

Aberdeen and District Angling Association

Honorary President, Alastair H. Hume MBE, 162 North Deeside Road, Milltimber, AB13 OHL



Association News Edition 10 July 2022

First: An Update from ADAA President Paul Adderton:

No sooner have we began experiencing the relief of all COVID 19 restrictions being lifted, enabling us all to get back to some form of normality, than we are now having to endure the burden of a massive hike in prices for our energy requirements.

I am sure you will be well aware of the effect these energy price increases are having on all of us, with the rising cost of everyday items contributing to the current cost of living crisis. Our Association is no different, with these increases impacting on the costs of managing and running our organisation.

Our annual River Board Assessments, albeit contained to some extent during the two COVID pandemic years, have this year been increased considerably to account for this past reduction. River and loch maintenance costs along with our own energy costs such as gas, electricity and diesel for the Land Rover as well as its servicing, have all increased. Even though we enjoy the goodwill of some members volunteering their time, there are exterior contracting services required which are time specific and which must be met. Despite these challenges rest assured I, along with the support of the management committee, am monitoring our costs and at the same time prioritising all expenses we incur, to both maintain and further enhance the angling experience of our members.

Our main source of income is from membership subscriptions; we have a healthy membership of close to 700 members and, despite these hard times, are seeing new members joining. We are now beginning to see the disparity of how our membership is made up with full, complementary, junior, and senior members each paying different membership subscriptions. Perhaps this is something that the members may wish to address in the future at an Annual General Meeting. Fortunately, due to careful management over the years, our general finances are in good order, and we have reserves to call upon should we experience hard times in the future.

We are now in midsummer and for those of us having a staycation and not wishing to spend hours in an airport departure lounge for a delayed flight or wait for one's baggage to be delivered days late at our appointed hotel, there is instead excellent fishing to be had on our rivers and lochs. Only a few days ago at the Home Nations River Fly fishing competition some excellent catches of Brown Trout were made. And what a beauty of a trout was caught by a Welsh competitor, now well documented and which can be seen on our Facebook page. A big fish indeed, but not big enough to win the competition. That was down to the Scottish team led by our very own Richard McHattie. Well done. I attended the competition and watching the experts at work was very much an education to a pure recreational angler such as I. With the cost of petrol, it may restrict the number of outings I take to the river so perhaps I may opt for a lift with a chum and have some company. After all, I will need a witness should I beat the Welshman's fish.

Enjoy the summer and tight lines

Paul.

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1. The Season So Far.

Salmon: We had a better start to the year than that experienced by most other riparian owners on the Don and good water levels and very little in the way of grue resulted in ADAA waters producing, in February, a small fish of 4lbs from the Cruives beat, a sparkling 11 pounder from the Fae me Well pool on Upper Parkhill and two fish of 6lbs and 7lbs (from Lower Parkhill), and, in March, another two fine clean run fish, one of 13lbs from the Manse Pool and another of 10lbs from Upper Parkhill, south (right) bank. Though the sporadic runs of fish in April did not tarry long in our lower river beats, May saw better results, with several salmon in the 7 to 10 lb category taken on Lower Fintray and Lower Parkhill, south (right) bank.

Since then, with water levels dropping back as the all too familiar scenario of low rainfall has exerted its malign influence on our rivers, salmon have been reluctant to run in any numbers, but a few summer fish have been landed on the Cruives and Lower Fintray beats.

As I write this in late June, the Don is already running at 2 inches below summer level, as registered at Parkhill and salmon anglers will perhaps be considering, as we approach July, whether the esoteric knowledge of rain dancing might be gainfully acquired.

Sea Trout: Although overwintering finnock are somewhat less prolific than they were in the past, our Ythan beats of Ardlethen and Methlick, along with our leased beat of Schivas, unfailingly provide early season sport and this spring was no exception, with most taken on trotted worm, although fly also accounted for a few, including specimens weighing up to one and a quarter pounds, excellent sport on light tackle. Occasional finnock were encountered early in the season on our lower Don beats, while on the Dee, some sport was had on the Banchory Devenick and Pots and Fords stretches.

A fresh 2 lb sea trout was landed in April on the Cruives beat and early May saw the first of the main run enter the rivers Dee and Don. Fish to 3lbs on Dee and 4lbs on Don have been reported to date already, giving hope that season 2022 will prove a productive one for this wonderful sporting quarry.

Again, as at late June, additional encouraging news reaches us that the Ythan estuary is currently holding a decent head of sea trout (amazing given that normally the estuary is overrun with seals!). While those sea trout will not all be Ythan fish, it gives us promise of sport on our upstream beats later in the season.

Brown Trout: The wisdom of our brown trout opening day being reverted to the traditional date of March 15th became evident this season as well-conditioned brownies were encountered from the first week onward. As the season has progressed, the Don has, once again, proved itself to be the jewel in the crown of UK wild trout rivers with quality fish being landed all season. Specimens of 4 lbs and upwards have been landed from beats as wide apart as the Cruives and Upper Fintray. Even further upstream, Kemnay and (our new acquisition this year) Pitcaple have also registered some notable catches. To further embellish the river's credentials, elsewhere in this newsletter is a report of a trout in double figures being landed in the Home Nations Competition.

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Our other main rivers, the Dee and the Ythan, though mainly the preserve of sea trout and salmon anglers, also have a population of resident browns which are encountered on occasion, especially when fishing light for sea trout or finnock.

The Stillwaters: Our two stillwaters differ quite markedly from each other, with the Loch of Loirston having the characteristics of a “wild” lowland loch and Millpond being a classic “put and take” fishery. Both are stocked regularly, and both have given good sport to dedicated rainbow trout aficionados, while also featuring occasional brownies and blue trout. Rainbows up to 5lbs have been recorded from both venues

2. The Loch: Stocking Programme and Weed Cutting Schedule

From Kenny Riddell ADAA Vice President / Loirston Loch Convener

Loirston Loch Aquatic Weed Control

On Monday 23rd May the aquatic weed contractor arrived on site at Loirston loch, two boats for two-days, one boat cutting, one boat gathering the cut weeds and landing it ashore.

It didn't get off to a good start as one of the 4 x 4 became stuck in the soft ground at the bottom of the grass landing area and they spent a good few hour trying to get it free.

However, once they were up and running, they made good progress with the weed cutting and it wasn't long before we realised that the weed growth wasn't as bad as it was last year.

They two operators worked on late both days and made quite an impact on the most productive fishing areas, which has opened some good fishing for our members.

I hope that the areas cut this year will allow access throughout the remainder of the season.

The loch has been running very low this year due to low rainfall, it has also been the subject of high winds which keep the water quality low.

We also had an outbreak of Bloom algae in late May early June, which kept anglers away, the water is still running dark brown and will continue to do so until we get some heavy rain.

The fish are still active, and some nice fish have been seen cruising around mopping up any fly life on the surface.

3. Stocking Loirston Loch/Millpond

We have stocked over 500 fish this year to date into Loirston Loch, with the plan for a few more light stockings to keep the fishing fresh. Get out when you can, the fish are there to be caught, you just need to get out.

Millpond has also had a few stockings this year, with a few more still to come. Millpond is 100% C&R so not the number of fish required here, but a nice number of fish just to freshen things up, the catches speak for themselves. Ash has been busy

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fishing out the floating gloo that appears from down under. Just in case you didn't know Ask McKinnon is the new ADAA convener for Millpond and now sits on the ADAA management committee. Ash was also instrumental in installing the Astroturf on all the casting platforms making it a little safer when just the bare wood.

4. Beat Maintenance / Grass Cutting Programme

As this newsletter is published, conveners Nicky Taylor and Lewis Baxter will have completed much of their chemical spraying of giant hogweed (GH) at those of our beats afflicted by this invasive plant. As temperatures have begun to rise and occasional rain has accelerated plant growth, general bank maintenance, including the first grass cutting of the season (in which contractor Scott Lovell is also involved), has commenced. While Nicky, with assistance from Lewis is driving this, additional volunteers are always welcome and any members who can help with these ongoing tasks are asked to contact Paul Toseland (ADAA Secretary). Any equipment required will be supplied.

On this subject, members are reminded that care should be always taken when fishing our waters, most of which are actually truly wild fishings, with varying levels and types of bankside vegetation. Our beats are not, and never have been, cut and maintained to manicured "chalk stream" levels of trim. That is part of what makes our fishing so valued, and I am sure members would not have it any other way. As we have such a great number and variety of beats, there is a set grass cutting programme which must be fairly strictly adhered to over the season. For example, salmon and sea trout do not normally populate our upstream Ythan beats (Methlick, Ardlethen and (currently) Schivas in any numbers until well into August, so grass cutting those areas before then would be pointless.

While every effort is made by all involved in bank maintenance to make access etc to our Don and Dee beats as easy as possible, because of the extent of waters involved (and the vagaries of weather), members should always be aware when moving along river banks or wading that unexpected obstacles can be present.

5. National Competition:

From Kenny Riddell, ADAA Vice President:

2022 River Home International (River Don)

The River Home International finally went ahead on Friday 24th June after nearly 2 years of uncertainty due to COVID-19.

The home teams, Scotland, England, Ireland & Wales descended on the River Don on or around the weekend of 18th/19th June in preparation of the competition day on Friday 24th June.

Team Scotland led by Captain Richard McHattie had been preparing for months in advance, not only on the ADAA Don beats, but on other rivers including the Tummel.

All the competitors were to congregate at the Thainstone House Hotel in Inverurie a few days before the event itself to meet and greet each other, some meeting for the first time, but most meeting some old friends and the "Auld Enemy".

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"Let the battle Commence"

Friday 24th June 2022 08.00am Thainstone House Hotel carpark, all the competitors, controllers awaiting their final instructions from the organisers, a little overwhelming if it's your first time, but looking around I am seeing a lot of familiar faces from all around the country, some very experienced and accomplished anglers.

All the competitors know which beats they are fishing, as the beat draw had taken place the day before, so all the competitors knew what lay in front of them for the next 4 x 90-minute sessions.

Team Scotland got off to a great start in the first two 90-minute sessions, which set them up for the day and the Gold Medal.

235 brown trout caught, and all returned safely to the river, including one of 73.5cms (*JWS - for we traditionalists (old codgers?) - 29 inches in "old money" and equivalent to about 10 lbs+ on the "plump trout" scale – Fit a troot, especially for daytime!*)

Scotland 65 Fish Gold Medal

Wales 55 Fish Silver Medal

Ireland 59 Fish Bronze Medal

England 56 Fish Wooden Spoon

Individual Winner (Ross McKeen) Team Scotland

Largest Fish (Terry Bromwell) Team Wales A Brown Trout on 73.5cms

For the full results, please visit the ADAA website

Congratulation to Scotland Team Manager Dick Logan, Team Captain Richard McHattie and team members Ross McKeen, Mark Straughen, Jim Litster & Martin Stewart

Kenny

6. Junior Members: Recruitment and Update

The longer-term future of our Association and indeed of the sport in general depends very much on inspiring the next generation of anglers to take up the game and, since the low-cost initiative to encourage joining was introduced, there has been steady and gratifying recruitment of new junior members to the Association.

Among members co-opted on to the ADAA Management Committee this year is well-known figure Ash McKinnon and Ash, assisted by other members, has taken on the mantle of mentor to new young members by introducing them to our ADAA waters and to the sport in general. We wish Ash and the others well in this venture.

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"Now pay attention at the back! This is how you do it lads"

7. "New" Beats:

On the Dee: New arrangements for this season mean our members have access to Culter only on Mondays. However, because of the pre-season negotiations we can now also fish the Ardoe and Murtle beats on Mondays. Ardoe and Murtle were, in the past, among the cream of Dee fishings, especially in spring, with a reputation for holding big fish. With a variety of pools and runs, it will be interesting, as the season progresses, to see how our tenure rewards us.

The Kingcausie beat, now available to us throughout the week all season, will be quite well known by longer term members of the Association, as it was once freely available on daily, weekly and season long tickets. Now somewhat changed following the ravages of Storm Frank, it is still a beguiling prospect and has already given us sport, with hopefully more to come once the grilse and later running salmon begin to arrive.

Two views, the first upstream and the second downstream from the pool just before the long run into the Powberry, at the "island" stretch.

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On the Don: The Pitcaple beat, just above the road bridge at Kemnay is a short stretch with several productive looking runs and pools which have already returned good trout to wet fly and nymph, while late evening rises, including to sedge hatches have rewarded dry fly anglers. Some of the runs hold promise of salmon sport also as the season moves on.



An irresistible pool at Pitcaple.

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The acquisition of the fishing lease at Lower Stoneywood gives us another string to our bow and while it will take some time, following several years when the beat was hardly fished, to prepare it to a fully satisfactory level, it has the potential to fish well, for salmon in particular.

8. The Bothy: An Update:

Following problems with graffiti etc at the Bothy, and his subsequent investigation into how this can be alleviated, Bothy Boss Davie has overseen the installation of a CCTV system. This will not only improve general security there, but it will also provide remote warning when flood water threatens the building.

9. The ADAA Competition Scene (dates “updates”)

Regular entrants among our members will already be aware that the competition dates as printed in the “Fishings and Rules” booklet this season were wrong. To clarify, the remaining competition programme is as follows:

John Cameron Trophy: Sunday 24th July 7.00pm -11.00pm: Don Upper Fintry

Simpson Plaque: Sunday 7th August 11.00am-3.00pm: Don Upper Parkhill

Munro Plaque: Sunday 21st August 11.00am-3.00pm: Don Lower Parkhill

Jordan Cup: Sunday 4th September 11.00am-3.00pm: Don Upper Parkhill

Jim and Betty Reynolds Ythan Trophy; Saturday 1st October 9.30am-1.30pm: Ythan Machar Pool

Last Fling Trophy: Saturday 15th October All day: Lake of Menteith

10. The Bob Dey (Ardlethen) Car Park

The car park at our Ardlethen beat, situated adjacent to the confluence of the Ebrie burn with the main river Ythan has, as members will be aware, been renamed the Bob Dey Car Park in honour of our well-respected Past President. Nicky has now installed the commemorative plaque at the location, one of Bob’s favourite beats, where it will be a constant reminder of his unstinting work for the Association.

11. Predators

Where does one start? The problem of fish eating birds is well documented, and the river boards are doing the best they can given the lack of political will on the part of the Scottish Government to do anything very constructive. An initiative was tried this season which involved Dee Board staff and volunteers “shepherding” the smolt run downstream during the crucial migrating period on the Dee. This seemed to have some success as predating goosanders were denied their usual unhindered access to the smolts, although only time will tell if this results in more adults making it back to their home river and that cannot, in any case, be seen as anything other than a “stop gap” measure.

The ongoing proliferation of seals, the other major predator in our area, along with cetacean species such as dolphins and porpoises, continues apace and, again, we anglers find ourselves at odds with the views of the general public. A classic example of this is the development of a dolphin watching facility being established at

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the Torry Battery above the Dee estuary. As we approach the end of June, with continued low water resulting in salmon numbers beginning to build up at Banchory Devenick's Pump House pool a seal has been observed chasing salmon into the shallow water at the head of the pool.

Something needs to be done and pressure on the relevant Ministers to acknowledge the extent of the problem needs to be maintained and increased. Our President, Paul Adderton has been very active in following this up and has met with the Minister concerned. Other members themselves have also written directly to the politicians and we can all play our part by doing the same.

As always, Association members are asked to report any sightings of seals to the contact number in our membership books.

12. Tilbouries Event (June 11th)

Following the success of the Twin Peaks event at Crathes in February, the ADAA, in conjunction with *Cadence Fly Fishing* of the UK and Ireland, held another open day on the Dee at Tilbouries on June 11th, at which Tilbouries ghillie Nicol Paton, along with others, imparted valuable guidance and knowledge to those of our members who attended.

13. Atlantic Salmon in Crisis

Members who attended our EGM earlier this year, held for the first time in what proved to be an eminently suitable venue, Mannofield Cricket Club, will have heard fellow member Sandy Bremner, who is also the chairman of the River Dee Trust give an eloquent and informative presentation on the Trust's work on the river. Lorraine Hawkins, River Dee Director was also in attendance to answer any additional questions asked. Further to that, on Thursday 5th May ADAA President Paul Adderton and I attended a walk and talk event at Ballater, specifically on the River Muick, a major tributary of the Dee. Laurence Ross, Dee Board chairman, Sandy Bremner, and Jane Lilley, Education Officer, also of the Trust, gave a stark appraisal of the problems facing our salmon, while highlighting the extensive measures being taken to mitigate and reverse the decline on the river. We were shown examples on the River Muick of a few of the measures being taken, including riverside tree planting to provide shade for young fish and, a novel and effective approach, installing woody structures (mainly fallen mature trees) in the river bed itself, thus deepening certain streams and runs. The team discovered that this last procedure has benefits even in the short term and their effect on what was previously a stretch of stream with very little cover can be seen in the accompanying photograph.

While most of our own beats are on the Don, which does not suffer quite the same as the Dee does from poor tree cover in the upper catchment and other upland exposure to the effects of long periods of drought, the work taking place on the Dee will have benefits for the species generally.

Additionally, Jane Lilley gave a resume of some of her work with the area's schoolchildren, producing gratifying feedback from pupils, while raising community awareness of the problems.

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Furthermore, the Dee Board and Trust, along with other River organisations and bodies such as the SANA Migratory Fish Committee ensure our interests are not forgotten by those in Government. Recent and ongoing communications from Paul Adderton himself (who has instigated meetings with relevant Government ministers), and from other individual ADAA members have also contributed to keeping our concerns at the forefront.

Attached are relevant documents and comparison photographs of “before and after” the “re-meandering” of the Beltie Burn. This is a classic example of an undertaking to reverse the harmful effect of Victorian era obsession with straightening water courses.



The Beltie Burn: Before and After



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From the Dee Board and Trust:

(1)



The River Dee

The Atlantic Salmon in Crisis

The River Dee is one of the country's most precious rivers with an international designation for its iconic Atlantic salmon, otters and the river's living filters – the freshwater pearl mussels.

Atlantic salmon are on a path to extinction. They are now virtually extinct across southern Europe and are vanishing fast in the south of England. All the major Scottish salmon rivers have seen drastic declines.

In Scotland in the 1960s, the juvenile salmon 'smolts' going to sea had a 40% chance of surviving at sea and returning to the river to spawn. Now, only around 2% make it back.

In our rivers, we are seeing dangerously high temperatures – for example, up to 27.5C recorded on the River Gairn in the upper Dee. Many of our upland streams are completely exposed to sunlight, so heat up quickly in summer.

Fish are already suffering from high temperatures in our upper tributaries. In future, we are likely to see them dying in their home river. And warmer water affects growth, the age and size at which juveniles migrate to sea, influencing their chances of surviving there.

What are we doing to help - Long and Short-term?

Bringing back woodlands

The Dee is particularly vulnerable to climate change because of the historic loss of woodlands which would have provided cooling shade. Scotland once had 70% forest cover, but Upper Deeside now has only 8% woodland cover remaining.

Without trees, our rivers have less shade, nutrients, habitat, flood control, and biodiversity. Trees help our fish survive and thrive.

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On Deeside, the River Dee Trust and Dee District Salmon Fishery Board have a **One Million Trees Campaign** to plant riverbank trees, helping save the Dee and its iconic salmon. We have already planted more than 250,000.

Restoration works

Crafted from windblown trees and anchored into the riverbeds and banks, Large Wood Structures produce completely new spawning areas, provide cover from predators, shelter during high flows, and generate food from trapped nutrients. We have installed 137 of these structures across the upper catchment. Far more will follow.

Small, wooden dams have been created in some of the catchment's smaller streams to help river flows – holding back water in times of flood, and slowly releasing water in times of drought. This is just the start.

Artificial flood banks (levees) have been removed to re-water wetlands and wet woodlands, helping stabilise river flows. We are planning more big projects.

Healthy nutrients

Due to the salmon declines, there are few fish carcasses produced each year and many rivers have become nutrient-poor. On the River Muick, these nutrients are being added by recycling waste from another land use – the lower legs of deer shot on estates as part of the land management.

The Atlantic Salmon

Our Atlantic salmon migrate from Scottish rivers to the northern Atlantic Ocean, some making a 5,000 km journey to Greenland and back.

Salmon in the North Atlantic have declined by nearly two thirds in the last 40 years, from numbers of 10 million fish swimming around in the ocean each year, to just 3.6 million. From every 2000 eggs produced in the Dee only one adult salmon will return to spawn.

The freshwater pearl mussel, which relies on the salmon's gills as a nursery, is dependent on the survival of the Atlantic salmon.

The Atlantic salmon can jump up to 3.5 metres. Despite this, we have had to remove 27 obstructions to migration on the river. This includes the Culter Dam where, in 2014, we were able to see the first salmon to ascend it in 250 years, just days after completion. Another 30 kms of tributaries are about to be opened.

What can YOU do?

Write to your MSPs. The Scottish Government have power over most of our salmon's river challenges, from habitat-restoration to water quality and predation. They must act urgently. See our Call to Action for more details.

Support The River Dee Trust. We are a charity. Please consider making a regular donation - however small - to support our work. <http://www.riverdee.org.uk/living-river>

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THANK YOU!

(2)

SAVING SCOTLAND'S SALMON - A CALL TO ACTION

The Scottish Government has now accepted what river managers have been saying for some time, that our iconic wild salmon are in crisis across their North Atlantic range. ALL rivers are affected. Salmon are dying in huge numbers at sea, for reasons almost certainly related to warming waters. Ministers have a duty to take urgent action in those marine situations where they can make a difference, including effective regulation of the salmon farming industry. And the Scottish Government must act NOW to tackle KNOWN problems in our rivers.

We call on the Government to –

- * Act IMMEDIATELY to deliver the commitments in its Wild Salmon Strategy.
- * Move NOW to provide the resources and incentives to ensure protection of Scotland's water quality, giving salmon and all biodiversity the cold, clean water they need.
- * Deliver WITHOUT DELAY on the pledge to review policy on fish-eating birds to protect a nationally-important species in crisis.
- * SPEED UP delivery of effective methods to discourage those specialist seals killing salmon and threatening jobs in Scotland's rivers.
- * WITHOUT DELAY, fund habitat-restoration work at scale, giving our young fish the best IMMEDIATE and long-term help to survive challenges at sea. Biodiversity and the whole environment gains.
- * Reform URGENTLY the Forestry Grants Scheme, encouraging riverside planting to counter the lethal impacts of climate change.

14. ADAA 75th Anniversary Celebration:

Progress Report

From Entertainment Committee member Ken Beaton:

Ladies and gentlemen, as you will no doubt be aware, the Association is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. To commemorate this significant milestone, we will be holding a gala dinner at Aberdeen Beach Ballroom on Saturday 19th November. The event is not only open to members and partners, therefore, if you wish to attend and take some friends along then they will also be more than welcome.

The evening will commence at 6:45pm with welcome drinks, followed by dinner at 7:45 and will close at 12:45am. We are in the process of finalising a band who will perform a couple of sets with a short break in the middle for raffle and coffee break. Further details will follow on the prizes for the raffle, with one special prize being something to be cherished by the lucky winner. During the evening, we will be

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showing some highlights from the past on a rolling loop, so if you have any memories such as photographs that you would like to share, let us know. They would be very welcome for inclusion.

In due course we will be sending out an e-mail with further details on plans for the evening, including information on ticket price, meal choices, how you can book your place and advise on dietary requirements. Tables will likely be set up in groups of either 8, 10 or 12. If you have any fishing buddies you would like to be sitting with let us know and we will look to place you at the same table. All the details when finalised will also be posted on our members Facebook Group.

Save the date, get your best bib and tucker looked out, prime your husbands, wives, partners, book the baby-sitters and come along and enjoy what should be a memorable evening where afterwards not only will the tales be told of the one that got away, but also of the night the ADAA celebrated being 75 years old.

Ken

15. In Conclusion

When one looks at the range of fishing available to our members It would come as no surprise to learn that the ADAA is the envy of angling clubs and associations the length and breadth of the UK. In this, our 75th year, we have much to be proud of, successive administrations, including the current one, having built up this impressive portfolio of fishings we now own or lease.

Let's go fishing! Tight lines to all our members.

John W Stephen, Dyce