

## Introduction from Editor

Fellow members, we reach that time in the calendar, at the turn of the year, when we



may (or may not) wish to reflect on the season past, while dreaming of (hopefully) halcyon days by the river in the forthcoming year. 2023 was, once again, bedevilled by drought for a sizeable part

of the early summer, again bringing concern for the survival, of our salmon especially, as they cowered in shrinking and warming pools. Temporary restrictions on angling had to be introduced in many areas and our members were overwhelmingly understanding of the need for these.

Paradoxically of course, the elements conspired to make the end of our migratory fish season a "washout" in many cases, the deluge continuing unabated at times and resulting in the Dee and Don being unfishable on a number of days. We do of course, fortunately have our Ythan beats to fall back on when such conditions prevail, although even this spate friendly river was uncomfortably full at season's end. See the attached photograph of swans frolicking happily, in celebration of a watery world, in their newly created "Loch Schivas" on one of the last few days of the season.



The river though, was still fishable, providing one remembered where it was and opted to utilise chest waders!

**On a more general note**, our Association does not of course, run itself, and is reliant on Committee Members (who do not, in the great majority of cases, receive any reimbursement) giving up their free time to attend meetings, deal with problems as they arise and put in the physical hard graft required at times. We are fortunate to have working for us committee members who have, as modern jargon would state, skills to bring to the table. Their input is invaluable in helping to keep the Association at the forefront of angling clubs nationwide. The contribution made by them will, in many cases, be evident in this and future newsletters.

**John W Stephen (JWS)**



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## President's Remarks



The year 2023 welcomed our Association with a flood, no not by a rising river I hear you ask, though that came soon after. The sudden and very sharp cold spell we experienced at Christmas was too much for our Bothy on Riverside Drive to cope with. We had a burst pipe, and to make matters worse the said pipe to burst had to be above the ceiling in the Committee Room. Consequently, all escaping water poured out across the ceiling eventually bringing it crashing down to the floor and over all the fittings furnishings in the room. The walls decorated with many archive photographs and press cuttings, recording our Associations historic past, they too were also ruined. But why did this happen, after all the central heating system was fully lagged and there was a frost alert in operation for the boiler? The problem or the culprit concerned turned out to be **Mus Musculus**, or better known to us all, as the House Mouse. Apparently, on inspection there were areas that some of the cladding insulating the pipes that had been eaten or damaged by mice. To make matters worse, as we managed to get on top of all the damage and clear away most of the mess into a corner of the room ready for disposal flood two came. This time though not from above but by below, as the river Dee once again rose and flooded all the rooms in the Bothy early in the New Year. Fortunately, we are insured for the burst pipes, and I am pleased to report that the heating system and the ceiling has now been repaired, though it did take some time have to let the room dry out. Also, the committee room as been decorated to look like as it was previously. We are now sorting out our archive material and what has been assessed and salvaged and deemed suitable will soon be displayed on the

walls once more.

Our changing climate and the effect this is having on the river giving the Bothy flooding on a regular basis, this you may recall I have previously brought to your attention; it is now surely time to act to prevent further damage. That said, we are now seeking to arrange flood barrier doors for the Bothy that can be fixed when a flood alert is given for the river. Meetings with suitable suppliers have taken place and following their advice the committee has agreed that these flood barriers will be available for use in early January. It is hoped that this will mitigate the Bothy from future flooding by the river.

I am pleased to report that after successful negotiations with Aberdeen City Council, the Association has now secured a land lease for the Bothy for another 25 years. Furthermore, we have increased the footprint size of the land the Bothy sits on giving us outside space. We also have permission to erect signs on the exterior of the building that both advertises and promotes our Association. We now have security of tenure and look forward to utilising the Bothy even more for our members in the future.

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## Promoting the Association

It has been a busy year for the Development Sub Committee promoting the Association to the wider community with a view of attracting new members. I must give special mention to Ash McKinnon who has given up many of his Saturdays taking the Association trade



stand to country Shows and farmers markets. With an excellent display of photographs showing some of our fishing beats together with information handouts attracted lots of attention, so much so that we now have over 100 junior members. This most welcomed statistic is a must for the Association to act upon!

Robert Paterson along with John Stephen has produced three excellent videos promoting the Association's fishings. They are now live on YouTube and other viewing platforms for all to see. To date feedback has been very positive and will be an ongoing promotion for the Association:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCY-gJUm3U5-IFbiITNwppA>

Obtaining additional fishings has always been top of the agenda for the Association and we are very pleased to have secured a two-year lease on the Middle Drum Beat of the river Dee. Although the beat had been lightly fished over recent years, I, like most of you, were eagerly anticipating an excellent annual catch given that the beat opposite, Tilbouries, had landed 168 salmon the season before. However, that was not to be as our catch was a little disappointing, though I did see a very lucky member catch three, one after the other salmon one morning in September. Let's hope for better luck this year.

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## Competition News

As well as our successful senior angling competitions held throughout the season, our recently formed junior competition, held at the Millpond, has done even better than last year. It is becoming very much a family outing giving the opportunity for those non-fishers to have a go. I am pleased to report that this event will take place next year and we are very pleased that the Ardoe House Hotel and Spa will continue to sponsor it. Following the first junior salmon fishing day held at the Middle Drum Beat on the Dee in September which was well attended, we are planning to have a similar event for juniors this time to be held on a Saturday at the Kingcausie beat on the Dee. At this event our juniors will have the opportunity to spin for salmon as well as fly fish.

### General News

It was unfortunate, given the hot and dry summer, that we had to take the decision to close all Association fishing activity on our fisheries. This decision not taken lightly, was

on the recommendation of marine scientists taking into consideration fish welfare. Whereas we all welcome a hot summer, hopefully this closure is just a one-off occasion. Given that it was only for a few days, this did not incur too much disappointment for members.

One of the many advantages the Association has to offer is the diversity of fishings available to members. Given the time of year, whatever the weather, water conditions, whether high or low there is always somewhere to wet a line on our fishing's. Looking at our catches all our beats produced fish, some better than others. However, salmon catches are still on the decline and as many of you now know, salmon are becoming an endangered species. This decline is not just on our beats, or on our rivers or even here in Scotland. The decline is being seen across all the northern Atlantic. There is much debate as to the cause and lots of action to address this decline in our rivers. The Association has representatives on the three River Boards here in the northeast, and who are in strong support of their actions to improve both habitat and fish stocks.

Though salmon catches are low we must take pride in our trout fishing. We are fortunate to have some of the best brown trout fishing available and with much of it as one member once told me, "At the bottom of my road....." And as well as our wild trout fishing's our still waters have done much better this year especially the Loch of Lirston. November and December despite the weather have delivered some excellent baskets for those few hardy members who venture out either to cast a fly or throw out a worm. Let's hope this continues.

### *Finally...*

No Association is a success without the time and dedication that is afforded by the people who manage it - your Committee. I am extremely grateful for all their time and support that they have given me this year. We are a bonded team, working collectively for the Association that gives us so much enjoyment. That said, there is more to be done and call out to you to come and join us, you will be most welcome. Think about it.

A new season is before us, and I am sure there will be many of you already winding a new line on a new reel given as a Christmas present or tying some new flies to add to your collection. Come February for Salmon or March for the trout, whatever you fish for and wherever that may be, may I wish you every success and tight lines.

**Paul Adderton**

# Riverfly Monitoring

**Gerry Hough**

**riverflyonthedon@gmail.com**

"The Riverfly Monitoring Group has now established three monitoring sites on ADAA water - all on Lower Parkhill. These are Lower Aryburn Pool, Mausoleum Pool, and House Pool (below Parkhill Bridge). We have sampled on Lower Parkhill every month since June and attendance from volunteers has been excellent. We have also had some decent informal engagement with the public. People passing by have been interested in and very supportive of what we are doing. (When chatting to the public, we always mention that the programme is led by the Association.)



We have also had success establishing two further sites on Inverurie Association water, with the key support of ADAA member and IDAA secretary Fred Hay. We are also about to establish a third site above Inverurie with the help of another member of the sampling team, Mike Maughan.

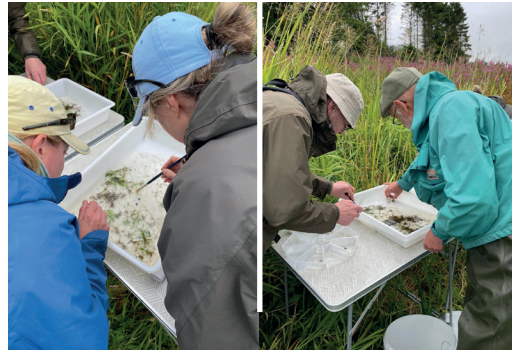
So far, we have carried out 15 individual site samples - 11 on Lower Parkhill and 4 at Inverurie. It is early days, and we are still learning how to sample. As we have progressed through the summer, we have gained confidence in distinguishing between the different bugs (though we are still learning), we improved our record keeping/data collection, and we investigated a few reports of spillages in the water and ensured they have been reported to SEPA.

It will take us a while to build up a picture of the state of bug life in the river - but so far, we

have seen what seem to be decent numbers of caddis (cased and caseless), olives and shrimp. We have also seen a small but steady presence of stonefly - which is encouraging, as they are particularly sensitive to pollution. Numbers of blue winged olive and heptageniidae (flat bodied mayfly) nymphs are lower than those of olive nymphs. We don't really know yet why that is.

Next steps include:

- the continuation of sampling through the winter - though this has proved challenging in October and November given high water levels.



- the expansion of the monitoring scheme to other ADAA sites in the Spring - e.g., Kemney, Cruives.

- beginning to explore further sampling and restoration opportunities for ADAA water and further up the Don."





## Season 2023 Summary

### Catch Report from Murray Hourston

As I write the salmon are on their spawning redds and I expect the trout too, in their more subtle way, are about their business in the burns and tributaries. The first snow has fallen in Aberdeen yet there are some good catches still being made on our rainbow fisheries, both of which were stocked in October, and it seems premature to speak of the season as being over.



For the majority though, it is over and it has been at best a very mixed season with regards to catches.

Our Dee catches are well down on last year although comparable with 2021, and it is worth remembering how dry last year was, which certainly favoured our lower beats. Thankfully we have the lease of Middle Drum next year as it proved to be our most productive beat. The Feugh too, was a happy hunting ground for some as water levels rose towards the end of the season. The main run of grilse probably held off entering the Dee during the heat wave in June and whilst the Pumphouse fished well for a few weeks from the middle of July to early August, they were soon off up the river. Totals for the Dee were, 29 salmon, 53 grilse, 43 sea trout, 48 finnock and 48 brown trout.

The Don fared better, and for the second year in a row we recorded the first salmon off the river, a 6lb fish for Bill Wright on the 13th from Upper Parkhill. The fish was quickly returned without a picture and was ineligible to claim the traditional trophy, [not that Bill seemed too worried]. Kemnay predictably fared best in the higher water at the start of the season, the week of 13th to 19th March saw 7 salmon reported, mostly from Kemnay. The brown trout began well enough with the earlier start of 15th March again seeing plenty of anglers out and more than a few fish caught. We had to wait until April for trout catches to really take off though, with 66 fish of up to 3bs, caught in the 2 weeks from 27th March to 9th April. The Don had a wee run of sea trout towards the end of June which quickly petered out, but grilse continued to trickle in as did some

salmon throughout the summer. September saw waters begin to rise again and catches of all species began to improve. There were a few fresh fish caught, but we are not seeing anything like the autumn runs of old. Totals for the Don were, 74 salmon, 24 grilse, 47 sea trout, 13 finnock and 388 brown trout, [best trout 6lbs].

The Ythan season kicked off as usual with a few hardy souls braving the February frosts to worm for finnock. Some were quite successful, during the week of 27th February to 5th March 12 were caught and reported to be of a good weight. The end of the season however saw the cream of the Ythan fishing and with the water often overtopping the banks, anglers who gingerly made their way towards where the river used to be, were well rewarded. During the week of 23rd to 29th October 5 salmon, 3 grilse, 14 sea trout and 40 finnock were reported. The Ythan also produced two of our best salmon of the season, a 20 pounder from Ardlethen and one estimated at 25lbs from Shivas, with its captor playing the fish well into the dark. Totals for the Ythan are 22 salmon, 11 grilse, 61 sea trout and 162 finnock.

Our rainbow fisheries were regularly fished and Loirston was more popular than last year. The loch was stocked twice this year as was Millpond, although the pond also received a small additional stocking before what I understand was a very successful junior competition. Clearly the amount of stock needed for these waters to fish is vastly different and anglers at both did well to produce relatively consistent results. Both venues also weeded up very badly in the summer but at Millpond it was still possible to tempt the odd fish on a dry fly. These venues are now fishing well again. The totals for the season, up to 29th November are 1,122 from Millpond and 567 from Loirston. Both contain excellent hard fighting trout with quite a few over 5lbs and the best reported at 8lbs.

Tight lines for 2024.

### Murray Hourston

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A postscript to Murray's comprehensive catch summary:

### Winter fishing

*(See also Kenny's summary below)*

While conditions over the colder months can be challenging, even in this era of comparatively mild winters, there will always be some days when we might be tempted to wet a line

and, as ADAA members, we are fortunate to have almost unlimited access all year to our 2 stillwater fisheries (Millpond is closed on Christmas Day) and stocking convener Kenny Riddell has ensured these venues have good populations of quality fish.

Following recent prolonged spells of rain, the level of the Loch of Loirston in particular is higher than most of us have seen for many years (see attached photograph) and rainbows have been tempted on both fly and worm tackle. From November to March all members can fish worm and this gives us an alternative string to our bows when casting a fly into the teeth of a typical north-east gale may be somewhat daunting.

I recently accompanied one of my grandsons, a very enthusiastic junior member, on an outing to Loirston recently. Despite personally also trying the worm, while I remained fishless, young Hamish connected with at least 2 hard fighting rainbows, one of 3 pounds which he landed and retained (he wanted his Mum and Dad (also an ADAA member) to see it!). I have to report that, cooked in butter, salt, pepper and paprika, the fillets from that fish provided me with a few excellent suppers!



**JWS**

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## Beat Specific Remarks:

Kemnay and Pitcaple Beat Summary 2023.

Following the now regular winter flooding in the North-East of Scotland, there was some concern as to the impact this may have had on the beats' bankside and pools. Fortunately, there was very little damage to the fishings with only some minor bank erosion observed in places. The neck of the upper Chapel pool has deepened significantly, however due gravel movement which hopefully will encourage more fish to pause here. The only real casualty of the flooding was the riverbank footpath through Kemnay village which was washed out in places.

The Kemnay and Pitcaple fishings got off to a great start to the season. Good water heights in the middle of March brought an early run of spring salmon into the beat and 5 fish were landed. A few more were caught during April and May resulting in the total number of springers landed to 9, this compared favourably with many of the more prestigious Dee spring fishing beats. Low water in the summer limited further runs of migratory fish with only the odd one being landed. With the first of the Autumn storms and the resultant big water, reasonable numbers of salmon were caught from mid-September through to mid-October. Matt Will had a couple of red-letter days on the beat landing 6 salmon over two days fishing. A total of 27 salmon/grilse were caught from the Kemnay and Pitcaple beats, this compares to 33 in 2022. The biggest change in catches was the Pitcaple returns where salmon numbers were down from 8 fish last year to only one this year. I suspect this is primarily due to the high water that occurred in the spring and autumn which tends to concentrate the fish in Kemnay's slower pools resulting in fewer rods fishing Pitcaple. Also losing the last 10 days of the fishing season due to major flooding prevented any late surge in numbers.

Trout fishing at Kemnay/Pitcaple started really well with some prolific hatches of March browns and Dark Olives bringing the trout on the feed usually around early afternoon. Some fine catches of trout in the 1-3lb range were landed on a mixture of dry flies and spiders. On one spring day, I walked the entire beat looking for rising trout with virtually nothing to show for my efforts, however around 2pm a big hatch of March Brown flies occurred, with so many fish rising in the previous "empty" pools that it was difficult to target an individual fish as my dry fly was taken as soon as it landed on the surface. All too quickly

however the surface feeding frenzy was over, and the trout disappeared again to focus their efforts elsewhere. Low water over the summer curtailed sport and there were very few anglers on the beat until temperatures started to drop off in early September, when again the trout seemed more willing to come to the fly. Every year at the back end, and this year was no exception, some very large trout in the 3-5lb range are caught from the Kemnay beats either as a by-catch while salmon fishing or by the more specialist trout anglers who target these fish with large streamer flies.

All in all, this was a good trout season on the Kemnay beat, and with a reasonable run of early running spring salmon, this should give us some confidence that these precious early running fish made it to the headwaters to complete their lifecycle.

### **Rob Paterson, Convener**

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#### **Loirston Loch 2023**

The winters here in the North-east are becoming very mild these days and this is encouraging members to venture out during the short winter days. The loch has fished reasonably well during our rivers closed season with some



good rainbow catches by those members who took advantage of the milder conditions.

The Loch is open all year round, but from November through March, worming is allowed by all members of the Association using barbless, or debarred hooks.

The loch was stocked very early in April with the usual West Mill class A rainbows, with a few Blues mixed through them which provided good sport for members looking to blow off the winter blues (pardon the pun)

The loch water level was kept at a decent height in 2023 which helped keep the weeds from appearing too early, but it was inevitable the weed was going to appear sooner or later. We had a plan to spray the weed with a new and approved chemical, but due to the theft of the ADAA outboard from the container at the loch, we didn't get the chance to carry out the work, but we hope to do this work in 2024.

Overall, the loch produced some great sport

with some fish 6lbs plus being recorded and some memorable days for some members.

The loch was also stocked in early November 2023, which again offers ADAA members the opportunity to get out during the winter months.

It's also worth mentioning that there is additional parking at the West side of the loch at the Farm Side through the locked gate which you can access with the ADAA padlock, with the number in your diary.

The Committee are looking for an Assistant Convener for Loirston Loch, so if you are interested, please contact the Secretary [secretary@adaasales.co.uk](mailto:secretary@adaasales.co.uk) with your details.

Tight Lines

### **Kenny Riddell**

#### **Spotlight!**

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This is a new feature in our newsletters, highlighting the backgrounds of some of our members and how they came to be fellow ADAA "brothers of the angle."

Our peerless Honorary President Alastair Hume has already featured in an edition some time back, in which he imparted his unrivalled knowledge of the birth of the Association and the sport generally in the north-east of Scotland and further afield.

There is then, only one person who should follow immediately in Alastair's footsteps, a man whose tenure, assisted along the way by stalwarts of the Committee both long term and recent, and especially by Vice President Kenny Riddell, Secretary Paul Toseland and Alastair's own wise counsel, has been, for the Association, nothing short of transformative.



I give you therefore, in his own words, our President, pictured here on a stalking day with his much loved, now sadly passed spaniel, Pluto, together perfectly demonstrating the closeness of man and dog.

### **Paul Adderton**

Our prestigious Newsletter Editor and my good friend John Stephen, who never shies away from the offer of a brace of pheasants or a haunch of venison, decided at the December Committee meeting to include short biographies of the life and times of Committee members to be included in future newsletters. And who better to kick off this new editorial piece says he, than me, the current President..... So here goes it. If asked when I started fishing, I couldn't say exactly, probably when I was at primary school, though now in my early seventies I consider myself more than just an angler and very much an all-round field sportsman as I shoot and stalk deer too.

I recall at the age of eleven I moved up to the big school, a new all-boys school built in the late fifties and arguably one of the first schools of its type in Nottingham. Being modern it was well equipped with the science block having a collection of animals that either crawled, bit, stung, nibbled, flew, swam, or hopped. It was like a mini zoo, and I think half the school received tetanus jags each year. And as for its location, fields and hedgerows and being adjacent to Fairham Brook, a tributary of the river Trent the small pools had endless shoals of roach and dace to fish for after school. Although we were now into the so-called swinging sixties with Beatle mania haircuts, the wearing of flared trousers, mods and rockers, the school maintained strict discipline in both behaviour and dress code. School uniform was mandatory, and yes, there was the cane too. Though I, even though no angel at school, was never on the receiving end of it. I had many a happy time there as the school was very progressive with all the different societies to be involved with. I was at Fairham school for just over six years leaving at seventeen before sitting my A levels. This caused much disappointment to my family as I had hoped to train to become a pilot, and for that I needed my A levels.

When in my fifth and sixth year I had a part time job at the Theatre Royal in Nottingham, mainly during the school holidays and occasionally working on the odd show during term time as well. The type of work was menial at first, just fetching and carrying. However, it was not long before I was allowed to operate the spotlights from high up in the gallery and to setting

the lighting at the side of the stage. Working alongside all these actors, singers and dancers and film stars was a fantastic experience for a teenager. My extended family were very much connected with the theatre which gave me the opening to what must have set me off on my new chosen career in the theatre. As far as a part time job was concerned, it certainly was one up on my school chums who either had a paper round or were working in a shop on a Saturday morning.

Part time work in the theatre was very much a diversion from my studies. I was beginning to fall behind and this persuaded me to come to the decision to leave school before taking my finals. One could say the so-called "Smell of the grease paint" and the "Roar of the Crowd" was just too much for me to resist. So not so much as "An actors' life for me" but to find my way in the theatre.....

And so, it was to be. I was fortunate to start as a junior with just having five O Levels on lighting at the Theatre Royal Nottingham, starting at the bottom, but who knows what the future held?

The hours were long and there were few weekends off given that there was a turnaround of a new show each weekend. The Nottingham Royal was an "A List" theatre, where all the big touring shows came. There were plays that starred Sir Alec Guinness, John Neville, Spike Milligan and Joan Plowright. The first big musical I worked on, even when still at school, was "My Fair Lady" straight out of London's West End. Then there were the musicals "Camelot", "Fiddler on the Roof", "Oliver", the rock musical "Hair" and many more. As well as the big west end musicals that came to Nottingham the opera companies toured us too. Sadlers Wells Opera, who staged "Madam Butterfly", the very first opera I saw and worked on. This was what awakened my interest in opera, which I still enjoy today. There was the Glyndebourne Touring Opera along with Gilbert and Sullivan with their light operettas. Who hasn't seen a version of their "Mikado".....?

Tchaikovsky's famous Swan Lake and Coppelia staged by the Royal Ballet company also came to the theatre as did the "Nutcracker Suite" staged by London's Festival Ballet.

Come Christmas there were the Pantomimes, with the old favourites such as Mike and Bernie Winters in Cinderella, Puss in Boots and Arther Askey in Aladdin..... And I can honestly say, I never want to hear the saying "It's behind You....." and or "Oh yes, it is ...or "Oh no it isn't...." ever again.....! However, no pantomime would be the same without these recurring and amusing lines. Audiences loved



them, especially the children. Working on these shows was a joy and I could not believe I was getting paid for it too.

On some Sundays we used to put on a 5 o'clock and 8 o'clock Concerts. This was the time of the swinging sixties and bands such as "The Who", "Dave Clark Five" and "The Mersy Beats" included the Nottingham Royal on their tour dates. And as you can imagine, I then had lots of friends requesting free tickets for these shows.

Life was all fun and exciting then, but I realised if I wanted to make a career in this sort of show business, I needed to improve upon my education and achieve some formal qualifications. At this time the late 60s, we were experiencing a time of change in the theatre. There were not that many plays or shows going on tour to the provinces as in the past. Sad to say theatres were either closing to make way for multi-story car parks or turning into Bingo Halls. The Theatre Royal closed for the Summer for extensive alterations, and during this period I was sent to cover holiday relief at the Victoria Palace in London, my time in the London's West End perhaps.....? The show for that summer was The Bachelors Show with Dick Emery and Freddie "Parrot Face" Davies. Although it was another great experience and bearing in mind the changes, I was becoming a little anxious as for my future and would be looking for change come the end of summer.

I was fortunate now, working for a theatre supply company in Nottingham that, given my theatre experience, sponsored me on block release for two years to attend college on an electrical engineering course linked to theatre operations. It was back to the classroom once more, though not all the time as work took me to certain theatres and drama workshops in the East Midlands which was good experience. Anyway, it gave me a little more time for fishing and shooting. However, although I was doing well, passing my exams in the first year and all was looking good for the future, I did miss the buzz of the live theatre. It was during one particular class at college with a lesson on "Young's Modulus of elasticity" boring to say the least, it just about blew my mind with the boredom, and probably anyone else who is familiar with this engineering phenomenon. (I'm sure when reading the next paragraph you will agree I made the right decision.....) One of the Secretaries came in the classroom room and handed me a note, via the lecturer, from someone I knew, a Production Manager, who I met when I was at the Victoria Palace, asking me if I wanted to join the tour of the Black and White Minstrel Show as their sound and

lighting technician.....

I think you would agree, no hesitation needed. Decision made and within two weeks I joined the show at the Grand Theatre Leeds.

It was certainly back to the roar of the crowd and the smell of the grease paint; I could not have been happier. More to the point it was here that I met my wife to be, Babs, one of the TV Toppers and just out of ballet school who joined the show a few weeks earlier. The tour was already in its second year with this cast and we visited theatres in Newcastle, Norwich, and the three principal theatres in Scotland. With it being an A list show we were invited to many civil receptions during the afternoons and on Sunday evenings the Mitchell Singers joined the church choirs for evening song. Our summer season at Scarborough was to me a working holiday as we only had two shows to put on in the evening and with the occasional tidy up work to do some mornings, I had plenty of time off. I was either on the beach during the day or sometimes, given the opportunity, fishing for cod and mackerel out at sea on a boat. It was the only time Babs caught more fish than me when she occasionally joined me. Some Sundays the cast, including me, played cricket with local teams. I even had the opportunity of a few flying lessons too. Halcyon days indeed.

When on tour in Scotland I made acquaintance with some technical managers at STV who gave me some advice on the way to approach a career change from theatre lighting to TV lighting and film camera operation, as there was some similarity between them.

Anyway, to cut a long story short, at 26 I was now married with two very small children and working at STV in Glasgow as a Film camera assistant. I considered myself very fortunate to land this position as then, in the 1970s there were just three TV companies, BBC 1, BBC2 and ITV. So, as you can see it was very competitive to get on the career ladder in TV and especially in programming. Although I was familiar with musicals and drama from my theatre days, television introduced me to working on documentaries, sport and news and current affairs programmes. Working on factual and documentary productions I really enjoyed as they took me out and about all over Scotland. My favourite programme to be assigned to was "Weir's Way" where the series took me filming all over Scotland. This was a great education to me as I got to know quite a bit about Scotland and its natural and cultural heritage. I got on very well with Tom and I was very pleased, when, a few years later, after becoming a Producer Director at Grampian

Television, I produced what was perhaps to be his last programme for television. We made the programme in Torridon and the surrounding area and Loch Maree. This was Tom's favourite spot in Scotland. The programme was called "Walking Back to Happiness", quite fitting I thought.

Furthering my career in Television brought me to Aberdeen and Grampian TV where I rose to the dizzy heights of producer director. For this there was quite a bit of intense training attending courses at the BBC college at Evesham, and at the National Film and Television School. The latter proved to be quite expensive as each trainee was allocated a set time of a fully crewed up TV studio along with a cast to produce a programme. Then there was the same for a short location production. Preparation was essential to make the programme a success.

Whilst at Grampian, as part of my development, I was fortunate to visit TV and film studios in other countries. Hong Kong, Singapore, and Japan, as well as Hollywood in the US, with its world-famous studios. Tokyo was mind blowing, especially witnessing the size of their TV studios and related technologies. Whilst there we were entertained for traditional dinner in a high-class restaurant with the head of NHK, their BBC equivalent. We all sat cross legged round a table some eighteen inches high off the ground. Try sitting like that for two hours and drinking saki and Sapporo beer .....? And then standing up to go to the loo, I won't say what the Geisha girls did to assist in this area.....? Whilst in Japan I visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki travelling on the Bullet train. All the way there, I was surprised I saw no one fishing the rivers as the train passed by.

One of the first things I did when I moved to Aberdeen was to join the Aberdeen and District Angling Association. I couldn't believe it when there was a waiting list. But it was only for a few short weeks before my name came up the list. And here I am, a member of over forty years. Also, a long-time committee member and now the President gladly representing the Association on the Dee, Don and Ythan river boards.

A couple of programmes I produced that gave me immense pleasure at Grampian was County Matters presented at first by Arlene Stuart who has now moved to the BBC and presenting Landward, and later by Vanessa Collingridge. The production of six programmes ran for a series of five years travelling all over Scotland and the outer Isles. The other was a programme on the river Dee, titled from source to sea and featured some well kent favourites of Deeside,

such as the late Jimmy Oswald from Glen Tanar and Willie Forbes from Mar Lodge. I spent twenty happy years at Grampian Television and made many friends.

Come the new millennium and the new digital age, with ever more TV channels to choose from, ITV was experiencing the same sort of renaissance that theatres went through some forty years earlier. Television companies either merged or were taken over. Here in Scotland STV and Grampian merged initiating many staff changes. All producers and directors were made redundant and re-employed on short contracts and on a programme only basis. To me this was a sign to move on. I was now 50 and after a year as a freelance director I moved back to the classroom once more. But this time not as a student but as a lecturer in Media and TV production at Aberdeen College after gaining a teaching qualification in Higher Education from Aberdeen University. It was quite a humbling experience at first as I now stood in front of about twelve students in their late teens. The future TV camera operators, sound recordists and would be Producers. This is how I must have looked forty years ago. I was so pleased to put something back and help the next generation.

Somehow, life keeps going round in circles.....  
Tight lines

**Paul**

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## General

### a. The Competition Scene

#### How do Association Competitions work

The Association run several competitions & away days during the season, some competitions are on rivers and some on lochs/stillwaters; all competitions are **Fly Only** and fished under SANACC competition rules. They are open to any Association Senior member who wishes to take part.

Association Competitions have two categories.  
**Senior Club Championship & Trophy Winners**

All Association Competitions are Catch & Release.

#### Senior Club Championship

Association members can compete over the season for "Club Championship Points." These will, at the end of the competition season, determine who will go forward to

represent the Association at the SANACC River Championships in the following year. There are 3 places available 1st 2nd & 3rd and at the end of the competition season the angler who has accumulated the most points is crowned "Association Senior Club Champion" and is awarded the Association Senior Club Championship Trophy at the Association AGM. There are also further opportunities for up to six places, who then qualify, if available, to go forward and represent the Association at the SANACC Loch style Championships and SANACC Three-man team Lochs Championships. Points awarded are 1st place 8 points, 2nd place 6 points 3rd place 4 Points, you are awarded 2 points if you catch a fish, but don't win a place & 1 point for entering.

### Trophy Winners

Association members who have no real interest in competing for club championship points are competing for the Trophy and the gift voucher. These is also placed 1st 2nd & 3rd at competitions, with gift vouchers for all three, the winner in this category wins the trophy for this event. The Trophy winners are not competing against those anglers who are competing for Club Championship points, but the two competitions run side by side.

### How do these competitions work?

Association competition dates are in your annual Rules and Fishings Leaflet and are further advertised on the Association Website and Closed Facebook page one week prior to the event, giving the venue, meeting place and time. Competitors would normally check-in to the official on duty about an hour before the start time of the competition. All competitors are issued with a plastic gutter measure to measure any fish they catch, each measure has a measuring strip fixed to the gutter with measurement makes just like a tape measure, when the competitor catches a fish which meets the minimum size which is 8" in SANACC International Rules minimum size, they would place the fish into the measure, take a photo of the fish to record the size, this is then shown to the official at the end of the competition as proof of fish caught. The camera or phone must be date and time stamped to be valid. All the competitors set off at the same time and must be back at the official meeting place by the advertised competition end time. No exception to the rule. All competitors must have a Camera or mobile

phone with camera, it should have the facility to time & date stamp photos. Everything will be explained and shown to you by the official on the day. Competitions can be fun, they can be a place to meet new member and like-minded anglers, a place to learn new skill and technics and a pathway to represent Scotland at International level. Look out for the competition dates in your Leaflet, come along, you will be made most welcome.

### Kenny Riddell

(A noteworthy end to last season's Association competition programme is that, after 15 years of trying, a keen competition angler has, for the first time, won the Association's top honour. To achieve that in competition with some of Scotland's (and the UK's) top anglers is no mean feat. I'm sure we will be hearing a lot more of this member in the future.



Step forward Ernest MacKay Jr (Young Ernest!) Senior Club Champion 2023). (PS. In the photograph Ernest looks as if he is beaming with pride at his elevation to Aberdeen and District Angling Association Club Champion, but I can reveal that the close up above was actually "cropped" from a wider angle photo showing our new Senior Champion beside the sea and enjoying tucking in to an ice cream cone (a celebratory "cappie" perhaps?!). (\*cappie: old Doric for an ice cream cone) Well done indeed Ernest!

### JWS

The table below shows the 2023 Trophy winners:

ADAA Trophy	2023 Winner
POTS & FORDS	MIKE CORDINER
POTS & FORDS RUNNER UP	ERNEST MACKAY SENIOR
JEAN REYNOLDS TROPHY	KENNY RIDDELL
D R WILSON TROPHY	KENNY RIDDELL
MITCHELL SHIELD	ERNEST MACKAY SENIOR
PRESIDENTS TROPHY	ERNEST MACKAY SENIOR
JOHN CAMERON TROPHY	KENNY RIDDELL
SIMPSON PLAQUE	KENNY RIDDELL
MUNRO PLAQUE	RICHARD MCHATTIE
JORDAN CUP	ERNEST MACKAY JUNIOR
JIM & BETTY REYNOLDS YTHAN TROPHY	ERNEST MACKAY SENIOR
LAST FLING TROPHY	ERNEST MACKAY JUNIOR
SENIOR CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP	ERNEST MACKAY JUNIOR

### Kenny Riddell

**b. Association Promotional Videos:**



As mentioned in the President's Remarks, committee member Robert Paterson, in conjunction with "Ali," Twin Peakes' filming guru, has been the main driving force in this venture. Together they have, to date, produced 3 informative and professional

videos which have raised the profile of our Association greatly. They can be accessed easily via the Association YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCY-gJU3U5-IFbiITNwppA>

or on our website in the Gallery Section:

<https://www.adaa.org.uk/gallery/>

More are planned for 2024, including one on the Ythan. Look out for them.

**c. Member Development:**

As highlighted in previous newsletters, to maintain our extensive portfolio of fishings, it is necessary to keep up our membership levels, not easy in modern times strangely, where, increasingly, sporting organisations such as ours, along with golf clubs and the like, have, in recent times, found recruitment of new members difficult. The Association are now bucking the trend, by seeing new member numbers increase, especially so in the case of junior members.



Well known committee member Ash McKinnon's work

on both juniors' development and the wider promotion of the Association to the north-east community has been exemplary. Ash will again be a prominent figure in 2024.

**d. The Bothy**

The wonderful and evocative painting depicted here was unearthed by Secretary Paul Toseland. (View of the Brig o' Dee, Artist John Mitchell



1838-1926, painted 1879). While there have been many changes to the riverside since that era, not least of course, the sweep netting, which has long since been consigned to history, one thing has remained. The bothy in the foreground, now owned by us, is still a prominent landmark, known by most Aberdonians and by many from further afield. The Association is determined to keep it as our headquarters and spiritual home, where it can be used for multiple purposes, from fly tying to holding meetings, including for instance with other angling-oriented organisations, in fact in any way likely to be of benefit to us and our fishings. A Sub Committee has been formed, led by fairly recently co-opted Management Committee member John Dewar. John brings particular skills which complement the contributions of such as Alastair Hume and Davie Knowles to developing the Bothy. Further updates on progress will be communicated soon.

**JWS**

**e. Gift Cards**

Another new and recent initiative is Association gift cards, meaning that, in the future, members can drop hints to family and friends that, instead of socks for birthdays, Christmas etc, these can be purchased and used towards annual subscription or Association merchandise.

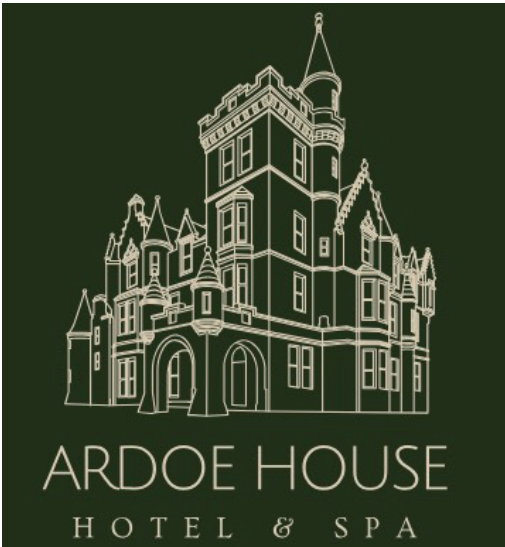


No contest I am sure you will agree! Details to follow.

**JWS**

**f. Events**

Various events were held last season, including junior days on our leased beats at Millpond and at Middle Drum on the Dee, as well as our extensive senior competition programme. Twin Peakes very kindly laid on 2 open days for our members, the second of which, though unfortunately coinciding with a period of torrential rain, was nevertheless attended by some of our members. The Ardoe House Hotel was again the generous sponsor for our junior days. They have indicated they wish to continue with this partnership and their chairman wishes to convey his good



wishes to the Association this festive season and for next year.

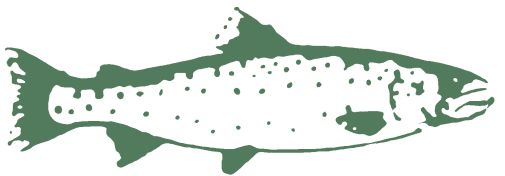
**5. In Conclusion**

As I write this in the bleak midwinter the rain is once again teeming down outside, and I am praying that river levels do not get so high this winter that newly laid salmon and trout ova are lost to our rivers. Hogmanay is but a few hours away, Hogmanay! that most Scottish of celebrations, now not celebrated in streets around the country in quite the way it once was, but still “the bells” are a moment in time when we can all look back and look forward.

As I raise a glass of finest malt at midnight on the 31st, I will be especially giving thanks that I became an angler all those years ago and can now savour the opportunities, afforded by my membership of this great Association of ours, to fish tumbling rivers in wonderful bucolic settings. Fellow members, I wish you all tight lines in 2024.

See you at the river!

**John**



**Direct Debit Membership 2024**

Please remember that you do not have to do anything if you currently pay by Direct Debit. Payment for season 2024 will be taken at the same intervals as currently i.e. in 1 instalment or in 10 monthly instalments.

Please also make sure we have your current address and date of birth on our records, especially if you have recently moved or you think you may qualify for senior membership rates next season.

**Contact us**  
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