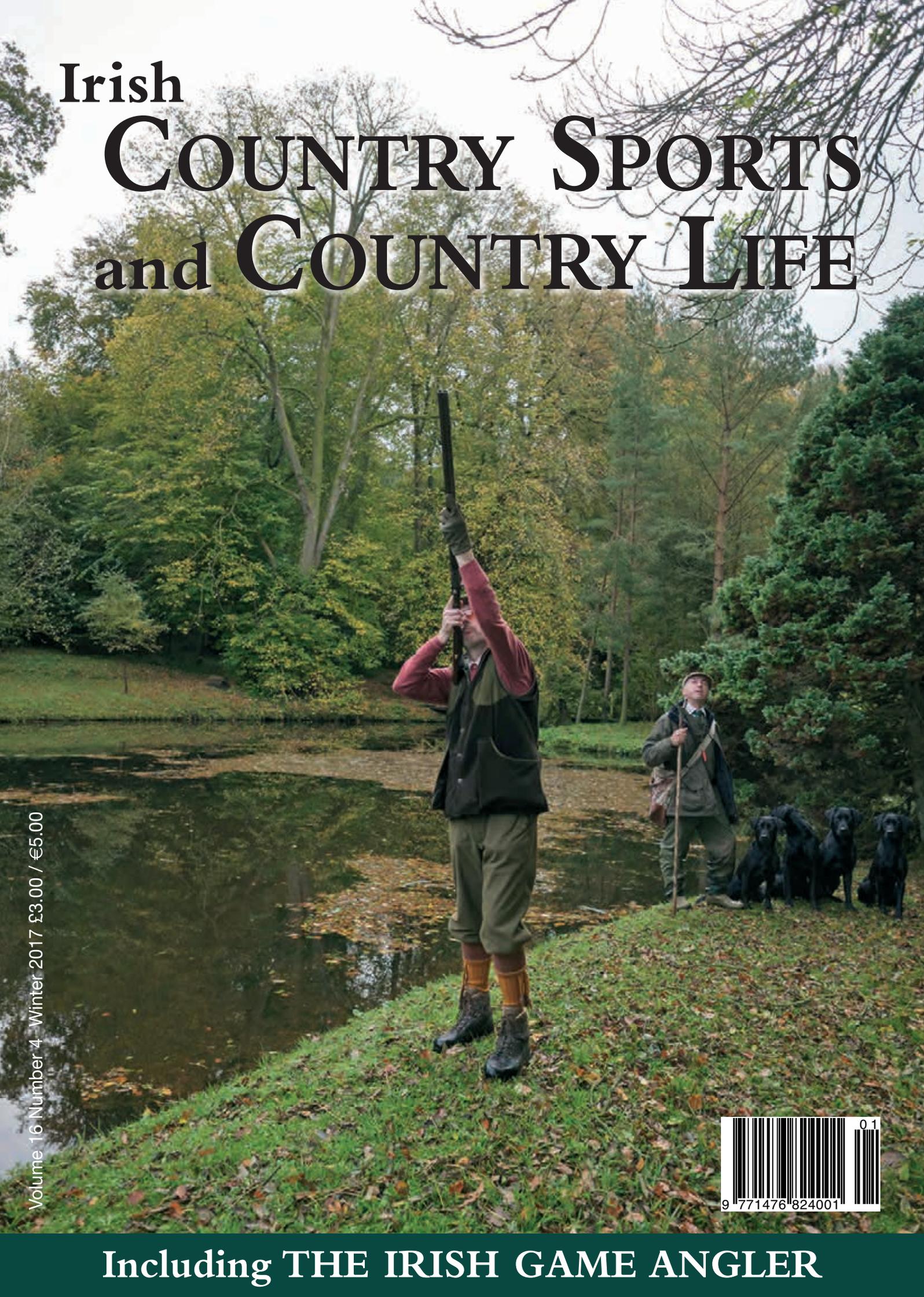


# Irish COUNTRY SPORTS and COUNTRY LIFE



Volume 16 Number 4 Winter 2017 £3.00 / €5.00



Including THE IRISH GAME ANGLER

# **FORTY YEARS of PROMOTING IRISH COUNTRY SPORTS**

**- it's a 'ruby anniversary' for the Great Game Fairs of Ireland team in 2018**



In 2018 the Great Game Fairs of Ireland brand celebrates 40 years of the launch of their first Irish Game Fair at Clandeboye Estate, North Down. The brand currently delivers two of Ireland's premier country sports events and Ireland's most read ever magazine IRISH COUNTRYSPO RTS AND COUNTRY LIFE (inc THE IRISH GAME ANGLER).



Over the next few issues Irish Country Sports & Country Life will celebrate this ruby anniversary by taking a nostalgic look back at the important part that the fairs and brand have played in the development, promotion and defence of country sports in Ireland.

And while we will be celebrating in style with two very special Ruby Anniversary events in 2018 we'll be setting out our plans for even more success in the next five years.



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New titles for each event indicate a fresh focus for 2018. We are giving a huge boost to our Living History Festivals at each event - at the same time expanding the range of attractions including our Fine Food and Craft Festivals to give an unrivalled range of family fun, education and entertainment as well as the very best of country sports displays and competitions.



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**Front Cover:** 'The Season's Sport Begins' by David S. Campbell, ABIPP ARPS  
FB: Field Sports Photography @shootingpictures

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**I love this time of year. Autumn, as the poet said, is the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness and nowhere is it more obvious than in our wonderful Northern Ireland countryside. Or Scotland's moors and forests and glens, or in the magnificent Irish Midlands, or really any of the delightful countryside within these islands.**



Just to get out amongst the russet leaves, the hedgerow bursting with blackberries and sloes, as the shooting season begins is wonderful. I am told that a ten minute walk in the fresh country air is enough to dramatically alter a bad mood; I believe it can do just that.

But how much better do we feel at this time of year when we go into the countryside with dog at heel for a day's sport. It really doesn't matter whether you are simply out for an hour on your own, or maybe with an old shooting companion, or indeed meeting up with the rest of the Guns for something a little more posh. The mood lifts, we are eager for the day ahead as we step out of the car into the cold, fresh morning air. The excitement mounts as we get a small shot of adrenaline kicking in with the prospects ahead. Will we see anything? Can I be on form (for once) so early in the season?

It matters not a jot whether it is the umpteenth time we have made that drive to that very same spot for a shot at the duck, the pigeons, pheasants or whatever, the excitement is always there. And we don't even need to have too much success for the day be enjoyable.

But let's row back a little from that car door opening and the sweet intake of crisp country air.

It may have begun, perhaps, with a phone call, or a conversation in the pub, when someone, probably a dear old friend, said: 'we need to make arrangements of the 'first day.'

The 'first day' at the start of the shooting season conveys to me that the sport is probably game! If it had been 'first morning,' then the quarry would undoubtedly be duck. But quarry aside it makes no difference to the procedure that is about to begin.

The topic has been raised and your attention is now starting to focus, there is a need to get down to business, to set a date and time and place, to see who is to travel with whom, to wonder fleetingly

perhaps if the shooting trousers will still fit — well, it has been a year of vague promises to get in trim. In a split second a whole jumble of thoughts flash past and we are unable to begin to put the 'first day' arrangements into some sort of order.

The gear was cleaned and lovingly stored after 'the last day' last season, (newcomers to shooting must realise that to a shooting man or woman there are always two important dates - the 'first day' and the 'last day,' each with their own delights and one as memorable as the other for a variety of reasons) but is it all in the same place?

Cartridges! Have I enough? Of the right kind? Must get some more number 5s or whatever. The dog is fit but when was the last time on the whistle? Clays! I promised myself that I would practise but ...really.... three lines of skeet and two of sporting in seven months will never be enough! (excuse to self number 1: 'I had all that lovely fishing to attend to')!

But the old friend has seen the effect of his mentioning 'the first day' many times before. Well, we have been shooting together as young men and now as senior citizens, so he regains my attention and we begin to plan.

His car, my house, both will bring dogs as hopefully we will both enjoy some sport. Bring a lunch? Just a flask of something? And so the arrangements are made, probably the very same arrangements we have made, for the same venue for the first of every new sporting season.

Later, we chat about other first mornings, high days and low days, days that both of us recall fondly, just like they were yesterday. Dogs we have trained, worked, retired and youngsters that we have brought on from the playful pup stage to being a valued companion in the field (and in my case, at the fireside as well).

Great shots are recalled, along with unaccountable misses, soakings, gales and times when we came back from the foreshore with a better tan than a week's summer holidays might offer.

Shooting pals are recalled, one or two perhaps no longer with us. We discuss how my son has taken to the game and remember the first shot he ever had. I draw a veil over the age he was, but I will admit to helping him hold the shotgun and taking most of the recoil myself, otherwise he might have decided against shooting ever again, given the kick from a one ounce load on his young shoulder. We argue: I

say it was near woodland where we shot occasionally, he says it was another spot entirely. No matter, we both remember that it was 'the first time' for my son.

And so it goes on, with other notable memories re-run. Shooting memories so well remembered that if they were to be performed in a play we could act them out using very same words we used at the time of their creation nearly half a century ago.

But now the car door is letting the fresh air in and the windscreen mists up as we grab flasks, bags, gun cases and cartridge bags and let the dogs out of the trailer. We always note that the dogs are just as keen to get going as we are and one of us usually asks if dogs can anticipate like humans. My money is on the affirmative!

This is the 'first morning' so we are after duck. It has been blowing all week, but the weather gods decided against helping the shooters in our neck of the woods this morning, as the air is relatively still. No matter, we are out for a shot, the way we have been every year at the start of the season since ..... well for ever, it seems.

My son and his pal are doing the exact same thing in another part of the countryside and I hope that

they will have some sport, but really it doesn't matter too much as they, like us, are simply pleased to be out again as another shooting season begins.

I said that my son was out with a pal which is strictly untrue. He is a pal, but more importantly it is his son that he bringing out for a 'first morning' for the very first time. History repeating itself!

I sit in the hide, the dog settled behind the cammo netting with me peering into the blackness that is starting to lighten. In another hide 45 yards away the scene is repeated, as my shooting companion sits waiting for the first sign of the flight starting.

A bang in the distance rolls around the lough to be joined by another couple. No more time for thinking. The 'first morning' has begun.

Straight barrels to you all this season, especially if you are just about to enjoy countrysports for the first time. Respect others, respect your quarry and listen to the advice of those who have a bit more experience as well. If you are not already a member of one of the representative bodies which fight for countrysports on our behalf, please think about joining one. And enjoy it all, I know I will!

**Paul Pringle,  
Northern Editor**



The 'first day' of a new season with good friends is always memorable.

**When I was writing the article on John Pondoro Taylor for this edition of Irish Country Sports & Country Life, my research led me to the lives of a number of other famous big game hunters in Africa. Obviously big game hunting is a considerable step up from game shooting in Ireland and I am always greatly impressed by the courage of these men who were willing to risk serious injury or death in the pursuit of these potentially dangerous creatures.**



John Pondoro Taylor is something of a legend in big game hunting circles. He became well known because he wrote four popular books about hunting in Africa and because of his immense knowledge of ammunition and rifles and their use in the African bush. He was born into a wealthy, distinguished Irish family but was seen as being a maverick and troublesome by his more respectable family members. Threatened by Sinn Féin he fled to Canada where he made money by smuggling illicit booze. When this palled he went to Africa and earned a living as a vermin controller in Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique. He also poached ivory, albeit in an era when this activity was viewed less unfavourably than it is now. During the 1930s and 1940s he made a living from hunting lion, cape buffalo and elephants. The locals gave him a name, "Chimpondoro" — "The Lion-Like One" or "The Roaring of a Lion".

An excellent biography of Taylor was written in 1994 by Peter Hathaway Capstick, who also led a colourful, unconventional life. Capstick was born in January 1940 in the US. He gave up his job of being a stockbroker and investment banker in the 1960s and became a professional hunter in Africa. He also hunted professionally in Central and South America, his quarry being jaguar. Capstick, like Taylor, was a fine writer and penned twelve books which featured accounts of his hunting experiences in Ethiopia and Botswana. His writing received plaudits and he was often compared to Ernest Hemingway and Robert Ruark when people were discussing African hunting authors.

Capstick held professional hunting licences in four African countries. He was a game ranger and a cropping officer, culling excess numbers of elephant as was an ecological necessity in the 1960s. He starred in seven documentaries about big game hunting, five of which won awards. In his books he was excellent on many subjects. As well as detailing the appropriate sporting weapons his books also contained accurate descriptions of African natural history and tribal sociology. One magazine reviewer wrote about him, "He can also write

action as cleanly and suspense-fully as the best of his predecessors (Ruark and Hemingway), and with far more intentional humour. He is certainly never boring."

Robert Ruark was from the US as well. He lived from 1915 to 1965. In the 1930s he became a sports reporter for the Washington Daily News. In the 1940s he achieved success as a writer of fiction and fulfilled his long-held dream of going on safari in Africa. On this first safari he employed a tracker named Kidogo, who had once hunted with

Hemingway. As a result of this first trip he wrote a book called "Horn of the Hunter" which was very popular.

Ruark penned a series of stories called "The Old Man and the Boy" which are fondly regarded and are the best remembered of his works. The stories feature the Old Man and his philosophical musings. The character was inspired by Ruark's grandfathers. In the stories the Old Man guides young Bob Ruark on hunting and fishing outings in coastal North Carolina.

In 1955 Ruark wrote a novel called "Something of Value", which described the Mau Mau Uprising by Kenyan rebels against British rule. It drew from his personal experiences of Africa and was made into a movie in 1957. He left the US for good in 1960 and settled in Catalonia. He died in London and is buried in Palamos, Catalonia.

To give readers an idea of the fine writing styles of these acclaimed authors here are a few quotations. This is John Taylor writing in 1937 in an article for a magazine called "Game & Gun": "There is no more heart-rending sight than to see a group of poor, little naked children clustering on the outskirts of one's camp, too frightened to beg and yet too desperately hungry to tear themselves away. Instead of the plump, shiny little black bodies, and the round, laughing, happy little faces that one has learned to expect, there are grotesquely distended tummies - from eating grass and leaves and roots - ribs like barrel hoops and bones sticking through the skin of elbows, knees, and shoulders. Great mournful eyes, sunk far back in deep hollows, look wistfully at the white man's well-laden table."

Here is Peter Hathaway Capstick writing about John Taylor in "A Man Called Lion": "He (Taylor) left his mark deeply scored on Africa and in the imaginations of those who accumulate dream books that are found with arrowheads, migratory duck bands, strange nuts, slingshots, possible fossils, and other detritus dear to the heart of any small boy in a man's body. To many, even though twenty-five years have passed since he died, alone, cold, in an alien London, he is still Pondoro, the Lion, and his great works are not only classics - they are also the stuff of which adventure is manufactured: the ore of imagination, the alloy of individualism, the element of energy."

Here's a humorous one from Ruark: "Never knew a man not to be improved by a dog."

**Derek Fanning ROI Editor**



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# **Blaser**

## CAI at Birr Castle

August proved to be an exceptionally busy month for everyone at Countryside Alliance Ireland (CAI), with it culminating in the Irish Game and Country Fair at Birr Castle, County Offaly on the last weekend.

The CAI marquee was host to the Wild Deer Association of Ireland with their collection of heads and deer stalking equipment, Irish stickmaker, Tom Kavanagh, with his impressive display of hand crafted sticks, Kildare Regional Game Council, renowned taxidermist Mick Dunne and for the first time the Courtlough Ladies Club who are trying to encourage more women to take up shooting sports.

The Irish Game and Country Fair at Birr Castle is the perfect forum for CAI to meet and chat with our members and supporters. With fieldsports, foods and a superb atmosphere all together in one of the country's most stunningly beautiful locations, the Fair offered something for everyone who loves the countryside and rural way of life. It also caters for all age groups; the young and not so young alike! CAI were delighted to have a significant presence and to play such a vital part.

Gary McCartney, the newest member of the CAI team was in attendance along with CAI Chairman, Barry O'Connell as well as a number of CAI Board members. On the Sunday afternoon Barry presented the Whippet Champion Trophy in the CAI marquee.



CAI presenting the Whippet Champion Trophy at Birr (l-r) Geoff McMaster (Feedwell), Barry O'Connell (CAI – Chairman), Barry Chambers (Winner), Gary McCartney (CAI – Development Officer) and Steven McGonigal (Great Game Fairs of Ireland).

Thank you to all our members who came along to support us at all of the Fairs we attended this year; it was good to see you.

## Management and Control of Invasive Brown Hares in Northern Ireland

Countryside Alliance Ireland (CAI) are delighted to report that Dr Anthony Caravaggi has published the last of his PhD on gaging public support for European brown hare control.

Management of wildlife is often a contentious issue in which stakeholders are increasingly influential. The European hare (*Lepus europaeus*) is a non-native invasive species, now established in Northern Ireland.

The European hare impacts the endemic Irish hare (*L. timidus hibernicus*), a priority species of conservation concern, via competition and hybridisation to the extent that control of European hares is a priority. The researchers conducted a questionnaire survey among members of Countryside Alliance Ireland, who promote rural interests, including field sports—and non-members, to ascertain the contrasting attitudes to the lethal control of European hares in Northern Ireland; a total of 342 (20%) questionnaires were returned.

The researchers hypothesised that: (i) CAI members would exhibit greater support for intervention than non-members; and (ii) respondents in the core invasive range would differ in their outlook when compared to respondents from other zones. CAI members were more likely to be aware of the presence of the non-native species and to support lethal management.



Both groups considered the threat posed to biodiversity by the European hare to be important. It was concluded that members of rural interest groups may be important advocates of intervention, whilst non-members of field sports organisations may be more reluctant to support any proposed management plan involving lethal control. Active engagement to develop a mutual understanding, prior to developing management options, is crucial in ensuring long-term success.

CAI fully supported the research and we will continue to work closely with Quercus to ensure a thriving future for the Irish Hare.

## Countryside Alliance Ireland Meet with PSNI FEB

Lyll Plant, Chief Executive, Countryside Alliance Ireland met with Nichola Murphy and Michaela Fox from PSNI Firearms and Explosives Branch recently.

There were a number of topics under discussion, including the online application system and the waiting times for applications and re-grants.

PSNI FEB reported that more and more people are using the online system and the current waiting time is approximately six weeks. This is due to staff holidays etc over the summer months.

Online variations continue to be successfully processed with a quick turnaround, which benefits RFDs as well as the FAC holder.

## Firearms Legislation and You!

Following on from CAI's meeting with PSNI FEB, may we respectfully remind you that it is vital that each firearm certificate holder is aware of and indeed adheres to the information and legislation which surrounds the issuing of a firearm certificate to them. Not only may this include the specified conditions for which a particular firearm is issued but also the legislation pertaining to the safe storage, transportation and use.

As the wildfowling season approaches, please be mindful of the safe transportation and storage of firearms. Much good practice comes down to common sense but there are guidelines available.

Also, of particular importance is the need for the firearm certificate holder to ensure they do not exceed the ammunition levels which have been allocated to them. We are aware exceeding ammunition levels is not always intentional, however, that will be no defence if the firearm certificate holder is found to be in breach of their limit.



Nichola Murphy & Lyll Plant

Therefore, we ask that you act wisely and in accordance with the legislation; to ensure that you can continue to partake in your shooting activities in the knowledge that you are above reproach. More information can be found at [www.psnipolice.uk/firearms](http://www.psnipolice.uk/firearms)

## Inspirational Game Recipes

Game-to-Eat is a Countryside Alliance initiative dedicated to increasing the eating and enjoyment of wild game. The campaign was founded in the year 2000 and since then game has grown tremendously in popularity as more and more people become fans of this delicious wild meat. The campaign reaches out to butchers, chefs, journalists' in print, radio and tv media and of course to members of the public.

All year round, pigeon, rabbit and certain varieties of venison can be found in the butchers, supermarkets and on the menu of restaurants. However it is during the open season when game comes alive with copious amounts of pheasant, partridge and grouse becoming available. The Game-to Eat website is designed to help you make the most of game.

As well as the delicious recipes and information on the website, you will find game featured in most magazines and cookery books these days as top chefs and food writers regularly champion this local, healthy and versatile meat.

However, it is important that the campaign continues to sustain the demand and encourage even more people to try and enjoy this delicious and nutritious food.

The recipes are varied and interesting and many show an 'easy' preparation rating. One such recipe we thought to share

with you, especially as the grouse season is now underway, is the following:

**BBQ Grouse, Soda Bread & Charred Leaves (Serves: 4)**

**Ingredients:** 8 grouse breasts; 8 pieces of soda bread; 4 chicory; 2 radicchio; 10g fresh chopped chives; lemon oil; sea salt; milled black pepper.

**Method:** Season the grouse and cook over a hot BBQ for two minutes each side. Remove from the BBQ and allow to rest for a further two minutes. Split the chicory in half lengthways and BBQ until a little charred. Also BBQ the radicchio leaves. Lastly BBQ the bread. Place the grouse and charred leaves on the bread and drizzle over a little lemon oil and chopped chives to serve. Enjoy!

For more delicious and healthy game recipes – [www.gametoeat.co.uk](http://www.gametoeat.co.uk)

## Castaway Project Offers Fishing Therapy for Young People with Cancer

The Countryside Alliance Foundation (TCAF), the charity that runs projects which use the countryside as a place of education and therapy, is to launch a new project aimed at supporting young people moving on from cancer. Castaway will hold its inaugural event at the Sportfish Game Fishing Centre, Theale on Friday 13th October and is supported by leading fishing and country clothing retailer, Farlows.

The project is the brainchild of Charlotte Weston, an oncology nurse who, having volunteered for TCAF's Casting for Recovery project for ladies with breast cancer, was impressed by fishing's healing powers. When she moved from breast nursing to working with teens and young adults with cancer, she approached The Countryside Alliance Foundation's Charles Jardine and Jill Grieve with a view to running a similar therapeutic project, this time aimed at young people with cancer.

The project will take around 20 young adults with cancer and offer them a day at Sportfish where they can learn fly and coarse fishing, make new friends and enjoy a day at the water's edge – an impossible thought when they were in treatment.

For more information - [www.countryside-alliance.org](http://www.countryside-alliance.org)



BBQ Grouse, Soda Bread & Charred Leaves



**Countryside Alliance Ireland**

**Incorporating The Irish Game Protection Association**

Countryside Alliance Ireland is a highly effective and professional rural campaigning organisation. We promote and protect all country sports interests at the very heart of Government decision-making and in the media.

Countryside Alliance Ireland is the only organisation that campaigns for and protects all country sports throughout Ireland, working closely with a broad range of partner organisations.

We have developed a powerful voice that is making a real difference.

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\* Payable in euro at current exchange rates

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## Barbour's Countrywear Collection - practical, stylish, quality clothing

**T**aking care of the clothing needs of those living and working in the countryside is at the very heart of the Barbour brand. This starts with our countrywear collection – classic, fit for purpose garments in the rich colours of the countryside. We also know a thing or two about delivering the finest, fit for purpose, technical sporting clothing for men and women for long days in the field.

Jackets are waterproof and durable with articulated sleeves providing unrestricted movement, waterproof zips for extra protection and large practical pockets for cartridges and all you need on a day out shooting. Knitwear comes with waterproof breathable linings and selected pieces have Teflon coating offering excellent water protection – the perfect alternative to a jacket on milder days.

New quilt silhouettes and sweats showcase a sporty vibe alongside fashionably oversized printed shirts for a very modern take on country living.

The combination of Barbour's timeless aesthetic provides practical, stylish, quality clothing that won't let you down. Whatever the weather.



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## 2017 AGM REPORT FROM THE PRO'S DESK AT THE NARGC

**H**ello to all NARGC Associate Members and sports shooters across this island and beyond.

Delegates to the National Association of Regional Game Council's AGM will be winging their way back to their counties with detailed reports on proceedings so here I am going to give just a brief synopsis of our weekend in Salthill, Galway.

This year saw us in historic Galway City just ahead of the hurricane season. With 'Ophelia' threatening, it was gratifying to see all twenty-eight RGC represented. They came from the northwest of Donegal, Waterford in the southeast, Louth on the border, deepest Kerry, the midlands and all points on the compass ready to participate in the most important event in our NARGC year.

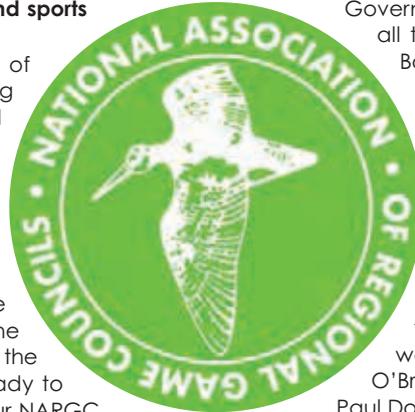
This is our forty-ninth year so with our golden jubilee just around the corner, it speaks volumes for Ireland's largest shooting organisation and there was undimmed fire and enthusiasm in our Delegates.

Proceedings were got underway with the opening address by the inimitable Chris Gavican who waxed so lyrically on the delights of Galway City and county that your scribe is tempted to grab a holiday there when leisure time allows. The Chairman, Michael Fenlon then got the main business of the meeting in train. Reflecting on a difficult couple of years past, he assured the Delegates that the Association has continued to function efficiently and effectively across all offices and sub-committees. Many of the challenges are behind us and we are sailing into calmer waters.

The financial report (always a star turn) was delivered by the Hon. Treasurer, Paul Doran, who was able to report that we had ended our financial year in the black, even managing to pay back some of our internal borrowings to the Compensation Fund. Questioning was lively and detailed as Paul gave clarifications and explanations as required.

Chris Gavican gave a detailed report on the Compensation Fund. This Fund is the jewel in our crown and it is this which enables the NARGC to provide the best indemnity available to our farmer and landowner friends.

Although this is out of the sequence of events, I must mention the extension of Fund protection that was ratified by the



Governing Body to protect Officers of the Association all the way down to Club level. The Governing Body further approved a grant of up to €750.00 for Fund Members of two years standing who find themselves contesting a decision by a Garda Superintendent on a licence renewal in the Courts. These moves just go to show the ever improving and unique offer of the Fund to NARGC Associate Members.

Next order of business was election of National Officers, The Executive and Trustees. Michael Fenlon (Wicklow) was returned to the Chair unopposed; Dan Curley (Monaghan) was similarly returned to Vice Chair; Seamus O'Brien (Tipp. North) is again our Hon. Secretary and Paul Doran (Wexford) takes up the reins again as Hon.

Treasurer. Ray Devine (Mayo) was elected Deputy Fund Administrator while John Toal (Louth) is a new face as Public Relations Officer. John Flannery (Tipp. North) was returned as National Safety Officer and Ger Burns (Waterford) again slots in to his familiar role as Game Development Officer. Seamus Heraty (Donegal) is again National Predator Control Officer and our former Chairman, John Butler (Carlow), was elected to the role of Youth Development Officer. Executive officers elected were Paddy Flynn (Mayo), Jim Brennan (Meath), Pat Donlon (Roscommon), Shane O'Connor (Wexford) and Tom O'Shea (Wicklow)

Trustees elected were: Joe O'Loughlan (Clare), Des Furlong (Wexford) and Tomás O'Curraoin (Waterford)

After the elections concluded we took a breather for tea and coffee before getting stuck into the resolutions. There was a heavy agenda here and I don't propose to list all of them but will mention a couple of highlights:

- Game crop subsidy funding is increased from €16,000.00 to €25,000.00.
- The NARGC will lobby the Government to activate the legislation on tourist shooting of migratory game birds
- There were a number of items discussed under any other business and as usual some robust debate ensued.

I will close at that for now, hoping that this is information gives you a flavour of events.

**John Toal**  
NARGC NATIONAL PRO

## Ireland claims victory in the Home International gundog competition at The Game Fair

**T**eam Ireland reclaimed the prestigious Home International title at The Game Fair, making it the seventh time they've reigned supreme since the gundog competition was originally founded in 1969.

Willie Edgar, captain of the Irish team, commented that they have not won since 2013: "There's been months of training and a lot of hard work. Coming from Ireland we haven't a big population of gundogs, so to win, this really puts us amongst the top gundogs in the world. We were running both retrievers and spaniels but in the morning the spaniels won their competition by 60

points, giving the retrievers a bit of a comfort zone. Thankfully the retrievers held their own, which led us to win the whole competition. We would like to thank our two sponsors CSJ Dog Food and Countrysports Ireland."

Held at Hatfield House in Hertfordshire, teams from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales each worked five spaniels in the morning and five retrievers in the afternoon of the two-day event, in a series of demanding tests designed to best demonstrate each dog's ability, with all the dogs' performances contributing towards the overall team score.

The top prize in the competition, the coveted Shooting Times Trophy and a cash award of £200, was presented to Ireland's team captain Willie Edgar for finishing in first place on 931 points. Ireland's winning team was made up of William Megaughin, Louis Rice, Willie Edgar and Ian Blair who all ran spaniels; and Damian Newman, John Barr, Declan Boyle and Sean Diamond, who ran retrievers. Second place went to Wales, captained by Alan Rees on 918 points, with England coming third on 900 points captained by David Latham and Scotland finishing fourth on 847 points captained by Joe Maclure.



# The N.A.R.G.C Compensation Fund

**Ireland's foremost source of Public Liability and Personal Accident Protection for Hunters, Clay Shooters, Target Shooters and others who are Members of our affiliated Clubs.**

The National Association of Regional Game Councils encourages game shooters and clay/target shooters to support the Shooting Lobby by joining a Gun/Game Club, Clay Pigeon Club or Target Sports Club affiliated to the NARGC.

With 27,000 Members, you will be joining the most authoritative voice for the sport of shooting in Ireland. You will also enjoy the protection of the NARGC Compensation Fund which carries a ceiling of protection of €10m each and every claim. The Association welcomes the affiliation of new Clubs through its RGC structure.



**In addition, with the NARGC you have:**

- Full-time staff dedicated to working for shooting interests
- A say in the running of the Association - elections/resolutions
- A Members' Magazine posted free to your home at least once annually
- Habitat and other Grants for your Club - €350,000 granted annually
- Special Funding for Grouse Projects
- Grants for the purchase of Predator Control equipment by Clubs
- Mallard/Pheasant Release subsidies for Clubs and RGC's - currently €4.37 per bird
- Research into Game and other species
- The defence of Members rights, individually and collectively, even in the Courts

- Club of the Year Award
- Game Meat Handling Courses
- Representation otherwise at EU level
- A good working relationship with Farmers
- An Association Shop - books, badges, stickers, ties etc
- Monitoring and input into the drafting of legislation affecting shooting sports
- Inter-Club & Inter-County Annual Clay Shoots - biggest Clay Shoot in Ireland
- Members' access to information/advise on all issues every day
- Proficiency Courses and Safety Seminars for Associate Members
- Constant Government lobbying in Ireland and at EU level

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## 2017 Ulster Reform Club Clay Pigeon Shoot

**S**ummer time and whilst dodging the rain showers in Belfast, Foymore Lodge Country Pursuits in Portadown basked in the sunshine and hosted a bumper batch of Ulster Reform Club Members and Guests at the Annual Clay Pigeon Shoot and BBQ.

The number of shooters registered is testament to the popularity and success of this now well established event in the Ulster Reform Club's event calendar. The Club Member who is Top Gun has their name inscribed on the Wylie Cup, forever recognising their achievement.

Undoubtedly the expert tuition given by the Rangers helped the novices in breaking their first clays before the winning novice was victorious.

The outcome was as follows:

Top Novice – Guilherme Coute, guest of Dr Sonyia McCleane

Top Team - URC Members Louise Smylie, John Caghey with guests PJ Whyte, Steven Boyd and Brian Carson

Top Guest – Hugh Simms guest of Desmond Wilson

Top Gun & this year's Wylie Cup winner – URC Member - Paul Hollinger (for the third year!)

Many congratulations to our winners and thanks to all who took part and to Cunningham Coates Stockbrokers for sponsoring this annual event. We are also indebted to Irish Country Sports and Country Life magazine, The Great Game Fairs of Ireland and Countryside Alliance Ireland for their continued support of this event.



Dr A Bell, Harold Jacobs, David Kerr and Ian Megahey at the URC Clay Shoot.

## Salmon farm escapees run five river systems yet no escapees reported to the Department

**I**nland Fisheries Ireland can confirm that 65 farmed salmon have been caught in five rivers in Counties Galway and Mayo. The affected rivers are the Delphi, Erriff, Kylemore/Dawros, Newport and Bunowen, in Counties Galway and Mayo. Inland Fisheries Ireland has been monitoring the situation since August stocks.

Concerns regarding salmon farm management and oversight have also heightened as Inland Fisheries Ireland understands that no escapees of farm salmon have been reported to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (the licensing authority) by salmon farm owners.

Salmon farm owners are obliged (as one of the conditions of the licence) to report all escapees to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The Department has confirmed to Inland Fisheries Ireland that no such report has been received.

IFI continues to have concerns regarding the impacts of fish farms on Ireland's precious wild fish. The licensing regime and best management practice should provide assurance to the State that controls are in place that safeguard our heritage. This does not appear to be the case in this instance. IFI supports sustainable fish farming but cautions against the renewal and/or award of licences where conditions are not being adhered to. The IFI Board recommends immediate strict enforcement and audit of existing licence conditions to ensure compliance and ultimately a sustainable resource for all.

Inland Fisheries Ireland scientists are analysing captured fish in an attempt to identify the history and maturity status of the farmed salmon. The outcome from this analysis will assist in understanding the risks to our wild salmon stocks.

Of those examined to date, three males (out of six examined) were mature on capture and had the potential to spawn in the wild and impact the genetic integrity of native salmon stock.

## THE IRELAND ANGLING SHOW 2018

**F**rom Mara Media comes news that the 'biggest and Best fishing show in Ireland, The Ireland Angling Show, will be back in action at the National Show Centre in Swords on 17th & 18th of February 2018.'

Event Organiser, Grace McDermott says: "Once again the show is shaping up to be an amazing gathering of Angling experts with over 100 exhibitors including Tackle Retailers, boat builders and fishing holiday providers.

"The International flavour of the show continues with the return of the sleek and sophisticated Marcraft fishing boats, hand crafted in the Netherlands [www.marcraftvisboten.nl](http://www.marcraftvisboten.nl) Joining our Boat exhibitors, Warrior Boats are back with their latest model for Irish Waters, Erne Boats, MCA Boats and Arrow Boats will all be showcasing their new designs and innovation. Fishing on the sea or lake, the show has something for everyone.

"Skippers from all around the Irish coastline and providers on our inland waters, rivers and lakes will be showcasing what we have on offer. Experts will be on hand to help you plan the perfect fishing trip at home or abroad.

"At the heart of the show is our family Zone, sponsored by Inland Fisheries Ireland and this promises to be fun and interactive with workshops, entomology, tuition and a host of attractions that will encourage the kids to pick up a rod and go fishing."

"Talk to the experts, advice is available all over the weekend, perfecting your techniques with instruction from renowned Anglers Scott Mackenzie, Hywel Morgan, Jim Clohessy, Glenda Powell, Tom Brown, Dan Esox and many more....Sea, Game, Coarse, Predator...the show has it all."

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## New event - Game Fair® Christmas 2018



**The Game Fair® has announced a brand new event to be held on 23, 24 and 25 November in central London. Game Fair® Christmas, a seasonal edition of The Game Fair®, which will celebrate Christmas in true Game Fair style but in the heart of London.**

Game Fair® Christmas will see companies exhibiting indoors and outdoors across Bloomsbury Square and within Victoria House, including the historic and glamorous Bloomsbury Ballroom. As well as retailing gifts, goods, game, food, theatre, art and hospitality, the event will offer cookery demonstrations showing the journey from field to fork and a Game Fair® Theatre, which will be hosting debates and informative discussions along with a host of entertaining features and attractions.

The event will bring the beat of the countryside to the heart of the capital and Bloomsbury Square will be dressed for the occasion with festive yet tasteful décor and the atmosphere of a spectacular countryside Christmas. With a strong emphasis on food, including spectacular street food (with a leaning towards game!), rural crafts and of course mulled wine. Dogs will be welcomed, with facilities provided for them, including a dog crèche and a VIP (Very Important Pets) area.

Retailers will include all manner of traditional and heritage rural crafts and the event will be open from 10:00 to 20:00 on all three days with evening functions for trade and public.

James Gower, Managing Director of The Game Fair®, said: "The Game Fair® has welcomed more than five million visitors across three generations. Visitors gather to celebrate the countryside, meet with friends, do business and have fun. Exhibitors, clubs and groups assemble to provide the shop window, educate, innovate and to promote everything that is important for our rural communities. Game Fair® Christmas will take this message and opportunity to the heart of London, making it accessible and enjoyable during the wonderful season of Christmas. Game Fair® Christmas will provide a winter focal point offering a distilled and magical essence of this cherished British Institution. Expect serious debate, fine dining, evening networking and the finest products from shooting to fashion and delicious food, drink and of course Christmas gifts."

## SWAROVSKI OPTIK LAUNCHES NEW CL COMPANION BINOCULARS

**Leading long-range optical specialists SWAROVSKI OPTIK will launch their brand new CL Companion binoculars, providing an improved viewing experience and individual style, with three different accessory packages to choose from.**

With its advanced optical and mechanical design, the latest product in the CL family of binoculars are easy to use and guarantee excellent viewing comfort and extraordinary image quality. Thanks to its unique features, the CL Companion really is the perfect companion for anyone eager to experience more during their travel or leisure activities.

Along with an impressive 132-metre field of view, their new balanced optics concept provides an unforgettable yet comfortable viewing experience and high-contrast, colour-true images. The CL Companion binoculars are both lightweight and rugged thanks to their slim, compact design and solid magnesium housing. The carrying strap with rotating quick connector adapts smoothly to every movement and the binoculars are available in two magnifications, 8x30 and 10x30, and two colours: green and anthracite.

The corresponding accessories are inspired by nature, with each package consisting of a field bag with carrying strap and a binocular strap, granting optimum protection. Customers can pick the package that best suits their personal style and choose from three different designs: NORTHERN LIGHTS, URBAN JUNGLE, and WILD NATURE. The new CL Companion will be priced from approx. £972 (€1,100), with each purchase including an accessory pack of the traveller's choice.

### Pricing:

Product and Accessory Package	Price
CL Companion 8x30 + WILD NATURE accessories	Approx. £972 (€1,100)
CL Companion 10x30 + WILD NATURE accessories	Approx. £972 (€1,130)
CL Companion 8x30 + URBAN JUNGLE accessories	Approx. £1,008 (€1,140)
CL Companion 10x30 + URBAN JUNGLE accessories	Approx. £1,035 (€1,170)
CL Companion 8x30 + NORTHERN LIGHTS accessories	Approx. £1,044 (€1,180)
CL Companion 10x30 + NORTHERN LIGHTS accessories	Approx. £1,070 (€1,210)



*The new CL Companion binoculars in green, with NORTHERN LIGHTS accessories*



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Seyntex is the leading European manufacturer of garments for the military, police and firefighters and manufacture takes place in its own factories in Eastern Europe and in Asia.

In the 1980s the company started producing the breathable, light and strong Aircoatflex range. Ten years later, the brand moved into the fishing, the shooting and the outdoor market focusing on producing high performance garments.

With technical and performing textiles and garments, the brand ethos is first and foremost to offer high quality at value for money prices.

The John Field range is manufactured using Seyntex's own technical fabrics with each product designed for a specific purpose with materials being selected accordingly and eco-friendly materials used wherever possible.

Quality is key combining performance, durability, comfort and inventive features with an elegant look and the whole collection is under continuous development.

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## Deer Butchery & Gralloching Course Success!

The Country Sports Ireland Deer Butchery and Gralloching training course which took place on Sun-day 24th September in Newtowncrommelin, Co. Antrim was a great success.



The Deer Butchery Group.

Experienced stalker and professional butcher Colin Longstaff treated the 22 attendees – who travelled from as far away as Galway - to a detailed and incredibly interesting demonstration of field gralloch-ing, carcass inspection and butchery for the table. Colin's detailed knowledge, excellent communication skills and easy delivery style contributed to a thoroughly enjoyable and informative day.



Demonstrations were detailed and very interesting.

Feedback from those who attended the course was incredibly positive and it was clear that they left feeling considerably more informed and confident in butchery and carcass inspection techniques in particular. Country Sports Ireland Chief Executive Ronan Gorman was on hand to present everyone with a certificate of attendance, which was greatly appreciated.

The next Country Sports Ireland Deer Butchery & Gralloching training course will take place on Sun-day 12th November in Newtowncrommelin, Co. Antrim. Following the success of the earlier course demand is sure to be high so early booking is recommended – using the contact details below.

## Deer Stalking Certificate Level 1 Course

Country Sports Ireland is pleased to confirm that our Deer Stalking Certificate (DSC) Level 1 course will take place in Newtowncrommelin, Co. Antrim on 10th 11th 12th November 2017.

DSC Level 1 will cover topics such as species identification, legislation, safety, shooting and inspection of deer carcasses. The DSC Level 1 certificate is issued after successfully completing a multiple choice test, a simulated stalk and a shooting test.

For further information or booking forms just get in touch using the details below:

Country Sports Ireland has further strengthened its team with the appointment of two leading country sports advisors with immediate effect.

## JP Craven - Firearms Advisor

JP Craven owns and runs the Midlands National Shooting Centre of Ireland based in Tullamore, Co. Offaly. The Midlands National Shooting Centre of Ireland is the country's largest shooting facility and covers all disciplines of the sport. With rifle ranges, varying from 10 to 1,200 yards, all firearm calibres are catered for along with a Pistol Range and Clay Target layout. They have also hosted numerous national and international target

shooting competitions.

On a personal level JP Craven has been involved in most aspects of shooting since childhood. He is an active game hunter, deer stalker and of course target shooter. He has been a range operator for more than 25 years and has numerous shooting qualifications including Chief Range Controlling Officer and Firearms Instructor. The pinnacle of JP's target shooting career has been captaining the Irish Long Range Shooting Team to Gold in the 2008 European Championships and Bronze in the World Championships in the same year.

Commenting on his appointment JP Craven said: "I have been a member of Country Sports Ireland since its formation and I have been very pleased to see the organisation go from strength to strength. I believe one reason for this success is the fact that Country Sports Ireland is run by expert, dedicated and very active shooting enthusiasts and I am delighted now to be in a position to provide additional support and advice to Country Sports Ireland and its rapidly growing membership."



## Jed Donagh Terrier & Lurcher Advisor

From Drogheda, Co. Louth Jed Donagh is a very familiar figure in the local terrier and lurcher scene. He regularly travels to shows across the country and has had considerable success with his dogs. In 2017 Jed became the first person to win the prestigious 5 Nations Lurcher Championships with 2 different dogs. Jed also regularly works his dogs and has substantial knowledge and experience in the field.

Jed and his wife Trish have also organised many terrier and lurcher shows



Jed Donagh

and races including in 2017, a massive show to raise funds for a very ill young Carlow woman which was a massive success, raising considerable funds and generating great positive publicity for country sports. In recognition of their outstanding contribution to country sports Jed and Trish were jointly awarded the Collette Gan-non Memorial Award for Sportsmanship at the 2017 Binn Game Fair.

Speaking following his appointment Jed Donagh said: "I am flattered to have been appointed to the position of Terrier & Lurcher advisor for Country Sports Ireland. I will work closely with the Country Sports Ireland team to deliver the very best advice, support and events for members."

Speaking following both appointments Ronan Gorman Chief Executive Country Sports Ireland said: "We are delighted that JP and Jed have agreed to take on these important roles. These appointments considerably add to the expertise and experience available to Country Sports Ireland and our members. With JP's and Jed's support we will provide member who involved in shooting and terrier & lurcher work with unrivalled access to expert advice and support – and a new expanded program of training courses and events. Contact Country Sports Ireland:

Email: [ronan@countryportsireland.org](mailto:ronan@countryportsireland.org)  
 web: [www.countryportsireland.org](http://www.countryportsireland.org)  
 Phone: 07542 111542 087 6509598



# Country Sports Ireland



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## Trout Fishing Event hosted for Wicklow Youths



The young anglers enjoyed memorable day learning about angling.

**A**ngling Initiative recently at Annamoe Fisheries, Co. Wicklow. The Sean McMorrow Memorial Trout Fishing Day, which was aimed at introducing young people in the area to the pursuit of trout fishing and angling, was attended by 28 participants from Rathdrum National School, Roundwood National School I and Rathdrum & Roundwood Scouting Groups.

Inland Fisheries Ireland's Dublin Angling Initiative aims to promote, develop and improve angling in the Greater Dublin Area through educational fishing courses for young people. This event is one of several being hosted by Inland Fisheries Ireland over the summer months. The Sean McMorrow Memorial Trout Fishing Day was held in memory of Sean McMorrow, a former General Manager of Inland Fisheries Ireland and this event was kindly supported by his family.

The Annamoe event commenced with a workshop on water quality and invertebrate testing, by Sinead Hurson, Community Water Officer with the Local Authority Waters and Communities Office at Dublin County Council. This fascinating workshop gave participants an insight into how water quality affects fish and communities in general.

Fishing lessons from experienced anglers in the Dublin Angling Initiative and the Vartry Angling Club followed with tutoring given in fishing techniques and safe fish handling. Participants practised fly fishing over an action packed morning with most of them landing several fish.

The young anglers also enjoyed lunch at the venue, followed by a final hour of fishing and a chance to show off their new found fishing skills. At the end of the event, the Sean McMorrow Memorial Trophy was presented to Darcy Santos from Rathdrum National School for his focused effort in landing a fine rainbow trout of over 4lb.

Inland Fisheries Ireland said that The Sean McMorrow Memorial Trout Fishing Day was a great success and a fitting tribute to our former colleague and friend who recognised the importance of engaging the next generation around the pursuit of angling. The novice anglers showed great skill and ability and we hope that they consider taking up fishing into the future."

Oisín Cahill, Co-Ordinator of Inland Fisheries Ireland's Dublin Angling Initiative said: "The Dublin Angling Initiative aims to empower young people to enjoy angling and to appreciate the importance of conservation and protection. The combination of theoretical and practical lessons proves to be popular and we are delighted to be hosting a number of educational initiatives and courses over the next few weeks."

Anyone interested in learning more about the Dublin Angling Initiative should contact Oisín Cahill, Dublin Angling Initiative Coordinator at Inland Fisheries Ireland (E: oisín.cahill@fisheriesireland.ie) Enquiries are welcome from any groups or individuals interested in the programme and availability will be on a first come, first served basis.

## Open Invitation Extended To All Beagle Packs

**T**he Balgarrett Beagle Hunt Club are pleased to announce that even though they have disbanded their hounds their hunt country is still being kept open and their club is still going. With that in mind they are throwing open an invitation to any registered beagle pack to come and hunt the country, either from Ireland or Britain. For more details any pack can contact the Secretary Liz Rosario on 087 2788595 or liz1rozario@gmail.com.

The Secretary sent letters to all the club's members a couple of months ago stating that it was with "a heavy heart" that she was informing them that at a meeting on the 11th of May an agreement was reached that "the Balgarrett Beagles will be drafted out to other packs. We will continue as a 'hunt club' which means we will invite other beagle packs to hunt our country and hunt with other packs whenever possible. We will need some financial input to keep the club

afloat, so it was decided that the subscriptions for membership of the club will remain as they were. Kieran Lambert has deservedly been made an honorary master, while Simon Steel, Ian Hamilton and myself will continue as joint masters. If in the future, somebody is in a position to keep and hunt beagles in Balgarrett country, it will be possible to put a pack together without too much difficulty. In the meantime, we can only KEEP HUNTING!"

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## “YOUNG HUNTERS: SECURING A FUTURE FOR EUROPE’S BIODIVERSITY” European Parliament, Brussels

**B** Sustainable hunting is a positive force for conservation! This was one of the messages delivered by Environment Commissioner, Karmenu Vella, at the conference “Young Hunters: Securing a future for Europe’s biodiversity” on 6 September 2017 at the European Parliament. The Commissioner also pointed to the value of FACE Biodiversity Manifesto to demonstrate how Europe’s 7 million hunters contribute to delivering the goals of EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020.

With a focus on young hunters, the conference set out to debate the future of hunting in an increasingly urbanised world. Panel members discussed communication strategies and how best to support the contribution of young hunters to nature conservation and wildlife management.

There was widespread agreement on the need for educational programmes and activities dedicated to support young hunters.

Janneke Eigeman, Head of Communication at the Royal Dutch Hunting Association (KNJV), highlighted some positive developments with regard to young hunters. For example, in the Netherlands around 50% of the people obtaining their hunters permit are youngsters. To promote hunting to younger generations, she explained the need to establish mentoring programmes such as KNJV’s mentorship programme, linking older and experienced hunters to new and younger hunters.

The conference acknowledged the role of new technology as a powerful opportunity to build networks of young hunters. Jean Pierre Ferraro, Danish entrepreneur and co-founder of Nyjæger.dk and Huntappvisor presented how new technologies can help young hunters to create such networks.

David Plaz, from the “Young Opinion” network of the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation representative, stressed the urgent need for well-funded communication campaigns to ensure the social sustainability hunting in an increasingly urbanised world. He also encouraged hunting associations to continue promote the value of game meat to wider society.

Austin Weldon, from the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) demonstrated the positive contribution of hunting and shooting in the UK to nature conservation. In doing so, he showed how GWCT successfully engages with younger generations, giving them opportunities to learn and develop a passion for conservation. He also referred to the Perdix Portal as a means to show how the internet can be successfully used to support and inform best practice community based conservation.

The conference was organised by FACE – the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU – in conjunction with its 40th anniversary and in coordination with MEP Karl-Heinz Florenz, President of the European Parliament Intergroup “Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside”, and the Vice-President of the Intergroup MEP Bendt Bendtsen, who chaired the meeting.

A parallel exhibition in the European Parliament - “Young Conservationists” - showcased in a visual way how European hunting associations reach out to and actively engage with young people in promoting hunting and conservation. Informative panels from different European countries and video documentaries displayed many conservation projects dedicated to the young and schoolchildren, and focused to learning more about wildlife management and community-based conservation.

## Inland Fisheries Ireland announces new fund open to communities nationwide

**S**ean Kyne TD, Minister with responsibility for Inland Fisheries, has today welcomed a new €2 million funding call from Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) for angling projects and conservation initiatives. The funding call, which consists of three separate funding streams, will help ensure that Ireland’s fish stocks and angling infrastructure are protected and enhanced into the future.

The Inland Fisheries Ireland Funding Call 2017 is made up of the following funds:

- Salmon Conservation Fund to a maximum of €500,000
- Midland Fisheries Fund of €50,000
- National Strategy for Angling Development Fund (NSAD) €1,500,000

Minister Kyne, said: “As Minister with responsibility for Inland Fisheries, I have ensured that significant funding under the National Strategy for Angling Development was available from my Department in 2017 to help Inland Fisheries Ireland develop a wide ranging investment initiative. I welcome the fact that the funding programme is rooted in Community led actions and I support Inland Fisheries Ireland in its enhancement plans. I also want to encourage Angling Bodies, Community Groups and local authorities to take up the funding opportunity and meet the development challenge at local, regional and National level”.

Inland Fisheries Ireland is inviting applications for funding for projects across a number of areas from fisheries habitat enhancement and sustainable development works to marketing and promotional projects for angling. Applications are invited from groups, associations, clubs, local authorities or other appropriate bodies looking to improve Ireland’s fisheries resource.

Dr Ciaran Byrne, CEO of Inland Fisheries Ireland said: “Today’s announcement sees Inland Fisheries Ireland make over €2 million available to communities nationwide, for projects which will help contribute to an accessible and sustainable world class inland fisheries and sea angling resource for all. We want to ensure that we continue to invest in conservation, while also developing our angling offering in Ireland.

While the National Strategy for Angling Development funding stream focuses on improving angling access with a view to attracting more domestic and overseas anglers to the pursuit, the Salmon Conservation Fund and Midland Fisheries Fund re-invest the contributions of anglers into valuable initiatives which a view to promoting the recovery of salmon stocks and habitats and supporting sustainable development works in the Midlands respectively.”

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# EDINBURGH OUTDOORWEAR

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These lightweight trousers offer effective moisture transfer so are ideally suited for hot and dry weather



## Percussion Bush Trousers £35.00

Designed for mild weather these DWR treated trousers to give protection against light showers.



## Percussion Stronger Chaps £25.00

Strong, durable waterproof chaps from the Percussion Outdoor range.



## Percussion Savane Jacket £40.00

The percussion Savane jacket, great for summer weather. Detaches from the sleeves to make it a vest.



## Percussion Brown Softshell £55.00

Has a 3-layer system with multiple pockets, an integrated hood and PVC game bag. Colour brown



## Percussion Ghost Camo Softshell £55.00

A super softshell jacket in a 3-layer system with multiple pockets, an integrated hood and PVC game bag. Colour: GhostCamo® Wet



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## Percussion Brocard Ghost Camo Trousers £45.00

The percussion Ghost-Camo trouser is both fully waterproof and breathable, it complements nicely with the brocard camouflage jacket to complete the set.



## Percussion Polo £15.00



## Percussion Long Sleeve Polo £20.00

3 button collar, long sleeve polo shirt with shoulder pads. Colour: Olive



## Percussion Kids Sologne Jacket £50.00

Featuring the Percussion brands Skintane® Optimum fabric to offer a waterproof, flexible quality hunting jacket from the Sologne range for children



## Percussion Kids Sologne Trousers £25.00

These trousers from the popular Skintane® Optimum fabric Sologne range from Percussion are available with the same functionality and performance in childrens sizes.



## Percussion Sologne Welly £60.00

A neoprene lined rubber Wellington boot with added steel reinforcement and cushioning comfort to make these boot wearable all day every day.



## Percussion Marly Welly £40.00

Percussion's natural rubber Wellington.



## Percussion Grande Norde Cap £15.00

Waterproof Grand Norde Cap. Comes with adjustable draw string to determine size, also has ear cover for colder days.



## Percussion Camouflage Baseball Cap £10.00

The percussion ghost camo baseball cap comes fully waterproof, adjustable at the back and matches nicely with other Ghostcamo coloured items.



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## National Heritage Week marked by Inland Fisheries Ireland event at Glenveagh National Park

**A**lmost 300 children and adults took part in a public initiative by Inland Fisheries Ireland at Glenveagh National Park, Donegal, to mark Marking National Heritage Week.

The Week is part of European Heritage Days and is a joint initiative of the Council of Europe and the European Commission and is the most widely celebrated participatory cultural events shared by the citizens of Europe. Over 70,000 events are organised every year in order to help raise awareness of Europe's common heritage and the continuous need for its protection.

Given that the theme for that day was 'Water', Inland Fisheries Ireland staff brought along an aquarium with brown trout and salmon of different year classes and in keeping with the overall focus of European Heritage Week this year - the unique link between people and nature - those in attendance heard talks on the life cycles of the various fish species which are present in Glenveagh National Park such as Brown Trout, Salmon, Arctic Char and Sea trout.

Led by Assistant Inspector Owen Kelly, Inland Fisheries Ireland staff also had locally sourced samples of insects from streams and many people were amazed at the abundance and diversity of the macroinvertebrates in each of the samples. Attendees were also given the opportunity to examine these insects in detail with the aid of the microscopes and magnifying glasses.

Children who attended the event were given a fish species poster, fish species book and a Catch-Photo-Release



Inland Fisheries Staff IFI Staff at Glenveagh - (left to right) Seamus Bradley, James Doherty, Owen Kelly

(#CPRsavesfish) wristband as part of Inland Fisheries Ireland's campaign to highlight a method of angling where a fish is caught and subsequently returned unharmed back into the water, which contributes to the maintenance of healthy fish stocks and ensures future generations can continue to enjoy the recreational and economic benefits of the fisheries resource.

## Annual competition generates in the region of €300,000 for the local economy



There were fantastic prizes worth in the region of €30,000 including fishing equipment, cash prizes and engraved trophies.

**T**he recent 32nd Rosslare Small Boats Festival attracted more than 120 anglers from Wales, Scotland, Isle of Wight, Ireland and many parts of England, including Manchester, Liverpool and Portsmouth. Sponsored by Inland Fisheries Ireland, Garmin, DAIWA and Sea Angler magazine, the prestigious competition was held the week of 9th to 16th September and generated in the region of €300,000 for the local economy, bringing jobs and employment to Wexford.

For the first time in eight years, the Festival produced a new winner, with the English boat 'Even Less' from Gosport and District

Angling club in Portsmouth. The crew of Wesley Lewis, Steve Mills and Steve Arnold beat 40 boats from Britain and Ireland, catching 22 different species of fish for 13.79 kilos.

The high standard competition, combined with a quality angling product, continues to attract the best boat anglers in Great Britain and Ireland in what is now regarded as the best small boat fishing competition in Europe. There were 10 new boats to the competition this year from all over the UK while there were two specimen fish caught during the week, the largest of which was a Ballan Wrasse of 2.3 kilos caught by Bill Walker on board the boat 'Outcast'.

# YOUR CHRISTMAS

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## Four Nations International Gundog Competition

**T**om Fox reports: I had the pleasure of attending & enjoying the 29th Scottish Game Fair in Scone Place on July 1st 2017. It was to say the least a super event run over three days from 30th June – 2nd July with over 450 businesses participating at it. The weather was excellent throughout.

I also watched the first (ever) Four Nations International Gundog Competition sponsored by Skinners Pet Foods & Ian Macleod Distillers (Tamdhu Whiskey). The competition was run on Saturday 1st July, with both Spaniels & Retrievers competing against their respective breeds. I would like to acknowledge the hard work, preparation & precision that Jamie Erskine (Chairman), Sam Drysdale (Secretary) & the working committee put into this International Event as nothing was taken for granted. It was planned with military precision & ran to perfection by this group of people. Well done!

The actual test was ran on an island adjacent to the lovely seated stand & Gundog Headquarters for spectators & competitors to watch the dogs in action.

Judges for the International were: **Spaniels** Mr Aidan Patterson (Ireland), Mr John Dick (England)

**Retrievers** Mr Richard Johnston (Ireland), Mrs Gilly Nickolls (England)

The team Captains for the International were:

**Ireland** Willie Megaughin

**England** David Latham (Skinners)

**Wales** Alan Rees (CSJ Dog Food)

**Scotland** Joe Mc Clure (CSJ Dog Food)

The opening ceremony for the International consisted of all teams, Judges & Chairperson of the Scottish Game Fair been led by a lone Piper across the specially constructed stone bridge from land to the Island...what a spectacular scene to have witnessed.

The teams were made up of 3 spaniels & 3 Labradors which included some very experienced handlers. One could but notice the way every team was turned out in style by their respective sponsors, you will be able to admire from the photos attached.

**Ireland** Labradors: Billy Lundy, Declan Boyle & John Barr Jnr  
Spaniels: Louis Rice (2 Dogs) Rabby Patterson

**England** Labradors: Mark Demaine, Lee Hartis, Roz McLroy  
Spaniels: Geoff Devine Jones, Natalie Cannon, Steven Blackwell

**Wales** Labradors: Vicky Stanley, Alan Rees, Mark Bettinson  
Spaniels: Dean Melrush, Steven Erasmus, David Williams

**Scotland** Labradors: Alexander Robertson, George Buchan, Lewis McNeill  
Spaniels: John Patterson, Stuart Dunn, Jim Temporal

Competitors were put through a rigorous course with jumps, cover & water to test all their natural abilities & the abilities of the handler too. Every dog & handler were given the same retrieves with fairness to both handler & dog. I spoke to most teams both during 7 after their respective runs, some were happy & others knew where they faulted but all in all everyone agreed the course was top class for both Handler & dog. This competition was very close & the standard among the handlers & dogs as you can see from overall results. The friendly atmosphere off the field is



The Irish Sundog Team at Scone 2017



The Winning Irish Retriever Team

incredible but the will to win when they compete is very serious,

### Results:

**Overall Team:** England 565 Ireland 557 Scotland 459 Wales 451

**Top Retriever Team:** Ireland 257 England 256

**Top Retriever:** Billy Lundy 92/100 **GB & Irl FtCh The Newcam Boss**

**Top Spaniel Team:** England 309 Ireland 300

**Top Spaniel:** Steven Blackwell 115/120 **Luthmhor Draco**

I would hope that all sporting enthusiast and pet owners, when they go to purchase food for their pets, remember the companies that help finance through expensive sponsorship the Clubs & organisations throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland. Please support the companies, because our sport needs them companies to support us.

I have also been asked by Willie Megaughin to thank the following people who helped the Irish Gundog Team prepare and indeed travel to Scone Palace for the Four Flag International Challenge:

- Larchfield Estates, Gavin Mackie & Alan Coats (Game Keeper) for letting us use the estate for our Selection Test and train our dogs on several occasions on the lead up to the fair.
- Our sponsors Red Mills with Jenny Crozier for sending us over well dressed and donating bags of dog food for our selection test.
- The Great Game Fairs of Ireland, Mr Albert Titterington for supplying the transport and accommodation.

Overall Winners were England.



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# 2018 - The Fortieth Anniversary of Ireland's GREATEST country sports events



In 1978, a meeting took place in the Royal Ulster Yacht Club which was to have profound implications for the promotion and defence of country sports in Ireland. Major Donald Hoy (estate manager of Clondeboye Estate); Major William Brownlow (chairman, British Fieldsports Society – now CAI); Stanley Scott (secretary of the BFSS); Michael Dickey and myself took the decision to launch the first sustainable Irish Game Fair at Clondeboye Estate in 1979.

It is with some pride in that original team and all who have contributed to the fairs over the years, that I state that this was the most important decision ever taken to promote and defend country sports in Ireland. The fairs have been a major force in promoting country sports and the rural way of life throughout Ireland and many of the events, which are now regarded as commonplace were first introduced and promoted or popularised at the Fairs these include gundog tests, terrier & lurcher shows; ferret &

falconry demonstrations; living history and conservation exhibits etc. Most of the major organisations were in their infancy and only operated with part-time and volunteer staff and their professionalism and strength today is largely due to the existence of the fairs.

The fairs, even during the dark days of 'the troubles,' were an oasis of peace & tranquillity where sportsmen and women from all over Ireland came together on a truly cross border, cross community basis and guns were on display for their legitimate purposes. We are proud to have helped good community and fraternal relations through our events.

The promotional impact of the fairs was enhanced just over 30 years ago when the GREAT GAME FAIRS OF IRELAND brand was joined by the IRISH HUNTING, SHOOTING & FISHING magazine. This was renamed IRISH COUNTRYSPO RTS & COUNTRY LIFE in 2002 and since then has become not only the longest continuously published country sports

magazine in Ireland but the most read ever with readership regularly exceeding 100,000 per issue.

It has been my privilege to lead the team during this period but I would stress that it is and always has been a team effort and I would like to pay tribute to all who have contributed over the years and those who continue to make a major contribution to events which are not only recognised as Ireland's premier country sports events by enthusiasts but also by tourism and other marketing professionals. Along the way the events and the professionalism of the team have won several tourism and marketing awards and political recognition.

The success of the fairs has been due in no small part from not only the hard work and dedication of the team but also their marketing flair and ingenuity and we hope this will be in evidence in our SPRING magazine, as we make public the several new initiatives we are putting in place to make 2018 a very special year



Fair Director Albert Titterington with Carol Nolan, TD and Lord & Lady Rosse at the opening of the Irish Game & Country Fair.

### Looking back on 2017

We considered that one of the most effective ways to prepare for our fortieth anniversary was to ensure that our 2017 events were successful and that we delivered for our customers. We decided to extend our voucher system to give families even better value in terms of admission charges while at the same time extending the depth and width of our publicity, attractions, exhibitors and prize funds. In spite of weather concerns and competing attractions both NI and ROI fairs had at least one record day of attendance and overall attendances that delivered for our exhibitors. The team can look back with satisfaction at their efforts in ‘preparing the ground’ for a very special year in 2018.

We are delighted that the events have attracted support from right across the political spectrum this year our IRISH GAME FAIR was opened by Councillor Paul Hamill, the Mayor of Antrim and Jim Shannon, MP while the IRISH GAME & COUNTRY FAIR was opened by Carol Nolan, TD the SF spokesperson on Rural Affairs.

We were also delighted to realise that Ms Nolan fully appreciated the contribution the Great Game Fairs of Ireland make to rural life throughout Ireland

The official statement released by SF

stated:

“Deputy Nolan said that she was delighted and honoured to officially open this year’s event and thanked the Parsons family of Birr Castle for their invitation. Deputy Nolan went on to say that this year was particularly special as it marked the 10th anniversary of the fair, a renowned fair which continues to attract thousands of visitors to Birr, a great event which is steeped in medieval history and is also a celebration of rural tradition and heritage. Deputy Nolan said: “As a rural TD, I feel that it is particularly important that we embrace, celebrate and protect every strand of our

rich rural tradition and heritage. Many rural communities in Ireland have been negatively impacted upon by depopulation, we must counteract this trend by sending out a clear message that rural Ireland is a great place to live and with more support and investment, it could be an even greater place.”

She also noted that the annual Fair presents many positive attributes of rural life and that all it represents and showcases should help to encourage more people to live and work in rural counties throughout the country.

Deputy Nolan then commended the organisers of the fair and acknowledged the crucial role of cross-border co-operation which plays an important part in many events such as The Irish Game and Country Fairs which take place at Birr Castle and at Shane’s Castle, Co. Antrim.

Deputy Nolan stated: “It is apparent that these two fairs have developed the concept of true cross-border co-operation in the promotion of rural tradition throughout our island. Cross-border co-operation opens up new possibilities for all on this island and presents us with opportunities to engage with each other and work together for the benefit of all citizens on our island. Deputy Nolan concluded by saying that she hoped to see more cross-border co-operation which promotes the values of respect and unity among all traditions.”



Councillor Paul Hamill, Mayor of Antrim and Jim Shannon MP not only carried out the official opening but judged the horse drawn vehicle display.

# Pictured at the Great Game Fairs of Ireland



Thrill to the clash of lances as Knights battle 'neath the battlements.



Fine Food is always on the menu - Peter Gott nearly sold out!



Always plenty of arena action to see at both events.



Mortal combat and a battle royal.



The Blaser stand had a visit from the International marketing manager.



Albert greets a US visitor.



Brownlow House was an appropriate setting for our media launch with its connection to Major Brownlow, who helped found the Great Game Fairs of Ireland.



Country traditions kept alive.



Gun expert Mike Yardley was gun fitting and fishing with Damian Harte!



Another clays bites the dust for this lady shooter.



Top dogs and top handlers entertain the crowds.



The team from Ardee Sports & Rizzini.



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The Living History Villages both entertain and educate.



Coin maker Grunal Moneta at work.



(Above) Some of the defenders from the attack on the castle.



(Left) History & elegance from the carriage driving.



(Above Left and Above) Stick making Champions - Liz McCracken presents the John McClelland Memorial Trophy to the Champion and Margaret Lawton presents the Philip Lawton Memorial Trophy to the winner of the Best Fancy Stick.



Re-enactors marching through the crowds to battle.



Old crafts demonstrated by experts.



Who can resist the rattle of drums and skirl of pipes?



The Great Game Fairs of Ireland always deliver fantastic crowds

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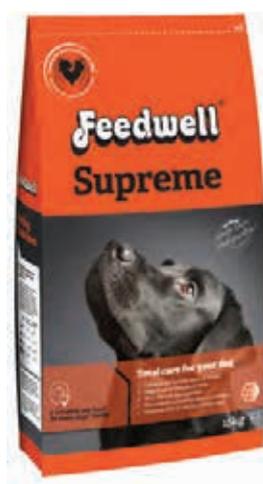


**Damian Newman** – Maighmor  
([www.maighmorgundogs.com](http://www.maighmorgundogs.com))



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

Damian 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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# Terriers, Lurchers and Whippet Roundup

## *The Irish Game and Country Fair at Birr Castle, Sunday 27th August*

Birr Castle is a very impressive Castle situated on 1200 acres of walled estate in the Magical Midlands of Ireland. With its extensive 17th century parkland, gardens, lakes, rivers, and famous herbaceous borders, this was the magnificent venue for this year's Irish Game and Country Fair.

This year's Game Fair was even bigger and better than any other year I have been to Birr Castle, and I have been to many. The weather was brilliant, the crowds were overflowing, the atmosphere was electric, and as they say in the South of Ireland, the 'craic was mighty'!

As I strolled around the Game Fair I met up with some old friends and along the way I got speaking to a very nice lady from County Limerick who was involved with tTerrier and Lurchers at Adare Country Fair, County Limerick for 19 years. It was nice to reminisce with someone who has been there and done it all.

Jill and Paul Pringle were on the Irish Country Sports & Country Life magazine stand, speaking to many visitors who came to the Game Fair from Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, Canada, Germany and further afield. They were very popular on this stand with phenomenal interest shown in Irish Country Sports and Country Life Magazine. No doubt Jill and Paul made sure every visitor to the stand took a free copy away with them!

It was time for some retail therapy, so our first of many stops stop was with The Edinburgh Clothing Company. I did not leave empty handed and got a good bargain. We stopped off at the Main Arena to watch the amazing Cochise Horses. If only I could line dance like those horses!

Birr Castle would not be Birr Castle without paying a visit to my good friend Stephen Smith at the Barbour Stand. No matter when I meet this man he is like a ray of sunshine and a great salesman. I can honestly say Stephen has the best range of Barbour Clothing in Ireland and very easy to deal with.

Soon it was time to head back to the Dog Show Arena, for a full programme of showing and racing, the Feedwelll Terrier, Whippet & Lurcher Racing Championships, and the big events of the day including the prestigious Great Game Fairs of Ireland Mick The Miller Racing Challenge Final and the Red Mills / ICS&CL Five Nations Championship.

### **Showing results**

Overall Champion Whippet Barry Chambers with Ruby

Reserve Karen Cummins with Maisie  
Overall Champion Lurcher Tricia Donagh with Chunk

Reserve Mikie Lyons with Sky  
Overall Champion Terrier Eamo Mc Erlean with Spooky

Reserve John Keane with Ted  
Overall Champion and Best in Show Eamo Mc Erlean with Spooky

Reserve Tricia Donagh with Chunk,  
3rd Barry Chambers with Ruby

Overall Puppy Champion Dawn Jones with Thor Reserve Fiona Devlin with Musty

## *The Great Game Fairs of Ireland Mick The Miller Challenge Final*

Ned Kane with Fonk, Chris Canavan with Maggie

### **RACING RESULTS**

**Directors' Challenge** James McGuinness with Snare Nicky Smith with Buster; **Under 21** Mal Mc Fall with We Scared; **Under 23** Mal McFall with Frozen Scared; **Over 23** Stephanie

O'Connor with Orla; **Bull Cross** Jed Donagh with Chunk; **Whippets** Charlene Rafferty with Zio; **Terriers** Jed Donagh with Faye

## *Great Game Fairs of Ireland Five Nations Championship*

Judges Alan Chrosbie, Donal Smith and Kieran Young.

Five Nations Champion Lurcher Jed Donagh with Chunk

Reserve Pat Dunphy with George  
Albert Titterington then announced that two important presentations were to be made:

### **SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

**The Colette Gannon Perpetual Cup** for "Countrysports Person of the Year" with an overwhelming popular vote went jointly to Tricia and Jed Donagh. What a well deserved win, and a glowing tribute to the memory of Collette. A Countrysports & Country Life Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Alan Crosbie in recognition of his contribution to country sports, including his huge charity donation from the



Overall Champion and Best in Show Eamo McErlean with Spooky.

proceeds of his dog show in 2017.

As usual, the Roscrea team ran the show like clockwork. Shane Lee, you and your team Rose and Niamh Troy and others carried out your duties in a very professional manner, many thanks indeed. Thanks too to the Judges: Rose Mc Coy

Pets; Tracy Crosbie Whippets/Lurchers; Nigel Quinn Terriers John Hendrix and to the Five Nations Judges Kieran Young, Alan Crosbie, and Donal Smith.

Finally, thanks go to Albert Titterington and his lovely wife Irene and the Co Directors for a great weekend

in Birr Castle, Albert. So many people look forward to the Great Game Fair events at Shanes Castle and Birr Castle and as well you do so much for countrysports and work hard behind the scenes to make things happen - we are truly grateful.



Alan Crosbie is presented with his Countrysports and Country life Lifetime commitment award by Albert Titterington and Steven McGonigal.



Jed and Tricia Donagh received the Colette Gannon Memorial Award from Kieran Young.

# THE GREAT GAME FAIRS of IRELAND CHAMPIONSHIPS - Ireland's premier Terrier, Lurcher and Whippet events finished with the RED MILLS FIVE NATIONS LURCHER CHAMPIONSHIPS



THE RED MILLS FIVE NATIONS LURCHER CHAMPIONSHIPS. Judges Alan Crosbie, Donal Smith and Kieran Young with The RED MILLS Five Nations Champion Lurcher CHUNK owned by Jed Donagh and Reserve Pat Dunphy with GEORGE.



**THE RED MILLS MASTER McGRATH CHALLENGE** at Shanes Castle. Winners Nicky and Donal Smith with SCOOBY and Runner Up Pat McGrath. Amongst some fantastic prizes both winner and runner up received a presentation coat for their dog sponsored by Jaydee Coats and Whippet Supplies



**THE MICK THE MILLER CHALLENGE** at Birr Castle. The Great Game Fairs of Ireland Mick The Miller Challenge Final Ned Kane with Fonk, Chris Canavan with Maggie. Janet Duke once again sponsored fantastic winners coats.



**FTHE RED MILLS FIVE NATIONS TERRIER CHAMPIONSHIP** at Shanes Castle Five Nations. Winner Dessie Mackin with Frankie, handled by Peter Conn, reserve Dessie Mackin with Jet, handled by Tara Hunt



**THE FEEDWELL FIVE NATIONS WHIPPET CHAMPIONSHIPS** at Shanes Castle. Winner Kirsty Fyffe with Bobby , reserve Janet Duke with Oscar pictured with judges and sponsors.

## **Tullylish Working Terrier Club 30th July**

Tullylish with its beautiful landscapes and farmland by the River Bann, was the venue for Tullylish Working Terrier Club's held their annual Dog Show and Raceday. The heavy intermittent showers did not take away from this show's success. As the old saying goes 'the show must go on. There were four well spaced out rings and the quality of the dogs was a very high standard with good breeding.

### **Showing Results**

Puppies Overall Champion Puppy  
Fiona Devlin with Musty

Whippet Dog Tracy Gill with Levi

Whippet Bitch Barry Chambers with  
Ruby

Overall Champion Lurcher Jed  
Donagh with Chunk

Overall Champion Terrier Conor  
Quinn with Bob

Overall Champion Bull Lurcher Roy  
Nixon with Chip

Overall Champion Strong Dogs Tom  
Barry with Scully

Overall Show Champion and Best in  
Show Conor Quinn with BOB

Reserve Jed Donagh with Chunk

Northern Ireland Lurcher Champion  
of Champions James Boyd with Fran

Reserve Lisa Beggs with Joker

Northern Ireland Terrier Champion of  
Champions Conor Quinn with BOB

Reserve Dessie Mackin with Frankie  
(handled by Hanna Heinonen)

### **Simulated Racing**

Overall Winner Michael Quinn with

Lady Reserve Fiona Devlin with  
Maverick

### **Racing Results**

Under 21 Joe Leonard with Amber

O23 Malachy Mc Fall with Sonic

U 23 Michelle Rafferty with Gin

Bull Cross Charlene Rafferty with  
Red

Mick The Millar Ali Gamble with  
Electra

Whippet Racing Winner Charlene  
Rafferty with Zio

Many thanks John and Paul and the  
Tullylish Working Terrier Club for  
another top class show this year. It  
should be noted that all the proceeds of  
the raffle on Sunday will be going to  
Laurencetown Cross Community  
Group.

## **North Sligo Agriculture Show (Gene Gallagher's Terrier/ Lurcher/Whippet Dog Show and Race Day) 5th August**

Set in the lap of the beautiful Ben  
Bulben, lies the village of Grange Co  
Sligo, the venue for the event. The sun  
shone and there was wealth of craic,  
banter, good food, great company, and  
after the showing good music and song  
from Gerry Guthrie to dance to. What  
more could anyone ask for. The venue  
for the dog show was superb this year,  
with well spaced out rings, easy access,  
ringside parking and a good racetrack.

### **Racing results**

Under 21 Deirdre Mc Coy with Taylor

Over 23" Lurcher Adam Cummins  
with Connor

Michelle Rafferty with Gin

Bull Cross Kirsty Harpur with Skyler

Rough Coat Peter Cummins with

Harry

Whippets Charlene Rafferty with Zio

Pups Michelle Rafferty with Spot

Terriers Jed Donagh with Faye,

Michael Lynch with Randy

### **Showing Results**

Overall Champion Whippet Colin  
Maguire with Pepsi

Overall Champion Lurcher Jed  
Donagh with Hammer

Overall Champion Terrier Terence Mc  
Laughlin with Rusty

Overall Champion Pup Wesley Scott  
with Midge

Overall Champion and Best in Show  
Colin Maguire with Pepsi

Reserve, Jed Donagh with Hammer

Hugh McGowan presented the PJ Mc  
Gowan Memorial Perpetual Cup to Colin  
Maguire the Best in Show winner. This  
cup was donated by the Mc Gowan  
family in memory of their late father, a  
top terrier man and kept terriers all his  
life.

## **Tully Castle Dog Show and Festival 12th August**

I never grow tired of the scenic views  
and history that surrounds this little  
piece of heaven called Tully Castle, the  
venue for Tully Castle Festival and Dog  
Show. We basked all day in the glorious  
sunshine, while the Churchill band  
serenaded all at the festival in true  
summer time style. As the beautiful  
strains of Danny Boy rang out over the  
Fermanagh countryside, this beautiful  
music added to the atmosphere and  
enjoyment of the Dog Show and  
Festival.

### **Showing Results**

Overall Show Champion Lurcher  
Michael Quinn with Buster

Overall Show Champion Terrier  
Terence Mc Laughlin with Rusty

Overall Show Champion Whippet  
Janet Duke with Oscar

Best Local Dog Stuart Hassard with  
Lollie

Overall Show Champion and Best In  
Show Janet Duke with Oscar

Reserve Show Champion and Best in



North Sligo Champion Lurcher Jed Donagh with Hammer, Terrier Champion Terence Mc Laughlin with Rusty and Colin Maguire with Champion Whippet Pepsi.



Show Michael Quinn with Buster

There was great teamwork on the day and thanks especially go to Scott Fallis. You made everybody so welcome, your dog show ran so smoothly and was a credit to your organisational skills.

### **Armagh Sporting Dog Charity Show. (Fiona Devlin's Show) Sunday 13th August**

Feaghbridge Dog Track was the show venue, situated on the outskirts of Coalisland Co Tyrone. As this show was for charity, families and trailers arrived in abundance. The weather was good, and although a little cloudy at times, there was no rain in sight. The children had a field day with loads of room for them to play safely, and under the watchful eye of parents and family. The organisation and timing were impeccable.

#### **Racing Results**

Greyhound Race Gregory Conlon with Joe

Lurcher Pups Jed Donagh with Lily

Over 24s Jed Donagh with Chunk

Under 24s Kirsty Harpur with Regal

Over 24 Elite Mal Mc Fall with Sonic

Under 24s Elite Joe Leonard with

Frozen not scared

Under 22s Joe Leonard with Not

Scared

Hairy Dog Jed Donagh with Hammer

Mick the Millar Jed Donagh with Hammer

Bull Cross (Dead Heat) Kirsty Harpur with Skyler,

Shane Ennis with Flash

KC Reg Whippets Gabriel Frank with Dash

Non Peds Susan Mc Cann with Bella

Collie Cross Sean Burke with Mylo

Whippet Pup Race Barry Chambers with Alfie

#### **Showing Results**

Overall Champion Handler Christina Maguire with Maverick

Overall Champion Pup Jamie Lee Mc Kinistry with Hank

Overall Champion Whippet Lisa Dumigan with Frankie

Overall Champion Lurcher Philip Mc Cormick with Ricco

Overall Champion Terrier Clive



(Above) Tully Castle Show Director Mr Scott Fallis presenting Janet Duke with her Championship Cup and winning Whippet Oscar. Also in picture is Reserve Champion Davy Best with Penny and Whippet Judge John McStay.

(Left) Champion Terrier at Tully Castle Terence McLaughlin with Rusty. Also in photograph are judges Gene Gallagher and Wesley Scott.



Some keen racers at Fiona Devlin's Dog Show.

Corkin with Diesel

Overall Champion Strong Dog Jamie Lee Mc Kinistry with Hank

Overall Champion and Best in Show Philip Mc Cormick with Ricco

Reserve Lisa Dumigan with Frankie

Many thanks to Fiona Devlin, Conor Mc Cormick and your band of helpers, you pulled together one of the best Sporting Dog shows I have been to this year. And the good news iOS that proceeds totally £1300 are going to The Cancer Fund For Children totalled. What an achievement!

### **The Combined Clubs Charity Dog Show Annaghmore Raceway, Sunday 3rd September**

Deep in the heart of Orchard County, is the now famous Annaghmore Raceway, with its fine landscapes and magnificent Pony and Jib race track, a fine venue for the Combined Clubs annual Charity Dog Show. The weather could have been better, with the odd shower of rain, but this did not dampen the spirits. The Combined Clubs have acquired a field adjacent to the race track and held simulated racing there.

#### **Showing Results**

Overall Champion Terrier Janet Duke with Frankie

Reserve Eamo Mc Erlean with Spooky

Overall Champion Lurcher Mickey Quinn with Hoss

Reserve Rick Hepburn with Storm

Overall Champion Whippet Dean Mc Straw with Papps

Reserve Rick Hepburn with Kerry

Overall Champion Strong Dog Davy Boyd with Buck Alec

Reserve Kieran O' Neill with Roco

Overall Champion and Best in Show Mickey Quinn with Hoss

Reserve Davy Boyd with Buck Alec

Thanks to the Judges: Lurchers and Whippets, Sammy Shaw; Strong Dogs John Barry; and Terriers Paul Mc Alinden and to the owner of Annaghmore Raceway, Clive Richardson, for allowing use of this magnificent venue for the event. A special mention as well to Tom Barry, Ethan Barry and the Combined Clubs team for another great Dog Show and especially for the contribution raised in aid of Alzheimers.

(Right) Combined Clubs Champion Lurcher Mickey Quinn with Hoss, Reserve Rick Hepburn with Storm.



Clive Corkin with Overall Champion Diesel at Fiona Devlin's Show.



Combined Clubs Champion Terrier Janet Duke with Frankie, Reserve Eamo McErlean with Spooky.





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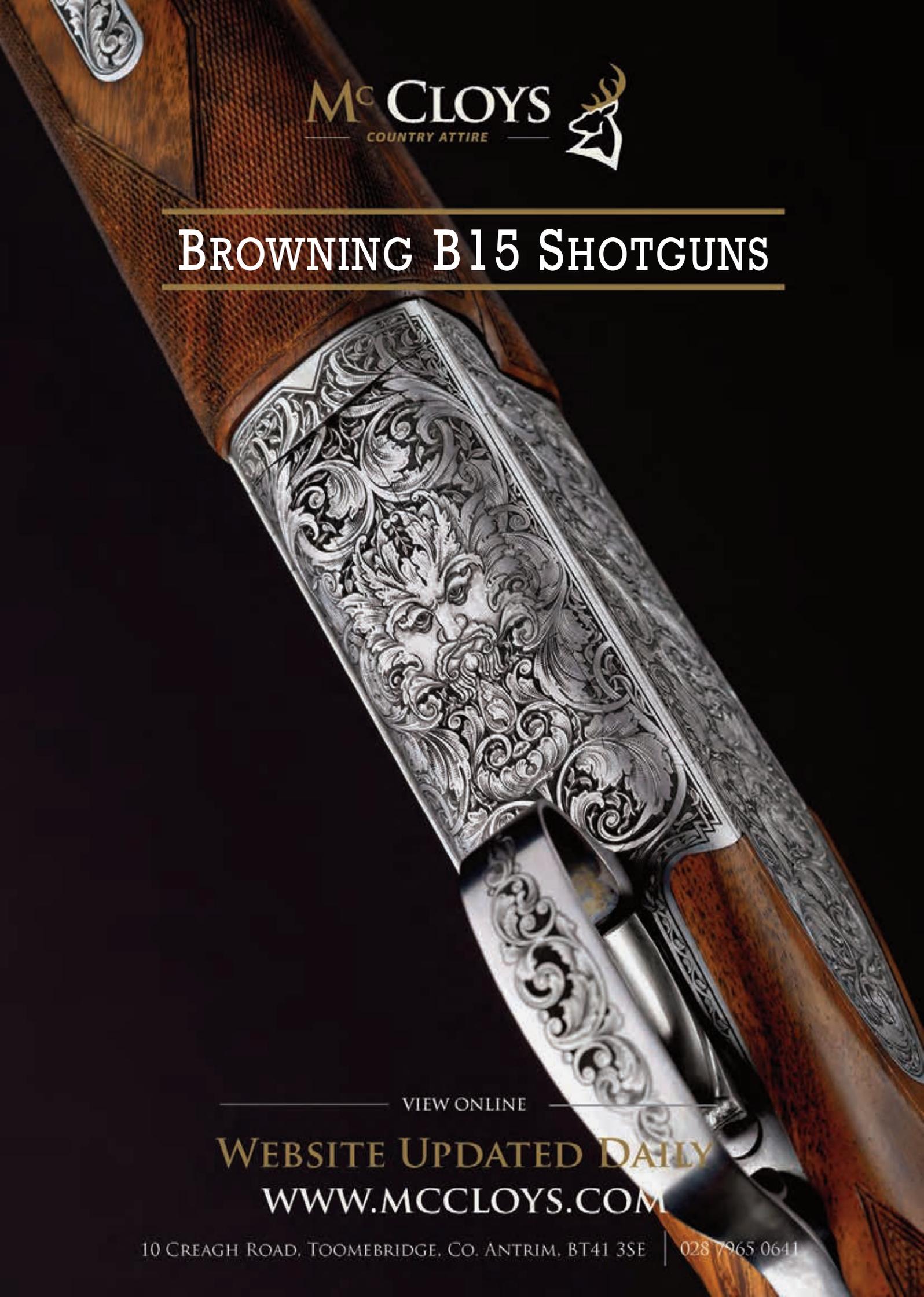


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# Country Chat

*Wee pigeons hatch well and a marauding hoodie gets his comeuppance when Billy shatters the 'leaping into action' world record.*

My friend Connor, who keeps racing pigeons, was kind enough to provide me with a couple of birds last year, which I wanted to use in the training of a young English Springer spaniel bitch. I made it quite clear to my friend that I was looking for a couple of duds that didn't make the grade, but unfortunately he saw that as an insult and told me that he doesn't breed duds, much to the amusement of LB, who also unfortunately, was with me at the time.

"Surely you must have pigeons that are constantly coming in last," I said, trying to take a step back from the mire. We were having a drink at our favourite hotel where Conner is the hotel manager and LB was bouncing about in his chair at this stage

Three weeks later, Conner's friend met me at the door of the hotel with a small cardboard box. I placed the box in the boot of LB's car, as he was duty driver for the evening. Later on, when LB dropped me off at my place, I transferred the box to my jeep and went to bed.

The next morning I discovered that there weren't two pigeons in the box, but six, and none of them were ringed. They looked suspiciously like feral pigeons to me, but then I couldn't tell the difference between a racing pigeon and a feral pigeon anyway. Or indeed if such a difference exists perhaps the only clue to their identity is what they happen to be doing at the time, like  
Some of Billy's pigeons, ducks and hens.

fluttering down from some town or city building on to the pavement, or going 'hell for leather' in a straight and purposeful flight line with twenty or so of their mates.

Now then, I have no problem humanely dispatching wounded or injured birds, especially when they end up on my dinner plate, but six little healthy birds that are as harmless to the soul as a new born baby, no way. It was fascinating as to how light they were and also, their wee hearts were going like a steam train in the palm of my hand.

"Right, that's it," I said, lifting one out at a time to let them go. I am told the male has a flat head and the female has a round head, or maybe it is the other way around. Anyway, I kept back two, their small little heads looked the same to me, so I had either two males or two females.

## **The two birds grew so quickly**

Three months later, when I went to clean out their coop, there were two little white eggs gleaming up at me, and it seemed only a matter of days before the eggs hatched. Never have I witnessed two chicks grow so quickly from chick to fully fledged. They were ready to rock and roll in no time at all, it was amazing.

Three to four weeks after that, another two white eggs appeared in the hutch, so I transferred Mum and Dad,

the two youngsters and the two little white eggs to the hen's coop. There they could come and go, fly away or stay about the place.

When I was cleaning out the kennels later that morning, the four of them were fluttering up and down in the back garden; it was actually fun to watch. When I came back in the afternoon, there were feathers everywhere about the back garden. One young pigeon was lying dead in the field just over the garden fence with half of the breast missing, but there were too many feathers lying around to be from just one young bird. One of the adults was also missing, the other two, which I now know to be mother and son, were sitting quietly in the hen coop.

I was devastated, I can come to grips with it happening a year or two down the line, but to happen on their first day of freedom and worse still, before they even got a strong start in life was as cruel as nature goes. Although it had all the hallmarks of a bird of prey, I just wasn't convinced somehow, yes there was the odd buzzard hanging about, but they had never given me any bother before. I even saw a peregrine falcon flying by once, but it seemed to be on a mission elsewhere.

## **Never in my life have I moved so quickly!**

Later in the day when I was in the kitchen, looking out I saw to my horror  
It's a devil of a job to keep them safe.



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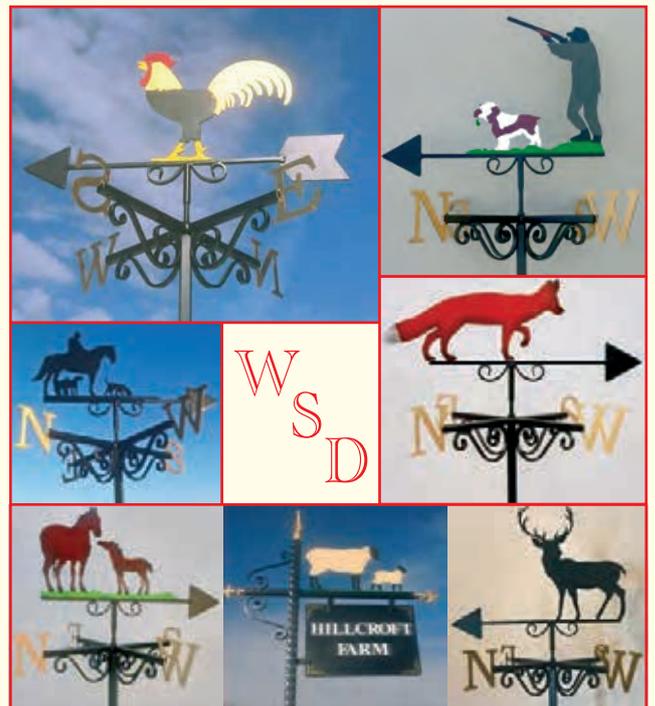
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Getting ready for the hills.

a grey-back crow chasing the other youngster about the garden. Never in my life, have I moved so quickly! First find the keys for the gun cabinet, open the gun cabinet, grab the little 20bore, search for two cartridges, go to the back door, unlock it quietly and with the gun 'at the ready' open the back door, I even took the time to check my 'field-of-fire,' as the door opened.

But the 'hoodie' tried to make good its escape, looking over its shoulder in that horribly characteristic manner, it flew off. I blocked the rogue out with the barrels, not the sights and shot it dead. Now rewind: from first spotting the crow from the kitchen window to actually shooting it, it took less than thirty-seconds! Not bad for an old sixty-one-year old! Although I have by now sickened every poor spud that has come about the place with the tale ever since.

But that wasn't the end of the grey-back crow saga, by jeeppers no. The crow that I shot earlier was in shark analogy - Jaws junior. The brute that came later was the father of all grey-backs, it was unbelievably huge. If I had shot what I thought was an average size grey-back crow, this brute was twice the size of it.

It came straight in and landed on the garden fence. I had just fed the ducks and hens feed trays, the remaining two pigeons were out and feeding, albeit rather gingerly, with the ducks and hens about the place. Gun at the ready, I watched to see what the crow was going to do. He watched for almost a minute or two, then flew down to the feed tray and started to walk after the remaining

youngster, who started to walk nervously away. Now just bear in mind that this was the youngster's first day in the big bad world!

"Right ye' boy ye' that's good enough for me!" I muttered.

I already had the back door open, so it was only a matter of opening the inside door, stepping out with the gun to my shoulder and shoot as the monster lifted.

Unfortunately the other birds had their fill of horrors for the day and they too lifted at the same time as the grey-back, so I had to wait until the airways were less crowded. Whenever mum and son changed their flight path, the grey-back sneaked off at a much lower altitude and was isolated. Bang! He went a full hundred yards before he dropped dead into the same field where I had earlier found the half-eaten youngster.

And that as they say dear readers, was that. There are now three wee 'townie birds' feeding about here and it is a joy to have them flying around my head at feeding time, just as long as the place doesn't end up looking like Trafalgar Square.

I have a hunch that this year is going to see a huge influx of the shooting man's favourite quarry, the humble woodie. They seem to be everywhere this year and like the feral pigeon, they can be prolific breeders, having two to three broods each year, two squabs being the norm. It is usually about June onwards when I see some sort of woodie movement. But throughout this

year, the airspace seems to be predominantly occupied by wood pigeon.

### **Wood pigeon are fantastic sporting birds**

I've taken more than a passing interest in which bird I see most, be it in flight or about our gardens, and I am pleased to report, the wood pigeon is by far the more common. A friend has no less than three pairs nesting in his garden. Here at home, I have something similar, even as I sit here typing this, a pair is right outside my living room window, coo-cooing to each other. They are a fantastic little sporting bird, they make excellent eating and even the most ardent of driven game followers love them, treating them with respect and enjoyment.

Finally, 'Monarch of the Glen' is back on our screens, well definitely on mine anyhow. Scotland-based, it is lighthearted nonsense at it's very best, more so the scenic views with each episode. Anyhow, if I may be forgiven for digressing from country topics, to quoting a cracking line from one episode. Here's the situation: Lexi, the housemaid in the big castle, fancied Fergal, the estate forest ranger, a handsome Irishman no less. But Fergal, unknown to Lexie, fancied the local school teacher, Katrina. Now stay with me on this one folks. Duncan, the estate 'dogsbody' fancied Lexie and asked her out one evening to a local hooley and Lexie laughed at his kind invite. So, when the opportunity arose, Lexie asked Fergal to the same hooley, he said he would love to, but Katrina had asked him first, and he also said in passing that Duncan knew he was dating Katrina. Lexie was not only embarrassed but was angry with Duncan for not telling her. "It made me feel this small," said Lexie, indicating with her thumb and index finger, and no more than a few inches from Duncan's face. "Do you know how that made me feel," she continued. "I should do," said Duncan getting up from the table, "you do it to me often enough". Ouch!

# Buying a modern gun at auction

*Auctions can deliver, says Chris Beaumont of Holt's Auctioneers.*

Chris adds "It would be hard to find such a diverse selection of available guns under one roof under any other circumstance – and whatever your budget or requirements may be, there is almost certainly going to be something there that fits the bill."

Certainly Holt's cannot be beaten for variety when it comes to gun auctions, and whether you are looking for little-used modern gun or an old classic that you'd like to take into the shooting field, auctions are the place to look.

Buying a brand new gun can be a big investment, and, as with many markets, the difference in the price of a pre-owned gun and a new one can be substantial. There are, of course, advantages to buying new: you can select exactly the model you want, the wood, the engraving style and pretty much any specification, almost to the point of ordering a bespoke gun, as well as having the serious advantage of a warranty. However, the cost compared with a pre-owned gun can mean this is not feasible, particularly when one adds in VAT and, in some cases, the waiting time for delivery.

So, if a new gun is beyond your wallet, perhaps a pre-owned gun of the same calibre isn't – and certainly it is a more immediate solution. Specialist auctions can have a huge range of modern guns in their sales, and it's well worth investigating. Chris says that while there are bargains to be had, you should do your homework: "Talk to the auction house, or enlist the help of a friendly gunsmith, as they may be able to offer you some good advice on what is going to be a gun for practical use." While guns sold at auction are legal in terms of proof, they aren't stripped or tested and of course there is no guarantee, so it's worth going to viewing days to take a closer look.

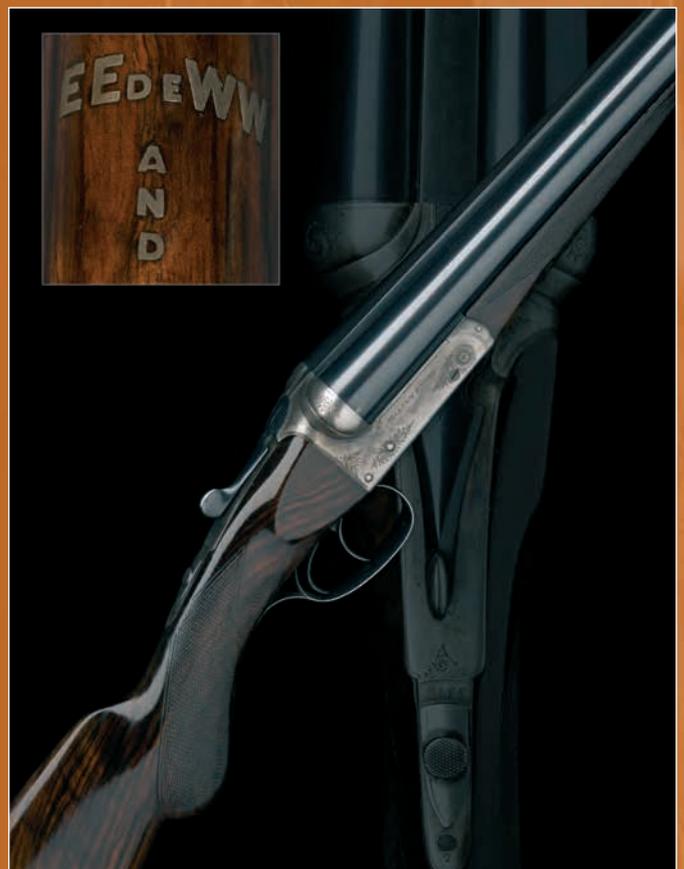
"There's no such thing as 'too good to be true' when it comes to buying a gun, whether at auction or second-hand from a dealer," Chris says, "But that being said, auctions can be a fantastic source for a good, working gun at a reasonable price." When it comes to how much to bid on a gun, check what a new example would fetch, as well as what a used gun might cost when buying retail, and don't forget to factor in the buyer's premium, as well as whether VAT is applicable (on new or imported items). Holt's Auctioneers now has a handy system to do this on the online catalogue: "The Total Price Calculator", which will show you the total price including buyer's premium and VAT if applicable. The other calculating tool is the "What is Your Spending Limit", which allows you to set your overall spending limit on a lot.

## Condition check

You aren't going to get the chance to test a gun that's being sold at auction, of course, but a gun will give you clues on an external inspection of its condition – if the barrels still have their blueing, the chequering is sharp and everything feels tight, it's a good sign. As Chris puts it, "Age doesn't necessarily mean that it has been much used or tie in to the life that is left in a gun." Key words to look for in a catalogue are "new and unused", "virtually unused" or "little used", according to Chris. Chris also advises "Looking for positive descriptions. Words that mark the gun out as being special may well mean it can be hard to find a similar example, and certainly you will find one-off or unusual guns that can give you a lifetime of use in the field if you do your research."

Some examples of guns sold by Holt's Auctioneers during 2017 are shown below.

**WILLIAM EVANS**, A 12-bore boxlock ejector pigeon gun, with 30in nitro barrels and 3in chambers, bored approximately full choke. Automatic safety, with some acanthus scrollwork, and figured semi-pistolgrip stock.



The gun was ordered in 1933, by Sir Ernest Edward de Winton Wills, and was the 4th baronet of Hazelwood.  
 Estimate: £1,500 to £2,500, sold by Holt's Auctioneers for £2,700.

**CHURCHILL LTD**, A little-used 28-bore "Hercules Finest Quality Model" boxlock ejector, with gold inlay and nitro barrels. Retaining virtually full original colour-hardening and finish, with automatic safeties, ¼ and ½ choke and fully scroll engraved. With lightweight leather case.



Estimate: £5,000 and £7,000, sold by Holt's Auctioneers for £8,500.

**BOSS & CO**, A fine pair of 12-bore easy-opening sidelock ejectors, with gold inlay, multichokes (with spares), removable striker discs, rolled-edge trigger-guards and Best fine acanthus scroll engraving. The colour-hardening and finish is original and almost fully retained, and the stocks are well-figured.

The guns come in a lightweight leather motor case with accessories, chokes and a brass chock key.

The guns were delivered new to the seller in 2011.

Estimate: £70,000 to £80,000, sold by Holt's Auctioneers for £70,000.

**DAVID MCKAY BROWN**, A fine pair of 12-bore round-action ejectors, with gold inlay and nitro chopperlump barrels (London proofed for 1990). Bored approximately true cylinder and improved cylinder choke, with the action and furniture profusely carved with bold stylised acanthus scrollwork, retaining virtually full original colour-hardening and finish.



Well figured stocks with semi-diamond grips in brass-cornered oak and leather case with canvas and leather outer.

Estimate: £20,000 to £30,000, sold by Holt's Auctioneers for £24,000+VAT.

**HOLLAND & HOLLAND**, A fine Vos-engraved 12-bore "Royal De Luxe" self-opening hand-detachable sidelock ejector. With

a band of bold foliiform engraving at the breech, automatic safety, gold-inlaid cocking indicators, rolled edge trigger-guard and the action, lockplate and furniture deeply



carved with acanthus and foliform borders, signed E. Vos.

Estimate: £25,000 to £35,000, sold by Holt's Auctioneers for £26,000.

*ARMY & NAVY C.S.L.*, An unusual quartet of 12-bore "Best Quality" single-trigger sidelock ejectors, two of the guns with

replacement 28in nitro barrels, two with original 28in nitro chopperlump barrels, with gold-inlay details, fine acanthus scrolling and retaining virtually full renewed colour-hardening and finish. Replacement stocks, presented in a fitted brass-cornered oak and leather motor case with reproduction label.

For more information, visit [www.holtsauctioneers.com](http://www.holtsauctioneers.com)



The guns were made in 1914 as two pairs. Estimate: £10,000 to £15,000, sold by Holt's Auctioneers for £22,000.



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# The Legendary Life Of The Man Called Lion

*In the annals of big game hunting in Africa one of the names which stands out is that of John Howard Pondoro Taylor whose lifestory was colourful, achieving legendary status. People who are interested in African big game hunting speak of Taylor with considerable respect. He was a sort of living Allan Quatermain.*

He was also Irish and was born in Dublin. He was born on the 6th of January, 1904 on Harcourt Street, Dublin into a very respectable family. His father was a surgeon in Meath Hospital and his mother was an American heiress. The family was Presbyterian, very committedly so, which meant that as he grew up John's political views were often out of sync with his fellow countrymen. He left Ireland at the age of 18 and many years later he renounced his Presbyterian

background and became a Muslim instead. He attributed this change to the very unChristian behaviour that he frequently witnessed being displayed between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland.

Taylor showed his rebellious streak and aversion to authority from an early age. In boarding school in England he refused to participate in the fagging system. When asked by a senior prefect to polish the prefect's shoes John threw the shoes out the window! He was popular in boarding school, as non-conformists often are. However, eventually he was asked to leave the school.

Back in Ireland he continued to get himself in trouble. He was only 17 but he decided to join the Black and Tans. Apparently, this act got him put on the Sinn Fein Black (death) list. Jack and his brother were arrested by four members of Sinn Fein wearing balaclavas. They were placed in jail and then tried. At the trial they were told they had to leave the country and if they came back they would probably be shot. The two brothers therefore emigrated to Canada. John worked on a ranch and also took part in some bootlegging activity which involved illegally driving trucks of illicit booze across a frozen border lake.

However, John had no intention of staying in Canada. He had a hankering for Africa. He wrote, 'It was at my preparatory school in Eire that I discovered Rider Haggard's 'Nada the Lily', an extremely well-illustrated edition. From that I knew there was

only one country for me - Africa.'

## **He jumped more freight trains until he reached Victoria Falls**

He left Canada after a short period and travelled to South Africa. In his possession were twenty gold sovereigns and a Harley-Davidson. Mounting his Harley he rode north until he ran out of money. He sold his bike and, still heading north, started to jump freight trains. When he arrived in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) he used the last of his money to buy a rifle, a B.S.A. .303 Sporter, and a hundred shells. With this he jumped more freight trains until he reached Victoria Falls. Abandoning the trains his intention was to wander up the Zambezi River. Accompanying him on this journey into Angola was Joro, a mentor and guide. They lived by hunting antelope and trading meat with the natives for pumpkins, maize meal, and eggs.

After this adventure he returned to Southern Rhodesia in mid-1925 and got a job as vermin controller on a cattle ranch. The vermin were cattle-killing lions. Taylor got a more appropriate gun for this job, a Martini-Henry .577/.450 calibre under-lever single-action, firing a 480-grain lead bullet in front of an unpleasant load of black powder.

Taylor shot his first elephant in 1927 in an area of green-gray bush in central Mozambique, about midway between the small Xinica and Mossurize Rivers. This was a lone bull which had been raiding the maize granaries belonging to a nearby village and the villagers



John Taylor in Ireland in 1929. He paid a number of brief visits over the years to his country of origin.



(Top and Bottom) Cape Buffalo and Antelope by the US wildlife artist Joseph Vance.



wanted the problem dealt with. Taylor took aim and fired. When the smoke from his black powder charge had cleared the bull had vanished. Shortly afterward there was a breaking of branches and a crash, followed by a long deep groan as the bull fell in the dense undergrowth where it had stopped. When he reached the dead animal, Taylor admitted that 'I suddenly found that I was trembling from head to foot.' He cut the tail off in the approved manner as proof of ownership. He realised that to shoot elephant safely he needed steel-jacketed bullets.

Shortly afterwards he set himself up as a legally licensed professional hunter in Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique). He decided to settle in Tete, a town on the south side of the lower Zambezi River. With the assistance of locals he built a pole-and-thatch camp under the umbrella of shade close to the river. It was 1927 and this would be his home, on and off, for the next ten years. He parted with Joro at this stage and his description of their parting perhaps reveals that their relationship had been more than just professional or friendship. 'Joro raised his hands, placed them on my shoulders, and looked deep into my eyes. My hands were on his shoulders and I looked back at him. For long and long we stood like that...then he was gone. I never saw him again. I remember I blew my nose loudly and stumbled a bit as I made my way to the canoe. There seemed to be a slight mist in front of my eyes and I couldn't see too well...I started to drink too much, something I'd never done. But then I'd never been lonesome before.'

### ***His knowledge of local languages came in useful***

During the 1930s and 1940s Taylor made a living from hunting lion, cape buffalo and elephants. The locals gave him a name, 'Chimpondoro' - 'The Lion-Like One' or 'The Roaring of a Lion'. As well as Tete he established another camp at Lake Amaramba in northern Portuguese East Africa. He

was based here when World War Two broke out. Not having a radio he did not even hear about the war until it had already been on for some months. When he found out he immediately joined up, becoming a Sergeant in the Kings African Rifles. They were posted to Burma and he was wounded there in 1943, receiving bullet injuries in his right shoulder and right calf. He returned to Africa where he worked in intelligence where his knowledge of local languages, including Chinyanja, ChiSena and Swahili, came in very useful. During the war, while dining in neutral Tete, he got into a fistfight with a German. He ended up in jail for a short while on account of this drunken brawl. Also during World War Two he lost the middle finger on his right hand, probably the result of being hit by a Japanese bullet in Burma.

Shortly after the war he began writing his first book, 'Big Game and Big Game Rifles'. With the proceeds from this book he bought a motor launch which he used for hunting up and down the Zambezi. Driven on by the success of his first publication he wrote 'African Rifles & Cartridges', which became an acclaimed book. He was now living in Malawi (then known as Nyasaland) and he had a faithful servant in the form of a local Muslim called Aly, who had a happy, cheerful disposition which Taylor found of considerable solace during lean times, or when he was sick from his war injuries. Taylor also came back from the war a Muslim convert. He paraded around Tete dressed in a thobe, a white cotton ankle-length shift, with a copy of the Koran tucked under his arm, trying to convert anybody who would listen to him.

A fellow hunter described meeting Taylor in 1949: 'I remember finding Taylor a rather reticent sort of person who did not seem pleased to have other white company. He, however, had a thorough knowledge of the bush and particularly buffalo and elephant and seemed to know most areas along the Zambezi that were good elephant



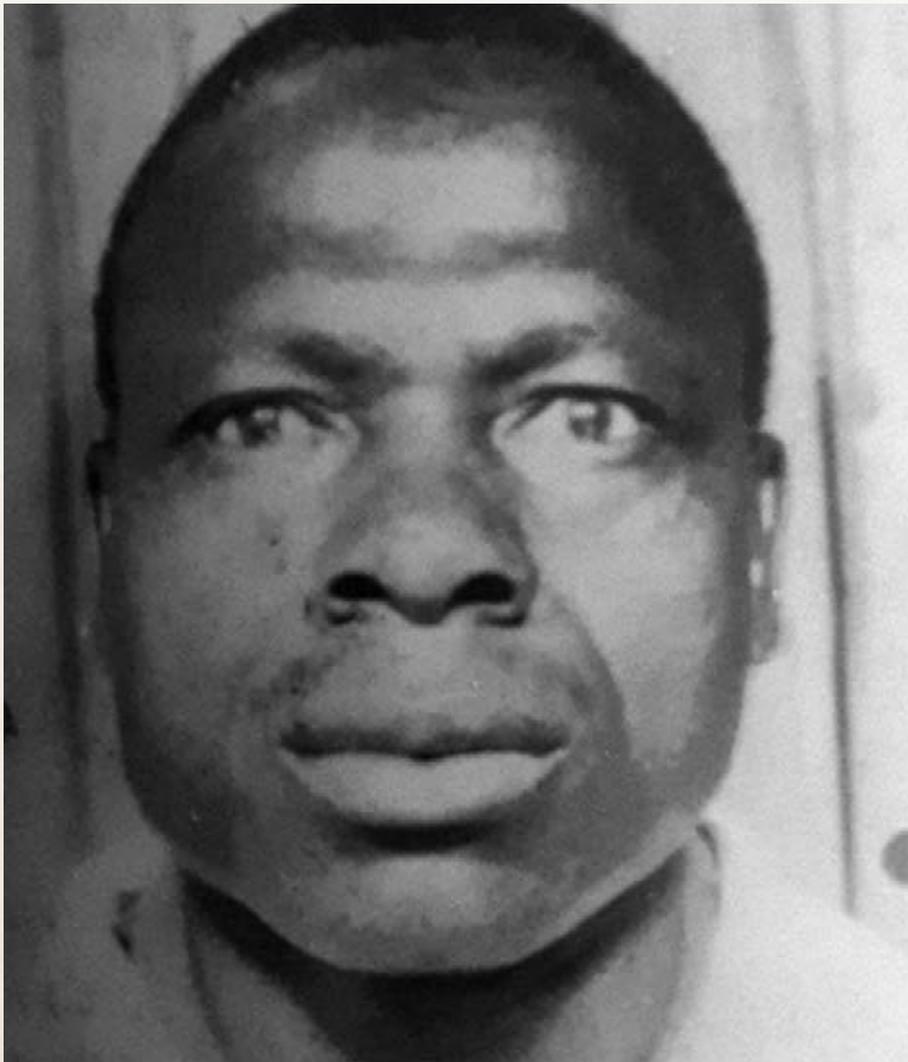
Another magnificent drawing by Joseph Vance.



John Taylor with Aly Ndemanga and an unidentified crew member of John Taylor's team in 1953. The animal is a roan antelope and Taylor, who converted to Islam, is wearing a turban.

haunts....Taylor was obviously what we would refer to today as a 'gun nut' and had used almost every type of

calibre....Taylor was apparently quite well known to all the local chiefs and headmen and I think he shot quite a few



Aly Ndemanga as a youth, about 1942 at age 17 - Aly became Taylor's adopted son.

buffalo for meat for them during his visits. This ensured 'news' of the local authority's whereabouts, from which I gathered not all his hunting was covered by licences. His tusks went to Tete....I remember asking him where he lived and his reply was, 'Where I happen to be!' I think he used Beira as a base quite often but seemed to know the whole of Mozambique right up to the Ruvuma River, being the border with Tanganyika.'

By the late 1940s, Taylor could see the writing on the wall and that the days of earning a living from ivory hunting were numbered. Some of his ivory hunting was illegal poaching but it should be pointed out that at the time it wasn't the nefarious activity that it is nowadays. As Peter Capstick pointed out in his biography about Taylor, 'In Africa, ivory poaching was merely against the law of that time because the

various governments didn't get their financial tax rake-off by licences and fees. It wasn't a matter of endangering a species. It was rather more like rum-running or selling tax-free cigarettes.'

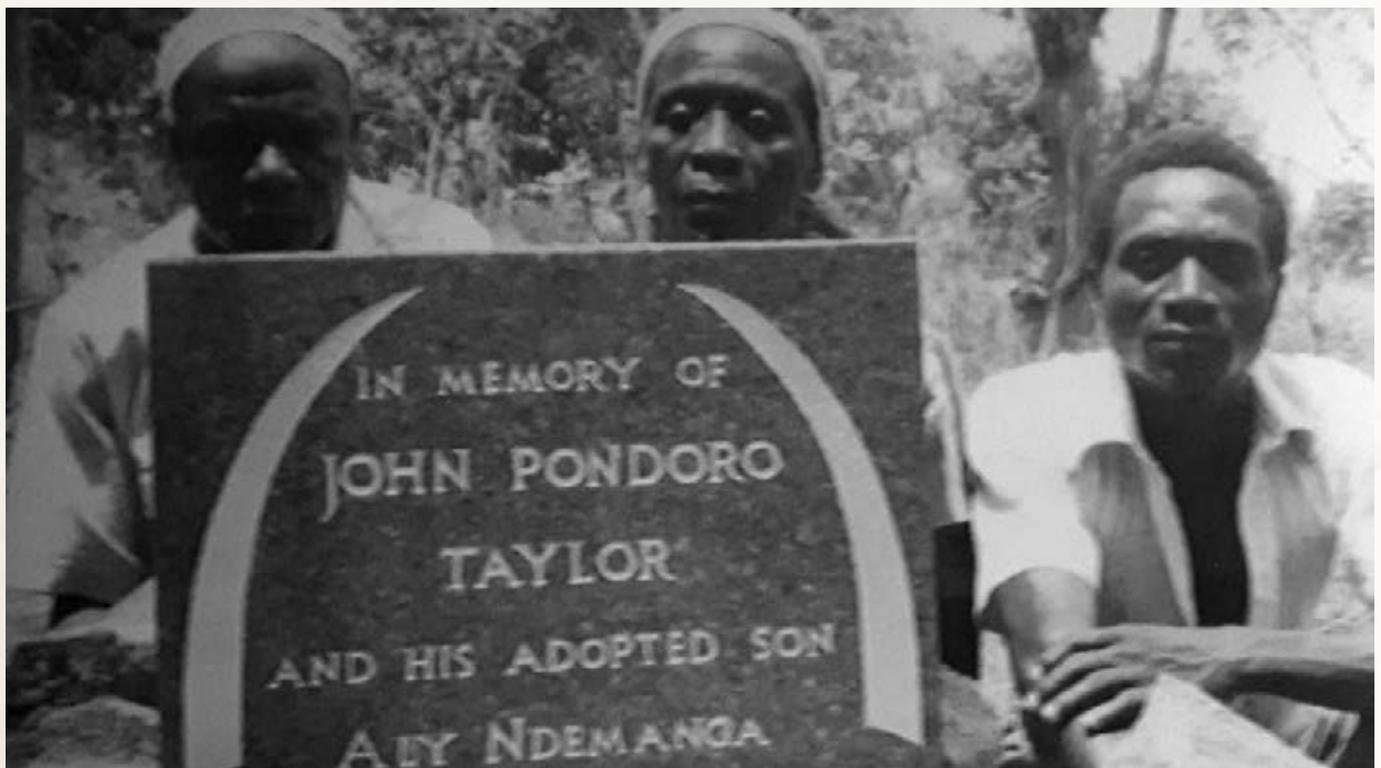
### ***The difference between poaching and licensed sport hunting***

Tens of thousands of elephants were killed by crop controllers. The relatively few tuskers the ivory poachers took didn't really endanger elephant as a species in the least....Poaching didn't have the same sort of stigma that it does now, poachers being thought of rather like romantic pirates of the Spanish Main. The general public looked upon it with more interest than abhorrence, never dreaming of the critical consequences that organised commercial poaching could have in the future.' Nowadays uncontrolled

poaching in parts of Africa has put a number of species on the endangered list. 'One of the problems,' says Capstick, 'that legitimate hunting must battle is the ignorance or reluctance of the general public to consider the obvious difference between poaching and licensed sport hunting, which is actually beneficial to game population management.'

In the 1950s the winds of revolutionary change were sweeping through parts of Africa and Nyasaland (Malawi) was part of this unsettling period. As a result the colonial powers were looking nervously about them, with the result that white liberals like Taylor (who had a negative view of colonialism) were looked upon with suspicion. It was perhaps for this reason that in December 1957 the authorities deported Taylor from Nyasaland back to England. Another possible reason was that the authorities had discovered Taylor's homosexual leanings (it was reported that young local men were often seen in his presence) and this was a forbidden activity. Whatever the reason, his deportation was a

momentous occurrence in his life and he found himself in London with no employment far from the land of his heart's desire. The possibility of an advisory position with Holland & Holland, one of the top London gunmakers, offered itself and he would have been ideal for the job. However, Taylor had a reputation as a poacher and renegade which was a serious problem for the image-conscious firm. He didn't get the job. The rumours of his homosexuality might have also played a factor. Eventually, he got a job as a night watchman at a kennel, the Battersea Dogs Home, a very far cry from his halcyon African days as *The Last of the Ivory Hunters*, *The King of the Elephant Trails*. 'The cultural shock must have been enormous,' writes Capstick. 'Taylor had been born into the privileged class; he had servants to wait on him from the day he was born....To those who knew him, he kept up a cheerful front, but inside he was



Memorial plaque with (left to right) Kandulu, Aly's brother, Aly Ndemanga's widow, Arina, and Aly's son, James Ndemanga. The plaque was placed at the joint grave of John Taylor and Aly Ndemanga in the village of Mwambwajila in Malawi.

numbed with despair.' He became cynical, at times moody and not talkative. He started drinking gin and whiskey in heavy quantities. After a while his eyesight started deteriorating and his hearing worsened. He lived in a number of bedsits. At this stage he considered marriage but it came to nothing. Capstick is of the opinion that because Taylor considered marriage on a couple of occasions during his life, that he was bisexual rather than homosexual.

Taylor left the kennel job and became a security guard. His last job was as a park keeper at Clapham Common in South London. His last years were sad and he lived poorly and fed himself poorly. What little of his wages was left over went on cigarettes and alcohol. He died, in London, from 'an acute flare of chronic bronchitis' on the 31st of March 1969 at the age of 65.

### ***Being a 'white native' was not fashionable at the time***

When Taylor became a professional hunter he became a 'white native', living in the African manner with his followers and not apart from them as

would have been customary for a white man. His followers called him Jack. He slept among them at the same campfire, ate with them out of the same pots and used the same utensils. His followers were often superstitious and believed in witchcraft. They were also very honest in that they weren't given to thieving. Being a 'white native' in this manner was not fashionable at the time, but one of the admirable things about Taylor was that he didn't give a fig for fashion.

Any discussion of this larger than life man would be incomplete without a brief mention of his often hotly contested ballistic theories that culminated in the formula that produced what he called a bullet's 'knockout value'. He devised his KO system as a way of trying to validate the effectiveness of a bullet's terminal results based upon its diameter, weight, and speed. 'Hunters of all persuasions,' says Capstick, 'being a traditionally very opinionated lot, have given as many interpretations of Taylor's Knockout Values as there are hunters.' The theory remains a regular feature of printed discussions of ballistics in gun books or

magazines around the world.

It should also be pointed out that during his hunting career he was sometimes asked to deal with man-eating lions. These experiences are described in his book 'Maneaters and Marauders.' In one dramatic incident he describes one of his followers being carried off from their camp during the night by a man-eater: 'I then rushed after the lion...naked and all as I was. I was waving the lamp and yelling at the top of my voice. Luck was with us, both me and the lad, for I caught up with them at the very edge of the clearing. The lion ran his own chest into the sharp stump of a small tree. The jar caused him to drop the boy, and before he could grab him again, I appeared on the scene. I rather fancy that the spectacle I presented must have proven too much for his nerves. He leaped round to face me but, with a vicious snarl, wheeled again and bounded into the grass. It is extremely improbable that he had ever previously faced a stark-naked white man, yelling and roaring at the top of his voice, waving a lighted lamp in one hand and wildly rushing at him!'

# Counts and Trials



Father and son – a young grouse follows the parent bird.

*I always look forward with real excitement to July, because July is when we can get back on to the hills and moors for grouse brood counts and pointer and setter trials. It is also a slightly anxious time because the next few weeks will tell us whether grouse shooting will be good, poor or cancelled altogether. For me, that uncertainty is part of the charm of grouse shooting. Grouse are wild birds and their numbers are very much at the mercy of weather, predation and disease. Of course, moorland keepers do all in their power to tilt the balance in favour of the grouse with heather burning, medicated grit and vermin control, but for all their efforts a week's bad weather at hatching time can spell the end of any hopes of shooting for another year.*

So what about the prospects for 2017? Our spring counts on paired birds were excellent. The weather during late May and early June was generally not too bad — at least there were no late falls of snow or days of monsoon-like rainfall. Some keeper friends reported seeing good numbers of cheepers as they made their trap rounds. Now we have finally been able to start our counts and the early signs are that this should be a good summer for those of us who love the grouse.

We started counting a couple of days ago as I write. After weeks with no meaningful activity the dogs are a gallop short of full fitness and for some it takes a while for their noses to get properly tuned in again. There is a lot of excitement as they tumble out of the vehicle and realise that they are back on the hill and for some that excitement

will lead to a little bit of — let's call it over-eagerness — when they start running again. But they soon settle down, remember, or are reminded, that they should drop when birds are flushed, that hares are nasty smelly things that are to be strictly ignored and

that the turn whistle means 'Turn!' not carry on for another hundred yards.

## **Hopeful for good numbers of birds**

It is still early days, but our first counts have been promising. Brood



Iain Grant and Ellie working out a point while grouse counting.

sizes are good, the birds are well grown and flying strongly and so far we have seen very few cheepers that mean late broods. With lots more counts to do it is, of course, too soon to come to any real conclusions, but at the end of our second day on the hill I was feeling pretty pleased with what we had seen and you can't hope for much more than that.

The Pointer and Setter field trial circuit is in full swing now, with trials nearly every day from the 11th July until the 11th August. A visit to the Dukeries trial on Burncastle Estate in the Lammermuir hills was the first chance to catch up with some old friends, meet some new dogs, and importantly, the chance to find out how other people's grouse counts were going.

Our host for the trial was the Duke of Northumberland and Head Keeper Craig Dickson combined the duties of Chief Steward and Gun. The Judges were Steve Lound and John Naylor and Val Isherwood was the Trial Secretary. The weather was almost perfect: bright, dry and not too warm. There were plenty of grouse in well grown broods and the walking was easy over flat ground and well burnt heather. The only thing missing was a breeze.

Pointers and setters are blessed with probably the best noses of any breed of dog. On a good scenting day a pointer at full gallop can catch the merest whiff of a grouse crouched in the heather fifty yards up-wind and instantly slam on to point with the absolute certainty that the grouse is there. Given a good, steady breeze a pointer or setter will quarter the



Grouse away from a young pointer at the start of the counting season.

hill systematically, crossing the wind from side to side in a pattern that ensures that any grouse on the beat will be found. Unfortunately, there wasn't a good steady breeze. For most of the trial there was little or no wind at all, with just the occasional zephyr wafting across the heather first in front, then from the side and sometimes even touching the backs of our necks.

### ***There was some great dog work to enjoy***

A mainly still day is difficult even for experienced dogs, and this trial was for puppies and novices. Judges Steve and John worked hard all day to give every dog the best possible chance of finding birds and made every allowance for the conditions, but it was never an easy day for dogs, handlers or Judges. That said, there was some great dog work to enjoy. There were eight runners in the Puppy stake but the lack of a breeze made it very difficult for them and the grouse tended to take to their wings before the dogs were able to point them. Even so, two young Irish setters: Brian Morris's Erinvale Meadow and Alan Neill's Dunroon Ginger Boy made it through to the second round and Alan took a well-deserved first place after his dog had a good find, held his point well and then produced his grouse calmly and steadily. Gun's choice from the puppies

was David Warren's pointer Onward Henry.

Hopes that a breeze might spring up as the morning passed were not realised and the twenty-three novice dogs found conditions as difficult as they had been for the puppies. There was rarely a chance for a brace to settle into a proper quartering pattern as the breeze shifted and died before starting up from a completely different direction. With no chance of settling into a pattern as they tried to quarter it was no surprise to see dogs flushing coveys, but despite the difficulties five and a half brace made it through to a second round, with the Judges giving 'the benefit of the doubt' where possible. It wasn't spectacular but there was some very clever work from several of the dogs, adapting to the conditions and proceeding with caution around birds. Had it been a shooting day the Guns could undoubtedly made a bag and that, after all, is what the dogs are trying to demonstrate.

Lester Anderson took first place with his pointer Snap Dragon: David Warren's pointer Onward Henry was second and Peter O'Driscoll third with another pointer American Lady who was also Gun's Choice for the novice stake.

I managed to chat with quite a few triallers and a couple of keepers during the trial and everyone was cautiously optimistic about the coming grouse season, based on their first few days on the moor. With several days shooting already penciled in on the calendar I am hopeful that there will be plenty of work for the dogs once the season starts and I may even get to shoot a grouse or two myself.

(Left) David Warren launches pointer Triplow Wilma at the start of the novice stake.





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1. Another covey goes into the book – Angela Haigh with Isla and Skye.
2. Counting team: Angela Haigh, Georgina Hudson and Jocelyn Ness.
3. Secretary Val Isherwood welcomes the competitors at the start of the Dukeries trial.
4. Gun Craig Dickman with Judges John Naylor and Steve Lound.
5. Brian Morris's Irish setter puppy Erinvale Meadow.



1



2



3

1. Anne Jacques pointer Sparkfield Midnight working hard in the novice stake.
2. Hannah Pearson's black pointer Pookerroos Adrienne showing some serious pace.
3. 1st and 3rd in the Novice stake: Lester Anderson with Pointer Snap Dragon and Peter O'Driscoll with pointer American Lady.
4. Colin Adamson with Novice stake winner Lester Anderson.
5. Puppy stake winner Alan Neill receives his cup from Colin Adamson.



4



5



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# HUNTING ROUNDUP

## *AROUND THE PUPPY SHOWS*

### **South Tyrone Hunt**

Andy Oliver MFH welcomed a large crowd to the South Tyrone Hunt Kennels, at Killeshil outside Dungannon, then introduced judges Mark McIlroy, honorary huntsman to the Newry Hunt and Philip Watts, the newly appointed huntsman to the Iveagh Foxhounds.

Huntsman Ryan Carvill brought forward 7 couple of doghounds and 6½ couple of bitches from seven litters and the judges worked their way through the new entry before Andy Oliver announced the following placings:

#### **Doghounds**

1. Craftsman Meynell and South Staffs Druid 13 Their Crocus 15
2. Rancher Duke of Beaufort Raider 12 Grove and Rufford Walnut 13
3. Poison Grove and Rufford Magnum

12 Their Poppy 14

#### **Bitches**

1. Rascal Sibling of Rancer
2. Posy Sibling of Poison
3. Ransom Sibling of Rancer

The bitch, Rascal, was then declared Champion puppy with Craftsman as Reserve Champion.

### **Tynan and Armagh Foxhounds**

A joint puppy show is a rather unusual event, but the Tynan and Armagh Foxhounds hosted their neighbours, the Armagh and Richhill Beagles, at their Sevaghan kennels, as they had only two litters and their guests only one litter to show.

Tynan and Armagh huntsman Keith McCall produced 2 couple of doghounds and 1½ couple of bitches for

judges Patrick Boyd (Warwickshire Beagles) and Jonny Butler (huntsman to the Route Harriers).

After due deliberation Brian Dougan MFH was able to make the following announcements:

#### **Doghounds**

1. Gander Louth Gammon 13 Locket 15
2. Gangster Brother of Gander
3. Gatsby Brother of Gander.

#### **Bitches**

1. Garbo Sister of Gander
2. Treasure Traveller 12 Loren 15
3. Treacle Sister of Treasure

Garbo was then declared Champion puppy with her brother, Gander, as Reserve Champion.

Lucy Leigh Livingstone MH then took over the ring and produced 2 couple of doghounds and 1 couple of



Huntsman Keith Mc Call showing the new entry to judges Patrick Bond and Jimmy Butler at the Tynan and Armagh Foxhounds Puppy Show.



Huntsman Barry Jones shows the new entry to judges William Montgomery and Craig Cavan at the North Down Foxhounds puppy show.

bitches for the judges.

It did not take long for the judges to pass the following placings for Lucy to announce:

#### **Doghounds**

1. Valiant Layman 10 Patchwork 13
2. Viscount
3. Vanguard

#### **Bitches**

1. Venus
2. Vixen

The doghound, Valiant, was then pronounced Champion with his sister, Venus, as Reserve

### **East Down Foxhounds**

Small new entries continued to be the case at the East Down Foxhound kennels, at Seaforde, as huntsman Declan Feeney produced 2 couple of doghounds and 3 couple of bitches from two litters.

Judges William Montgomery, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Masters of Hounds Association and John Henry Jnr, who hunts the Meath Foxhounds' bitch pack, worked their way through the new entry before Craig Caven announced the following placings.

#### **Doghounds**

1. Godney Mendip Farmers Godney 12  
Ribbon 14
2. Gordon Brother of Godney
3. Rector Mendip Farmers Godney 12  
Ringlet 14

#### **Bitches**

1. Restful Sister of Rector
2. Golden Sister of Godney.
3. Gooseberry Sister of Godney.

### **North Down Hunt**

The North Down Hunt puppy show, at Comber, was judged by two very experienced ex masters in William Montgomery (who was master here from 1963-1988 as well as master of the Ballymacads 1991-1993) and Craig Caven (who was master of the North Down's neighbours, the East Down Foxhounds from 1978-2013).

Huntsman Barry Jones produced 4 ½ couple of doghounds and 4 couple of bitches from four litters for the judges' consideration.

After due deliberation the following placings were announced.

#### **Doghounds**

1. Copper Fitzwilliam Stilton 12

C and WW Chicory 12

2. Captain Sibling of Copper
3. Whiskey Portman Barnard 13  
Whisper 12

#### **Bitches**

1. Perfume Warlock 12 Perfect 13
2. Coco Sibling of Copper
3. Chewit Sibling of Copper
4. The bitch, Perfume, was declared Champion Puppy with Copper as Reserve.

### **Louth Hunt marks its Bicentenary**

The Louth Foxhounds celebrated their 200th anniversary with a gala lunch at the Lisrenny, Tallanstown home of Mr and Mrs Charles Angel, which preceded the annual puppy show.

Sarah Angel is, of course, the owner of these hounds and the kennels are on her home estate.

Huntsman Alan Reilly, assisted by amateur whipper-in John Sullivan, produced 6½ couple of doghounds and 6 couple of bitches, from six litters, for the judges, Kate Jarvey MFH (the Duhallow and the Scarteen) and Michael McKeever.

At this stage, I should mention Michael McKeever. He became kennel huntsman here in 1958, hunted the hounds from 1972 until he retired in 2002 and handed over to his son Noel. Michael is fortunate to not look any older than when he retired!

These judges are uniquely well qualified to judge Old English hounds and they duly passed the following results to Edmond Mahoney MFH.

**Doghounds**

- 1. Linesman Duhallow Lonsdale 09  
Lonely 11
- 2. Tenant Muskerry Landlord 10  
Ticket 13
- 3. Soldier Muskerry Landlord 10  
Sassy 10



Huntsman Alan Reilly showing hounds at the Louth Foxhounds Puppy Show.

**Bitches**

- 1. Racket Randle 12 Topsy 13
- 2. Sonnet Sibling of Soldier
- 3. Linnet Sibling of Linesman

This was an occasion when the Louth Hunt remembered long standing friends such as land owners and others who have contributed so much to the Hunt over the years and one which they wanted their guests to share with them.

**Fermanagh Harriers Hunt Club**

Marie Curie received a donation from money which had raised at a point to point by Members of Fermanagh Harriers Hunt Club.

The photograph shows Pam Miller from Marie Curie receiving the cheque while members of the Hunt Club look on.



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# Obituary

## Margaret Neile

### 1934 – 2017

*It was with great sadness that I learned on the morning of September 27th of the unexpected death of a very dear friend and colleague for over 30 years, Margaret Neile.*

Margaret was a quiet gentle soul who I have known throughout my involvement with NARGC for far more years than either of us would have been able to remember. She was an active member of the Kennel Club and a member of the Executive of the NARGC. These are the organisations which occupied a huge part of her life. She was the consummate volunteer. In fact she personified all that is fine, honest and good in volunteering. Margaret was known as the lady who looked after the NARGC “Stall” at the numerous fairs and shows she attended every year. She was tireless in promoting and defending the NARGC right throughout her tenure. The words which I associate with Margaret will always be *“pleasant, dedicated, honest, loyal and completely dependable.”* To put it in a nutshell, Margaret had standards – high standards

In the service she rendered to the organisations in which she was involved, nothing was too much trouble. I have seen her tired and worn out after a long drive and an even longer day, still managing a smile, advice and a chat to everyone who sought her out. Wherever there was an NARGC tent or marquee, whether that be the National Ploughing Championships, the Birr Fair, the Tullamore Show, the National Shoot, Shanes Castle in Northern Ireland, there you would find Margaret, standing at her post manning the NARGC “shop.” She was for many years also Chair of



Margaret presenting a prize to one of the junior handlers at Birr. In 2012, the Irish Countrysports and Country Life magazine presented Margaret with a Lifetime Commitment Award for her work for Irish country sports. the NARGC Shows Committee.

Everything about Margaret was quiet. I never once heard her raise her voice or display anger in public. Come to think of it, I never heard her in private either. But her quiet demeanour did not mean she that she did not have strong views and convictions. She was well capable of sounding her disapproval if that was necessary and when she did, she commanded the attention of everyone. But she did it in the same quiet way that she did everything else. She also had a mischievous sense of humour and it was not beyond her to see the funny side of everyday things and particularly someone’s innocent embarrassments.

Margaret had wonderful qualities of diplomacy and good manners – qualities which are usually attributed to those

who society regards as ladies. And Margaret was indeed a lady to her finger-tips. I have to say that in all my years of knowing her, I never knew anyone who did not like her. It was a great pity that she departed so quickly and so unexpectedly. The regard with which she was held was eloquently demonstrated by the very large attendance at her removal and funeral. I know that her sudden loss shocked her great many friends and supporters. Fieldsports is a much poorer place for her loss. It was an honour and a privilege to have known her and I will miss her terribly as will many others.

May Margaret Rest in Peace for ever.

**Simon Devereux**

By Michael Drake

# ART & ANTIQUES

*Every auction room brings its own individual atmosphere, whether the items being sold are general in nature or specialist in form. But they all generate that energy that is unique to the places where people come to buy and to sell.*

Just imagine the clamour and the din of the Arab souk and transfer it to a city sales room, a country auction house or a humble house clearance. Then multiply it many fold when considering the high priced sales of Old Master art, period piece furniture or anything else for that matter. Think of the silence that falls across a sales room when an auctioneer has brought an item to say five or six times its estimated value.

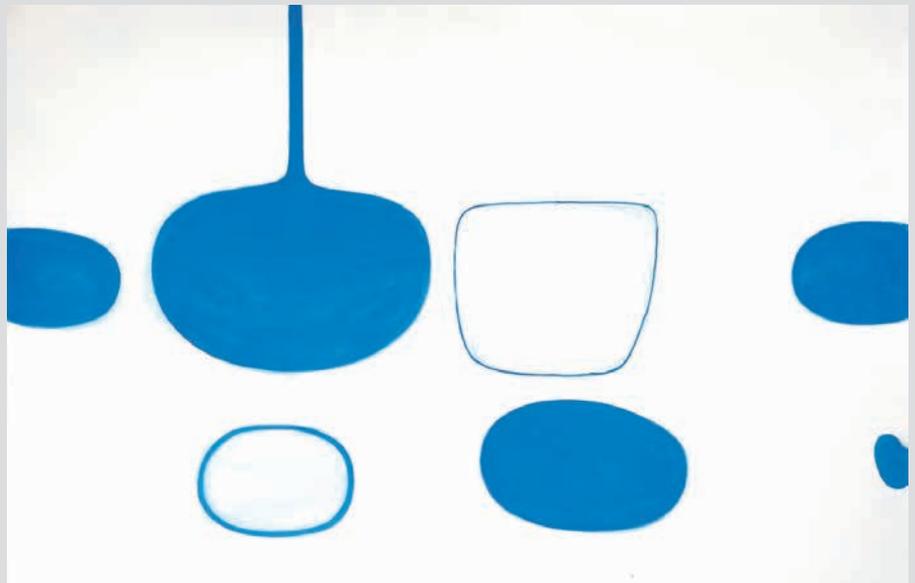
The unanswered questions flow in: what is causing two people or even more to bid so boldly for something that doesn't at first light appear to have anything like the value they are placing on it? Then again, perhaps the would-be purchasers know something about the item in focus that others do not know. It could have a history that was revealed to few. Those in possession of such knowledge are privileged in having it.

## ***A bit of provenance tells a different story***

For it arms them well at a sale and while their actions may appear foolhardy to others around them at the time, theirs will be the last laugh. After all, a simple fountain pen, still working of course, might seem worth a couple of pence, or not worthy of even gracing a sale. Give it a bit of provenance and you have a different story!

Say you are able to prove the pen once belonged to a noted writer, politician or even someone of less reputable character and the interest increases. Of course if such information is freely available from the sales catalogue then it is available to everyone. But, when it is known to only a few then that makes the sale interesting and intriguing.

Collecting information about auction lots can come about in many different



William Scott's Blue Still Life made €450,000 (Whyte's)

ways. There was a time when it only came with the experience of visiting countless viewings and actual sales and seeing what fashions were being formed and what trends were changing.

Today, however things are a lot different thanks to the growth of new technology. Practically everyone has access to the Internet and everything it brings into the home. Sadly, it also makes overnight experts of some people who, in their haste to use their newly found knowledge, make disastrous mistakes at auction and live to repent much later.

## ***Is that item really the same as the one which sold for a fortune?***

In all of what I've been saying there is a message, and the old Latin adage 'Caveat Emptor' holds just as good today as it did hundreds of years ago. Buyers must always beware. Internet knowledge can be a bonus but it can also be a bombshell. The level of accuracy concerning information gleaned from it can be, to put it mildly, misleading. And just because some item or other was said

to have made so much doesn't necessarily mean a similar one you may have sitting on your mantelpiece or elsewhere is of comparable value. Internet information can at best be a reasonable guide to what certain items are making elsewhere and something of a barometer reading to the strength of demand for them.

Nothing beats the knowledge born of time and, as I've said earlier, it only comes with the experience of going to viewings, visiting and participating in sales and of course, reading and absorbing as much information as you can about countless things.

You don't have to have the guile of a wheeler dealer to enjoy yourself. But it is good to have confidence and know what you are buying and have the belief that should you want to sell it over again it won't let you down. Of course, if money is no object then buy to your heart's content. And if you are not worried about a resale value for the future - then so be it!

But, should you be pursuing what is really a hobby and have a restricted budget, then always look for value for



Chinese blue and white brush pot went for €19,000 (Adams)

money. There is no need to get involved in a pricey bidding frenzy just because you don't want your opponent bidder to secure the item that is at stake. It is a warm, comfortable feeling, however, to learn after purchasing an item that you have in fact secured something which is more valuable than the price you paid for it. It doesn't happen too often. But it does.

It is not for the first time, either, that I took profit after a sale when approached by someone who was prepared to go that little extra to ensure they went home with the item I had just purchased. It is not something I would do every time I am approached, but there are occasions when a value judgement has to be made quickly, and it can add another glow to auction-going.

### **Around the Sales**

There was a lot of affection for Jack B. Yeats at **Adams Irish Art Sale** in May when his 'Early morning Cliffony', sold for 70,000 euros which was twice its high estimate. A Louis le Brocquy at €58,000 was a little less than its high estimate, as was a Sean Keating which went at €40,000. A Paul Henry bog scene oil on panel realised €36,000

while Patrick Collins' 'The Bath' made €33,000. A Nathaniel Hone oil on canvas, 'Dans les Vignes' sold for €32,000, followed by a Dan O'Neill at €25,000 and a Basil Blackshaw at €23,000.

**ADAMS At Home Sale** in mid June saw a beautiful Chinese blue and white brush pot which carried a high estimate of €6,000 coming under the hammer at a fantastic €19,000, to be followed by a fine Victorian giltwood overmantle mirror at €8,500 and a pair of fine Regency rosewood console tables at a similar hammer price.

A Japanese six-fold dividing screen from the

19th century made €7,500 while a Chinese blue and white bottle vase went at €6,500, a large Wm IV mahogany serving table at €5,700 and a Chinese archaistic blue and white vase from the 18th century at €5,400.

There was interest too in a pair of Waterford cut glass eight branch chandeliers when went at €5,200, a fine Victorian walnut breakfront credenza which made €4,000 and a blue and white Chinese vase which, while carrying a high estimate of €1,200 sold for €4,000.

**WHYTE'S** reported their May sale of **Irish and International Art** as being their best in ten years showing that the recession in the art market was well and truly over. The auction house brought in a total of €1.7m in sales and many record prices, including a William Scott which sold at €450,000 and a Louis le Brocquy which made €140,000. Great prices indeed!

Who says Irish lots will not sell away from home? Well, take the case of the Padraig Pearse 'surrender letter' from the 1916 Rising which was listed for sale at **Bonhams Fine Books Sale** in London in June. Carrying a high



Victorian giltwood overmantle mirror which sold for €8,500 (Adams)



Louis le Brocquy's Adam and Eve in the Garden sold for €140,000 (Whyte's)



A Japanese six-fold dividing screen from the 19th century made €7,500 (Adams)

estimate of £120,000 the signed, typed letter fetched £263,000 to prove there is still much value in Irish historical items.

Of course, a piece of Chinese ceramics really outshone everything that has happened this year when it came under the hammer at **Sheppard's Irish Auction House, Co Laois** this summer. An antique blue and white Qing period vase measuring just 23 cm it sold for €740,000 which is about 700 times more than its high estimate and a record price for decorative art at an Irish auction. The previous best price, was the €630,000 achieved for a carved Chinese jade seal, also sold by Shepard's five years ago.

And who knows there are probably several more valuable Chinese lots to be found in Ireland. American gangster Al Capone would have been happy, had he been around, to see his diamond pocket watch fetch \$84,375 or around £78,000 at a Boston sale a few weeks ago. Then again he might not have sold it!

## Old Parochial House for Sale Co. Mayo €260,000

Set on an acre of land approx 30mins from Galway & Knock Airport, 20mins from Castlebar, Claremorris, and Balinrobe. Cong and the famous Ashford Castle are only half an hour away. It is set in the small Saxon village [www.mayoabbey.com](http://www.mayoabbey.com) A bog plot is included with this property. The famous fishing Lakes of Lough Cara, Lough Mask and Lough Corrib are within easy reach.

Upstairs the house contains 4 bedrooms and large bathroom. Downstairs there is an extra large sitting room and similar dining room. Large kitchen and utility.

This property was totally restored 30yrs ago. All original features include Connemara marble fireplaces, red & black tiled hallway etc. New double glazed windows are being installed. Oil central heating, new condensed outdoor oil burner recently installed.

The Gardens have been designed by professional landscaping company [www.fuchsialandscapes.com](http://www.fuchsialandscapes.com) 4 apple trees bountiful with fruit at present.

The entrance to this property has four stone pillars hand crafted wrought iron gates

The possibilities are endless in developing this property. The current owner is an internationally

recognized Artist. Her little birds have flown the 'nest' and she wants to downsize. See Facebook page 'Louisa Nally' for full details and photographs.

Note: The famous lakes of Mayo offer flora and fauna different habitats; Lough Corrib, Conn and Mask are among a unique groups of twelve large lakes in Europe home to the wild brown trout. The rivers and lakes have high water quality and support a wide range of wildlife: salmon, trout, lamprey, pike, otters, kingfishers geese and ducks.

All amenities available such as: Shops, Grocery and Hardware, postal services, Pub, School, Community Training Center, Market Garden, Church, football pitch.

Note: The famous fishing lakes of Mayo offer flora and fauna different habitats; Lough Corrib, Conn and Mask are among a unique groups of twelve large lakes in Europe home to the wild brown trout. The rivers and lakes have high water quality and they support a wide range of wildlife: salmon, trout, lamprey, geese and ducks.



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By Jonny Dillon

# REAPING AND SOWING – THE HARVEST IN IRISH TRADITION



Building a stack, Dunquin, Co. Kerry, 1948

[Image Reproduced by permission of the National Folklore Collection University College Dublin]

*The harvest is a time of abundance and fruition, with crops that grew in unhurried determination through the wind and rain of spring now standing ripened in the fields and ready for gathering. For our forebears, this was a time of great celebration, as it marked the point at which the lean months of June and ‘Hungry July’ (where the year’s stores were at their lowest) gave way again to profusion and plenty.*

In Ireland, the harvest season was understood to commence on the 1st of August, and was known as Lammas (or Lúnasa in Irish). This date is marked as one of the four ‘Quarter Days’ of Irish tradition, so called as they divide the year into its seasons of winter (Halloween / Samhain), spring (St. Brigid’s Day / Imbolc), summer (May Day / Bealtaine) and autumn (Lammas / Lúnasa). The Irish language names for the autumn months likewise tell of the reaping season, with September and October being known as Meán Fómhair and Deireadh Fómhair (‘Middle Harvest’ and ‘Late Harvest’) respectively.

Despite the autumn traditionally beginning on the 1st of August, celebrations welcoming it typically commenced across the island of Ireland

on the last Sunday in July, on what was commonly known as ‘Garland Sunday’ (a garland being a term to describe a decorative wreath of flowers, as well as more generally referring to a party). Other English language names for this day were ‘Big Sunday’, ‘Height Sunday’, ‘Mountain Sunday’, ‘Rock Sunday’, and ‘Bilberry Sunday’ (to name a few).

Despite the variety of names however, these celebrations had a common theme; the tendency on this day was for groups of young people to remove to hills and heights in their local districts, ascending to their summits and gathering there to sport and play. In some parts of the country wreaths of flowers were woven and scattered across hilltops or left at sites of worship and devotion, berries were picked and

eaten in their droves, and there was music, dancing, courtship, and the consumption of intoxicating liquors. In some instances, with young men having retired to the public house for the day (and duly indulging in the refreshments offered therein) faction fights broke out (sometimes even being arranged to take place between neighbouring parties at this time).

### ***Something referred to the ‘disgraceful practice’***

Races and contests of athletics and strength were also common at the hilltop gatherings of Garland Sunday, and in certain places men even raced horses into lakes and bays in a state of undress; an exuberance which drew scorn from the authorities of the day. A Co. Clare magistrate writing in 1833,

referred to the ‘disgraceful practice’, and ‘shameful custom which prevails, of naked men riding horses through the water’ at this time. Horse-swimming races like these are also recorded as having taken place in the harvest celebrations of England, Scotland and France.

All was not drinking, courting and skinny-dipping however, as pilgrimage, prayer and reflection also played an important part of Garland Sunday celebrations; this day saw communities across the island make their way to various holy sites in their districts – blessed wells and graveyards for example – to perform rounds of prayers there, the most notable instance of which can be seen today in the tens of thousands of diligent pilgrims who ascend to the summit of ‘The Reek’, the sacred mountain of Croagh Patrick situated just outside of Westport, Co. Mayo, where St. Patrick observed a 40 day ritual of fasting and penance. Weary and woeful was his time on that good mountain, and he suffered great hardship there, being surrounded we are told, by demonic birds who blackened out the sky above him.

Before St. Patrick’s time however, the mountain of Croagh Patrick (and indeed celebrations marking the arrival of the harvest in general) were associated with pre-Christian sun-god and divine champion Lugh. The festivities that came to be associated with him bear his name to this day, and in the Irish language the month of August is known as Lúnasa; Lugh being the name of the god, with Násadh referring to games, or an assembly (the county Louth also derives its name from him, as does the city of Lyon, in France).

Lugh is said in antiquity to have established Aonach Tailteann, or ‘The Tailteann Games’ (at modern day Telltown, in county Meath), a large gathering which took place at the beginning of the harvest period, and which was held in honour of the deity’s foster-mother Tailtiu. These festivities are described in our early literature as



The Scyth Men, Co. Donegal, 1937.

[Image Reproduced by Permission of the National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin]

having great throngs of people in attendance, with royals and nobles being found alongside merchants, musicians, athletes and other entertainers, and survivals of these open-air assemblies of old are to be seen in the Garland Sunday observations of more recent tradition.

With the passing of Garland Sunday, and with celebrations duly having ceased, the heavy work of the harvest commenced. Crops of corn (namely rye, oats, barley, flax and wheat) were now taken in from the fields, and men and women (along with their children) would travel in their droves to begin the heavy work of reaping with scythes and sickles.

### ***Without the ‘edge charm’ others were doomed to struggle***

Harvesting involved laborious effort,

though certain individuals were credited in folk tradition as possessing a supernatural ability to cut enormous amounts of corn with little exertion, owing to their possessing a magical charm which guaranteed that their reaping hook always had the sharpest of edges. The one who had ortha an fhaoir or ‘edge charm’ so called, would write it on a piece of paper before sewing it into their clothes, so that mowing would no more prove a hardship to them. Others with ‘edge charm’ who might take pity on a mower struggling with a poor scythe, were able to share their gift simply by taking the blighted implement from its owner, rubbing their hand along the blade, and returning it. Their companions working alongside them without the benefit of this charm however, were doomed to struggle; stopping to sharpen their blunted blades again and again before continuing on in



Many hands make light work; reaping and binding, Co. Louth, 1946.  
 [Image Reproduced by permission of the National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin]

the heat and sweat of those long evenings.

The sharpness of one's reaping blade was not a concern in Ireland alone, and in certain parishes in England it was considered most unlucky for a mower to cut on his first swathe, a grey or coloured snail through its middle. Such an event, we are told, would make the hook so blunt as to render the rest of the day's work quite useless – the only cure for which was to go home and rest for the remainder of the day!

All was not struggle and misery however, as the harvest (in bringing together men and women from across the community) served as a time in which symbols and tokens of affection and fancy were passed to and fro among individuals. These find their most beautiful expression in the 'harvest knot'; a small and delicately plaited wisp of straw given by men and women to one another as a symbol of affection, a custom introduced here from our sister island of Britain. These items were often woven from grass, as well as flax, oats and wheat, and were constructed by taking straws of equal length and fastening the ends, before delicately turning one straw over the next, rotating

them in a delicate weave which was tied off at the ends. Harvest knots worn by

women had the seeds of grain still attached, while these were cut away in the knots worn by men.

By the end of September, the work of reaping the grain was nearly finished, although no harvest was complete until the cutting of 'the last sheaf' (or bundle of corn in the field), had taken place. In a moment that was treated with a certain symbolism and joviality, this final bundle of grain left standing in the field was ceremoniously plaited from bottom to top before being cut. Reapers would at times stand back and throw their hooks at it to cut it, sometimes being blindfolded and spun around before doing so, to 'add to the hilarity', and in a great many places across Europe, the cutting of this final sheaf was marked with great cheers.

### *The 'spirit of the corn'*

In some quarters this cutting of the last sheaf was known as 'putting out the hare' and it was considered that the



Tokens of affection and fancy; harvest knots from the south of Ulster [Image Reproduced by permission of the National Museum of Ireland]

spirit of the corn, now hiding in this last sheaf, would flee from the site of its final reaping, much to the jubilation of the onlookers. The hare in folk tradition has long held particularly malevolent associations, being understood to be the form most often taken by shape-shifting women who would disguise themselves as this animal before travelling to their neighbour's land in order to supernaturally attack them and steal away their luck for the year. William Camden, the English antiquarian and topographer of the late medieval period, in giving account of the manners and customs of the Irish in the 16th century, describes how those farmers who found a hare among their cattle would 'kill her, for they suppose she is some old trot that would filch away their butter'.

The association of the last sheaf in the field with a particular animal is common; apart from its representation as a hare, in various parts of Europe the spirit of the corn was known (depending on the region) to take the form of a wolf, dog, fox, cock, goose, quail, cat, goat, cow, pig or horse. This last sheaf was also often personified as a female, and was commonly referred to in tradition as 'the maiden' or 'the queen', as well as being known as 'the hag', the cailleach or 'the granny'. Terms used to refer to the last sheaf tend to personify the corn as both mother and daughter, symbolic of the dual aspects of femininity present in both; in the grain newly ripened, and



The master and his companion, Dunquin, Co. Kerry, 1948.  
[Image Reproduced by permission of the National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin]

the grain yet to provide future abundance, in next year's harvest.

### ***The feast of 'harvest home' marked the end***

The cutting of the last sheaf was met with great jubilation and cheering, and the lucky reaper who managed to cut it was often showered with drops of whiskey or water, before hosting a clousúr ('closure') or 'harvest home'; a celebratory feast which marked the end of the harvest, to which all were invited, and which had the last sheaf as its ceremonial centrepiece. This feast would feature an abundance of freshly home-brewed beer, as well as sides of bacon, rounds of ribs and new potatoes. Food and drink was consumed in

earnest at such a gathering, healths were drunk and there was music and dancing until late into the night, and the harvest season has even lent itself to traditional tunes and dances to accompany them, namely An Staicin Eorna (The Little Stack of Wheat) and Baint an Fhéir (The Haymaker's Jig).

The last sheaf was hung up in the house until the next harvest, and was held to bestow good luck and plenty upon its possessor. It was also understood to have certain curative powers, and grain taken from it and fed to animals would ensure their robust strength and good health throughout the year. With the gloomy weather of October fast approaching, and the last sheaf hanging snugly above the door, life turned inwards again in advance of the long nights of winter; the earth now lying fallow and bare.

Now then is the season of harvest; a season of abundance and plenty, wrought in struggle, by the sweat of one's brow. Let us give thanks to those who have gone before us; to those men and women who so diligently sowed so that we might now so richly reap. Let us be glad especially of our fair land; of the wealth of profusion and bounty it offers up to us, of the earth from which it springs; the earth to which we return season after season, harvest after harvest, generation after generations, unceasingly, and without end.



Bringing home the hay! North Co. Dublin.  
[Reproduced by permission of the National Museum of Ireland]



# The 'Sitty Tree'

Crouched in the hide.

*Even when the crops are standing high in the fields, the airgun hunter can still build a decent bag. It pays to keep your eyes open as you travel about, observation is a key skill in successful airgun hunting. Until the harvest starts the standing crops are too high to decoy over. Even where there are patches of laid crop, the intervening crop obscures any chance of a telling shot, that is, if you can see your quarry at all. For the shotgunner, this isn't a problem provided the decoys pull birds within range they can be shot as they fly over the pattern.*

Due to the limitations of the air rifle an airgun hunter has to take a different approach and intercept the quarry in a static position where they offer a clear shot. If you look for them you will find places where pigeons visit at regular times during the day where there is no foliage and a telling shot can be placed. Water troughs are one such opportunity, if you happen to have one that is frequented by pigeons regularly then it is worthwhile making a firing point to take advantage of it.

Another useful intercept is on telegraph wires. We have one field near us where the pigeons will sit in lines on the telephone wire where it runs between two poles. This year the field is down to rape though and the wire crosses where any pigeons shot would fall into the 6-foot high crop never to be seen again. Other years, or when the

crop is in its early stages, this is a worthwhile place to ambush the pigeons that I have used to good effect. There are some elder bushes in each hedge against which a hide can be made, it is a long shot though and so if there is any wind it is too difficult to ensure a humane shot., on still summer evenings though it has provided some good sport over the years.

The very best opportunity though is provided by what is known as 'a sitty tree'. This is a prominent perch that the pigeons use on a regular basis. A good sitty tree is a communal gathering point and somewhere all the pigeons on the Parish will use, either as a scouting perch or as somewhere to sit and digest the food in their crop. Very often they are sited on a flight line, so if you follow pigeons flight paths from a vantage point through a pair of

binoculars you can often find these favoured perches.

I have one that I have known about for a long time, but it took me a while to find out who to approach for permission to shoot on those fields. I noticed it was a magnet for the pigeons, and occasionally corvids too whenever I drove that way I would see pigeons sat up on the highest branches, sometimes a dozen or more at the same time. This tree sits on the hedge line between two fields it is also ideal while the crop is at its highest, because the shot birds fall into the headland area where they can be more easily found.

## ***Little considerations make all the difference***

The hedge line runs more or less east to west, so I have built semi natural hides in the hedge each side of the sitty



From the holly to the centre of the sitty tree is 35 yards.

tree. The easterly one for the morning and the western one will put the sun on my back in the afternoon, so I am not looking into the sun to shoot. Furthermore I have made the hide positions on the northern side of the hedge, the reason for this is so that my hide will be on the shaded side and that will help to conceal me. Had I built the hides on the southern side, the sun would spotlight me in the hide. Little considerations like these make all the

difference. Being on the shaded side will be more comfortable on warmer summer days and being in the shade helps to conceal any movement I make getting the rifle into shooting position.

When I first arrived I had to create something from nothing. Fortunately there is a small patch of holly close to the tree. I paced to the centre of the tree from where I would make my hide in the holly, and then paced it back again as a means of checking the distance. It

is 35 yards from my hide to the main branches of the tree. Absolutely perfect!

I set about finding where in the holly bush I could create a hollow spot and then with the secateurs that I always carry in my rucksack, along with a folding saw, to clear the nettles and brambles and then trimmed just a few limbs and suckers from the holly. The result is a cave-like hollow within the holly bush that I can sit in, with a camo net draped across the gap at an angle I can have an excellent hide within 2 or 3 minutes of arriving and the beauty of holly is its evergreen, so this hide will be useful all year round. There is one drawback though, from late afternoon I am looking into the sun to shoot, so I needed a second hide the far side of the tree.

I picked up my gear and from the tree I paced the distance to the start of a thorn hedge, it was 33 yards, so again absolutely ideal. I set about doing a similar job in the thorn and set up the hide, once inside I was able to do some minor adjustments whilst remaining completely concealed behind the doubled net. I had one, small shooting aperture looking at the main perching



In just a few minutes work this hide position is created in the holly - with the net draped it's good to go.

branches and thanks to the natural slope of the ditch it was comfortable just sitting on my rifle bag, no seat needed.

### ***I poked the muzzle through the net to get a lower angle***

As I was trimming a few stems off the thorn bush, to ensure a clear shot without clipping a twig at the muzzle, the first customer landed on the most uppermost branch. My observation had proved correct then, this was definitely a regular perching point. I lined the cross hair up and down the pigeon came, it clattered through the branches below and ended up in the thick brambles at the base of the tree, dead as a dodo. I left it, so as not to break cover and reloaded in readiness, as there was another I could see flying my way. Sure enough, it dipped and landed in an upswing on a branch half obscured by oak leaves. I poked the muzzle through the net, in order to get a lower angle and be able to slot a pellet under the leafy branch. There was a bit of breeze and so I waited until the leaves were blown clear and let fly. 'Thwack', my pellet found its mark and number two was added to the bag.

There was a thunderstorm approaching, so I had to sit it out, but the thorn bush gave me a reasonable amount of cover and I was joined by a group of 5 wrens, who huddled in together to sit out the cloudburst no more than 6 feet from me. What a privilege it is to share nature like that. As soon as the clouds cleared a small flight of three pigeons dropped into the tree and one started calling. That was reaffirmation of the importance of this tree in pigeon world. I added the third to my bag and then decided to pack up for the day as it was getting on. The simplicity of this set up meant all I had to do was put my rifle in the slip and roll the net into my rucksack. I carried the pigeons by their feet rather than put them in the haversack, but with a bigger bag I shall be prepared with a liner for the rucksack. All in all a good afternoons work, I shall be using this vantage point on a regular basis.



The first customer arrives!



My hide in the thorn tree on the western side of the sitty tree, the evening set up.



Three pigeons off the sitty tree.

# AT STUD

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# Firearms Fingerprinting - Fact or Myth?

*Various jurisdictions around the free world at some point have looked at carrying out ballistic tests on firearms held legally by citizens. Theoretically this would result in identifying the owner of any licensed firearm discharged at or recovered from the scene of a crime. The theory might seem like an attractive proposition to Police officers investigating crime scenes, but the reality is far from positive. Proposals to fingerprint all licensed pistols and revolvers in Ireland have already been shelved by the Department of Justice.*

Ballistic tests are only effective if identical ammunition is used in both the test and the crime. The likelihood of this occurring is probably in the million-to-one bracket. While semi-automatic pistols will very likely leave brass in the immediate area a crime scene, a revolver won't — unless the user empties the cylinder in order to reload the firearm.

In an ideal world a spent bullet or cartridge case retrieved at a crime scene just might result in the particular firearm owner's identity being established. That is all! Whether this information would lead to solving a crime and a conviction is very much a matter of conjecture.

A plethora of scenarios exists which make matching a bullet to a particular

firearm impossible. To mention a few — constant use of a gun and subsequent wear and tear will alter the characteristics of a fired bullet beyond definitive recognition. Even a careless cleaning scratch in the barrel will cause distortion. FMJ rounds fired into a soft back-stop will result in additional marks, making legally binding comparisons with a "test" round nigh impossible. Similarly, soft-point bullets become distorted in "hard" targets. Hunters can attest to this because this distortion applies whether animal or human tissue and bone is involved. There's also the fact that soft-point bullets often break-up following penetration, leaving little or nothing that could be used to compare with a ballistics database.

## **Impossible comparisons**

A replacement firing-pin will make any ballistic fingerprint useless, as will wear and tear on the original pin. Likewise re-loaded ammunition may have impressions from several bolts or recoil plates depending on the number of times the case has been used, again rendering comparisons impossible. Manufacturers produce cartridge cases varying in hardness from brand to brand, so ballistic test-cases differing from those recovered at a crime scene will have varying fingerprints, while breech and extractor pin markings also may not be picked-up.

Most firearms' characteristics evolve over time assuming normal usage. Hunting rifles can have an accurate barrel lifespan of anywhere between 1000 and 2000 rounds. Depending on the frequency of use – rapid fire or otherwise, rifling marks will have altered accordingly as will individual tooling marks that would have been recorded in a test. Records taken from a Match firearm won't stand certifiable scrutiny either due to the high number of rounds discharged. A barrel that is clean when tested and recorded will exhibit altered characteristics if later fired when gritty and dirty.

A further problem arises within a small number of different rifle makes —



Through constant use, this 1969 Browning Target Pistol's fingerprints today would vary hugely from any previously recorded.

the bolt-heads are interchangeable! That would create an investigating team's worst nightmare. Yet a further headache for investigators arises from a specific group of pistols and rifles of European origin. These firearms have hammer-forged rifling which is identical in every gun that was rifled in the same factory. Ballistic comparisons there would be almost impossible!

Shotguns create an even bigger headache, proving a ballistic match is pretty-well impossible. Smooth barrels don't leave marks on shot. The best that can be hoped for when shotguns are used in crime is hard evidence of the calibre if fired shells are around, otherwise shot and wadding is about all that is left.

### **South Africa's illegally held firearms**

Worldwide, evidence based on firearms fingerprinting shows that



Lee Enfield bolt-heads are interchangeable.

convictions are indeed scarce. Calibre, manufacturer, left or right-hand twist etc are among the issues that can be proven, after which it becomes a lottery. An enlightening read on the subject is Brian J. Heard's *Forensic Ballistics in Court*. South Africa is currently introducing ballistic testing of all legally held firearms despite having been told numerous experts that it has little or no merit. It's reckoned that country has anywhere between half a million and five million illegally held firearms. Given the number of wars on the African continent in recent years either number is not surprising, yet these firearms which are probably involved in most of the crime there will never have their ballistics recorded.

To divert slightly – 25 years ago in that country, a gentleman offered a colleague and I AK 47's plus ammunition for US \$100 per gun. They came from a stash of military hardware liberated during his service days in South Africa's wars in northern Namibia and Angola. Needless to say we declined his kind offer! However I did get to drive a Mercedes troop-carrier that had been purloined north of the border.

A tiny handful of US States uses ballistic testing to fingerprint legally held firearms. Today, debates about its usefulness, discrepancies, claims and counter-claims are ongoing. One State, Maryland, spent \$5 million in 15 years fingerprinting legally held guns. During that period numerous press releases highlighting the effectiveness of the system were issued. Fingerprinting was discontinued in Maryland when it was eventually revealed that during those 15 years not one single criminal conviction had resulted.

### **Fingerprinting would be enormously expensive**

Given the number of licensed rifle and shotguns held by law-abiding citizens in Ireland, fingerprinting them would be an enormously expensive task, unlikely to yield any positive results. The idea of testing only handguns may

well have been the result of a prejudice which historically permeated certain areas of policing. Regular claims of stolen licensed handguns being used in crime, when demolished unceremoniously were replaced by claims that while none had ever been recovered at a crime scene, although someone "knew" that they were being used unlawfully. When it eventually transpired that the actual number of licensed pistols stolen within the specified time-frame was in fact only 3 (not the 5 claimed), the testing plan withered. Wiser heads in authority prevailed.

I recall a similar plan to test all rifles back in 1973 also being shelved. Having witnessed expensive firearms that had been handed-in for the so-called 1972 One Month Temporary Custody Order (it lasted 32 years) being flung unceremoniously into the back of a truck, I was not anxious to commit my costly .22 Anschutz Model 1413 Supermatch rifle to such gentle care, even for ballistics testing. I offered to accompany the rifle to and from the testing area. A further offer to be the rifle's sole handler plus providing ammunition of my choice for the test brought the matter to a conclusion. I never heard from the authorities on the subject again and neither did anyone else as far as I know. To this day that same rifle, fitted with a new stock is in regular use — but not by me — although I still remember the serial number!



Centre-fire Revolver firing-pin and spring beside a .22 LR round for size comparison.

# A Summer's mink-hunting

Moving to the first draw of the day on the River Allow, Cork.

In July I joined the County Cork Mink Hounds for a day on the River Allow in the Mullaghareirk Mountains on the Limerick / Cork border. Soon I was up to my chest in water, struggling through lots of muck, brambles and dense undergrowth. Quickly we were enjoying a fantastic day's hunting.

To begin with, it was a warm day with plenty of sunshine. The huntsman Brian McDonagh put his ten couple hounds into a narrow section of the River Allow beside a beautiful stone-cut bridge. There was scarcely a house around in this section of the country. It was charming country, being hilly with plenty of forestry with dairy and beef being the main form of farming.

In one field I entered a fellow hunter advised: "There's a bull here." I looked and saw the huge beast lumbering towards me, and quickly retreated putting a wire fence between me and it.

Walking down one lane, we came across a local farmer in his tractor who was perhaps in his 70s. He looked very pleasant and genial and puffed on a Sherlock Holmes style pipe. In another field frisky cattle broke through a fragile, electrified fence. One of our number bravely tied the fence back together hopping on one foot at the same. The purpose of hopping on one



Enjoyable days amid the muck, brambles and undergrowth of Cork's rivers.



The pace picks up!

foot is to unearth the electric current and reduce its potency.

As always, the County Cork field were friendly and showed me the best ways through the challenging and thick undergrowth, which was very rutted and full of deep, hidden, water-filled holes. Brambles ripped my arms, nettles stung my legs, wasps and flies hovered irritatingly about my head. After the

excellent start things subsided on the hound-speaking front and for a couple of hours we traversed the challenging terrain without a peep arising from the hounds.

### ***Suddenly he was up to his chest in a deep pool***

But at four o'clock the lead hounds picked up a mink's scent and all hell

broke loose! In our excitement we threw caution to the wind which resulted in frequent tripping and landing in the mud. A hunter walked out on a thin branch over the fast-flowing river to see if he could spot the mink. Brian had blown his whistle just around the corner which told us he had spotted the animal. We watched but saw nothing. It had obviously taken a deep breath and was swimming submerged, impervious to our sight because of the impenetrable brown bog water. As the hunter leaned out the branch snapped and he was up to his chest in a deep pool. Unperturbed he carried on downstream following the rear hounds. We followed as



The Mink's black droppings are another sign of the way the animal went.

well, sliding down into the river, the cool water enveloping our limbs in a pleasurable embrace on what was a warm day. As always the huntsman gave the pursuit his best shot, but on this occasion the quarry remained elusive.

It had been a long day, with a lot of exercise and I was famished. Returning home I passed through Meelin, which was billed as 'Ireland's highest village.' Meelin rises to 823 feet (251 metres). In the 1960s, on the advice of a geologist, they drilled over 5,000 feet down into rocks in the area, seeking oil or gas, finding neither.

Work is not only the curse of the drinking classes. It is also the curse of the hunting classes. I was subjected to this very familiar curse for several weeks and it wasn't until the second weekend in September that I could join the County Cork once again.

One of the challenges for mink packs is finding watercourses that are not too full and this was a recurring problem during the summer which was cooler and wetter than normal. As we moved from a soggy August into September we hoped for an Indian Summer but were dismayed to be greeted by more unsettled weather. The Dripsey River was one of the few rivers which was suitable.

The Dripsey is a tributary of the Lee. The name comes from the Irish 'Druipseach' which means 'muddy river'. It looked muddy as we hunted its banks, its red appearance caused by the heavy rains of the previous days.

We met at the beginning of the day at one of those countless, charming, old world, humpback bridges which are commonplace in Cork. Prior to setting off the huntsman Brian McDonagh drew my attention to a 2011 article about a former hunt member Charlie Parker. It was Charlie's wish that after his death his ashes would be scattered in the River Blackwater at one of the pack's hunt meets. His wishes were complied with. Brian showed me a picture of the field and the pack of hounds looking on as Charlie's ashes were scattered into the river from an urn.

## ***Hounds latched onto scent in a side-stream***

As we moved off the rain finally abated and the sun came out. We walked across several fields as the pack worked its way through a shallow, well-wooded valley slightly beneath us. At one stage, I tried to get closer to the action but withdrew when I found myself in a quagmire of a field beside the river. When I got back to the more pleasant terrain of the pasture fields I fell into conversation with one of the hunt members. He talked about the hassle and cost of microchipping the hounds and ensuring the kennels are meticulous for inspections. As we talked, the hounds latched onto scent in a side-stream of the main river and went away from us. We followed, dropping down a steep, brambly slope and crossing the river where the water was up to our waist. We jogged across a few fields and caught up with the action.

We stood in an area of briars and ferns watching the hounds speaking excitedly beneath us. Suddenly I caught sight of the mink moving rapidly towards me. It didn't see me until the last moment and when it did spot me, only a couple of feet away, it took evasive action cutting sharply downhill to the right. Half a minute later the pack followed in full voice. Pack and foot followers were in a great state of excitement and we went tearing off across the countryside, often stumbling,



Huntsman Brian McDonagh of the County Cork Mink Hounds in the Dripsey River.

often sinking to our knees in mud and water, tripping over brambles, briars catching in our hair, branches knocking our hats off, sweat seeping into our eyes, heavy breathing, hearts pounding.

When we reached firm, flat terrain our speed increased. When we reached firm, downhill terrain I went as fast as my legs would take me. When I got to uphill sections I valiantly tried to keep jogging until the exertion got the better of me and slowed me to a walk. This excitement and arduous exercise lasted for half an hour until the hounds lost the scent at a humpbacked bridge. The huntsman cast about for a long time but with no luck. Eventually he decided to try further downstream in the belief, correct as it turned out, that the mink had moved further down the river.

As I stood at the bridge watching the huntsman trying to find the scent again I

began to think in abstract terms, as is often my way. It occurred to me that one of the great attractions of hunting for us is its sense of fun. Another great attraction is its sense of freedom. When we hunt we are temporarily released from the strictures of societal norms, of political correctness, and this feeling of freedom makes us feel better. Those who censure us say our fun is wrong. What a dull, inhibited world they live in. There are many definitions of happiness. The fun and freedom of a good hunt would be one of them. Following a pack of hounds in full flight along with 30 foot followers is definitely one of life's better experiences.

I followed the pack downstream. After a few fields they discovered the scent again. The mink disappeared into a bolthole beneath a tree's roots. The opening was too small for the hounds to follow. We moved downstream looking for another quarry when a holler from the field told us that the mink had slipped its bolthole and was on the move again. Brian returned the pack to the pursuit and soon sweet music was ringing along the river's wooded banks once more. This game of cat and mouse continued for another hour but eventually the quarry took refuge in another impenetrable bolt-hole. At this stage the day was drawing on, we were getting weary, and Brian decided to give best and call it a day. He blew the lovely huntsman's call for the end of the day. I returned to my car tired and happy.



Huntsman Brian McDonagh and his followers watching the action from one of the many, attractive, humpbacked bridges in County Cork. The County Cork Mink Hounds in the Dripsey River.

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- Fastenings: Full YKK Zip  
And Bellows
- Main Features: Full Length  
Zip Running Down the  
Entirety Of The Upper
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And Upper Trim

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- Materials: Premium  
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- Colour: Brown
- Lining: 5mm Neoprene  
Goodyear Lining
- Heel And Sole: Walking  
Boot Style Rubber Sole
- Fastenings: Metal Side  
Buckle Fastening
- Main Features: Anti Scuff  
Toe Cap
- Decoration: Block Colour  
Running Throughout  
Wellington

## Goodyear Cascade Wellington £75



- Materials: Upper Made  
From Rubber
- Colour: Brown
- Lining: New High  
Performance Radial X  
Lining
- Heel And Sole: Layered  
Rubber Sole For Durability
- Fastenings: Side Buckle  
Fastening
- Main Features: Radial X  
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- Decoration: Matching  
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# Gundogs - Another Way Of Thinking?

*Successful dog training — is it down to luck, chance, passion or timing and could Malcolm Gladwell's book 'Outliers' give us real food for thought?*

Today, there is less wonder and an acceptance of so many things that we cannot understand. For instance, how many of us could re-invent a television, radio or car? Another word that has existed in the vernacular forever is the existence of 'luck.' Some people seem born lucky and this is espoused the reason for their success. There has been relatively little scientific literature to substantiate luck and why some people seem to be more successful. "Outliers" central theme is to understand how certain people throughout history are remarkably successful. Is it chance, luck, or a matter of timing! This may seem to have tenuous links to dog training but throughout the article I will draw upon Gladwell's main observations and indulge myself by overlaying its relevance to our topic of interest.

What does "outliers" mean? It means something that exists outside the bell curve of normal distribution. Imagine an old-fashioned bell standing on a level

floor — its edges on the left and right side don't touch the surface.

This is where the outlier exists. An example of an outlier is a genius. Most people even those that are very intelligent exist somewhere in the "normal" distribution of the bell. They very bright can exist near the edge and the normally intelligent exactly in the middle (at the dotted line).

## *The monosyllabic traits of certain languages encourage particular learnings*

It is accepted that many Asian cultures are numerically superior at mathematics to their western counterparts. Gladwell examined the Chinese language by phonetically counting to 10. It took less than half of the time it took to count in English, German, Spanish or French. He draws the parallel to the Chinese history of working in paddy fields in the complex art of growing rice across many ridges and argues therefore the syllables used

for their numbers are simple and basic. Accepting all humans are within the range of normal intelligence, the proportionate reduction in syllables makes it easier to conceptualise and remember, and crucially gain confidence. Chinese children can count much earlier than their western counterparts. This is a possible explanation to this higher performance in mathematics.

Drawing on this anthology to the world of dogs, and particularly my own interest of pointing and setting dogs, I was always struck in Sweden where, due to the inclement weather, for the most part dogs are kept indoors. Due to this proximity, they become part of the family and therefore seem to have a broader vocabulary of understanding. The owner's instructions to their dogs are mono syllabic as the Nordic languages are more direct generally than ours. I have been surprised by the capacity of their dogs to take a varied number of instructions, which traditionally we would not require of ours. In my own experience of dogs, I could teach them to retrieve a wide variety of soft toys ignoring some to bring back the one requested. The number of toys could be expanded to at least four for all dogs while the clever dogs could choose between six toys. So, what are the implications of this?

To boost the popularity of working Irish setters amongst shooting folk, there could be working tests to demonstrate their natural retrieving ability and general all-purpose smart. Over the last decade there is an incredible growth in German pointers particularly as the preferred choice of



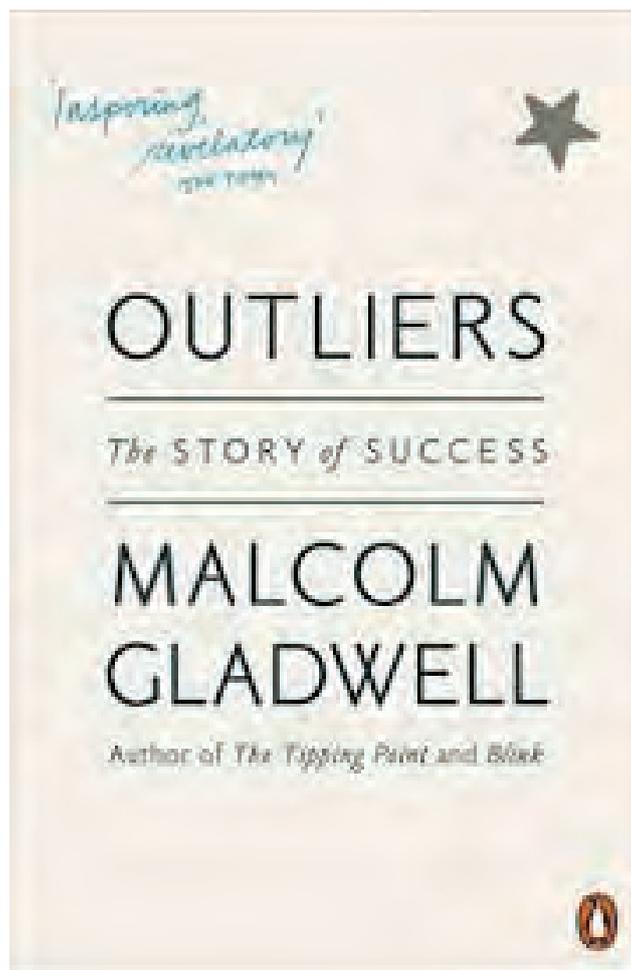
Undoubted success - but what were the contributing factors?

shooting people. They are practical dogs and great credit to the Irish breed club for increasing their popularity. We need to do more to promote our native breeds adaptability. There are two implications from this theme: dogs may have greater capacity to learn and remember by using mono syllabic instructions. And secondly, if you accept that dogs have a level of intelligence, then you accept mental health as a factor. This has implications for stress, over training and kennel boredom. Would overall performance improve if the dogs received some stimulation in its kennelling arrangements? Should the design of kennels allow stimulation of dogs allowing views outside of their runs?

### **A preferential date of birth is correlated with success**

Gladwell found that most professional American footballers and basketball players were born in the period January to April. The cut-off date for playing sport is January 1st. Therefore, these children were underage by January 1st they were eligible to play at that level for the year. These children could have 11 months' advantage over some of the other kids in the same age category. At a young age, a few months is crucial. The children born earlier in the year had at least several months maturity over the other kids and therefore were more likely to excel at underage level and be streamed into better teams and development training camps. These relatively older children became more confident and dedicated, and had higher expectations while the younger children did not receive the same positive reinforcement and, had lower expectations and dropped out altogether.

Is there a correlation between



The book which gave the Author much food for thought.

pointing and setting dogs born earlier in the year and competing at field trials? Yes, there is. The majority of dogs competing at field trials are born in the spring. Many breeders prefer pups born in the spring for several reasons. Until recently the Irish derby for setters and pointers was based on being less than 2 years old on 1st January. This has been changed in recent years to less than 2 years old at the date of the derby. There has been a commensurate increase in the standard of the derby. Under the previous rule, would pups born later in the year be less attractive due to their relative youthfulness for this prestigious stake? Other breeders prefer to rear pups over the summer months where they are exposed to the Irish summer. A pup born in February or March after eight weeks being whelped will be outside in May till the weather gets harsh again in November. Another reason is that fieldtrialers may prefer to miss the spring circuit of trials in February and March then the major

competitions of summer and autumn.

### **Legacy often drives current behaviour**

Gladwell illustrated this point by focussing on the cultural legacy of China, where rice was the dominant crop. Tending rice in paddy fields is complicated and requires hard work and determination. To have a successful paddy depends directly on the amount of work, starting at dawn, and working till dusk, rotating, irrigating and harvesting in a continuous cycle 12 months a year. With climate differences allowing a 12-month growing season compared with the autumnal harvest and subsequent winter breaks of the western world has created a different cultural legacy and attitude to work. This culture of hard work prevails within the Chinese community.

In a kennel of dogs, successful older dogs can affect younger dogs with their attitude, seriousness, and ability to exercise. Do young dogs learn the standard expected? Young dogs can gauge speed and drive (learn to jump gates) from the older dogs. Does this build a kennel culture?

### **Not everyone gets the same opportunity**

Gladwell argues that the period when you are born can influence the type of opportunities presented to you in life. For example, in 1935, there were 100,000 babies born in the US which meant that there were smaller class sizes in subsequent years and a greater chance of a spot on the sport teams or colleges. People born in 1935 had a better chance of getting a good job. In the cycle of kennels, is a puppy luckier not to have too many counterparts? Particularly after a successful period, kennels can become overstocked with stud fees or a successful female being mated to

continue a particular line. Jack Nash, the famous red setter breeder once said: "Beware of the competitor who arrives with one dog." The implication is that one dog will be well finished and therefore a genuine competitor.

### **Timing is a critical component of success and opportunity**

Gladwell espouses the effect of timing on opportunities presented. Some people have an innate advantage simply because they were born at the right time. One example is that all of the top IT entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley were born between 1953 and 1956. They were at the right age when the opportunity presented itself-not too old and not too young.

Equivalently in the sport of pointer and setter field trials, if the predominant trial grounds were held in steep mountains with high heather and a scarcity of birds, it follows that a tall, rangy dog with drive may be more successful than a smaller dog whose groundwork may not be as wide but more exact. This advantage dissipates

on more level ground with low heather with a higher propensity of game.

### **It takes 10,000 hours to master a skill**

Gladwell is renowned for this observation. Broadly, 10,000 hours translates for a 40 hours' week roughly into five years. He gave the example of Bill Gates who was born into a wealthy family and therefore went into one of the few colleges that offered coding programmes. He was therefore able to computer code for free. By the time he went to college, he had hit the 10,000-hour mark. Microsoft is a by-product of his mastery of programming. The Beatles performed live in Hamburg, Germany over 1,200 times from 1960 to 1964, amassing more than 10,000 hours of playing time.

Do dog trainers take five years to be successful? Certainly, it is rare for a newcomer to succeed with their first dog. It is often remarked in later years that, had that first dog presented themselves again, the results would be quite dichotomous.

### **Meaningful work drives mastery**

Gladwell's observation that if you feel like there is a purpose to your work and therefore more likely to work hard, putting the hours in and becoming a master. One case study he cites follows immigrants and their offspring and the emphasis that the parents put on the value and practice of hard work. This inspired their offspring to find more meaning in their own work. As a result, many children from immigrant parents became successful in mastering their own chosen profession.

People competing in field trials with their dogs are passionate about their sport. The level of mastery compared to the average pet owner is vastly superior.

In conclusion, sometimes there is value looking at the familiar and questioning assumptions that you never considered. There are always better ways and always new things to learn. That is what is the most exciting. Finding correlations to outcomes where they do or don't exist!



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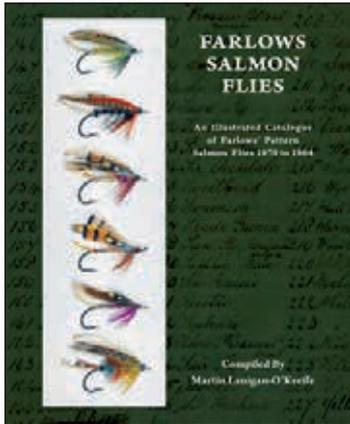


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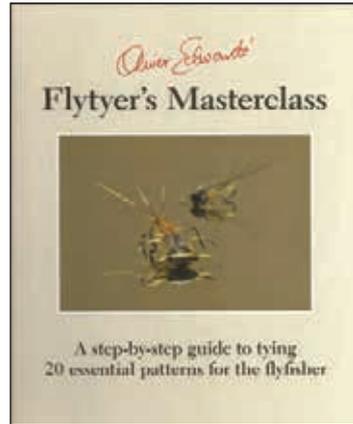
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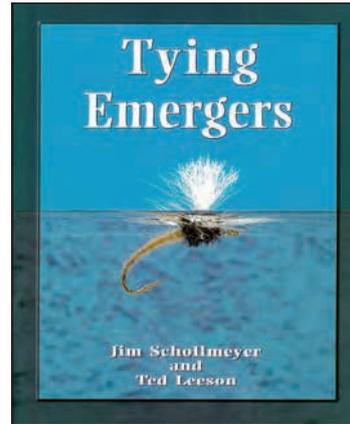
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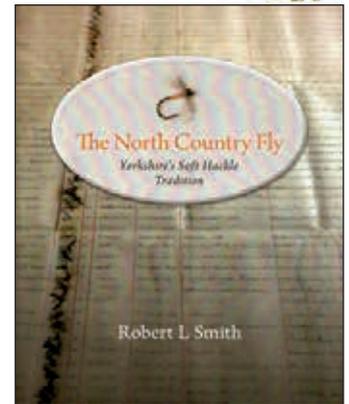
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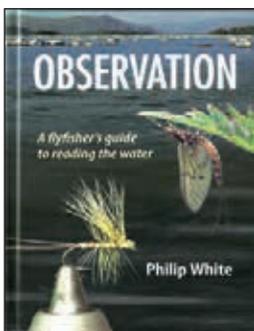
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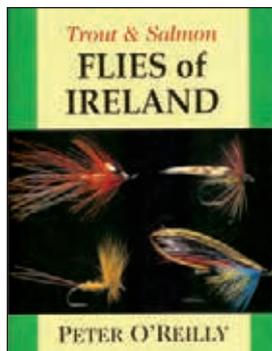
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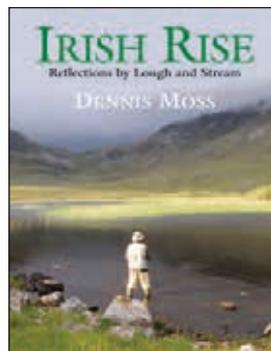
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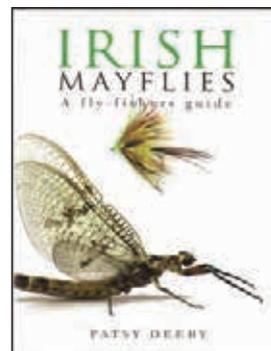
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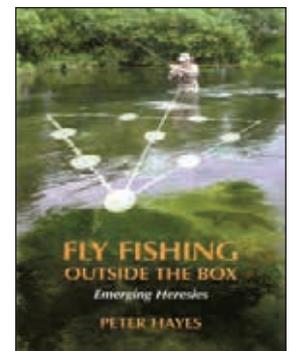
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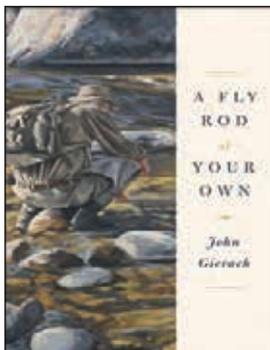
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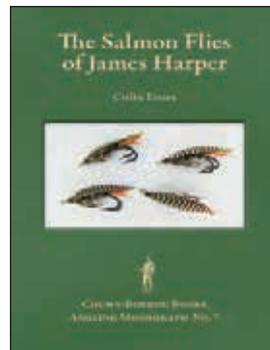
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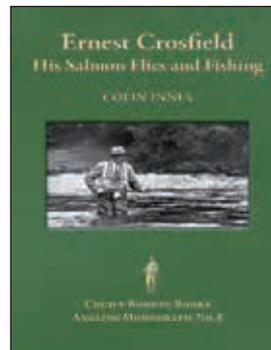
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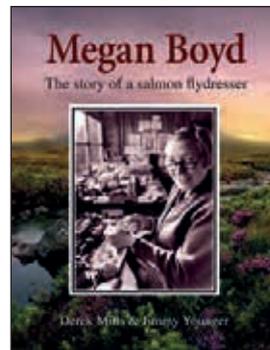
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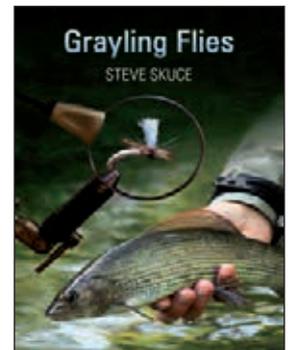
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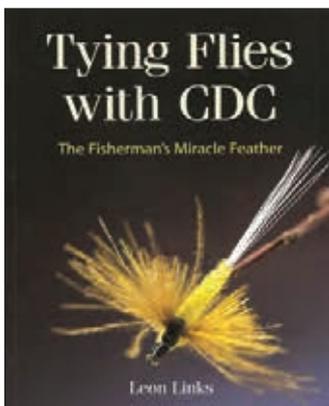
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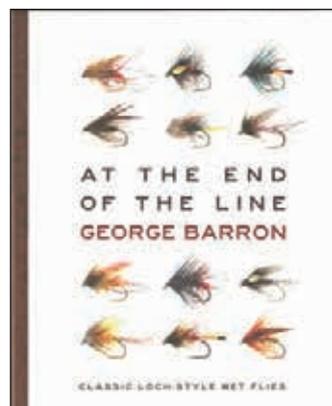
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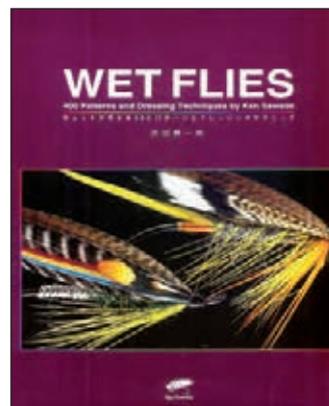
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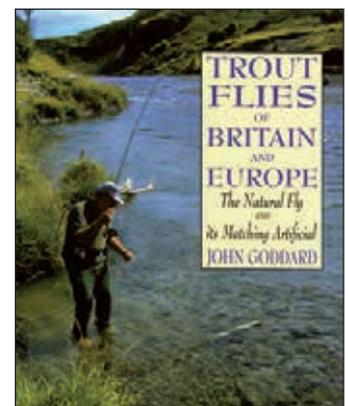
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**F.I.S.S.T.A.**

## SUMMER OF HUGE LOSS AS OUR SALMON LEADER ORRI LEAVES US

The 2017 angling season concludes with the sad feeling that once again we are presiding over a dwindling salmon and sea trout fishery that once delivered a bountiful harvest to the rivers and bays of this island.

We have lost a dear friend and colleague Mr Orri Vigfusson who has left our salmon world reeling with few ideas on how we will ever fill this huge loss; nature talked back once again when the dreaded pink salmon arrived in our rivers; there was an increased number of fishing

days with the more than wet Spring and Summer, but the number and quality of the fish reflected the downward spiral we are all too aware of.

But it is not all bad news, as countries such as Iceland are showing great and increasing salmon returns that proves our wild salmon can recover in the future. But what we should be doing is very much part of an ongoing debate that FISSTA are having with the state fishery related bodies on this island.

Inland Fisheries Ireland, The

Loughs Agency and DAERA submitted their documents to NASCO which indicates where they view the progress of the conservation of our wild salmon on this island, north and south.

FISSTA challenged a number of issues published and later at the IFI funding workshop roadshow events that were held in late August and September. FISSTA welcomed the opportunity to meet IFI at these workshops but the presentations on how to undertake a form filling exercise was a lost opportunity which the state body can ill afford at this crucial time. The IFI board members or senior management were sadly unavailable from these meetings which did not allow discussions on issues such as:

- IFI refusal to undertake the salmon policy review announced by the Minister last January
- IFI decline in angler stakeholder relationships with federations
- Water Quality Crisis - Action Plan needed and in the wake of the EPA Report
- IFI failure to apply for increased fisheries funds instead of accepting cutbacks



This picture (from IFI) marks the visit by Minister Sean Kyne TD to their offices in September to examine and discuss the IFI salmon review which he ordered last January.

- Salmon farming game changer in Norway – IFI response and action required for wild stocks
- Funding policy change as per workshop – new admin maze to steer through
- IFI withdrawal from development and dismantlement of division and OPW funds

Such issues can only be resolved with communication from the IFI management who have ignored their stakeholder's requests to date. The voluntary sector has consistently been treated with contempt by IFI who seem to regard them as anything other than their client who provides their funding and maintains their ever-decreasing state income. We look forward to an improved approach from such state services in the future for the benefit of our wild salmon and seatrout stocks.

### **UNWELCOME GUESTS IN OUR RIVERS - THE PINK PACIFIC SALMON ARRIVED**

The salmon runs of this season may have been disappointing to some rivers but overall the reports are favourable in many rivers that are open or are under catch and release status. However, this summer will be remembered for when the Pink Pacific Ocean salmon made their first appearance which took many angling clubs by surprise

as no official warning was evident for.

To date, over 32 pink salmon have been recorded with IFI but a number had been released before anglers had received advisory notice on the what to do with them. In Scotland, the Environment Agency has received an unusually high number of reports of Pacific pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*) which have been captured in both rod and net fisheries in North East England, Scotland and Irish rivers, particularly the Drowes, right down as far as the Corrib in Galway apart from one on the Cork Blackwater.

To date, it is believed that over 200 pink salmon have been captured in the North East coast salmon net fishery with an increasing number of reports from rod and line anglers within freshwater. Pink salmon are the smallest and most abundant of the five Pacific salmon species and are a non-native salmon species within the North Atlantic Area. Non-native species have the potential to disturb the natural balance of our environment and introduce novel parasites and diseases to our native fish species. IFI are the authority that must closely monitor the new visitors to our valuable rivers but to date the puzzle of where they came from has yet to be solved.

Some believe that the most likely

origin of the pink salmon recently caught in the UK and Ireland may be Russia but most suspect closer neighbours to harbour the cause. Scientists admit that they are unlikely to compete with our wild Atlantic salmon and sea trout but with the many research experiments being undertaken in Scotland FISSTA fear that an escape could have brought the pink to Ireland.

To better understand the risks associated with pink salmon arriving in numbers this year in the UK, the Scottish investigations are ongoing into egg development at the Marine Lab in Aberdeen, using eyed ova recovered from pink salmon redds cut on the River Ness. We are told that the Ness DSFB has also introduced 100 eggs into each of two sub-surface incubation baskets with temperature monitors (supplied by Marine Scotland Science) to monitor fry emergence. It is important to note that District salmon fishery boards are non government bodies formed under statute and not under the control of the state. Irish anglers are not happy that pink salmon eggs are being used as part of a wider initiative with egg boxes being deployed on a number of rivers from the North to the south of Scotland. FISSTA believes that there is much research work to be undertaken on our wild Atlantic salmon without dreaming up new projects on such invasive ones as the Pacific pink salmon.

In the meantime, a multi-agency meeting has been set up among management bodies and researchers from the UK & NI, Ireland and Scandinavia. We await the report from the IFI who will attend this meeting as it will allow for a better exchange of information and the development of a coordinated and consistent approach.

### **River Fane**

It's great to see that the River Fane is on the road to recovery with



A fine Fane fish for Andrew Mc Donnell

fish like these being caught. Andrew Mc Donnell caught and released this lovely 15lb salmon after an epic fight.

### **TIME FOR THE MINISTER TO ORDER ANOTHER REVIEW OF THE NEW REVIEW**

As the time of writing, the final stage of the ALAB oral hearing is being held in Bantry Bay where Marine Harvest are attempting to defend the indefensible. There is no doubt that salmon farmers are feeling frustrated at the very long delays in the process for getting licenses and oral hearings are great places to witness this at first hand. That is why the salmon farming lobby through Irish Farmers Association convinced Minister Donal Creed to conduct a review so that the process could be speeded up and this was commenced in January last and was concluded in May with what FISSTA described as a charter for sealice production and pollution.

Last January 2016, we stated in this column that one of our clear objectives was “to convince the

Minister to sever the apparent conflict of interest link between the Marine Institute and the Fisheries Division of the DAFM. Only then will a new era in unfettered scientific research emerge – one that may end the squandering of state resources.”

FISSTA adopted this stance after Ireland’s first National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development was approved by Government and published in December 2015. That Plan proposed 24 actions to drive the sustainable development of the aquaculture sector and sustainably grow production in the sector by 45,000 tonnes. One of the actions of the Plan committed the Minister to “a review and revision of the aquaculture licence process, including the applicable legal framework”.

For seafood and salmon farming in particular, Food Wise 2025 committed the Minister yet again to “an independent review of the existing aquaculture licensing system involving all key stakeholders, to identify the current shortcomings and bottlenecks

(legislative, resource and logistical), to report by early 2016 and implement necessary changes to the aquaculture licensing system as a matter of priority”.

Sadly, it took another year, and last winter the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed T.D. to order that review. By the end of May it was announced that he had indeed received the report of the Independent Aquaculture Licensing Review Group which was to have examined the process of licensing for aquaculture and its associated legal framework in keeping with actions identified and terms of reference that included a research into international best practice.

The Review Group received 385 submissions in response to its public consultation process and also met with stakeholders to understand the issues surrounding the licensing process. The consultations and submissions reflected a diverse range of views but the 71 Pages did not address the conflict of interest we cited nor did it include any references to the game changing



FISSTA members made the long journey to West Cork to address and present new evidence against salmon cages in Bantry Bay to the resumed oral hearing that was adjourned last February

news of a new roadmap from the leading aquaculture country in the world. Norske Industri or Norwegian Industry's new announcement advocated a licensing system based on sea lice free applications for farmed salmon which FISSTA attended as part of the North Atlantic Salmon Fund International delegation to the May 5th Hardangerfjord conference as reported in the last issue of this publication.

Our delegation was led by Chairman of NASF Orri Vigfusson (who sadly passed away on July 1st after a short cancer illness) had opened up and continued the long and difficult dialogue with the industry for many years until this May 5th announcement confirmed his achievement.

This radical new roadmap plan acknowledges production costs have

increased by 90% over the past few years due to expensive treatments that often fail to work. Two of the main objectives of the Norske Industry Group of which Marine Harvest holds membership are:

- By 2030, salmon must be farmed using technologies that eliminate the problems of sea lice, prevent escapes and capitalize the value of particulate matter.
- By 2030, the industry will export salmon worth more than €20 billion per annum and represent one of Norway's most important export industries.

Meanwhile back in Ireland, the normally excellent Our Ocean Wealth Summit made no mention of it in Galway at the end of June nor could an NGO like FISSTA get the opportunity to tell them all about Norway's new thinking. The recommendations of the Minister's

new report includes the words "having regard to best practice in other jurisdictions" but does not.

There is plenty of outdated information on Norway included but nothing that would direct or inspire a Minister to act or be influenced with the industry leader in Norway. Meanwhile the publication of this review only confuses and diverts the progress happening outside Ireland. The Minister should now order a review of the Review, otherwise nothing will change and the Marine Institute and the Fisheries Division will continue to squander resources

**OBITUARY  
SALMON ACTIVIST -  
ORRI VIGFÚSSON R. I. P.  
10 July 1942 - 1 July 2017**

The sad news was announced from Iceland in early July by the



Irish Anglers paid tribute to his passing by floating a wreath in the Killarney Lakes. The photograph shows the FISSTA Chairman Paul Lawton and his colleagues on the banks of Loch Leane.

North Atlantic Salmon Fund (NASF) of the passing of founder and Chairman Mr. Orri Vigfússon. It was met with shock in Ireland and along the North Atlantic by the many supporters and colleagues including those from FISSTA (FISSTA had been a founding member of the NASF since 1990). FISSTA Secretary Noel Carr was honoured to be one of the pall bearers at his funeral in Iceland where he lived and was based all his life.

Orri Vigfússon succumbed to lung cancer at Iceland's national hospital in Reykjavík on July 1st 2017, only nine days short of his 75th birthday. Mr. Vigfússon had for 27 years, tirelessly fought for the survival and restoration of the wild Atlantic salmon through the North Atlantic Salmon Fund earning him the admiration and respect of environmentalists all over the world. He was recognised internationally for his vital conservation work and was awarded with numerous distinguished awards.

He is credited with saving millions of wild Atlantic salmon from the high seas netting that was such a great threat to the species along with ending mixed stock fisheries, but at the same time he was determined that commercial netmen should be properly compensated for giving up their licenses to fish for salmon. His stated objective was to "restore the abundance of wild salmon that formerly existed on both sides of the North Atlantic". That was an attitude that endeared him to both sides of the issue, and was the basis for his great success in helping to close down damaging commercial net fisheries throughout the Northern Atlantic.

Once named a "European hero" by Time magazine, Mr Vigfusson's dedication to saving North Atlantic salmon from extinction earned him accolades from France, Denmark and Iceland, as well as the Goldman

Environmental Prize and a conservation award from the Duke of Rothesay.

He helped turn around the fortunes of Ireland's wild salmon stocks by leading the international part of the Irish campaign to stop drift-net fishermen in Ireland intercepting migrating fish moving east to the coast to their European natal rivers. Elsewhere, he helped to raise millions of pounds to buy out commercial salmon fishing rights.

As founder and chairman of the NASF, he regularly travelled around Europe, and came on regular visits to Ireland, to speak to anglers and conservationists, lobby government officials and politicians, meet commercial fishermen, and give interviews on behalf of our campaigns here.

Paying tribute, FISSTA Chairman Paul Lawton said: "He was a dear friend who will be sadly missed by us all in salmon conservation and someone I admired greatly, who never failed to stand with us in our many events and marches to raise the international awareness and plight of

the wild Atlantic salmon resource."

## **Obituary Billy Millar R.I.P.**

The season closed with the very sad news that Billy Millar from Belfast and the Salmon Leap had passed away after a long illness which he battled bravely.

Billy was a regular member on the Glen river and enjoyed his salmon and sea trout angling among us for many years. In recent years as Billy recovered from his cancer treatment he did less fishing and more chatting at the honeypot that was the Salmon Leap. He enjoyed the camaraderie among the angling club members and among his close friends at Derrylaghan where his caravan overlooked the peaceful Teelin Bay. He was a true gentleman, originally from Scotland, whose quick wit endeared him to all. He made the long journeys to Donegal not just to fish but also to attend AGM's and gave kind words of support to all committee members who undertake the management of angling on our small river. Rest in Peace Billy.



Billy as we will remember him with a salmon at the Salmon Leap taken back in 1999.



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# DAERA Inland Fisheries – 2017 a year of engagement



*Inland Fisheries at DAERA will, as we approach the end of the angling season and calendar year, be taking time to reflect on another year of increased engagement with the angling community. The team will also reflect, positively, on the many new partnerships forged as DAERA continues to increase the number of groups across Northern Ireland with whom they work in an effort to promote angling as an accessible, affordable and enjoyable outdoor sport.*

The DAERA Inland Fisheries Community Outreach programme has, again in 2017, worked with youth groups, community projects, charities and many others in spreading the word about the fun, as well as the competitiveness and sense of achievement, in angling. Many, many, people, from various age groups and backgrounds, have availed of opportunities to go fishing in 2017 and much of this participation was made possible by assistance from DAERA.

In addition to practical support offered at many events, DAERA Inland Fisheries has continued to offer complimentary licences and permits to those, in organised events, trying angling for the first time. This assistance, offered to the potential angler in the first year, has massively surpassed the DAERA target of 1,000



Fishing fun for the young, in a DAERA supported programme at Angling First, Dromore, Co Down.

per season since it was introduced in 2013.

There was also, in 2017, a new Angling Events Fund introduced by DAERA through which funding assistance, of up to £500 per event, can be available to those organising angling introductory or development programmes

The Inland Fisheries team is confident that programmes to date have increased the profile of angling as well as helpfully improving the amount of engagement and information sharing between the Department and established angling customers and providers.

Gillian Kinnier, Community Outreach team manager at Inland



Kids, complete with DAERA Goody Bags, at Polish Anglers NI family event in Newtownards.



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Fisheries said: “As well as introducing many people to angling, the Outreach programme has increased communication between us as civil servants and our customer base. The delivery of projects has provided opportunities for us to meet with angling clubs and coaches and discuss provision as well as the development of angling. Hopefully this has been a positive experience for our customers as well as for the Department as they have helped us shape the service delivery and joined us in discussion as things progress.”

DAERA Inland Fisheries has, of course, continued in the past year with the provision of the Public Angling Estate consisting of over 70 waters across Northern Ireland, its statutory obligations and promoting angling in Northern Ireland at a number of shows



Competitors, complete with DAERA Caps, at the International Ladies Fly Fishing Competition at Lusty Beg, Co Fermanagh.

in the U.K., Europe and the United States. The busy team has also helped those responsible for local, national and international competitions which included five competitive events, all in Fermanagh, in the month of September alone!

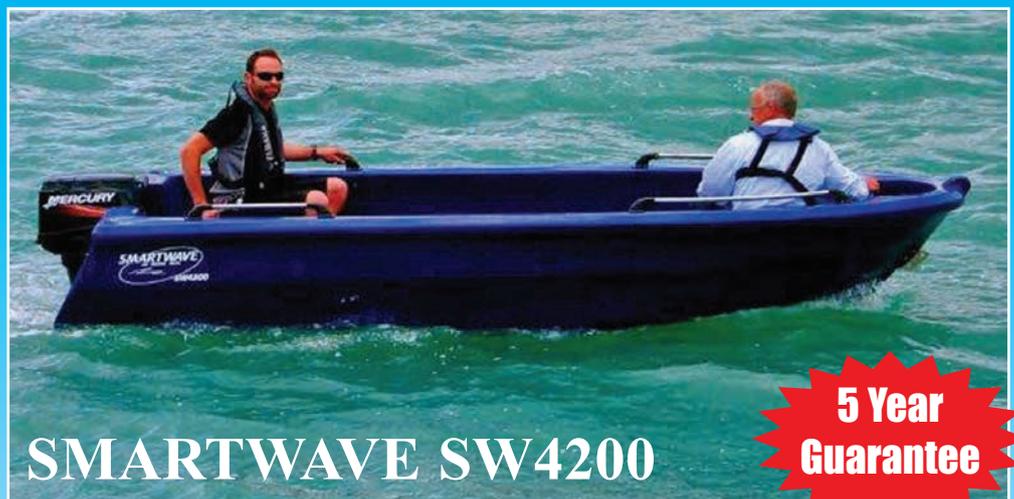
As ever, anyone seeking advice from or wishing to give feedback to DAERA Inland Fisheries can contact the team, by telephone, on 0300 200 7860 or by e-mail at [anglingcorrespondence@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:anglingcorrespondence@daera-ni.gov.uk)

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# GRILSE RUN

*Finally the long dry spring has passed, the dirty brown floods wash debris down the river and we can look forward to fresh silver salmon coursing through the pools once more and eagerly await the days when the water fines down and clears bringing ideal conditions to seduce one of the silver tourists.*

For months the rivers have been a depressing sight with sluggish flows and algae everywhere but now the clean gravel glows bright beneath the surface and dark shadows move in the usual lies under the trees and behind rocks.

Occasionally a beautiful silver fish hurls itself from the river to crash back in, sending ripples through the pool. The fresh salmon are restless and jostle for the best lies, sometimes disturbing one of the big stale spring fish which are already turning red and colouring up.

All along the West coast, the salmon will be flooding into rivers and streams, negotiating waterfalls and heavy streams to surge into the pools and provide sport for the angler. The grilse run was traditionally around the second week of June when I started chasing them, but for some reason the run got later and later, possibly due a plethora of drift nets along the coast and now the fish seem to be running in June again, water permitting.

These are the conditions for swimming a fly over the fish, the dirty water is turning the colour of strong tea and the sediment is clearing. We can expect some interest in our flies now and are full of anticipation as we cast our way down the pool. I love to feel the push of water on my legs while wading, and watching grilse slip through the shallow water at the tail of the pools, before taking their place in the usual lies.

Sometimes when the fish are still running we get frustrated by fish showing but ignoring the fly, or just touching or nipping. The angler must bide his time until the fish start to settle and sooner or later a solid take will come, sending a flutter through the anglers heart, that heart stopping moment when all goes tight and the line starts to throb before zipping out from the reel on the first mad run — the grilse are back!

On the back of the flood while the

water is still high, a tube fly with a cone head will fish well in the heavy flow and a skagit or switch rod makes it easy to fish the big flies. The heavier heads of these lines have the power to turn over big flies easily and we can also change the tips to suit the depth of the stream. The switch rods are also good for casting in confined spaces, such as tree lined banks and can present a fly nicely under the branches where salmon like to rest.

When the grilse are just in, a nice bright fly such as a Silver Wilkinson, Green Highlander or Apache will take fish and the usual Cascade, Bann Special and Curry's Red Shrimp patterns are excellent. As the water drops then more subdued patterns are effective, such as Foxford Shrimp or little Stoats Tails and the Hairwing patterns. My favoured tactic in really low water is a tiny size 14 Curry's Shrimp tied with a little lead in the body and fished like a nymph; a square cast



One very happy spaniel and a beautiful fresh fish.

with an upstream mend, allow to sink then draw it up over the fish to tempt an 'induced take'. In the last few years anglers have been catching salmon using gold-head nymph patterns and light tackle can be used. It's great fun with small grilse as the river levels drop really low.

Fly angling of course is not the only method of angling for grilse, indeed many of our rivers are perfect for the

fly. The Finn, Mourne, 'Drowse, Easky, Owenea, Glen, Owenmore, too many to list, have perfect fly water but there are many others which are slow and deep, mainly due to dredging or flood defence measures which have done much to destroy our rivers. But if the headwaters are still natural and the water clean, then salmon still run in numbers. Perhaps the most famous of these is the River Moy, which has a huge run of fish, but few fly fishing beats in the lower river.

In these days of conservation and catch and release for salmon, spinning and worming is not so popular as the fish tend to engulf the baits and can be badly damaged during unhooking. This leaves bubble and fly and the use of the shrimp and prawn for angling in deep, slow beats. The bubble and fly technique is being refined on the Moy, with specially shaped floats and tactics being developed and it's an effective method for those who know how to use it.

Shrimp and prawn is another method which can produce good results especially during low water and the attraction of this is that salmon are very rarely deep-hooked so can be released very easily. On rivers such as the Moy, which are deep and featureless, a measure of skill is required to present the prawn at the correct depth and without drag. The sliding float allows

depths to be plumbed and we've caught fish in more than sixteen feet of water in some of the big holding pools on Mount Falcon beats of the Moy. Light carp rods are perfect for prawning and the grilse can give an excellent account of themselves on light tackle, generally much better than when worming or spinning.

As I write, summer and the whole of autumn in front of us and the angler in Ireland can look forward to sport with our grilse — just remember to spare a thought for the future, handle and release fish gently, use a net for landing and unhooking fish and try not to use trebles if possible. When the floods abate a fresh new stock of silver grilse will appear in our streams to provide sport until the leaves are falling from the trees and the winter is near; until then tight lines and I hope it's not too long before you're feeling that heart stopping heavy draw on the fly line and the rod pulling over into a hoop or your little red float top hesitates then dives under, enjoy your sport, respect your quarry and tight lines for the remainder of 2017!



A real tussle eventually saw this one safely in the net.



This was another lovely fresh run fish.

By Betty Hayes

# THE GREAT DICK WARNER FISHING CHALLENGE

*About two years ago I received a call from Peter Murnaghan at Midas Productions. He was researching a documentary series for television in which Dick Warner had set himself the task of catching one of every species of fish legally catchable in Irish waters. Dick was inviting me to be his fishing partner in the episode about Wild Brown Trout. I was surprised, of course flattered, and very happy to accept.*

My friendship with Dick had endured over many years and he was always happy to be called upon to address a group, or be part of a panel of experts, whether it be about fish, wildlife or the environment.

We both started writing for Waterlog Magazine many years ago, when we met Jon Ward Allen at the re-launch of Rogans of Ballyshannon. More recently, we often met and fished together as members of Derek Evan's Media Group.

Sadly, Dick Warner passed away after the series was filmed and did not get to see this one last chapter in a long list of documentaries on the TV screen. His outstanding contributions to the knowledge and entertainment of viewers and the sound of his remarkable and distinctive speaking voice over the airwaves brought listening pleasure to many.

Dick Warner's Great Irish Fishing Odyssey

Here is what the Press Release from Midas Productions said: Dick Warner's Great Irish Fishing Odyssey is a factual entertainment series presented by the late, great, Dick Warner which blends an innovative format with HD photography and unseen archive. The result is to produce television that conveys an important aspect of Irish culture and heritage that also retains broad audience appeal. The series is made by Midas Productions and supported by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland.

The thirteen parts build into a comprehensive and entertaining guide



Discussing the plan.

to fishing in Ireland; series presenter Dick Warner, a diverse cast, and the breath-taking scenery take this series far beyond the traditional fishing audience, but there's also plenty in there for angling aficionados. The series is also unusual in that it makes a very distinct contribution to Irish heritage by assembling some of the Inland fisheries incredible unseen archive making it one of the most exciting new programmes for a single sport in Ireland.

In this, Dick's last contribution to Irish television, he leaves no stone unturned in his Odyssey to catch one of each of 13 Ireland's freshwater species of fish in Ireland that are legal to catch in a calendar year, in all weathers, in

every type of waterway, and cements his legacy as one of Ireland's all time presenting greats.

## **Brown Trout**

Dick Warner starts his great Irish Fishing Odyssey in Spring and the annual ritual of mayfly fishing for brown trout on Lough Corrib, Co Galway. Dick learns what his odyssey will entail and Betty Hayes international fisherwoman joins Dick on the water.

## **Rudd**

Dick goes to Ballyeighter Lake, Corofin, Co Clare in search of Rudd; Alan Griffiths helps Dick find a



I had confidence in this Mayfly.  
 legendary white lake, while Gerry  
 Ruane provides the fishing guidance.

**Tench**

The unlikely bait of sweetcorn lures a tench from Blackrock Pond, Drumshanbo, Co Leitrim. For three days previously the swim has been pre-baited with canned corn by Sean Wynne guide and member of the Loch Allen conservation trust. Dick arrives in early evening and by twilight the fish are starting to nibble.

**Salmon**

Fly fishing for salmon, Blackwater Salmon Fishery, Ballyduff, Co Waterford. Glenda Powell is not only co-owner of this fishery, she is also an internationally renowned ghillie and fly-casting instructor whose skill and enthusiasm demonstrate that this is far from being an exclusively male sport.

Being 'wired for sound' by Geraint



**Pike**

Fishing for pike on the great inland sea of Lough Derg, counties Tipperary

and Clare. The largest pike ever caught, anywhere in the world, have come from this lake. Paul Bourke runs a pike

fishing business with an Irish and international clientele and he will be Dick's guide and guru provided the wind drops and the lake calms down a little!

### **Roach**

Dick makes his way to Dublin via Robertstown, and joins Josie Mahon and Oisin Cahill of the Dublin Angling Initiative with a group of young boys and girls who are being introduced to coarse angling on The Grand Canal. Dick is up against it with these wily youngsters. Will he prevail?

### **Sea Trout**

Autumn and the challenge is Sea Trout at Waterville on the coast of Kerry. Waterville is famous for its run of giant Sea Trout. Dick and his ghillie Dominic discuss the possible reasons for this. Dick meets Jay Connolly, a former Vietnam combat pilot, Wall Street banker who now owns the fishery.

### **Bream**

Lough Derravarragh and Lough Gowna are the locations for catching a

big bream. There's a night-fishing session with James Dignam and a lakeside view with Nigel Holdsworth. It's a tricky business with fish and weather conditions. Will Dick win out?

### **Carp**

It's late in the year and an all-night carp fishing session with Leigh Bell in Meadow Lodge, Maynooth, and Adrian Browne in the Oakland's fishery, Wexford beckons, but first he goes to the Lough in Cork to get some advice from fishing journalist Bill Brazier.

### **Gudgeon**

Dick goes hunting the not-so-mighty gudgeon on the Inny River, Co Westmeath. These are the smallest quarry in the odyssey. But Dick has a specimen catch on his mind. He plans to catch them with the help of Myles Kelly; he's aiming for a record of some sorts.

### **Dace**

One of the most invasive species in Ireland catches Dick's interest this

week, John Murphy tells of their introduction in Cappoquin, and Alan 'Burkie' Burke helps out in Graiguenamanagh, co Kilkenny.

### **Rainbow Trout**

The 12 months are nearly up and Dick has to catch a rainbow trout. It's cold. He needs some good flies to fish with, and Johnny Mealy's the man to tie them. He finds Adaire Springs, Mooncoin in a dairy farmers paradise and learns about a massive breakout in the river system.

### **Perch**

Finally, with only days left in his Odyssey, Dick's in Athy where the River Barrow meets the Grand Canal. He's fishing for perch with some guidance from Spikey and Strikey. He's planning to use a canoe, but the weather has other ideas. John Shaughnessy is the local help. Will he be able to get his perch?

The crew - Stephan Hare (Cameraman), Geraint John Davies (Sound), Viktor Kutichev (Underwater Cameraman) with Hugh O'Donnell (Boatman)



# Fly tying evolution



*I constantly research the history of old fly patterns which my late father and I used when growing up, fishing our local rivers and loughs. I often uncover links between the flies and the great names of angling past and present, names which include a few of my personal fly fishing heroes, such as Skues, Halford, Francis Francis, Kingsmill Moore, Blacker, Gordon, Wulff and many others. I find these links make the old, classic fly patterns really interesting. They show that our fly fishing and fly tying history has evolved and is still evolving to the present day.*

Coincidentally, I have just watched a TV documentary about Charles Darwin (1809-1882), the famous English naturalist whose theory of evolution is perhaps one of the greatest contributions ever made to science. It was Darwin that came up with the term 'natural selection' which is one of the cornerstones of modern biology. The great man introduced this term in his groundbreaking 1859 book 'On the Origin of Species'. It is a term that could apply easily to great fishing flies, as they are survivors of time due to the process of natural selection by the angler and importantly the natural selection of our quarry the fish. It's simple, if the flies are good they survive, and if they are not they fade away. What follows will illustrate what I mean about patterns being linked.

## Tying

Hook: 10-18 Partridge  
Thread: Black or Red  
Tag: Flat gold tinsel  
Body: Peacock herl  
Rib: Very fine copper wire (this is just to make to fly more durable)



The Hackled Coachman (dry)

Hackle: brown with a white hackle in front

This version of the Coachman is a fly that I used a lot as a kid on the rivers. It is a fly which is easy to spot in fast water, with its dual coloured hackles it's taken well by trout feeding on caddis and moths in the summer evenings. When it is dressed on smaller sizes on rivers and still-waters, it's great for trout feeding on Caenis, sometimes called the fisherman's curse. I think trout may take it for

an emerging Caenis as it sits in the surface film of the water.

The original Coachman is around 200 years old and is the same dressing as pictured left, but instead of a white hackle at the front, it sports a wing of white duck or swan feather and there are wet and dry versions.

There is also the lead wing coachman which, instead of the white wing, is dressed with a blue or blue wing. This version is a good general purpose lough fly. The origin of the fly in most books is accredited to Tom Bosworth, who was a coachman to three English monarchs: George IV, William IV and Queen Victoria, but I have also read that it was a coachman called John Hughes who first used this fly on rivers in Kent England. Either one may have invented the fly, as with a lot of old fly patterns, sadly the origins are often lost in the mists of time.

What we do know is that this pattern was around in the early 1800s, as it appeared in a book called the 'Anglers Guide' by T.F. Salter 1814 and also appeared in a list of flies in the 'Young Anglers Companion,' a publication that was in print between 1810 and 1825. No matter who was the first to dress this fly, it has

become a classic trout fly which is still used today all over the world.



The Royal Coachman

### Tying

Hook: 8-16 Partridge

Thread: Black

Tail: Golden pheasant tippets

Body: Peacock herl with red floss in the middle

Hackle: brown or natural red game

Wing: White duck or swan wing.

The Royal Coachman is a pattern from the USA which is related to the Coachman and is perhaps one of the best known flies in that country. When the original Coachman (which was almost certainly a wet fly) crossed the Atlantic, the great American fly angler of his time Theodore Gordon adapted it as a dry fly.

Gordon was probably sent this fly by one of the great English fly anglers such as G.E.M Skues or perhaps F.M Halford, who were both in correspondence with Gordon in the 1800s. The adapted fly then found its way to John Hailey around 1876. Hailey was a professional fly dresser living in New York and was asked to dress some more durable coachmen as the peacock herl body of the fly would often unravel after it had been taken by a few trout, as the trout's teeth would cut the fragile herl. Hailey added the red silk band which creates the distinctive body. It seems he tied this band of red silk in the middle just to prevent the peacock bodies from fraying. Hailey also added a tail of barred wood duck feather, as this helped the fly float and was more like the standard dry flies of the time and apparently he thought it looked handsome. Later, the wood duck tail changed to tippets from a

golden pheasant and so a classic fly evolved.

The name of the fly was given by an angler with another well known fishing name, as it was a Mr L.C. Orvis that christened it while discussing with other fly anglers what it should be called. He said: "Oh that is easy enough, call it the Royal Coachman. It is so finely dressed."

Although the Royal Coachman may look to some modern fly anglers as a gaudy fly, believe me it is an excellent general purpose up-winged dry fly, which can be used to represent many other large winged insects as well as mayflies and olives.

Many flies have evolved from the Royal Coachman, among them are the Royal Trude, the Royal Coachman Bucktail, a hair wing streamer pattern and the Royal Wulff, a hair wing dry fly dressed by the great angler Lee Wulff as a dry fly for salmon, and best known in the UK and Ireland as a fly to use on the loughs as a mayfly pattern. Another is the Royal Humpy, a hair bodied dry fly which is another great fly to use when mayfly are around. In fact I was told by Peter O'Reilly that he is asked to dress this fly more than any other at mayfly time.



### Tying

Hook: 12-18 Partridge

Tail; Medium blue dun hackle fibres

Body: Stripped peacock herl

Hackle: Medium blue dun

Wing; Wood duck flank, upright & divided.

The Quill Gordon is a truly excellent fly, which I often use on fast rivers during an olive hatch, especially a blue wing olive hatch, although dressed in different sizes it can be

fished to represent many of the up-wing flies.

It is named after Theodore Gordon (1854-1915), the great American fly angler I mentioned earlier, who visited the Catskills regularly to fish and accordingly the Quill Gordon is regarded as a Catskill style fly pattern. In 1890, when Gordon was in his mid thirties, American fly fishermen were mostly still only wet fly fishing.

Gordon fished wet style as well but, unlike many of his fellows anglers, he fished upstream and started to notice that he took better trout in the moments that his fly floated, before sinking. Much of this would have had to do with the fact that he was standing below the trout as they faced upstream and not in their vision, or window, but this was the fact that prompted him to write to F. M. Halford in England, who responded kindly to him by sending him a packet of dry flies.

He soon discovered, however, that there were problems with Halford's flies, one being that they imitated English insects and secondly, perhaps most importantly, they were designed for the smooth glides of English chalk streams, rather than the fast free stone rivers that he fished. He also had some help from G.E.M. Skues, who we know sent him hackles.

So, Gordon began to evolve his own dry fly patterns using stiffer hackles with more turns than English flies, so that they could ride the faster riffles and runs of the Catskill rivers. Among these, his most famous pattern was the Quill Gordon, a classic dry fly which still should be in most river anglers' fly boxes today.

### Fact File

*Game Angling Consultant Stevie Munn works full time as a fishing guide on the Six Mile Water, writer and qualified game angling guide and 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 all over the world. He has fished many places worldwide and grew up fishing on rivers and loughs of Ireland where he often guides. He runs teaching courses in Ireland and hosts groups to fish in Norway, and other parts of the world. You can contact him via email [anglingclassics@aol.com](mailto:anglingclassics@aol.com) and for more information visit [www.anglingclassics.co.uk](http://www.anglingclassics.co.uk)*

# Pointer and Setter Champion Stake 2017

*Ireland was well represented at the the 2017 Pointer & Setter Champion Stake run on Sheikh Mohammed Al Maktoum's beautiful Bollihope moor. Alan Neill had nine runners and Gerry Devine eight and in all twenty-nine of the fifty-two runners had Irish connections either through their owner or handler. The judges for the second Champion Stake run under the three Judge system were Peter O'Driscoll, Terry Harris & Fiona Kirk, the Guns Michael Gibbs & Racster Dingwall, Steward of the Beat was Peter Fawcett and Chief Steward was Sheila Steeds.*

The weather was far from ideal for pointer and setter work, being a mixture of sunshine and showers with a fresh breeze that kept the temperature low enough to make coats an essential even at the end of July. Typically for these sort of cool, damp and windy conditions the grouse tended to fly off long before the dogs could get anywhere near them and through both days we saw covey after covey lift and glide off across the moor while the line was still a hundred yards or more away.

There was clearly a lot of ground scent left behind and often, one or two young grouse that had remained tucked tightly into the heather instead of flying off with the rest of their covey. Though their siblings and parents had taken to the wing while danger was still well off, these stragglers sometimes sat so

stubbornly that they were in danger of being pegged as they simply refused to rise even when a dog was right on top of them.

It was a long drive across the hill roads to the beat for the first morning. As always, Bollihope was in beautiful condition with well managed heather, superb access and lots and lots of grouse. It is always a surprise to me that there are not more spectators at this oldest of the Championships. The gallery has a great view of all the action and are right up with the handlers throughout the trial. Compare this with (say) the Retriever Championship, where several hundred spectators come along and for much of the time are so far back that they can see nothing of the dog work even when the action isn't taking place in waist high kale. But I

digress.

Even though many – perhaps most – of the grouse took off well before the dogs reached them there were still plenty of birds left behind to give every brace a clear chance of game. Through the morning most dogs found birds (or in a few cases missed birds) within a very short time of being cast off and it was the last brace before lunch: Sarah Chichester and Colin Forde with Irish setters Dunroon Ginger Storm of Wiscombe and Bownard Delegator: before we saw a brace really getting into their stride and quartering the ground for more than just one or two casts. This was particularly impressive from Sarah's young dog who had qualified for the Champion Stake by winning the previous day's Kennel Club Derby Stake for puppies.



Gun Michael Gibbs, Judges Terry Harris and Fiona Kirk watch as Dominic Goutorbe's English setter FTCh Gibeltarik Troy at Upperwood points.

## ***The most stylish dog on the first day***

Lunch over, we were soon back into action and the grouse were a little more cooperative than in the morning. There were still coveys getting up well ahead but more birds were content to sit until the dogs found them. As in the morning, there was not much chance for a dog to get out and really show its pace and style when quartering because there were always grouse somewhere in the first cast or two, but there was plenty of opportunity for the dogs to show off their game handling skills and steadiness. We finished around five 'o' clock, with the announcement that

Jimmy Dalton's pointer Lagopus Jester had won the Ladies Trophy for the most stylish dog on the first day of the Champion Stake, presented in memory of three very special ladies: Auriel Mason, Eppie Buist and Barbara Beazley:

On the second day we went to a beat quite close to the meeting place – a long, hogback ridge with the wind coming freshly from the left flank. There were eight and a half brace to be seen in the second round and it was very breezy again with a mixture of sunshine and the occasional sharp shower. After some discussion the Judges chose a beat on the sheltered side of the ridge though even here the grouse were obviously unsettled by the weather and the sudden appearance of dogs, handlers, Guns, Judges and spectators. We could see lots of coveys taking off even before the first dogs were run and other birds had their heads up and were running in front of us. Eight Pointers, five Irish setters and four English setters had made it through to the second round and as on the first day game handling looked like being the thing that would distinguish between the dogs.

### ***We lost a couple of runners who bumped birds***

The scent seemed to be good and dogs were taking their birds well out ahead and then often having to rode quite a long distance before the birds would take to their wings. While some grouse were obviously running others sat very tightly and we lost a couple of runners who bumped birds right after being cast off and didn't acknowledge the flush. The grouse were generally well grown though Steve Lound's pointer Goddrib Judd found a covey of cheepers that were presumably a second brood and could barely fly.

Wilson Young's pointer dog FTCh Fearn Quark of Burncastle had been impressive on the first day with a long rode in to produce a covey and he turned it on again in the second round. First he had a good find on the left of

the beat while his bracemate flushed a covey, then he was run on with Billy Darragh's Irish setter bitch Erinvale Jenna. Sent off to the right this time he put in a beautiful flat cast and pointed birds at the base of the slope, holding steady while his bracemate worked out a point on the other flank before producing the covey. It was a really good piece of work, especially since we had seen a lot of grouse moving about below us and it would have been all too easy for him to have flushed grouse on the outrun.

The Judges conferred for a while before deciding that they had seen enough without calling for a third round and we drove back to the trial headquarters where our hosts had provided coffee and biscuits, to wait for

the results. After a rather tense wait (for some) Sheila Steeds announced that the winner was FTCh Fearn Quark of Burncastle and Wilson Young came forward to collect the Heywood Lonsdale Perpetual Challenge Trophy for the third time.

The Bollihope keepers under Peter Fawcett worked hard throughout to make the trial a success. It is a great privilege to be allowed to run dogs on such a beautiful moor and to see such a wonderful show of grouse. Fiona Kirk referred to the very tricky conditions and made the point that, as always, some runners were lucky while others were not. That, of course, is field trialling as it has always been, but lucky or not it was a real pleasure to be here again.

#### **Summary**

<b>Venue</b>	Bollihope Moor, 28th & 29th July 2017
<b>By Permission</b>	of Sheikh Mohammed Al Maktoum
<b>Judges</b>	Peter O'Driscoll, Terry Harris & Fiona Kirk
<b>Chief Steward</b>	Sheila Steeds
<b>Entries</b>	52 32 Dogs & 20 Bitches
	Pointers 24
	Irish Setters 11
	English Setters 14
	Gordon Setters 3
<b>Head Keeper</b>	Peter Fawcett
<b>Guns</b>	Michael Gibbs & Racster Dingwall
<b>Winner</b>	Wilson Young – Pointer dog FTCh Fearn Quark of Burncastle
<b>Second</b>	Mr E. Filmer – Pointer dog Koram Murphy of Wye handled by Alan Neill
<b>Third</b>	Billy Darragh – Irish setter bitch Erinvale Jenna
<b>Fourth</b>	Sue Langford & Alan Neill – pointer bitch Goddrib Messina handled by Alan Neill
<b>Diploma of Merit</b>	Laurent Hild – Pointer bitch FTCh Gerensary Minerva handled by Richard MacNicol
	Dominic Goutorbe – English setter bitch FTCh Upperwood Hera
	Alan Neill – pointer dog Amsenoy Humbug
	Steve Lound – Pointer dog Goddrib Judd
	Sarah Chichester – Irish setter dog Dunroon Ginger Storm of Wiscombe
	Colin Forde – Irish setter dog Bownard Delegator
<b>Keepers' Choice</b>	James Dalton – Pointer bitch Shannaghview Gershwin De Lagopus



1



2



3



4

1. Jimmy Dalton won the Ladies Trophy for the most stylish dog with pointer Lagopus Jester.
2. The Guns were Michael Gibbs and Racster Dingwall.
3. Gerry Devine's English setter FTCh Gortinreagh Eppie on point.
4. Alan Neill and Sue Langfford's pointer Goddrub Messina firmly on point.



1. Glorious view as Gun Racster Dingwall, Wilson Young and Judge Peter O'Driscoll make their way across to where winning dog FTCh Fearn Quark of Burncastle waits patiently on point.
2. The Judges were Peter O'Driscoll, Fiona Kirk and Terry Harris.
3. Gerry Devine's English setter Int FTCh Ballyellen Cody at full pace.
4. Billy Darragh's Irish setter Erinvale Jenna on point.
5. Judge Fiona Kirk watching Alan Neill cast off Mr R Michel's pointer Deeverspring Millie.

# First Ever Meeting of International Association of Falconry & Conservation of Birds of Prey in Ireland

*In November 2016, Ireland hosted the 47th Annual Council of Delegates meeting of the International Association of Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF). The IAF is the global organisation for the representation and advocacy of the ancient and living art of Falconry and represents 86 different countries worldwide. Organised by the Irish Hawking Club, this unprecedented occasion took place in two locations in Ireland. The Irish Hawking Club have been members of the IAF since 1969, however, this is the first time an IAF meeting has taken place in Ireland where up to 200 people from 60 different nations attended the week-long event.*

The first part of the week, which included the IAF council of delegate meetings, was held in the south-west of Ireland from Sunday 13th to Thursday 17th November. These 5 days witnessed world falconers gather at the Sneem Hotel in the picturesque and quaint village of Sneem, Co. Kerry. Sneem nestles between dramatic glacial mountains and the rugged Atlantic coast with the hotel ideally situated overlooking the spectacular tidal waters of Kenmare Bay. The ordeal of language translation at this multi-cultural gathering disappeared each morning as the visitors took in the sights of the many raptors weathering on the

hotel lawns, surrounded by breathtaking scenery. The approving smiles and knowing nods of fellow falconers were all the communication required to confirm the unified passion for this most ancient of field sports.

## **Foreign customs and practices**

Wednesday saw everyone gather together to celebrate 'World Falconry Day' where the local communities were invited to take part in celebrations. One of the guests, Nicola Dixon, former Project Manager at International Wildlife Consultants, used this opportunity to visit the local school with a number of overseas falconers in

traditional dress to teach the children foreign customs and practices. Nicola also gave a presentation on the Mongolian Artificial Nest School links programme. This programme connects schools, teachers and students using the ancient art of falconry as a means of introduction.

Falconry incorporates aspects of heritage, history, literature and science, making it an ideal subject for educational programmes as it represents a common theme that crosses a diverse range of cultures. The second part of the week was held in the midlands based Moyvalley Hotel in Co. Kildare. This coincided with a two day international conference on the 'Stewardship of Biodiversity and Sustainable Use,' organised by the Irish Hawking Club.

The conference was supported by an exceptional line-up of international guest speakers with strong credentials in conservation management, science and raptor biology. The speakers included founding chairman of the Peregrine Fund, Professor Tom Cade (who is accredited for saving the



Guests gather on the lawn at Sneem Hotel each morning.



Polish Falconer Eric Witkowski releases his peregrine falcon to hunt for snipe.

peregrine falcon from extinction) and along with Professor Robert Kenward, (chair of the IUCN's thematic group for sustainable use and management of ecosystems), Dr Nick Fox, Dr Mike Nicholls, Dr Farooq Omar Al-Ejli and other leading world specialists, they made up a calibre of conference speakers unparalleled in the world of raptor conservation.

### ***Showcased conservation projects***

Speakers chose a variety of subjects which demonstrated the value of hunters in conservation management, sustainable use and biodiversity to a broad audience of the hunting community, scientists and wildlife department officials. There were also two engaging presentations from the Irish Grey Partridge Conservation Trust and the Irish Red Grouse Conservation Trust that showcased two of Ireland's successful on-going conservation projects.



Fran Bolinches travelled from Spain with his cast of Red Naped Shaheens.



Visiting falconers from Mexico, Japan, England, Scotland, Norway and Qatar.

Alongside the two day conference and council of delegates meeting, the Irish Hawking club arranged falconry field meets to be held each day at both venues from Monday to Saturday inclusive. There were six groups in total which included an array of falcons, goshawks, Harris hawks, sparrow-hawks and eagles. The majority of guests came to spectate, but there quite a few dedicated falconers that went to great lengths to bring their own birds of prey to partake in hunting. The choice of quarry varied and included duck, partridge, pheasant and rabbit, but by far the greatest interest from our overseas visitors was something which has a phenomenon in recent years, the practice of snipe hawking on Irish bogs.

### ***Falcony practised at the highest level***

Pioneered by Irish falconers, snipe hawking on Irish bogs is the ideal field meet to observe the practice of falconry at its highest level. The bogs are large, open and generally flat with little cover to interfere with the safe flight of a falcon. Large spectator groups are easily managed and allow both the stoop of the falcon and the pace of the pointing and setting dogs to be seen in clear view of the gallery. The testing nature of this enigmatic quarry is evident by the fact that with several

hundred flights at snipe over the six days, less than ten were caught. There are few places in the world that can offer such wild sport against the most cunning of wild birds in spectacularly beautiful wild places.

We extend our deepest appreciation to all the land owners in County Kerry that facilitated our sport over the week with a special mention to Henry Cowper, Donal O’Leary and the Rathmore gun club, Frank Joy from Glenbeigh and Frank Donnelly from Waterville. Further south, we extend our thanks to David Brabazon and Angus Lee from Kilruddery Estate, Matty Lambden from Mullingar, Patrick Oman from Kildare and Vincent Flannelly and Jim McCormack from Moate.

As full and entertaining as the days were, the nights were equally so. Guests were offered ample opportunity to experience traditional Irish music sessions and our world famous hospitality and good craic. There were a series of talks on a number of the evenings at both Sneem and Moyvalley Hotel and one interesting heritage evening with Kent Carnie, founder and Hon. President of the Archives of Falconry museum in Boise, Idaho along with Mark Upton presenting on the British Archives of Falconry. We were also delighted to present Ireland’s own sporting heritage with Walter Phelan from the Irish Flyfishing & Game

Shooting Museum, who brought along a number of his museum exhibits to give a superb presentation on Irish field sports to an enthralled overseas audience.

Overall, the event was a tremendous success — not just for the sport of falconry or the IAF and Irish Hawking Club but for country sports in Ireland.

Our guests experienced all that Ireland has to offer and were embraced by the local communities. We showcased Irish field sports and our love of country pursuits to the highest degree; from hunting along breathtaking wild Atlantic shorelines, to flying falcons in wild mountain bogs that near scraped the sky, to hunting pheasants, ducks and partridge in our charming kept estates and all with a passion that transcends diversity of cultures.

Former IAF Vice president of the Americas, Ralph Rogers, stated, that of the 40 years he has attended these annual meetings, this was by far the best. Sometimes it takes overseas visitors to let us know how good we have it here.

The Irish Hawking Club offer our sincerest appreciation to all that sponsored this memorable event, including, Bord Failte, Countryside Alliance Ireland, Great Game Fairs of Ireland, Irish Red Grouse Conservation Trust and FACE Ireland.



(Top)  
Carine Troudart travelled from France to fly her male goshawk.



Scottish falconer Andrew Knowles Brown in the Sneem hills with spectators and African Crowned Eagle.



Japanese falconer in traditional dress.



(Above)  
Irish falconer and IHC president Martin Brereton on a mountain bog in Kerry.



(Right)  
Snipe hawking party in Glencar, Co. Kerry.



Polish Biologist Januzs Sielicki (left), Dr Ladislav Molnar(Slovakia) and IAF president, Dr Adrian Lombard (South Africa) at conference banner.



Goshawk group at Killruddery estate in Co. Wicklow.



Council of Delegates Meeting at Sneem hotel.



UK falconer Chris Frearson (left ) with Wilifried Verst from Germany and his passage female goshawk.



Traditional Irish music entertained the delegates.

# Hillwalking - better to travel than to arrive?

Carrantohill - sometimes you have to watch your step.

*Hillwalking is a hobby or pastime which has always confused me. I have to admit that I had not tried it for many years, but I did see those many clubs gathered in Dublin streets, dressed in the compulsory woolly socks over trousers (now gaiters) and 'sturdy boots' most Sunday mornings, gathering in groups before they set off on whatever walk they had planned.*

I remember well while staying on an estate in Wicklow in the eighties, as I stretched out on a hillside by myself in the quiet of a summer morning, that I wished — metaphorically of course — that I had a decent rifle with good sights so I could pick off a few of the idiots tramping over the hill in the distance. To my mind, the bright yellow and red cagoules offended the peace and quiet of a lovely quiet day. I understand the need to be seen in case of an accident, but why not have the bright colours on the inside. I remember thinking: "They will see nothing."

Anyway it was years later that I got involved in Scouting and discovered that the idea is not necessarily to see anything except the view from the top. It's to do the hike and be able to say: "Yes, I've done the Wicklow Way," or 'bagged a Munro. This idea baffled me for a long time. The more I thought about it, the stranger it seemed to me. I could not be interested in keeping up, I simply had no interest in ticking off hills and mountains I had hiked up. Don't get me wrong, I respect the fitness of these people. I am not that fit

now. But there was a time when I would head up the hills of Donegal for a long day's walking, time flying by, being out on the hill for several hours, but I had a purpose.

My sister lived in a remote area and I'd head off with my camera, stalking the wild red deer in the area, in the hope of getting a decent photo. I have to admit that I got pretty good at it. Even bringing my then girlfriend with me. I managed to bring it close enough to spit on a group of hinds one time, if we wanted to spit on them. I'm not talking about tame deer here, as to get that close meant a long diversion and attention to the wind.

In the Scouting situation I was always the last up the hill and gasping for breath. Mind you, to see a bunch of cub scouts take off running up a hill would knock the breath out of anyone. I have not lost one yet. I have done my time as a cub section leader so in the past year or so I handed on the position to another leader who does enjoy hiking over hills. She has brought the cubs on all sorts of hikes and kept track of the mileage they do. It came as a bit of a

surprise to us all when she recently totalled the mileage up and we found that some of the cubs - between eight and twelve years old - had done over 100 kilometres in the past eight months, which is a fair achievement in my opinion. I did go on several of these hikes but certainly not all. Nor will I be going to climb Ben Nevis!

On one of our recent hikes, I had a bit of a 'eureka' moment. This hike set out to the top of a hill in Connemara and the path looped around the summit. As usual, I was looking after a couple of stragglers and at the junction I agreed to take a break and wait for them to come back down the return path.

## ***I was surprised I could see no deer***

After a few minutes rest, I thought that I would go and meet them on the way back so I headed up the return path. I was in no hurry, I did not have a bunch of overactive kids to look after, so as I strolled up the path I took the time to look around and sit down when it occurred to me. I studied the surrounding area of hillside and was



Heading up Glendalough - a 15k walk that day.

surprised I could see no deer. But there were a lot of other walkers about, so perhaps not so surprising. I did watch a large black beetle eating a large black slug.

When I got a bit thirsty, I stopped by a stream and had a refreshing drink of the brown cold water in it. It tasted of bog the water ran through. We don't appreciate what we have in this country. In most other countries you have a high risk of getting something nasty if you drink from open watercourses, in fact people are warned not to drink untreated water. Having looked up the symptoms of giardia, which include 'explosive diarrhoea,' I would not fancy it at all, but I have never had a problem drinking untreated water in Ireland. Please don't take this as advice to drink anything, maybe I am immune and I'm pretty sure I have consumed a lot of toxins over the years, but I'm still here! I do usually boil it and drink tea. But there was something about that cool water that was just great, and I'd take it over expensive shop bought water in a plastic bottle anytime.

One time while I was working on a river in the midlands of Ireland with a colleague, we stopped for lunch and brewed up a cuppa from the river. After the usual comments of 'You can't beat a good cuppa tea,' we resumed work and about fifty yards upstream found the decaying remains of a sheep lodged under a branch in the river. As they say: "Did us no harm in the long run." But thinking about it now does make me retch just a bit. (Sorry Johnny, that invite to afternoon tea with you unfortunately now clashes with urgent and unexpected business: Editor.)

### **Better safe than sorry**

Anyway I realised that I was just at the summit and had seen no sign of the cubs. I asked a German hiker approaching me if she had seen any small kids and to my surprise and horror she said that they had gone back the way they came up, so I hurried back because they would expect me to be

waiting at the junction of the paths. To cut a long story short, I found them at the base of the hill having a cup of tea before someone went back to look for me. It turned out that, as they approached the summit the wind had nearly blown them off the hill, so of course better safe than sorry they had decided to turn back. I am very glad that I had not decided to hide in the bog to give them a fright when they passed by me, as I have done in the past, or I could still be up there.

Oddly the wind was not bad on the side I was on, and I had made it to just below the summit before almost running back down. Lessons from this were obvious: I should have left a note to say I had gone up the return path or, as they were scouts, a sign of some sort. I had not noticed that I had climbed the hill because I took my time, and even to the extent of at one point lying down on the heather to listen to the birds singing. I did get some odd looks from serious hikers heading down past me at the time, but I'm long past caring if people think I'm a bit odd. I seriously intend to try to instil in the cubs and other leaders the need to sometimes 'stop and smell the roses' or you'll miss them completely.

The point of all this is that when actually not walking with a purpose, such as reaching the end or getting from A to B, you'll get a lot more out of your hike. Deerstalkers spend days on the hills, so why not enjoy the walk to the next viewing point and take in everything along the way. Sometimes the journey itself really is better than 'just getting there.'

Not a place to be when the clouds descend.



By Margaret Annett

# An African Journey

*With such great concern about the lives and well being of wild animals throughout the world and Prince William's recent talks with Government Representatives about this very subject perhaps there is no better time to visit Africa and show support for these amazing creatures. For generations we have been equally intrigued and curious about our wild counterparts, with an insatiable desire to explore their worlds. South Africa and Kruger in particular offer some of the best and greatest variety of wildlife and lodges.*

Travellers first visited South Africa to bring back trophies to adorn their palatial walls and, although this still occurs, the people now choosing to visit are mostly interested in observing and returning with photographic images to hang.

The original and still arguably the best camp in Kruger is Mala Mala. Founded by the infamous Mike Rattray and still run by his family. It has its very own airstrip and is only a 1 hour flight from Johannesburg. Such a difference from when Mike first set out

to explore the area. It is a perfect wilderness camp, which retains a character that is in essence reminiscent of its 60's birth. Circular thatched lodges, with wonderful wooden terraces elevated and overlooking the river bed where all wildlife choose to visit.



Elephants at feeding time.



Drama at Mala Mala.



The Zebra stripes come in different patterns each unique to the individual animal.



Antelope outside my window at Jabulani.

Mala Mala is a hark back to a time when safaris were an exploration, when one had no idea what to expect and indeed didn't expect. There is a quaintness with a delightful reception room for pre-dinner drinks for meeting other explorers and sharing the delights of the day. Dinner is served buffet style with plenty of tasty treats and your guide will join you and further regale you with stories of the park. All your meals are included as are your game drives and for the duration of your sojourn you will enjoy the personal services of your very own ranger.

Mala Mala is a true gem where wildlife are left to their own devices without interference, but at the same time there is a huge consciousness of what is required for birds and beasts to thrive and areas that are left natural to aid their wellbeing. Some years ago, Mike tore down the entire perimeter fence and so opened up the 30k acre reserve to all of Kruger and Botswana thus allowing all animals to roam freely.

### ***We left the lions to their tea!***

On our last day, a feverous call came over the radio, we were observing Rhino's in a marsh river bed! There had been a kill, so our eager ranger moved at lightening speed. A pride of lions had brought down a water buffalo, not a simple task and in his exuberant efforts to ensure we were as close to the kill as possible we had acquired two flat tyres! Reinforcements were called for and after some tricky wheel changing we left the lions to their tea.

A stay of 3 days is delightful. There are three camps to choose from and then by car you can move on to a completely different experience "Camp Jabulani" which is everything Mala Mala is not. Jabulani is a designer's paradise from the minute you arrive you appreciate that every detail at this camp has been considered. The reception areas are exquisite and very African in theme with only the best decor, Zebra covered chairs and antler lanterns to name but two and even the pool outside has it's very own resident hippopotamus.

The rooms here are suites beautifully furnished with 4 poster beds, outside covered showers, resting areas, and superb views of visiting antelope as they feed outside your window, the attention to detail reinforces the care taken to create a luxury destination.

## ***The reserve has a conservation project***

In the evening, game drives are orchestrated to the last minute detail and allow you to arrive at the appointed location just as the sun is setting. Staff greet you with a welcoming table decorated with individual artefacts and full of elixirs and tantalising canapés each evening.

When you return to the lodge, dinner is served in which ever surrounding you care, a wine room, a pool side corral or possibly the terrace and the chefs will create a gastronomic feast of whatever you desire. The game drives here are within a much more confined area but still considerable; it is clear animals are exceedingly precious, feed is left out in times of drought and the reserve has a conservation project, breeding endangered cheetahs and leopards.

Jabulani is an incredible destination where you can view animated animals, eat fabulous food, be incredibly pampered in ultimate style and when you depart Hoedspruit Airport, another designer treasure, is just opposite the entrance gates to Jabulani.

Most folk flying into South Africa to go onto Kruger will travel through Johannesburg. This is a city worth exploring, but perhaps best to stay at Willow Place B & B in Midrand just 30 mins on the Goutrain into Rosebank and Sandtown. Here you can visit Mandella Square, the wonderful craft markets with loads of delights, purchase an Ostrich bag, beaded art and jewellery or hand printed clothes.

From Midrand, it is an easy drive to Hartbeespoort Dam, an amazing mountain retreat with beautiful hotels, summer homes and restaurants ,as well as some great retail therapy at Cameleon Village, eat at Mozambique restaurant or Ta Malie's Winkel before heading home. Enjoy!



Hyenas tend to eat another animals kill, rather than catching their own food.



Coming down to drink as the day ends.



(Right) Sundowners at Jabulan.

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