



LOCH ACHONACHIE ANGLING CLUB NEWSLETTER 44: MIDSUMMER 2023

HUGH CUSHNIE : A LIFETIME OF SERVICE TO ANGLING



As the 2023 season began the club's executive committee was paying tribute to the lifetime of service that one of our longest serving members has given to fishing in Strathconon. Hugh Cushnie has been a stalwart of our club, tremendously influential in its development, and was instrumental with his fishing friends at the very start of the club. In the key acquisition of river beats Hugh played a key role and was with others from the area highly energetic in the fund raising efforts that enabled the club to purchase key fishings including the beautiful stretch of the Upper Blackwater above Rogie Falls (see press cutting page 2). Hugh has served the on the club's executive committee continuously and carried all the Office Bearer positions at various times over the years.

Presenting Hugh with an engraved decanter the club chairman, Stephen Dowds said it had been a great pleasure to work with Hugh. He had been the first LAAC member that he had met when out exploring the River Conon fishings. adding that he had been a hugely valuable mentor to him since he joined the committee in 2010. He always consulted Hugh when tricky issues came up and was well advised at all times. He warmly thanked him for his dedication to the club and this was received with acclamation by the committee members pictured above.

In thanking the club committee for this award Hugh spoke eloquently of the club's development years, the people who had helped him throughout, the extent of the fund raising, maintenance work, and in doing so gave the committee members a detailed history lesson of Loch Achonachie Angling Club. We send Hugh and his family every best wish for the future.

Committee members pictured above with Hugh are (l to r) Derek Ritchie, John Ritchie, Neil MacRitchie, Derek Williamson, Chris Ross, Ian MacPhail, Ally Hunter, David Ross

Continued over :-



This **March 1986** press cutting from the **North Star** (left) details the negotiations and funding basis for the purchase of the Upper Blackwater. Very enjoyable fund raising events are mentioned at various venues throughout the Highlands and the support given by then HIBD, MP Charles Kennedy, and through the purchase of Life Membership by local anglers and companies. It also mentions the drive to keep improving the club's fishings through the planned purchase of the Upper Conon river beats. The sense of commitment is very clear. The engraving on the decanter reads – *Presented to Hugh Cushnie from all your LAAC fishing friends with thanks for friendship and your lifetime of service and commitment to angling in Strathconon.*



WINTER LEAGUE 2022-23



THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

A hugely warm welcome from Ruth at the excellent Artloch Fishery near Huntly and a tricky final for newcomer to the Winter League **John Ritchie** who was sitting in pole position at the start with several sitting just below him on the league table all trying to overtake him. John was on edge and didn't have his best day but did enough to keep first spot and win his first ever club competition. **Well done John.**

It was another first win in the heaviest fish of the whole competition, this time for Gavin Morton who had a cracker of **7lb 15oz** at Forgue Fishery in February. **Congratulations Gavin!** **Highlights** of the Winter League this time around have been new members joining us over the 7/8 legs; a truly icy adventure to Lagg in December; discovering excellent fisheries and Forgue & Artloch; returning to a rejuvenated and improved Mill of Kellas under new management; saying cheerio to Tom Sharpe at Lagg Fishery who has provided superb fishing for us for many years; fabulous hospitality from Ruth Wright at Artloch and even a ceilidh in the warmth of her brilliant fishing hut – keep an eye out for it all starting off again in the autumn and join us give rainbows a go!



PIKE FISHING

There is an increasing interest in fly fishing for Pike amongst members and visitors. Club member Scott McMath this caught pike this spring from the boat on Loch Achonachie. He was fly fishing for the species and tells the newsletter it was caught using a silver perch imitation on a fast sinking line in the margins close to a weed bed. He also had a follow right to the boat later in the day by a much bigger pike but it turned away at the last minute! Spinning or fly fishing for pike – remember no treble hooks these days and always NO BAIT FISHING



DINGWALL & DISTRICT AC

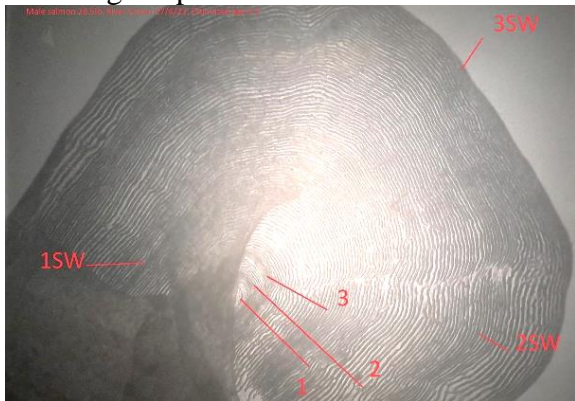


Out on first day of the season in February on the Digwall & District AC stretch of the Conon was Jimmy Mutch, taking the first cast of the season on opening day.

We share Exchange Tickets with our sister club on the lower Conon and these are available for members to book from Contin Filling Station. Try an outing using the exchnage or why not join DADAC – email us and we'll put you in touch.

LOWER CONON DADAC

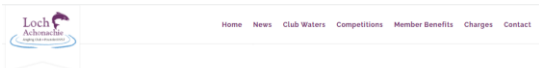
Dingwall club's Brian Morrison caught this fantastic salmon, pictured here on the right, whilst fishing late in April. It was Brian's first ever Salmon on the fly, caught on a size 8 double Black & Yellow fly and weighing in at 28.5lb this silver springer was landed with the help of Liam Mutch. . A solitary scale (pictured below) was recovered at the scene and this was passed onto fishery board staff to see if they could establish its age. It was estimated that the fish has spent 3 years in freshwater before migrating to sea as a smolt before spending a further 3 years at sea before returning to spawn.





Joe Gilchrist also had a memorable fish early morning on 8 May from the tail of the Bridge Pool. Carefully handled and kept in the water, both beauties now heading upstream to LAAC river beats!

PERMIT EXCHANGE: EXPLORE COMPLIMENTARY FISHING ON OTHER WATERS



1. Bala and District Angling Association: www.balaangling.co.uk
2. Beaully Angling Club: www.beaully-angling-club.co.uk
3. Aberdeen & District Angling Association: www.adaa.org.uk
4. Assynt Angling Club: www.assyntangling.co.uk
5. Abernethy & Aviemore Angling Association: www.aavla.co.uk (NB You need to go to Beat of Garten Post Office and pay £30 for a 24 hour permit - beat maps & rules will be issued - friendly helpful staff at the shop and you can buy sandwiches, packed lunch essentials too if you wish!)
6. Dingwall and District Angling Club: www.thedadac.co.uk
7. Wick Angling Association: sport.caithness.org
8. Lairg Angling Club: www.lairg-angling-club.co.uk
9. North Uist Angling Club: www.nuac.co.uk
10. Portree Angling Association: www.Portreeanglingassociation.co.uk
11. Elgin Angling Association: trout-salmon-fishing.com/scotland-river-losse
12. Inverness Angling Club: <https://www.invernessanglingclub.co.uk/>

Note: You do need to plan your use well in advance to use exchange tickets by booking them out via telephone to Contin Filling Station giving the names and membership numbers of any anglers using these exchange tickets.

- All exchange tickets must be returned to the filling station on the day they have been taken out.
- If any member requires to take out an exchange ticket for more than one day permission must be sought from the club chairman via email.
- An exchange ticket can only be used twice in any given week and no more than 3 times in any one season.
- Check with the filling station prior to making plans to ensure that the exchange tickets are available.
- There are no exchange tickets at the filling station for the Portree angling association.
- Check the website for contact details and any Achnaiche member will then be given all Portree AC membership access to their fishings.
- A catch return for the fishing must be submitted immediately after an exchange ticket has been used to - achnaicheangling@gmail.com

Only a few of our members really take advantage of our 12 exchange club permits available to LAAC anglers **Why not use them to and explore new fishing in 2023!**
The web link is here:-

<https://highlandfishing.net/member-benefits/exchange-tickets>

Club member **Joe Barlow** took advantage of our exchange scheme to explore **Assynt AC** and he has written this account below for us of a fantastic trip out west. **Many thanks for this Joe – really great photos.**

“I had a great two days in mid-May exploring some of the trout fishing the hills of Assynt had to offer. I spent two days camping and fishing some of the more remote waters available on the Assynt Angling club exchange ticket. Despite cool windy weather the fishing was fantastic with fish coming to traditional wets and static dry flies. I caught plenty, however was very surprised with the quality and size of fish in some waters. I managed several around the 1.5lb mark, which fought incredibly hard for their size. I also lost a much larger fish that headed straight out for deeper waters before shaking the hook, a good reason to go back!”

Picture 1 - A fin perfect Assynt trout with a spectacular backdrop.

Picture 2 - One of the better fish that had me running up and down the bank thinking I had hooked a much larger fish



MEIG OPEN COMPETITION 2023



It would have been a suitable subject for a **Jet2 Holidays** advert with warm sunny beaches just waiting for beach towels and sun worshipers but instead it was a very hot and challenging Meig Open, our annual interclub competition. Teams of three anglers each, all 8 club boats out on the water from 9am but only eight anglers caught trout and only 20 fish in total – very bright, very warm, at times very windy too. Lewis Ross persevered with his own neatly tied wee Bibios and so proved to be the best angler on the day winning all three trophies with only three fish. A bag of 3 for 3lb 8oz, containing a nice 1lb 10oz fish took top rod and biggest fish and Ally Hunter added a half pounder to give the team best boat prize with 4 fish for 4lb. Graham Hoare had subbed last minute for the usually ever present member of **LAAC Bog Trotters**, Neil MacRitchie, but like 15 other anglers blanked on the day. Everyone was relieved when the weigh in time came – dehydration and heat effects were evident on the lochside. The fish were there for sure but they weren't interested in most of the offerings and took to the depths. Thanks to everyone who took part and travelled far in hot conditions. Particular thanks to Kenny, Chris, David & Robert Ross, and to Ian MacPhail for loads of help prior to the day. The photos tell the tale of a tough day in the hot Strathconon sunshine.



The pontoons were resting on the loch bed and the water temperature was already 19C at 7.30am as we readied the boats for competitors arriving. Below right– a competitor cooling off after a roaster of a day!



LAAC Bogtrotters left, securing the William Bartlett trophy, The Meig Cup and the Strathconon trophy. MacPhail & Co came in 2nd with 2 fish for 2lb by Ian MacPhail. Portree AC and Beaully AC tied for 3 place.



EARLY SCARDROY SUCCESS FOR NEW MEMBERS FROM WALES

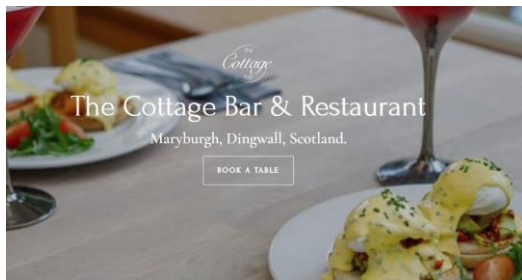
Very pleased to welcome to club membership Lynne & Wayne Richards from Wales. They're very keen anglers and despite clearly not very auspicious conditions in April, the first of our Mediterranean weather periods, they were successful in attracting early wild fish from Scardroy and, over the course of their week, fished all our waters and were delighted with the range and quality of waters that their new membership provides.



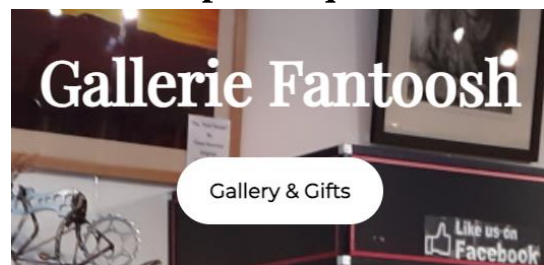
Our club receives support from our community businesses and we commend them to you. Great hospitality at The Cottage Bar & restaurant; knowledgeable and friendly fishing tackle sales at Sports & Model Shop Dingwall and the fascinating shelves of Picaresque Bookshop & Gallerie Fantoosh. Do please use them.



www.sportsandmodelshop.co.uk
www.picaresque.scot



www.thecottagebar.co.uk



JUNIOR SALMON ANGLING 2023

Once again this season, we have a welcome opportunity in August for a junior member to enjoy **salmon fishing and tuition** on the Coul Beats of the Conon. Any junior member who might fancy this in August please get in touch immediately.

If you have enjoyed this newsletter and found it useful, please let us know. Many thanks to all who have taken the time to do this already. Next edition will carry an article on discovering **underwater topography**, and how it could improve your fishing tactics – **Archie Prentice** will be showing us how – and more fishy stories and pictures from around our waters. **Do please remember your contributions in stories and photographs are always very welcome!** Our Club website <https://highlandfishing.net/> our Facebook page and Instagram site are all available to stay up to date with LAAC activities and news. Always email the club at achonachie.angling@gmail.com

Stephen Dowds
LAAC Chairman/ Secretary
JUNE 2023