of organising a 'boutique' fair in the very beautiful Montalto Estate, and we thank the Wilson family for hosting the two fairs there; in our opinion the changes being made to the estate make it unsuitable for the type of event that we wish to stage. Therefore a new venue is being considered for 2018.



Fair launch in Ballynahinch

PHOTOGRAPHED AT SHANES CASTLE



PHOTOGRAPHED AT SHANES CASTLE



PHOTOGRAPHED AT SHANES CASTLE



PHOTOGRAPHED AT SHANES CASTLE



PHOTOGRAPHED AT BIRR CASTLE



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

2016 SEASON SALMON RUNS SHOW IMPROVEMENT

Now that another salmonid and trout angling season has concluded we are happy with reports for the first time in years that there is an encouraging improvement in the spring and grilse run with back end fish showing up in good sizes. There are a number of rivers that have also seen a remarkable improvement in the seatrout numbers especially in the northern and western regions, but mostly the rivers out of range from the farmed salmon cages.

The River Moy is once again the most prolific with anglers reporting good catches on the renowned fishery pools around Swinford and Foxford (250 salmon weekly averages) and Ballina where the run has increased up to 50% average since last year's low base.

There are a number of closed rivers or rivers only open to catch and release that are showing good numbers of salmon returning which should assist in their re-opening in the coming seasons. Sadly, angling participation on our rivers has declined according to permit and licence sales, but this is mainly due to the lack of investment in the sport and fisheries in the past.

The FISSTA campaign of lobbying never ends as we now try to convince a new government and Minister to support a new plan to bring salmon and seatrout angling and stocks back to its former glory. However, non angling visits to

viewing points on our rivers under the FISSTA promotion of the Wild Atlantic Salmon Way (WASW) has increased nature lovers from all over the world to see at first hand our wild salmon and seatrout leaping the falls on the WASW which are located on the Irish west coast driving route called the Wild Atlantic Way (www.wildatlanticway.com) Thankfully, the rains kept coming this season giving the season a much needed boost to the local economies on the banks of the main salmon rivers of Ireland.

MINISTER OF STATE FOR GAELTACHT & NATURAL RESOURCES SEAN KYNE TD MEETS FISSTA ON THE RIVER

FISSTA are delighted to report that Minister Sean Kyne visited one of our rivers on his visit to Donegal recently and agreed to meet again in the near future, when he would source more information regarding the various questions that were put to him regarding wild salmon conservation.

One of the FISSTA priorities was to introduce Minister Kyne the new technology called RAS which ensures cleaner water. We discussed the need for tougher planning on Pollution and new applications should state in the future where the source of adequate water supplies will come from in their

planning submissions, bearing in mind the need for large quantities during mid-Summer to treat Amoebic Gill Disease.

Our discussion centred on ending state grants that support 'pollute to produce' cages and we asked him to get IFI to resume a more active opposition to sealice. (Not one anti sealice press release or report was issued since Joe Mc Hugh became minister)

He agreed that IFI needs to be rebooted to work for us and get fish back into the rivers with their agreed plan. It is fish that creates jobs not surveys or tar and cement amenities for tourists that will never return if the fish aren't there. Review present policy of fish counters based on new science. SSC to oversee new IFI plan to get every river back to former glory using a mini Moy template. The Minister promised to support our angling promotions such as the various FISSTA projects underway.

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE AT MCGILL SUMMER SCHOOL

FISSTA took the opportunity to press IFA PRESIDENT JOE HEALY who was a Panel Member at the McGill Summer School on Tackling Climate Change about his support for farming unsustainable salmon cages causing pollution

The panel comprised: Senator Grace O'Sullivan, Green Party, Prof John

Sweeney, former lecturer, Geography Department, NUI Maynooth, Fr Sean McDonagh SSC, Columban, eco-theologian, contributor to Papal Encyclical 'Laudato Si', Joe Healy, President, Irish Farmers Association (IFA). Moderator: Paul Hannigan, President, Letterkenny Institute of Technology

Mr Healy was made aware that this open net cage industry continues to bring down the good name of agricultural farmers down with their indefensible actions and methods they adopt to get their tonnage from the marine environment.

It was stated that he could be the first President to get the salmon farmers (do not mix them up with the shellfish producers ie oysters and mussels etc – who they also represent) to clean up their acts of pollution from chemicals and cage waste by using RAS technology. In other words 'clean water in / clean water out' technology that is well established methods in Europe for ten years now.

- We asked him to question the fish farmers the farmers :
- Why they do not use the new technology for a cleaner industry as IFA members have to do?
- Why do they resist the FISSTA campaign to clean up their act?
- Marine Harvest have resigned from ASFF over sea lice numbers. Why?
- Shellfish Sector may lose out on €241 Million Seafood Development Programme to 2020 due to ISGA sea lice record
- Taxpayers will not pay for more sea lice, disease and pollution - IFA AQUACULTURE & ISGA must no longer hide under the cover of the good clean reputation of our farmers record.
- FISSTA was the key Irish NGO international speaker at NASCO salmon conference in Germany in June where 19 salmon countries debated salmon farming issues – Ireland was the worst offender on various issues.



FISSTA promotes angling and active conservation at every opportunity.

SALMON NETTING

This was the scenario in court: a fisherman gets €150,000 to stop netting for salmon, he then goes and gets charged for netting salmon with a net of 750 yards long, while being paid compensation of €150,000 to not do it. He then turns up in court with €1000 to pay a possible fine for destroying the whole area of fish life!

Salmon caught in these nets would be making their way up all the small spate rivers all the Dingle Peninsula, they would be spawning in the lochs and streams way up in the valleys and mountains. After travelling thousands of miles down the North Atlantic onto the west coast of Ireland, instead they getting caught in these greedy so called fisherman's nets and being sold to all the restaurants in the area.

The sickening fact is that we the public are paying these netmen compensation to not net while to head out every morning and evening from Brandon pier. You can see them yourself every day with the fibreglass boats and outboard engines.

TROUT ANGLERS UNITE AS WATER POLLUTED AGAIN

The Trout Anglers Federation of Ireland (TAFI) wishes to express its disappointment and frustration regarding the direction being taken by the Board of Inland Fisheries Ireland with regard to their proposed closure of IFI Fish Farms

and the cessation of the production of Freshwater Trout.

The Boards failure to consult with, or respond to, TAFI's request for a meeting on this issue shows a blatant disregard of this Federation and its members. TAFI is dismayed that a report commissioned by Inland Fisheries Ireland at great expense to the tax payer is disregarded and its recommendations ignored and not acted upon.

The failure of Inland Fisheries Ireland to invest in this essential support, which is vital to our Trout Fisheries and to our economy and, leads us to suspect that there are those within IFI that believe the privatisation of this important asset is the way forward.

It is the view of TAFI that the massive contribution made by Trout anglers to the Brown Trout Fisheries and to the sport of Trout Angling, and to the economy of this Country, is purposely being disregarded by IFI. It is also our view that but for the development work carried out by our members there would be no Trout in our Lakes, and Rivers for Tourists and locals to enjoy, and not to forget our role in marketing and protection. All of this work comes at a serious financial cost to our members. It is high time the Board of IFI recognises this contribution and starts to make a reciprocal contribution to our member clubs for the work being done.

TAFI will strenuously oppose the closure of the trout hatcheries at



Tom Brown and his boys from Co Donegal who go to the beach if it's sunny and fishing on the Glen River when it's raining - and not a computer game in sight!

Roscrea, Cullion, and Cong, our members want to see the Board of IFI to commence immediately an investment plan to upgrade these facilities rather than to abandon them.

We are calling on the Board of IFI to start working with the Trout Federations to build a sustainable product rather than

follow the agenda of those whose obvious intention is that of self-interest.

OBITUARIES

Tom Lillis

The very sad news of the passing of Tom Lillis recently in Portugal has

shocked the angling community in Ireland and abroad where he represented Irish angling interests. Tom was a stalwart of the Irish Federation of Sea Anglers - former Chairman, International Team Manager, International angler. He was the face of the sea angling having represented his members with great gusto and was known all over the globe. Our thoughts go out to all family and friends. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam.

Ted O'Riordan

The death also took place recently of Ted O'Riordan from Tralee who was a leading light in Kerry angling for many years. Ted O'Riordan, was formerly of The Kerryman Newspaper where he wrote an angling column for many years in which he promote our sport especially in salmon and seatrout. He was a great supporter of FISSTA and was a recipient of FISSTA Journalist of the Year on numerous occasions when friends in the press were scarce. He advised our late Chairman Jim Maxwell founder of FISSTA on many aspects of strategy and ensured that our federation got great coverage every week in his most popular column which was read not just in Kerry but internationally because of his expert reporting. Ted was the ultimate gentleman who was determined to get the story in his own persuasive but gentle way. His articles were comprehensive and accurate and now serve as a superb record to the huge amount of campaign work done back in days when driftnetting was an acceptable practice, with a ban being rejected by many Governments and Ministers. Ted was a great family man and our sincere sympathies go to his beloved wife Maureen and sons and daughters John, Mary, Brendan and Irene who were his pride and joy.



Lady Luck has been smiling on some anglers this season.

Seven tips for fly fishing

I have taught many people how to fish, yet and I am still amazed just how many anglers have bad technique fly casting technique. This is nothing to be ashamed of as it can be fixed, but it really does pay to find a good casting coach to help you with this. Although I have been a fly fishing instructor for many years, I took some lessons when I was sitting my instructor courses and it helped me a lot. I have shown thousands of anglers, including many whom had been fishing for years, how to improve their casting, and many said they wished to have had that instruction much earlier in their fishing careers. But let's assume that our angling readers are already reasonable casters and I'll reveal some of my top tips for fly fishing which may increase your catches.

Tip one: Try to be as silent as possible. Walk softly as fish are as sensitive to noise and vibration as they are to visual warnings. Walking lightly on the river banks and trying to wade slowly and quietly are very important tactics. In stillwaters or loughs, noisy or rocking boats also scare fish. Remember you are trying to fool a wild animal into thinking that you are not around.

I remember fishing with my father when I was very little, possibly as young as 6 or 7 years of age, he taught me a valuable lesson about being stealthy. I was excitably running along the river bank while we where fishing,

so he told me to move slowly and walk lightly, as trout can hear. I thought he was mad — trout don't have ears or I would have seen them — and back then I did not know about their lateral lines, which are the sense organs fish use to detect movement and vibration in the surrounding water. Later that night while I was having a bath he came in told me to put my head under the water and then banged the side of the bath. Just like the trout, I could hear and feel vibrations. I am not saying you half drown your children when teaching them to fish, but that lesson stuck in my head and it definitely made me catch

more trout. So be quiet.

Tip two: Use your eyes to see what insects are in or on the water. If you see what is the most abundant bug on the river or lake it's a good chance then that's that what your trout maybe eating . It's not always the case, as it could be a time of year they are taking small fish, or they are may be being selective, perhaps picking out a certain insect, sometimes even at a stage of life, say for instance an emerging fly. But that said, if you match the hatch, or find what the trout of eating and try to copy it, you will certainly do much better than before.

There are many books and information is available on the Internet to help you with this. I remember as a youth looking at an excellent book, 'Trout Fly Recognition,' by the late great English fly fisher John Goddard, which really helped me a lot. I was lucky enough to meet John in later life and tell him. So that's tip two - try and match the hatch and remember size of fly is important.

My favourite type of fishing is perhaps dry fly fishing, but at times I also need to think subsurface for trout. At least two-thirds of the diet of trout, perhaps more, is taken under the water, not on it . Even if, like me, prefer dry fly fishing, knowing what nymphs, larvae and crustaceans are available beneath the surface can help you decide on fly selection.



Just another day at the office - the Author with a fine trout taken on the fly.

Tip three: Leader length. When learning to cast, nine-foot leaders are perhaps a useful standard length. As your technique improves, you may face some situations which can often call for longer leaders, for example fishing dry flies on stillwaters, loughs or some rivers. Sometimes, wet fly fishing from a boat requires longer leaders and also when more flies are often fished, you need 12 to perhaps 20 feet at times. That said, at times a shorter leader is also useful as on rivers when fishing streamers as this often requires no more than 7-8 feet of leader material, and shorter leaders also make casting heavy flies easier. Another time might be when using a sinking line on a river, it often pays to get your flies down and fishing at a similar speed. So experiment with your leader length from time to time.

Tip Four: On large rivers and stillwaters, fishing from the bank, search the close water first. A regular mistake is to cast over fish in the excitement of making a long cast. Lots of my fish are caught with quite short casts. At times we do need to cast long but, more often than not, short casts

catch the fish. Its also a lot easier to set the hook.

Tip Five: Avoiding being broken. I often hear anglers saying they were smashed or had their hook straightened. It has happened to me a few times in my life, and I could tell you some great stories about being broken by massive fish, but not often. Most anglers use far too stiff a rod and don't let the fish run while playing them. Playing a good fish takes practice, the trick being to be firm but not too firm. Practice keeping your rod at a 45-degree or lesser angle so you are playing the fish with most of the rod, not just the tip. When you think about it, a flyrod is just a spring and acts as a shock absorber while hooking and playing fish.

Tip Six: Stalking fish keep your approach low, using any cover you can such as long grass, rushes or bushes. If possible, try to keep a low profile especially on high banks with the skyline behind you. Remember, fish that are deep can see you from farther away than fish that are close to the surface. Their ability to see is uniquely adapted to locate food and distinguish predators

from above. And try not to wear bright or vivid fishing clothing, just try and blend into your surroundings.

Tip Seven: Perhaps I should have begun with this one. Stay safe. Watch for uneven banks, or river bed if you are wading. Mind you take care if there are boulders, or mud. The list is endless. Make sure you wear a hat and sunglasses protect your eyes. Good quality polarised sunglasses like Costas (my favourite) also help with spotting fish and most importantly help when wading, spotting rocks, deep holes and underwater structures. I remember last year while hosting a trip in Norway, fishing a big river in sunny conditions that my sunglasses cut through the glare of the sun reflecting on the water and showed many obstacles only visible through the polarised lenses. We should always be careful wading, I cannot stress that enough; I only wade if I need to. I see a lot of anglers wading unnecessarily. And always use a wading belt, as it may save your life someday.

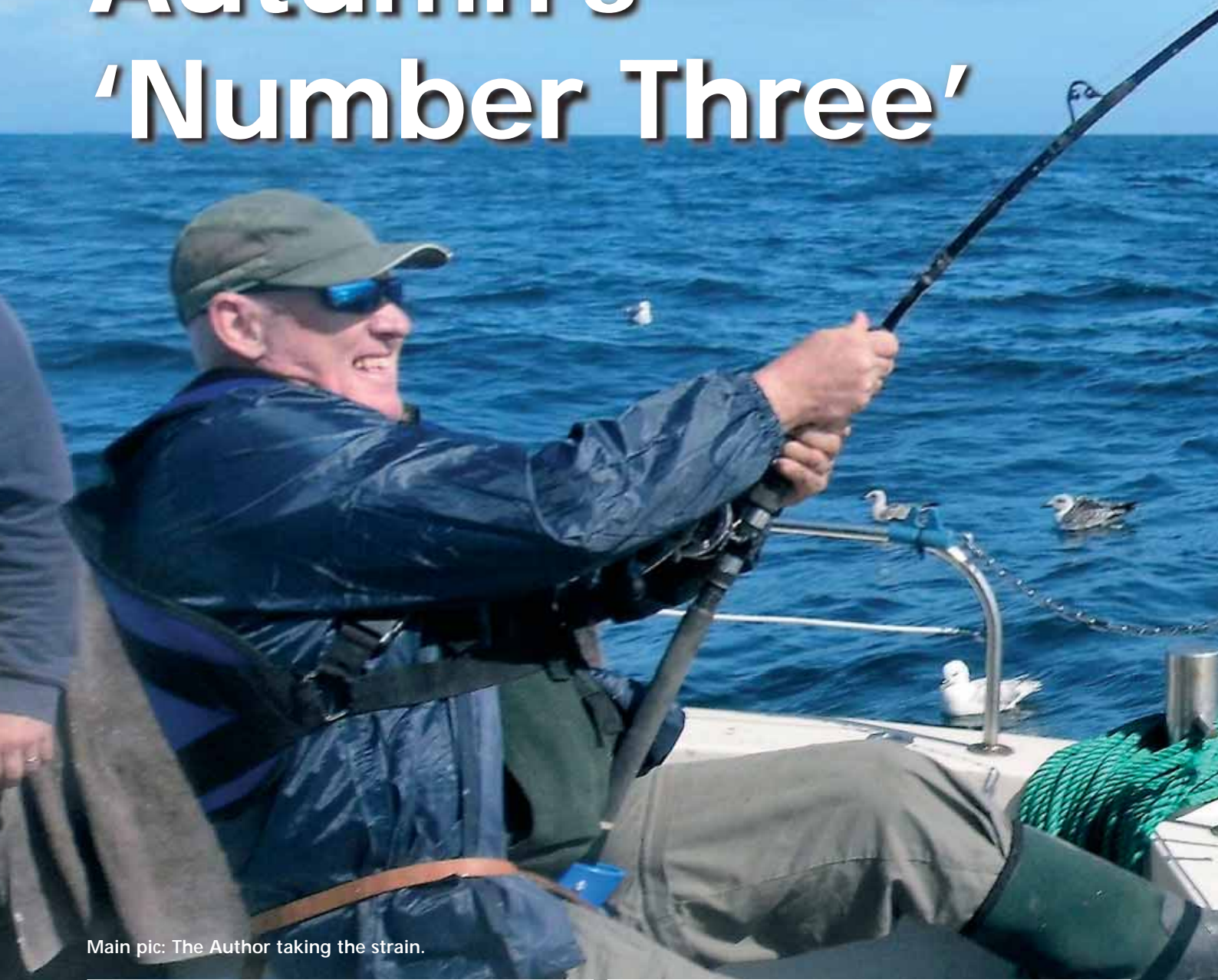
I hope these tips help you enjoy your fishing. Tight lines.

Stevie Munn is Game Angling Consultant for Marryat Fly Rods and Partridge hooks. Works full time as a fishing guide, writer and qualified game angling instructor in fly casting and fly tying. He has also appeared in many angling books, magazines and DVDs and gives casting demonstrations at angling events. He has fished many places around the world and grew up fishing on rivers and loughs of Ireland where he often guides. He runs teaching courses in Ireland and host groups to fish in Canada, Norway, Argentina etc. You Email anglingclassics@aol.com For more information visit www.anglingclassics.co.uk



Safely back for this one as well.

It's Time For Autumn's 'Number Three'



Main pic: The Author taking the strain.



Anticipation as the rod bends.



Nick gets the tag in quickly to return the fish without delay.

For the vast majority of fieldsports enthusiasts the months of late summer/early autumn means only two things, deer and ducks, but for me there is a third, sea fishing!

Shooters will have waited since early spring, preparing and refining their gear. Training up their dogs and scouting out their permissions in preparation for the new season. A September rabbit is considered the best eating one of the year.

But I am now primarily an angler and September is also significant for anglers. The sea is at its warmest in September, pike and other coarse fish tend to go on a last feeding spree before the winter slows everything down. The September grilse run is the last run of salmon left, the June and midsummer grilse runs having been netted out many years ago. This run of one sea winter fish is possibly the best chance one has of catching a salmon.

Late summer and autumn offer some of the best angling for sea anglers all year. Not only that, but with the arrival of the herring off our southwest coastline come some of our most impressive wildlife in the shape of humpback and fin whales and bluefin tuna also arrive. A protected species, but offering the chance to catch and release probably the most impressive fish in the sea. I was lucky enough to see these when fishing off Donegal last year, a sight I will not forget. If you can get out on a charter boat in September, even if you catch nothing, it's very possible you could have a trip of a lifetime if you keep your eyes open.

It was not until September this year that I could find a boat with a day free to charter in the area I wanted off west cork. I had never even seen a common skate caught and this area has gained a reputation in recent years for them. The largest I had heard from this area this year was 199 pounds, which is over 18 stones in old money. I could not imagine how you catch one of these on a rod and line.

The skipper who caught this beast was booked out all September, not to think that we were going to settle for second best, but we got lucky and managed to book a day out with Nick Dent from Baltimore. Nick has many years experience angling in this area. We hoped to see at least one caught but Nick's best day this year he had seventeen to the boat.

I was going out with an old

angling mate,

Ross

Macklin

from Cork and he booked us in for early September. It's a long drive from North Co. Dublin to West Cork but well worth it. I knew I had suitable hooks, but strong swivels and leader I did not have, so arrived prepared to buy from the Skipper. As it turned out Ross made me up a trace, but no wire needed as skate have crushing jaws rather than sharp teeth.

As we were spending the day at sea from 9.30 in the morning I drove down the previous evening and pitched a tent for the night. This tactic allows me to be relatively fresh in the morning and by the time most people are up there is no sign that some anglers have spent the night in the spot except a small area of flat grass. We are careful about this as we may need to use the spot again. We had time to get breakfast in town before loading the gear onto the boat.

Don't be shy about asking for a single seat

Often on charter boats you can have as many as six or eight anglers. We had agreed to pay the higher price and charter the boat between four of us. This not only allows each angler more space, but there is less chance of tangles if fishing gets 'hot.' Six anglers fishing for shark generally means only four lines in the water at a time anyway, as all have to be lifted if a fish takes a bait to avoid a tangle or break-off. Of the four of us aboard, I only had met John the previous evening, Ross I knew and Ken showed up at the boat on the morning. It's a great way to make friends, I have never been angling where people did not help each other out and leave the boat as if they had known each other for years. So don't be shy about asking for a single seat if that is all you can get for a trip.

Anyway we headed straight to a spot where Nick thought we would get a supply of fresh bait. As with most sea angling (not all) fresh mackerel was our target. We tried for about half an hour but only succeeded in getting small Joeys - perfect pike bait but too small for skate. Nick then suggested we stop at a spot he knew for some 'black pollack,' coalfish. Skate are fished for with different baits around the country and dogfish is the preferred bait off the north coast. They have big mouths so the whole fish is used. So with half a box of mixed small mackerel and coalfish about one and a half pounds to two ponds in weight we headed off the skate mark. The gear is heavyweight and the hook is large. I had a pack of size 11/0 hooks with me which proved ideal.

We were fishing in two hundred feet of water, so it took a

while to get to the bottom. I did not have to wait long before I felt a fish at my bait. I struck and knew I had a fish on, but it was no skate as it lifted it from the seabed easily and I felt it fight all the way to the surface. Nick was beside me and said 'conger or ling,' and sure enough a small conger soon appeared. I did not say that I wanted to keep it to eat so Nick shook it off the hook without bringing it aboard. Conger are good to eat, but this chap swam quickly back down to the depths. Two of the lads caught a ling each so we had some decent table fish to bring home. It was not long before Ken was into a decent fish and his rod bent over as he heaved it up. Questions like "Is it a fish or the bottom?" are common when skate fishing as the bite is gentle until you pull into it — then it swims away!

Nicks advice was that you have to try to lift the fish off the bottom as quickly as possible, before it realises that it has been hooked. In the open water you then pump and wind the fish to the surface. It sounds easy but it's not. The fact that the bite is delicate makes things harder because you must strike and wind hard quickly.

Ken worked away as we all encouraged him and speculated on the size of the fish. Eventually a pale shape could be seen deep in the water beneath the boat. Nick removed a section of handrail from the gunnel and asked Ken to bring the fish around from the back of the boat to where he waited with a gaff. The fish was gaffed in one wing, another gaff went into the other and it was hoisted aboard. The wingspan was measured to calculate the weight then it was lifted onto the engine cover for a photograph before being tagged and carefully carried to the side of the boat to be released. Of course we all were crowded around trying to get a good look at it. Kens back was slapped and we were delighted to have at least have seen a skate. But there were lots more to come!

I may have thought I was winning slowly

I felt movement on my line and struck into a heavy weight. Fish or bottom, I did not know which. Then it took line, I heaved as hard as I could, pulling the rod tip up before winding in the short length of line recovered. It is physical work and I have heard of fights lasting over an hour to get the skate to the surface. I worked away, very grateful for the butt pad I wore around my waist, which spread the pressure of the rod butt across both thighs. I may have thought I was winning slowly, but Nick was not sure and put a small piece of tape around the line next to the rod tip. Sure enough the fish headed to the bottom again taking the tape way underwater. I heaved but could not recover the line. Then slack line. The fish was gone. Forty pound breaking strain line is simply not heavy enough.

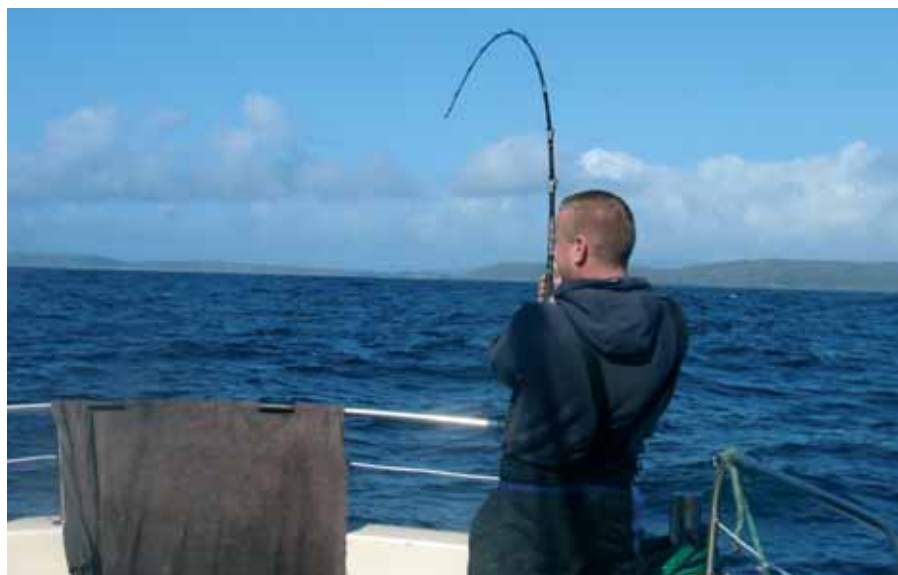
I was convinced that the fish had hit the line with its tail and fished on with a new trace. A mistake, because I was to lose another fish before switching to a rod kindly lent to me by Nick which was loaded with sixty pound braided line. Ross then hooked into a skate, which he got to the surface fairly quickly, but it surfaced about forty yards behind the boat. He had to work hard to get it to where Nick could gaff it. Nick estimated that both fish landed so far were in the region of eighty to one hundred pounds in weight. It is important to note that with skate the time of the tide is important, as only at



Ken's big one.

slack tide can you realistically expect a short fight. The skate will use the tide to resist coming to the surface and use its great wingspan to 'kite' across the tide. We would witness this later.

Then I was in again; I pulled on the rod with the drag holding the line so tight it was like a banjo string. I was determined to give as little line as I could. It was hard work bringing the fish up but eventually it was shallow enough to be seen. I pulled it around to the side of the boat and Nick gaffed it. Up she came. It was approximately the same size as the others so I was delighted to pose with it for a photograph. While holding the fish I could see that the tail has very sharp spines along both edges and down the centre, hence the need for a long



Taking up the strain.



A decent size fish for the Author.

rubbing trace of about ten feet of 150 pound mono line. But if the tail hits the line the fish is off. As Ross released his fish the tail struck his jacket and sliced through it like a scalpel.

Get every fish back into the water as quickly as possible

People who do not fish will find it strange that sea angler's care so much for their catches. Stainless steel hooks

are a no-no. They take so long to rust out; in fact I have not seen a stainless sea hook for many years. Ross' fish had swallowed the bait and the hook proved difficult to get out of its throat. Nick and



Ross working the fish.

Ross tried for a time to get it with a selection of disgorgers and tools but decided that it would be best for the fish to cut the hook off and let it rust out. Nick was eager to get every fish back into the water as quickly as possible once they had been tagged and measured so photos had to be quick.

Skate survive very well if handled correctly and can be caught again. In fact there is one tagged Skate off Oban in Scotland I heard of, which has been caught and released in the region of twenty times. I was surprised to learn that she even has a name. Each time she has been caught, it is thought she has brought in the region of two thousand pounds worth of business into the area. If caught by a trawler it would be discarded as common skate cannot be landed. I'm not saying we spent two thousand Euro in West Cork but we did buy petrol, breakfast and lunch along with boat fees, so encouraging

responsible angling is very positive for any coastal area. The nearest I have experienced to catching a skate is when I caught Halibut out of Alaska, another bottom dwelling fish that you have to get off the bottom as quickly as possible.

John was now the only one of us not to have caught a fish but it was not long before he hooked up. This fish proved to be the smallest of the day at about sixty pounds, but it still gave a great fight. Considering that a big skate is well in excess of two hundred pounds we had not caught a big one yet, but were all happy with the ones we saw and brought aboard.

By this stage the tide had turned and as it built Ken hooked up again. It was apparent straight away that this was a different size of fish on the line. Ken could barely budge it though he was heaving with all his strength. Nick reckoned it was using the tide and he

would have to slack off the anchor rope to back down on it. As he did this, Ken was able to gain some line. Eventually the fish appeared and it was huge. It was hoisted aboard and sure enough was estimated at approximately one hundred and fifty pounds. The tide at this stage made fishing for skate impracticable, so we finished up for the day by stopping on the way in for a few mackerel for tea.

Score for the day was one skate for me and two lost, Ross had two Skate and one lost, John one skate and Ken two skate, plus two ling and a conger. A great day out by any means and I will be back with proper gear for another go at these challenging monsters. Nick can be contacted at nick@wreckfish.com There are a number of other operators in the area but I would recommend Nick myself. He has the gear to rent if you don't have it and makes a good cup of tea.

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The Honourable The Irish Society Lower Bann Fishing: still going strong

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Carnroe saw 348 salmon taken and safely released alive in 2015, despite difficult weather conditions.

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

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

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parts of the Lower Bann, including the beautiful Estuary.

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

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

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THE MAYFLY MCNAB

A glorious sunset on the Lough Sheelin.

I just sat and took in the breathtaking beauty of the Lough with the blazing sunset. The panorama of the reflecting water and the mountains in the distance just topped off an amazing day's fishing.

Our fears for this year's Mayfly had been realised. Word came from 'Down South' that the Mayfly wasn't really up yet. But the digs and boats had been booked and paid for, so we'd just have to make the best of it. Another week would pass before our journey to Cavan and the iconic fly might start to put in an appearance in the meantime. As fate would have it, the festival queen had put in an appearance by the time we arrived, but as every angler knows the trout take a while to become accustomed to feeding on the big flies.

Lough Sheelin is a temperamental Lough at the best of times, there's so much food that the trout are spoilt for choice and to be successful everything must be in the anglers favour. I had missed the first couple of days of the trip and joined the party in Finea on Sunday, to be greeted to stories of fish caught and lost. Most of the action was to wet flies stripped through the waves and it was reassuring to know the boys

were having some sport.

Over the years I've had some great days fishing dry flies and to be honest I've become really complacent, content to pursue this method whatever the conditions. I spent the first couple of days drifting the Lough catching the odd trout on dry flies, but sport was patchy. We reckoned the trout were feeding on nymphs and emerging flies, rather than the emerged flies sitting high on the surface. This made sense, as the trout were still getting used feeding on Mayflies and maybe weren't familiar with the emerged duns. In the warm bright weather, the duns were emerging quickly and were only on the surface for seconds before flying off, so the trout hadn't had much opportunity to take them from. This didn't leave much chance for dry fly fishing, so I'd have to rethink my strategy as I intended to stay and fish on Tuesday when everyone else was going home.

The following morning I bumped

into another angler who reported great sport, fishing several different styles. He'd caught a trout on the Mayfly on the afternoon, Buzzer in the evening and finally, as the light failed, he managed to entice a trout of over five pounds to a big Murrough Sedge fly. We joked that his might be the equivalent to the Lough Style Macnab, being trout on three different styles of angling all on the same day and considering that the smallest trout was four pounds this added up to a grand days sport.

The original Macnab challenge has its roots in a 1925 novel by John Buchan whereby the protagonists had to bag three species — a stag, a salmon and a brace of grouse within one day between dawn and dusk and there is still a Macnab Challenge open to this day.

The idea came of a Mayfly Macnab

As I motored up the Lough that morning I was thinking what tactics would be the suitable for the conditions. I'd fished dry flies for two days, with



I lifted all six pounds of beautiful wild brown trout up for a quick photo and slipped him back.

only a couple of small trout to show for my efforts. I'd use whichever methods would catch a fish, but I'd have to adapt to the conditions. I was also aware from my aquatic invertebrate kick sampling back home of the life stages of the flies, the nymph, dun and egg laying spent, and the idea came of a Mayfly Macnab i.e. catch a fish on each stage of the Mayfly life cycle. It was just an idea but good to try it anyway.

The day turned out really bright and sunny with little breeze, tough conditions angling. I motored through Sailors Garden, across Corru Bay and on to Derrysheridan, the scenery was stunning and the Mayfly hatch had started from here to the top of the Lough. I was thinking of a good place where the trout may be ambushing emerging Mayfly nymphs as they made their way to the surface, a vulnerable time for a nymph, swimming in the open water with no cover they are easy pickings for predators.

At the edge of Derrysheridan, gulls were sweeping up and down the shoreline, a sure sign that Mayfly were hatching. I cut the engine and took the boat in quietly on the oars, not wanting to disturb any trout that may be feeding in the area. I pulled quietly up to an old metal pin close to the shore and tied up, then proceeded to set up two rods: one for the dry fly and one with the wets. The wet fly rod had a floating line and weighted Mayfly nymph on the point and a nymphy-looking hackled pattern on the dropper. The dry fly rod had a

Wulff pattern on the leader.

The pin where I had tied the boat was there to mark a dangerous rock reef lying inches below the surface. I could see treacherous rocks and huge boulders glowing golden under that brassy sun and, although close to the shore, they quickly plunged down into the depths. I just knew that trout would be patrolling the drop off at the edge of the shelf for the Mayfly nymphs rising from the deeps to hatch at the surface.

The faint breeze took me slowly along the shoreline, while I lengthened the flyline and sent the long leader out over the rock shelf and into the deeps

beyond. I gave the leaded nymph a while to sink down to the bottom and gave it several long pulls, pulling it up to the surface just as the natural nymphs were doing.

I felt confident something was going to take and sure enough three casts in, I let the nymph dive deep, two pulls, everything went tight, then the rod tip bucked and jumped as a lovely Sheelin trout fought below the boat. The pound and half trout was brought to hand and, as I slid it back into the water, the boat drifted around a little point and I saw a large swirl tight to the shore.

A short cast dropped the nymph beside the rise, let it descend then strip, strip and everything locked solid as a four pound Sheelin beauty proceeded to strip off my flyline and make for the deep water, where I fought it without disturbing the shoreline where the fish had been patrolling. It took a while to subdue the trout and after taking a few photographs, I slipped him back unharmed. I pulled up on the shore for a cup of coffee. Behind the point was a little sheltered bay and I almost dropped my cup when a huge swirl marked the presence of a large fish feeding just under the surface.



Object of the trout's desire - the egg laying Spent Gnat Mayfly.



Large trout cruised the contours of the shelf mopping up Mayfly nymphs as they rose to the surface.

My first instinct was to stalk quietly in amongst the rock

I was pleased with a four pound trout, but a little observation revealed several much larger fish which appeared to be feeding just feet from the shore. Mayfly were popping up along the shoreline and these trout were just patrolling up and down hovering them up. There was no breeze for a shoreline drift, so my first instinct was to stalk quietly in amongst the rocks and make a cast from the shore to drop a dry Mayfly into the feeding zone, rather than repeatedly casting a wet fly which would disturb the trout in the bright, clear conditions.

I watched a large trout make its way up the shoreline, sometimes taking with a quiet rise, sometimes a violent swirl and when he passed I dropped the Mayfly just where he had risen previously. That trout made its way up to the point and turned back to retrace its path. My heart was beating hard as my Polaroid glasses revealed the fish cruising right under the fly, a foot below it, and I could see every spot on the golden flank of that beautiful trout. It took no notice of my fly but was definitely feeding. This happened several times and I tried several patterns which all got the same treatment, utter disdain. Eventually I put the rod down, waded out as close as I dared and watched carefully. It turned out the trout

were taking the nymphs as they rose to the surface, not one dun was taken, the rises were actually just subsurface, many of the nymphs nailed just as they made it to the surface, easy pickings for these large trout.

So much for my dry fly attempts; the dun stage of the Macnab was going to be a tough one. I was joined by another club member who'd stayed behind and we watched the huge trout follow the contours of the shoreline feeding on the Mayfly nymphs in the calm water. Eventually a breeze came up sending a ripple across the bay and we climbed into the boats again, and I went back up to the pin leaving Willie to fish the point with one of my nymphs. Third cast in and another small fish, from the exact

spot the first fish had come from, same size too, a pound and a half, but by now a breeze had got up and I knew we would get a drift along the bay to cover the big fish.

The rod was almost wrenched from his arm as the trout grabbed his nymph

Willie and I drifted the bay side by side, the anticipation making me tingle, every sense on high alert; I knew one of us was going to hook a large trout. I put Willie on the inside to cover close to the shoreline as I'd already had three trout. As we crossed the little point into the bay there was a huge swirl as another nymph was taken just below the surface. Willie's flies sailed over and the heavy nymph plopped into the water beside the spreading ripples. As Willie stripped back the flies the rod was almost wrenched from his arm as the trout grabbed his nymph, there was a short tussle and the hook hold gave way. We didn't even have time to be disappointed as two more fish moved further along the bay, so Willie checked the hook point and we continued our drift. Half way down the bay I was pointing out the place where I had tried the dry fly from the shore to Willie and he popped the flies into the spot, only for the nymph to be seized and let go again, heartbreaking stuff!

Suddenly my line just stopped, I may have hooked the bottom but then a



A nice fish on the Spent Gnat

vibration along the line told me that this was a large fish which then suddenly woke up and bolted upwind, line stripping off the reel. The fish ran for about thirty yards then everything went solid, I knew something had snagged but I could still feel the trout trembling on the line. As I reached the spot there was a 'ping' and the big trout surged away into the depths, I could see a weed bed down below and knew the dropper fly had snagged but luckily it had broken off and I was still attached to the trout which was thumping about down in the depths below me.

After a long battle the big fish eventually came to the surface and I netted him, his beautiful golden flanks glistened in the sun and big black spots adorned his sides. I pulled the boat to the shore whilst keeping him in the net over the side of the boat and once there Willie and I weighed him and took a few pics before cradling him in the water until his strength returned and he cruised over the golden rocks into the dark depths below. What a days fishing, four trout including a four pound and trout of over six pounds, I couldn't believe it. Unfortunately the commotion had disturbed our little bay and the other trout went down, nothing appeared to be happening anywhere else so it was time to light the fire, set up the griddle and

get the steaks on, a nice brew from the Kelly Kettle finished off a great meal in the open air.

As we sat on the shoreline over tea, we were talking about my Mayfly MacNab. The trout were definitely focused on the nymphs, as soon as they hit the surface the Mayfly could hatch quickly and be away. The trout didn't have time to take the duns, whereas the nymphs were easy pickings. All this time the Mayflies were dancing above the trees which we were sitting under and I realised I might be able to get two out of three of my MacNab if the flies decided to go out and lay their eggs, a few spent fly on the water would surely bring the trout to the surface in the twilight of that calm, warm evening.

A few spent fly drifted overhead, pink light reflecting in their wings

I watched the direction of the light breeze and thought of a place where the spent fly might be coming off a shoreline, blown across the water between a couple of small islands. There were always a few trout about this place, just the spot to get a trout on the dry fly! By the time I motored up the Lough the sun was setting and everything was bathed in the pink and orange glow of a Sheelin twilight. A few

spent fly drifted overhead as I pulled up close to the island, the pink light reflecting in their wings.

I wasn't sure if the fish would be taking spent mayflies yet, the hatch hadn't long been started so they wouldn't have seen many spent gnat. I tied on a couple of spent patterns, greased them and settled into a drift, scanning the water for signs of movement.

I heard a distinct sucking noise far below the drift and soon a dimple betrayed the presence of a trout quietly sucking down the flies stranded in the surface film. The trout moved quietly along a little slick, up past the boat, too far away to cover with a cast. I pulled over beside the slick and within minutes another trout came sidling along taking the flies and this time I was able to drop my fly in its path. I had those heart stopping moments as the fish took one fly, then another as it came closer to the artificial. Then a dimple appeared where the fly was. I paused for a short moment, then struck to set the hook. A commotion as the trout bolted, stripping line off the reel. Fantastic!

At almost three pounds this trout fought hard on the little dry fly rod and I was delighted to land the fish on the spent so early in the Mayfly season. For a while I just sat and took in the

breathtaking beauty of the Lough, the blazing sunset was amazing, the panorama of the reflecting water and the mountains in the distance, this just topped off an amazing days fishing. I knew I'd have to leave, I had a Lough to cross in the dark and a long drive home in the early hours, but what a fantastic day's fishing in the bright sunshine, I could feel my face burning already. As for the Mayfly Macnab, that'll just have to wait for another time but two out of three ain't bad anyway!

As the sun set, Mayfly left the trees to lay their eggs and we scanned the water for trout feeding on Spent Gnat.



By Betty Hayes

Mayfly Madness

Traditionally and historically the highlight for every trout angler's season in Ireland the 'Mayfly time.'



Anticipation of a great day on the lake.

My abiding childhood memory is of my parents on standby, dapping rods and wooden boxes for storing live Mayfly ready, and the caravan packed just waiting for the call 'the fly is up.' Then the excitement as my mother made fresh soda bread, there were always fishermen calling to our caravan for endless cups of tea and Mom's famous currant cake generously spread with fresh country butter. There would also be a bottle of 'the hard stuff' stored away for celebration or commiseration purposes at evening time.

Dad would secure the house which might be vacant for the month of May; the West was calling. My brother and I and the dog, always a black Labrador, were also packed up, that is until eventually school got in the way. My how times have changed, but those memories have never faded and are part of me now as an adult.

Eventually I grew up, got a fly fishing husband, a caravan and children

(and dogs) of my own and yes, awaited the call of 'the fly is up.' Fast forward to this moment and I have long since paid my dues to doing it the hard way but I will always cherish that charmed upbringing and my treasured memories of Mayfly madness.

I still answer the call, when possible, of the Mayfly, but it's different now as the motorway gets me to the west of Ireland in about two hours. Caravans are a liability in this age of insecurity and other accommodation is usually available. However, the call to me no longer depends on wires strung between telegraph poles so, unless one has pre-booked lodging it could mean staying out in the sticks.

For the past three years, Michael and I have chosen Lough Corrib where the fishing has been to say the least frustrating. The climate has become most unpredictable, which has a huge impact on fly life and on the Mayfly in particular. Memories of shaking the

whitethorn bushes on an island and watching the swarms of Mayfly rise into the air, or seeing school children on the streets of Oughterard selling flies to visiting anglers may not be that many years ago, but it sometimes seems like it never really happened.

Last year, during the first week of May on Corrib, we could count the small number of flies as we used the bailer to scoop hailstones from the bottom of the boat. We didn't get many trout but of course I readily recall the 'whopper' which escaped over the rim of the net! Even wearing gloves our hands were frozen. Amazingly, as anglers and one year on, we forget the bad days and are once more gripped by Mayfly madness.

Boats were moored on the Owenriff River at the end of their garden

This spring we decided on Corrib again, staying at Camillaun Lodge in



Anne Kyne selecting best Mask Flies for Paddy.

Oughterard. The convenience of having their boats moored on the Owenriff River at the end of their garden, a large drying area (shed) plus only a five-minute walk to the pubs and outstandingly good restaurants in Oughterard is appealing. Also the proprietor, Deirdre Forde, makes scrummy muffins and her helper Kathleen knows how to cook breakfast kippers with scrambled eggs to perfection.

First day on the lake our boatman

Cyril Conlon, one of the most knowledgeable and dedicated of guides worked exceptionally hard to find feeding fish. Conditions were tough, bright sunshine and no wind; there was a lot of motoring involved as what looked like a good ripple in the distance would become mirror-like on our arrival. We saw some Mayfly hatching even an occasional spent fly, but these were ignored by the, probably replete, Corrib trout.

Although there were no natural rises

that day, Michael brought up a couple of fish and I lost one so at least we had action even if only for a few moments. A party of four anglers from the UK staying at the lodge didn't get near a fish all day. I believe they have been coming to the Lodge in the same week for something like twenty-two years. And we think we are dedicated!

Cyril ties his own top secret mayfly

Later that week, conditions improved and although Cyril was unavailable to boat for us I will credit him with my success. He ties his own top secret mayfly and, while I am privileged to have been given it (on loan), I am a member of the sealed lips circle therefore I cannot identify the material or describe the tying of Cyril Conlon's special Mayfly. He 'promised' me I would get fish the next day....and I did!

Anglers have to be eternal optimists and we were on the lake early the next morning confident of a great Mayfly hatch. Deirdre had engaged Patrick Malloy to boat for us. Another experienced gillie on the western lakes he worked hard in search of feeding trout. Our determination eventually paid off. Fishing the shallows at Inchiquin in a good wave with Cyril's special fly, well greased on the top dropper and a



This fine fat Brownie restored my confidence.



Mike preparing his special lunch in the hut on 'Saints'.

very small green Wulff on the point, I caught about four fish to one lb. and a lovely golden spotted beauty of two pounds. Cyril did promise!

Michael also had a slow start to the week, but his success with his own small cul de canard dries and his

modified Wulff patterns outweighed any disappointment at the limited



Diarmaid's trout fell for a Gorgeous George.

number of fish landed. Having had gold medal success several times in the art of fly tying, I believe he enjoys making flies as much as matching the hatch and casting them on the water. He caught about six or seven fish on our best day. I cannot report that the mayfly fishing on Corrib was a memorable experience but we live in the hope that next spring will revert to normal conditions with warm breezes, nice waves and mighty hatches of mayflies, olives and sedges.

I returned westward on 17th June and joined my media group for our annual outing to Lough Mask at the invitation of Tomás Burke at Tí Búrca in Clonbur. My boat partner for the weekend was my friend Diarmaid Fleming; we were well matched as neither is over ambitious regarding angling competition. Our boatman was

Noel Moran who stepped in when the intended gillie became unavailable. Noel proved to be exactly what one needs on Mask - knowledgeable, very careful yet confident and obliging. Both Diarmaid and I would recommend this guide, info@noelmoranfishing.ie. Interestingly his boat brought back memories, as it had belonged to the late Rod Tighe with whom I fished many years ago.

We had a slow start to our day as my partner was delayed somewhat but in a good cause. Journalist Diarmaid was reporting on the Mayfly in the west of Ireland for BBC World Service and was interviewing Anne Kyne, owner of the little, but stuffed full of angling supplies, shop in Clonbur village.

She was delighted to enlighten us with the latest lake news

It is not difficult to see why Anne loved by every angler entering her premises. She is a charming lady who genuinely seems delighted to welcome fishing folk, old friends and new and to



A fellow angler.

enlighten us with all the latest lake news.... and gossip while 'pocket money' is exchanged for the killer flies of the day. Diarmaid's mayfly story was broadcast on Saturday on 9th July on the Kate Adie show on BBC 4 and has been tweeted around the world. The link is [@diarmaid_flemingbbc.in/29UEV4J](https://twitter.com/diarmaid_flemingbbc.in/29UEV4J). I received an excited message from our granddaughter Samantha in Grand Cayman as Diarmaid's story was being broadcast. Another example of how far we have progressed from the days of telegraph poles!

But back to the fishing: that morning, conditions were good, calm but with a nice ripple. As with Corrib there was almost no fly life of any description and we didn't see one fish rise. I persevered with a floating line and dry flies, changing from mayflies to sedges and even hoppers but the trout weren't interested. Diarmaid, using an intermediate line and fishing blind, landed two trout one a keeper, to Anne's version of the Gorgeous George.

I was glad to break for the lunch rendezvous on Saints Island, where boatman Pat O'Donnell had boiled up water for the tea in the Kelly kettle. Meanwhile, Mike Hennessey was busy cooking sausages, bacon, black pudding etc. Nobody was in any great hurry to go fishing!

We took to the boats just in time. Quickly and without warning the weather became unpleasant and quite ugly. Thunderous clouds darkened the sky and the rain became a steady heavy downpour. The waves increased in height and strength and the water washing over the bow as we thrashed our way to shore was quite warm compared to the cold of the sharp stair-rods of rain.

I had a room at Hugh O'Donnell's Lake Shore Holiday Homes which was



The live Mayfly boxes are retired now.

warm and comfortable but importantly, as I had seldom been more soaking wet after a day's fishing, there was a large laundry/drying room. Hugh also owns apartments in the village and can be contacted at Clonbur Angling Centre. As Sunday promised more of the same, and gave worse, most anglers retreated. Derek Evans ventured out with Mike and Maurice, but they experienced difficulties and did not persevere.

One of the highlights of our outing each year has to be Saturday night and the sumptuous meal provided by our hosts, the Burke family and their most attentive staff. After dinner an outstanding performance of excellent and diverse music by our very own Media Melody Makers was appreciated by all. The Accordions of Diarmaid Fleming and Maurice Neill, the inimitable Paddy O'Flaherty making his violin run red hot, Brendan from Clonbur joining in with flute, even Larry Nixon couldn't resist keeping time with a pair of spoons.

For my birthday during the first week of July, Michael and I travelled to Galway. My present to myself was another chance to catch a good trout on Mask. Pat O'Donnell was on standby

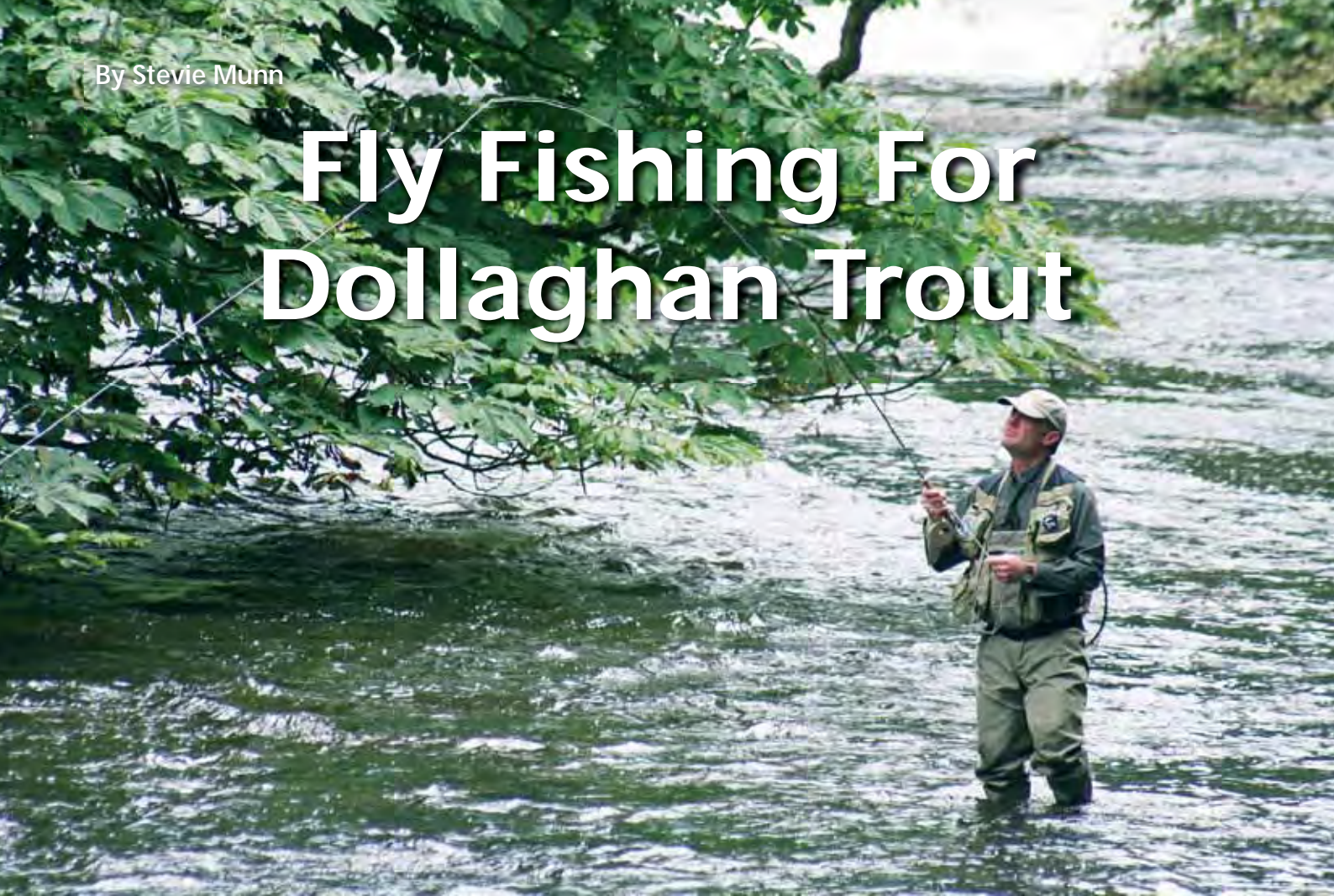
with his boat ready to go. However my treat wasn't to be: the drizzle and serious mist over a completely still lake became steady rain, making an early start out of the question. However, we launched at three o'clock but as we left Rosshill Bay conditions became very rough. The only shelter was along the shore at Saints where we managed a few drifts fishing Stimulators and Dabblers before landing on the island for tea.

Pat did his very best to put us over fish but nothing worked. He even took the boat (carefully) into The Quarries where we were all sure we would find great trout and were amazed that it didn't happen. We stayed out till ten o'clock and I realised that Mask had won, and had beaten me for another Mayfly season. Of course there is always next year...

Editors Note

The renowned BBC Northern Ireland broadcaster and journalist Paddy O'Flaherty featured in this article has sadly passed away since the article was written. A talented violinist and very keen angler he will be missed by many.

Fly Fishing For Dollaghan Trout



I must confess that I love night fishing on my own from time to time, but the mind can play tricks and sometimes things do go bump in the night. It just might be a Dollaghan!

Lough Neagh is the biggest fresh water lough or lake in the British Isles. It covers a vast 153 sq. miles or 400 sq. km. Its name comes from the Irish Loch nEathach meaning Lake of Eathach. For its size it is quite shallow around the margins, with the average depth in the main body of the lake about 9 m (30 Ft.); although at its deepest the lough is about 25 metres (80 Ft.).

Five of Northern Ireland's six counties have shores on the Lough: Antrim, Armagh, Down, Londonderry or Derry and Tyrone, with Fermanagh being the only one that does not. Towns and villages near the Lough include Antrim, Crumlin, Randalstown, Toomebridge, Ballyronan, Ballinderry, Moortown, Ardboe, Maghera, Lurgan and Magherafelt, and it is through these areas that some of Northern Ireland's best rivers for fly fishing flow. They include the Maine, Ballinderry, Crumlin, Kells, Ulster Blackwater, Upper Bann, and the river where I spent

most of my childhood and a river that I continue to fish to this day, the Six Mile Water.

I often fish for both salmon and trout, but perhaps for me one of the greatest things about this area is that it is home to variation of trout that is known locally as the Dollaghan, a fish which to many local anglers is shrouded in mystery, and to those who do not live in Northern Ireland, is relatively unknown. It's no ordinary trout, if there is such a thing, because I love all wild trout and have travelled far and wide in the pursuit of them. It is perhaps more like a sea-trout in its life cycle and can grow very big due to the rich feeding that is found in the Lough.

The name Dollaghan comes from the Irish Gaelic word *dulach*, which means swift running, and the translation of Dollaghan means 'run of fish' or 'running fish'. Interestingly it was commonly believed that the Dollaghan was a unique type of trout that consisted

of different strains or families. But recent scientific studies have shown that they are not genetically distinct from the resident populations, with only the life history being unique. They are a much sought after sporting fish, and many a night I have spent doing battle with arguably Northern Ireland's greatest game fish.

The 'big fat fellow' and a time of stillness and river sounds

Local names for these fish include Buddagh or Breddach which translate to 'big fat fellow' and the big ones look similar to the Ferox. There are smaller and younger Dollaghan known locally as Salmon Trout, their silver appearance giving them the appearance of a sea trout. Like sea trout they are very light sensitive and shy when they return to the rivers to spawn. All Dollaghan can achieve growth rates similar to Atlantic salmon while in the Lough, and on their

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Black & Blue Jam Fly.

return they can weigh well into the teens of pounds, and there are stories of much bigger.

My personal best was a large cock fish of around 16 lb, but I have hooked bigger and know anglers who have been lucky enough to land some very big fish, close to 20 lb. In fact, an old friend, Bobby Bryans, once landed a fish that tipped the scales at just a shade just over twenty.

The best time to fish for them can be late in the evening and at night, which is a time I love to pursue them, because there is something almost magical about fishing at this time, a time that not only invigorates the Dollaghan, but also the bats and the otters and the owls. The stillness and sounds of the river at this time are wonderful and should be experienced by more people who enjoy not only desire great sport, but perhaps also enjoy different approach to fly fishing.

But be warned, if you decide to try for yourself make sure you minimise the potential dangers posed by the night time conditions, because believe me, you do not want to end up swimming in a river at night! For first timers, I'd recommend hiring a qualified and insured guide, yes someone like me, and I make no apology for the obvious plug. I learned from growing up on the rivers and fishing with my father, a fairly steep

learning curve. If you are on holiday or just visiting and want to maximise your chances of hooking a Dollaghan, a guide who knows the water and the tactics required will help. And if you're not used to rivers and have never fished for migratory trout at night, a guide can help, not only the point of view of safety, but can greatly increase your chance of success. I have seen the biggest of men get quite unsettled and nervous while night fishing, because the mind can play tricks and things sometimes do go bump in the night. So if you are new to night fishing it might be nice to have company, although I

must confess that I love night fishing on my own from time to time, but I'm well used to it.

Landing a large Dollaghan sometimes needs a big slice of luck to keep it on. They seem to have a mouth that is hardened, probably due to their feeding habits, and they nearly always violently head shake while simultaneously falling backwards. If this behaviour is present, it is normally a good sign that you have just hooked something substantial, but it is also a critical time and many are lost at this stage. But in a season's fishing I normally catch quite a few fish over six pounds, big wild trout in anyone's book, and there are always some lucky anglers that will get a monster over 10lb.

Best conditions for night fishing come a day or two after a flood

Tactics for Dollaghan vary slightly from river to river, and you can have good sport during the daytime if the conditions are right, normally just before or just after a flood or fresh when the water has a hint of colour and looks like a fine dark Irish whiskey. But often the most successful time for the big fish is the evening and at night, but unfortunately if it's a moonlit night it often becomes very slow, bad for Dollaghan but often a good night for an



The witching hour approaches on the Six Mile Water.



The Fox Fly



A Dollaghan is gently returned.



Yellow Shrimp Fly.

occasional salmon, all species can make your night worthwhile. The best conditions for night fishing normally are a heavy overcast sky a day or two after a flood, when the water is crystal clear. If you know where the fish are it can be super sport, and when the fish are on, it can be as good as any fly fishing that I have done in all of the countries that I have visited, and you can often catch some fantastic fish, but like all fishing, it also depends on your luck.

Fly tackle is very much a matter of personal preference, for me during the day ordinary river trout gear is fine, but at night I prefer to go heavier with a 9 to 10-foot rod that throws 7 to 8 weight fly lines. I would recommend a Marryat fly rod 9'6 or 10' for a 7 line, it's a perfect rod for night fishing and can handle these potential heavy weight trout.

When you make contact with a big Dollaghan, you require a rod with good backbone that can help you with hooking, especially when using sunk lines. A rod with good backbone also helps when the fish are fresh from the Lough, because large Dollaghan are powerful fish and a rod that can put pressure on them is vital, otherwise you can lose them in the rocks and snags, especially at night, as for flies, they are fairly standard patterns.

During the day, small traditional trout flies like the Back Pennell, Dunkeld and the Gold Head Hare's Ear take their share of fish, and modern tungsten bead Nymphs also work. But in the evenings I change to the night flies, which are basically traditional sea-trout and salmon flies. Hairwing or Irish shrimp flies do very well, fished on an intermediate or sinking line with a short leader. But they will also take a floating fly stripped across the surface, again, similar to sea trout. Large Muddlers or Chernobyl Ants are great at times as well. An important tip when night fishing is to remember when you change you fly is to turn your back to the water, do not shine your torch on the river as it can spook the fish and is also bad etiquette if other anglers are around.



A very fine fish captured on camera.

Do Dollaghan feed on their return to the river?

As I generally practice catch and release I do not get the opportunity to inspect the stomach contents of the fish that I catch. However, in the past there was no evidence to suggest that these trout were gorging themselves. Perhaps, like sea trout they take an occasional invertebrate, but I would suggest that in general do not feed when returning to spawn and take the fly, much like salmon, out of curiosity, playfulness and aggression.

Dollaghan like salmon, occupy certain lies and you will find them throughout the river system and, like most large trout, they like a bit of cover — overhanging trees, undercut

banks and so on. They will also lie around rocks and in deep runs and pools.

Dollaghan fishing has become much more popular with local anglers and I think the attraction of these wonderful, unique brown trout is their size and that they are truly wild. While fishing during dusk and into the darkness, it's the excitement of not knowing if it's going to be a 1 lb or 10 lb fish that hits you — or even a salmon. In fact, the last few months of the season when the Dollaghan fishing is at its peak, are almost like an angling night shift.

But it's not all good news, we do have some problems that need constant attention. Too many houses are being built close to rivers and pollution

incidents and illegal netting are just a few examples. But that said, we still have good fishing and Dollaghan have so far still thrived in the Lough Neagh system. If we could get the problems eradicated, we would have without a doubt, one of the world's finest brown trout fisheries. There are very few places in the world where you have the potential to catch wild brown trout over 6 lb in decent numbers every year. We need to treasure these wonderful fish, their natal rivers and their unique home, Lough Neagh.

Guided fishing can be arranged, and for more information please visit: anglingclassics@aol.com or www.anglingclassics.co.uk

Recommended flies

Black & Blue Jam (S. Munn)

Hook 8 – 12 Partridge PATRIOT DOUBLE UP-EYE
Body Gold or Silver holographic tinsel
Hackle Orange cock
Wing Blue Arctic fox with black squirrel or bucktail with a couple of strands of pearl twinkle.

The Fox Fly (R. Bryans)

Hook 8 – 12 8 – 12 Partridge PATRIOT DOUBLE UP-EYE
Body Silver or pearl flat tinsel
Rib Silver wire
Hackle Guinea Fowl
Wing Golden Pheasant red breast feather, black squirrel, Temple dog or buck tail, golden pheasant topping and a couple of strands of pearl twinkle (optional)

This Bobby Bryans pattern has been taking both Dollaghan and salmon on the Lough Neagh system for years. A great pattern.

Yellow Shrimp

Hook Partridge double 8 – 14
Tag Fine oval or flat silver tinsel
Rear Hackle Golden Pheasant rear body feather, wound
Rear Body Yellow Seal's fur
Rib Fine or medium oval tinsel
Centre hackle Yellow cock
Front body Black Seal's fur or floss
Rib Fine or medium oval silver tinsel
Front Hackle Badger cock
Head Black

A very good fly for both salmon and Dollaghan especially when used as a dropper.



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