



The River Dee Brief

February 2010

Billy Connolly gets the salmon fishing season underway

The salmon fishing season on Deeside commenced on 1st February with an opening ceremony attended by over 250 people at the Milton of Crathes. The ceremonial cast was performed by Billy Connolly who also spoke about his connections with the North East and his enthusiasm for fishing.

John Foster from Park Estate presented Jim Coates with the inaugural Park trophy for catching and releasing the largest verified salmon from the river in 2009. The fish, a fine 31 lb specimen, was caught on Park South with the help of Ghillie Charlie Yates.

Pictured right: Billy Connolly addresses guests at the Milton of Crathes



Dee Dram is launched for 2010

The whisky that was chosen, following a blind tasting of a variety of malts by ghillies, anglers and fishery proprietors, is a limited edition of the 12 year old Dalmore from Whyte and Mackay. The Dee Dram was very well received at this year's Opening Ceremony and is perfect for enjoying on the riverbank or sharing with friends.

The Dee Dram is of great importance to the River Dee Trust as a generous contribution from each bottle sold will be given to the Trust. Every pound raised through the Dee Dram can be used to raise another £2-£3 of matched funding to help with the practical restoration of the Dee. Supplies of this malt whisky will be available to purchase from George Strachan of Aboyne and other outlets in Deeside when they receive stocks, as well as online through www.deedram.com.



To book fishing log onto
www.fishdee.co.uk

FishDee News

Rods Available to Let

There are rods available to let for anglers on the River Dee by logging onto www.fishdee.co.uk and by accessing the 'find fishing' page on the menu. We have new beats for this season and we hope that anglers will visit these beats and enjoy some success.

Bookings this year are particularly strong and we would urge anglers to book early to avoid disappointment. The site is constantly updated and recent additions include a page on flies suitable for the Dee and a useful salmon weight: length conversion chart to help estimate the weight of the returned fish.

Conservation Code

The numbers of fish for the Dee as a whole are slowly continuing to recover from the dark days of the early 1990s. This recovery has been helped by anglers throughout the Dee practicing catch and release; in 2009, 98% of salmon (or over 7,000 fish) were returned. Whilst the catches are improving we are not out of the woods yet and in 2010 the Dee DSFB is asking anglers to continue to return all salmon and sea trout, so that they may go on to spawn and aid the stocks recovery. With your support we can look forward to good runs of fish in years to come.

Ian G. Scott, Chairman, Dee DSFB

Interview with Mr Jim Gray, Proprietor of Upper Drum & Lower Durriss Beat Proprietor with innovative youth angling initiative

Jim Gray is a highly respected and eminently successful business man born and bred in the Fraserburgh area. He owns the Upper Drum & Lower Durriss fishing beat on the River Dee as well as the 36,000 acre Altnaharra estate, which encompasses a good portion of the River Naver.

Question: You wrote to the River Dee Board with a proposal that the proprietors of the Dee should consider allowing youngsters to fish free of charge with their parents if they are fishing. What prompted the idea?

Answer: I have been involved in many aspects of sport over the years. I have noticed it is becoming increasingly difficult to encourage young people to take an interest in outdoor sport activities. On my fishing beats I intend allowing one child (under 15) to fish free of charge accompanied by a parent. This, coupled with the River Dee Trust's IntroDee schools programme, should help persuade young people to take up salmon fishing.

Question: Tell me how you would promote this initiative?

Answer: Firstly I feel this initiative should be proposed to all Dee proprietors in the hope that they will support this on their own waters. Secondly I would like to see the two main angling clubs willing to develop their junior sections. I would be prepared to initiate a three year trial to allow up to five junior club members to fish on my water free of charge.

Question: What practical difficulties could the initiative pose?

Answer: Proprietors on opposite banks would have to agree on the practicalities of more rods fishing than previously agreed. Participating Ghillies would have to be fully disclosed through the Disclosure Scotland process.

Question: What do you feel makes Deeside a special destination for prospective visiting anglers?

Answer: The River Dee is a fabulous river set amongst truly spectacular scenery which is loved by all who come to visit Deeside, including the Royal family who are regular residents in Deeside. The river provides wonderful fishing for visiting anglers from February through to the end of season where anglers have a great opportunity to catch a prized salmon. If any of the river proprietors would like to discuss this can they please contact the River Office to arrange this with Mr Gray.

Did You Know? - Facts about River Dee

- Over 7000 salmon and 2000 sea trout were caught and released in 2009
- 2009 was the best rod catch in 20 years for salmon
- 2009 was the best rod catch in 10 years for sea trout
- Spring catches were down, but summer and autumn catches were above the 5 year average
- The Dee Conservation Code is paying dividends, with catches increasing year on year
- Angling supports approximately 500 local jobs and attracts £12 million to the local rural economy

Dee District Salmon Fishery Board & River Dee Trust

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