

ADAA Newsletter Summer 2025 Edition

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1. Introduction from the Editor



Fellow members, welcome to the summer edition and what a summer it has been recently, not so much for we brothers of the angle of course, but for the sun worshipping majority of our fellow men (and women I hasten to add, lest I fall foul of the wokerati!).

Seriously though, I get the impression that our sport, pastime, nay obsession, is under some subtle pressure at the present time. Apart from the ongoing seal problem affecting the salmon and sea trout runs (and in this we unfortunately cannot count on much support from the general public), there have been sceptical rumblings expressed in some quarters at our professed concern for our quarry. For instance, the question has been asked, "why do we subject a salmon or trout to the stress of hooking, playing, landing, and then releasing it if we care about that creature's future?). I will say though I do not see that as the viewpoint of the majority of the public, but in this age of bandwagon jumping, accelerated by the influence of rampant social media, one can see how a head of steam could, to our disadvantage, be built up.

We must therefore be vigilant in our defence of our sport when necessary, and always point out to the uninitiated whenever possible that anglers, more than any other section of our communities, with our constant presence at the river and loch arteries of our world, are always best placed to monitor what is going on in our environment. In simple terms we in the angling community could justifiably claim to be the guardians of the natural world!

In this exalted position, sally forth fellow members, rod in hand, confident we are on the side of right! I trust you are all having an enjoyable and successful season!

John W Stephen

2. President's Remarks



We are told the month of June sees the start of the Equinox summer.....! However, given the wonderful weather we experienced in May who would complain if June was a little less friendly to us. That said, rain is needed, and we were fortunate to have our first downpours at the beginning of the month though it is fair to say we need more, much more. The little rise in river levels that there was did entice a few fish to run giving some success to some of our members and I am sure this will encourage more of us to visit our fishings. May I wish tight lines to those that do.

Loch of Loirston

Even though I am not by the river to fish I often take a stroll by the river meeting up with members for chat and to hear of their successes but mainly to pick up ideas and opinions on how we can improve members angling experiences. One subject that often pops up are the conditions of our still water fisheries and especially to the continued weed growth problem that seems to be come earlier and more persistent each year on the Loch of Loirston. It is unfortunate, though some may beg to differ, that we are experiencing milder winters and warmer and wetter summers which are ideal conditions for accelerated weed growth particularly Canadian Pond Weed. Long gone are the winters when we saw the Loch of Loirston frozen over for a few weeks during the winter months and fishing with frozen rod rings in February. These are ideal conditions for holding back the weed growth. To mitigate this and hopefully to clear designated areas of weed on the Loch we have embarked on a weed cutting programme for this summer, using our boat and a specially adapted weed cutter that can be mounted at the front of the boat. Preliminary trials under the supervision of Lewis Baxter have proved to be very encouraging.

The Mill Pond

Although weed growth at the Mill Pond has become a problem in the past the same procedure of weed management will be utilised at this fishery should the summer weed growth present further problems. That said, it is anticipated that the recent dredging work undertaken will have resulted in greater depth to the fishery, thus improving the angling experience. John Dewar undertook the project leadership of this task, a major undertaking for the Association and the attached photographs and John's update illustrate the scale of the problem and the steps taken to rectify it.

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From John Dewar:

Update on the Millpond

Using a digger with a 7 m reach, the Millpond was dug and dredged around 80% of the pond's circumference with about 50- 100 tons of removed silt being dumped near the pond, all with the landowner's consent. After contractual discussions with the Contractor, the work was declared fit for purpose, if not ideal. The wooden sleepers were then reinstalled with help from Nicky, Murray, Paul A, Raymond, and myself. The pond is presently filling up - see photos below. Some small gaps in the sleepers still need to be shored up asap. This will be discussed with Mike Murray before proceeding.

Campbell Pert has sent me some guidance and instructions for when we restock the pond.

John

Bithnie

The Association is always on the lookout to obtain more fishing opportunities for members. Although some of the Association's fishing beats are on a lease arrangement for short periods, continued angling security for our members can only be maintained by outright beat ownership. The Bithnie Beat on the river Don, slightly upriver from Alford has come on the market and the Association is now in negotiations with a view to acquiring it. This purchase would be financed using funds from our reserves. The beat is just over a mile in length and is opposite the Littlewood fishings. Unfortunately, the beat has been somewhat neglected over recent years and now requires a fair amount of riverbank work. However, given the nature of the fishing among some wonderful countryside, it would be run as a wild fishing beat offering some challenging trout fishing. More information will be posted on our Facebook page when it becomes available.

The Chancellor's budget will certainly have some knock-on effect to our operational day to day costs. Annual riverboard assessments have increased, the cost of the supply and delivery of fish for our still waters has taken a big leap already and we will have to be more aware of our grass cutting and riverbank management costs.

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We are fortunate our Association is in good health thanks to the professional management of the committee. It will be another challenging year; our finances are in good shape as are our fishings and equipment thanks to the hard work of committee and the number of volunteers who also give up their time to help our Association. You will note that all of the pools on the Heughhead beat of the Feugh are now easily accessible thanks to the hard work of Lewis Baxter aided by Nicky and Raymond.

The Cruives Aces:



Two members who certainly get much pleasure not to mention great success from fishing our rivers are Raimondas Kaubrys and Adrian Kukowski. I could not help but notice their incredible success at the river when viewing our catch returns. I was fortunate on one of my walks to the river and to the Cruives I was fortunate to meet up with them both in car park as they were tackling up ready to fish. Their choice of fly was new to me a Perdigan nymph and according to them this choice of fly has been fantastic and accounted for most of the trout he has caught. Walking to the river they both told me how pleased they are to be a member of the ADAA and what good value the fishing is. Their method of fishing was the upstream Czech nymph method. I watched Raymond head to the neck of Snuffies, not a spot I would choose to fish for trout and on his first cast..... a trout of a pound..... Some have all the luck. A visit to Somers beckons.....

Tight lines

Paul

3. Catch returns

From: Murray Hourston



By the time of publication, what must be one of the driest springs on record, will hopefully be just a memory. For salmon anglers it will be a somewhat painful one with catches well down on last year. There is perhaps little consolation in knowing that the ADAA beats are not alone in having struggled, as it only underlines the perilous state of salmon stocks. So far, that is as of 27th May, 13 salmon have been reported, compared to 20 for the same period last year. All but 1 of this year's fish have from the Don, the exception being Stuart

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Stephen's 10lb fish from the week kindly gifted by the Balmoral Estate to the ADAA. Fish were reported from all our main Don beats from Lower Fintray to the Cruives with the best estimated at 11lbs caught by Raymond Thomson from Upper Parkhill on the 26th March. It will come as no surprise that the last fish reported was on 24th April, [caught by Malcolm Ewen who had an excellent start to his season with 4 fish].

From April onwards a steady trickle of sea trout appeared in the Don, 20 were caught in total, mainly from the Cruives and Parkhill beats. Fish of up to 4lbs were recorded, many appearing in mixed bags with brown trout. This run appears to have been early, with fish perhaps being held up in the lower river.

Finnock fishing commenced as usual with our Ythan beats opening on 11th February, where 29 were reported up until the end of March, mainly from Ardlethen. The Pots and Fords fished reasonably well in April and early May with 18 reported. The remaining 19 fish, from a total of 66, were caught on the Don, with the Cruives being the most productive beat.

The brown trout season on the Don again kicked off on the statutory date of the 15th March, rather than the later traditional opening of 1st April. Good catches were reported from the opening day onwards. A total of 393 have been reported to 27th May, compared to 132 for the same period last year. Whilst this total was boosted by a Scottish National Fly-Fishing Competition on 27th April, it still far exceeds the average, and is a welcome sign of the quality of our wild brown trout fishing.

Kemnay fished very well in the early part of the season. Both our Parkhill beats have featured heavily in the returns from late March onwards. The Cruives was also very popular, perhaps particularly so in the warmer brighter weather offering as it does a lot more shaded runs and pools. The best fish, estimated at 5lbs, was from the Cruives, but plenty more fish between 2 and 4lbs were caught throughout the beats.

Rainbow anglers have had mixed fortunes this year, the long warm spell seeming to put fish off the take. Early season fishing was however good, with the stalwarts at Mill Pond braving the elements to catch 22 in January. The total so far is 174 fish, 136 from Mill Pond and 38 from Loirston. Some excellent fish have been caught with several between 5 and 6lbs, mainly from Loirston.

With the arrival of more normal weather, hopefully the fishing will improve. Fingers crossed for a typical Aberdeenshire summer.

Catch report addendum (11th July)

During June and the early part of July we had some sporadic days of heavy thundery rain, which did little to raise river levels, but did allow some salmon and grilse to enter our rivers. A total of 7 salmon and 3 grilse were reported, with a couple of grilse from the Dee, being landed at The Pumhouse, [1 caught by our President]. The heaviest fish, estimated at 14lbs, was caught by John Burr from Lower Parkhill.

Sea trout continued to sneak in with 18 reported. Again, the Don provided most of these fish, but 7 were caught at Banchory Devenick. In addition, 38 finnock were reported.

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Brown trout fishing has been the mainstay of our sport this year and continued to be good, with an excellent 269 reported from 27th May onwards. Some cracking fish were caught and 3lb plus trout were a regular feature of the returns.

With Millpond closed Loirston provided all the rainbow catch. A total of 62 were reported and recent stockings seem to have stirred up the residents, with some big fully finned trout of up to 6lbs caught.

As at the time of this update another 23 rainbows have been reported from Loirston, including 20, yes 20, to the rod of Ash Mckinnon (a red-letter day indeed Ash!)

Tight Lines!

Murray

At the time of publishing this newsletter, the hoped for rain has not yet arrived in anything like the quantity needed to actively encourage substantial runs of migratory fish, but despite the continued low water levels there have been reports of fresh fish coming through our Don beats and every tide appears to be bringing sparkling fish into our Banchory Devenick and Garthdee pools, so much to look forward to!

JWS

4. Beat Maintenance

Undoubtedly one of the most important operations of an angling club, especially one having an extensive and diverse portfolio of fishings such as we in the ADAA enjoy, is to maintain these assets in a way that helps our members to gain maximum enjoyment from their time on the river or stillwater.



Lewis Baxter, our Works Convener, tirelessly leads his team of Nicky and Raymond, along with other volunteers such as Keith Wilson, in carrying out the required tasks as the season progresses. Although the long dry spell recently did curtail vegetation growth to some extent, grass cutting was, as always, still necessary and great strides have been made on that. Other problems occasionally demand attention, and as an example, Nicky and Raymond have

recently undertaken the onerous task of cutting back the gorse which was encroaching on the north bank of our Upper Parkhill beat and, again on the north bank, at Kettocks Mill on Nether Don

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The accompanying photos show the extent to which the gorse which was restricting movement has been trimmed back.

This will allow much better access to productive trout (and salmon) water up near the Bypass bridge at Parkhill (the 2 smaller photos) and opposite Seaton Park at Nether Don (the larger photo).



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Still on Nether Don, the dense growth (pictured middle) on the south bank looks impenetrable, but Nicky and Raymond have succeeded in clearing a pathway to allow us to better access the long sea pool.

Our Kemnay beat: before and after Nicky and Raymond got to work!



The river is here somewhere!



Machetes no longer required! Just rod and line!

JWS

5. Our Rivers and Stillwaters Environment

We are fortunate to have on our Management Committee Dr Campbell Pert, a renowned fisheries scientist and Gerry Hough who has been leading, among other projects, the groundbreaking Buglife and Riverfly initiatives on our behalf. Their extensive expertise has been of great assistance in ADAA matters.

Members are reminded of our responsibilities with regard to the ongoing concern to minimise and hopefully prevent the spread of fish disease. While, fortunately, our rivers are not affected, unlike the devastation seen on some Norwegian waters for instance, we need to be vigilant at all times and Campbell's comprehensive summary below highlights the salient and important facts.

Should any members who have fished abroad for instance need access to Virkon before fishing our waters, Murray Hourston can assist.

River Don Hydro and Extraction Schemes:

Some members may not be aware of two "industrial" sites on the river.

One, which has been up and running for a year or two now is the community hydro turbine at Tillydrone, at the head of Becker's Pool on the Cruives beat. This is purportedly designed to mitigate against running salmon and sea trout entering the outfall from the turbine "screw." There have been occasional sightings though of fish attempting to run that spur of the river rather than the main stream and, on our behalf, this has been and is being brought to the attention of the Don Board by our President and Vice President.

The other, more recent development, allied to the mad push for "net zero," is a hydrogen plant being set up just below Kintore, on the Balbithan stretch which will apparently involve a degree of water extraction. Although we have been assured that a substantial quantity of that water will be returned to the river as the plant operates, as anglers we obviously harbour concerns and will be monitoring this closely.

JWS

From: Campbell Pert



***Gyrodactylus salaris* – The Silent Killer**

Gyrodactylus salaris (Gs) is a small (0.5 mm in length) parasite that resembles a maggot which infects the skin, gills, and fins of Atlantic salmon in freshwater. The parasite is capable of rapid multiplication, as it does not require males and females to reproduce, which can cause serious physical damage to Atlantic salmon parr. It has been responsible for significant mortalities (up to 98%) of wild Atlantic salmon populations in Norway, and as a result some salmon stocks have been lost completely. Gs is a listed disease that must be reported under Schedule 1 of the Aquatic Animal



Health (Scotland) Regulations 2009. The U.K. is currently recognised as being free from Gs although evidence exists to suggest that our Atlantic salmon populations are highly susceptible to both infection and mortality.

Once introduced it could take many years to detect Gs as it slowly wipes out the juvenile salmon in affected rivers – hence it is often referred to as “the silent killer.” More worryingly, Scottish scientists have suggested it may be impossible to eradicate Gs from Scotland due to our extensive rivers and loch systems if it were ever introduced. Therefore, we want to protect the health of our rivers and fish stocks.

Where is Gs Naturally Found?

Gs is restricted in its distribution to Europe. It occurs naturally in some Baltic areas of Finland, Sweden, and Russia where some Atlantic salmon populations tolerate the parasite. Widespread distribution in Norway has resulted following the accidental introduction of the parasite in the 1970s. The UK and Ireland are the only areas known to be free of the parasite. Across Europe many countries have an undetermined status, and it is likely that the parasite is present in more countries than is presently known.

Diagnosing Gs Infestation

Due to its small size, low power magnification is required to see the parasite, e.g. through the use of a good hand lens. Heavily infected parr appear greyish, with excess mucus, and possibly concurrent fungal infections. Morphological examination can lead to the identification of Gs by a trained morphologist, but the main method for identification and confirmation is the use of genetic analysis techniques.

What can I do?

One of the most significant risks to the introduction of Gs is through the movement of live fish. However, there are also risks of introduction through the movement and use of equipment associated with angling – particularly waders. If travelling from a region where Gs is present or its status is undetermined, all equipment associated with angling and water sports should be thoroughly cleaned and treated to kill the parasite by either:

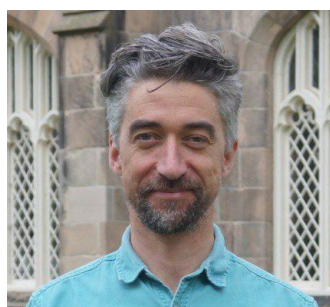
- Deep freezing (-20°C) for at least 1 day.
- Drying at a minimum temperature of at least 20 °C for at least 2 days
- Heating for at least 1 hour at temperatures of above 60 °C
- Immersion in a solution (Virkon ® Aquatic (1%), Wescodyne (1%), sodium chloride (3%), and sodium hydroxide (0.2%) suitable for killing the parasite for a minimum of 10 minutes.

All of these methods have potential positives and negatives as well as the risk of not killing the parasite as it is incredibly hardy. As such, and for ease, most anglers find bagging their equipment in bin bags (or similar) and placing it into a deep freeze for AT LEAST 24 hours is the simplest and most effective option.



Campbell

From: Gerry Hough (The Buglife and Riverfly Initiative)



ADAA River Health Update July 2025

This year the Association is again working hard to protect our waters from pollution. To achieve this, we continue to contribute to a variety of schemes to help us monitor the health of our fishing. In doing so, we have been working in partnership with SEPA, the Fisheries Boards, and Environmental Charities Buglife Scotland and Earthwatch UK.

We started our year by taking part in Buglife Scotland's 'Hunt for the Northern February Red' monitoring programme. Northern February Reds are a species of stonefly whose population in Scotland is of international importance. A few members of the group (myself included) were sceptical whether we would find any hatching flies in February and March, but we were delighted to find a decent number of February Reds sunning themselves at Parkhill. We reported our success to Buglife and look forward to putting a bit more time and resource into this monitoring programme next year.

This year has also brought some new activity on monitoring water quality in the Don. As you may remember from previous newsletter updates, last year we took part in Earthwatch UK's 'Great UK WaterBlitz.' This was a great success - we managed to monitor 15 sites in all, from Grandholm Bridge on Cruives to Kemnay. As a result, we applied for Aberdeen City Council funding to expand our water monitoring programme with Earthwatch UK. We were successful and have now begun monthly

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monitoring of nitrate and phosphate levels and turbidity on the Don in the City. To start off our programme of water monitoring, we again took part in the Great UK WaterBlitz in April, monitoring 13 sites on the Don. We also took part in an E Coli monitoring pilot project which allowed us to send off four samples from the Don for E Coli testing. You can find the full report on the April 2025 WaterBlitz, and the individual results for all sites across the UK (including the Dee, the Don, the Urie, and the Ythan) [here](#).



We are now in our third year taking part in Buglife's 'Guardians of our Rivers' project, which involves us carrying out invertebrate monitoring on the Don at 7 sites across Parkhill, Inverurie and Kemnay. Here, as with the Great UK WaterBlitz activity, we have worked closely with Inverurie Angling Association, and syndicates at Grandhome and Kemnay Beat 4. We have now collected a significant amount of data on invertebrate numbers across Parkhill, Inverurie and Kemnay (over 50 individual samples), and this year we have added a SEPA endorsed 'trigger level' for each site. If invertebrate numbers drop below this

level, SEPA are required to attend and determine whether there is a problem at the site. This is the main purpose of our invertebrate monitoring - regular monitoring of our waters for any changes that might harm fish and the environment they live in. So far numbers have remained strong, and we will continue to monitor things through to October.

Gerry

[Water Temperatures](#)

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Advice on angling in warm rivers

Above 20°C / 68°F
Avoid angling

20°C

18°-20°C / 64°F-68°F
Take extra care

18°C

Below 18°C / 64°F,
Follow best practice of handling fish

For further information :
<https://fms.scot/new-catch-and-release-guidance/>

As the "heatwave" continues, our rivers are of course, heating up and, to give an example, a temperature of 64 F (17 C) was recorded at the Pumphouse pool on our Banchory Devenick beat of the Dee on Thursday 10th July at 9.23pm. While that was a random one-off reading at the end of a hot day, it does remind us of the situation we are currently in. It is rumoured that the River Spey Board is looking at the possibility, should this spell continue, of closing the river to angling. As far as we know our local River Boards have not yet seriously considered such a move and, in any case, this exceptionally hot spell will hopefully come to an end soon.

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In the meantime we need to be alive to the very real threat this poses to migratory fish especially and do our best as responsible anglers to do as much as we can to mitigate any harm to the fish we hook and return.

JWS

6. The Bothy

The Bothy sub committee of Honorary President Alastair Hume, management committee members John Dewar and Murray Hourston and well known ADAA stalwart Davie Knowles has been involved in progressing the long-awaited acquisition of our spiritual home.

JWS

From: John Dewar



Following the completion of the last 3 “milestones” since January 2025, namely 1) Receiving the Building Warrant, 2) Getting Planning Approval and 3) Acquiring Ownership of the Land, the Bothy Sub Committee has started the process of obtaining Funding for the Works.

Following a recent meeting at the Bothy, an initial submission has been made online to the Lottery Fund for a substantial part of the funding which will be required. President Paul Adderton, who led the applications when the new bridge at our Ardlethen beat was being proposed and completed, will again be carrying this forward, along with attempts to obtain additional funding from other organisations.

John

7. Expansion of our fishing opportunities

President Paul Adderton, aided by other committee members, is always monitoring the general fisheries scene for potential additions to our portfolio of fishings, the recent negotiations taking place around the Bithnie beat of the Don (as mentioned by Paul in his remarks) being one example.



Additionally, we have been fortunate in being granted occasional opportunities to fish the Dee at Balmoral this season, following an initial contact through Kenny. One of our members, Stuart Stephen, landed a pristine Dee springer during our first week there.



New committee member Angus Rutherford will be known to many through his connections with Somers Fishing tackle. Angus is well acquainted with the River Dee scene and members will be kept informed

whenever any days or weeks become available.

JWS

8. The Competition Scene

From: Kenny Riddell



The ADAA have had a fair bit of success in the past in River International and Home International competitions and 2025 is no exception.

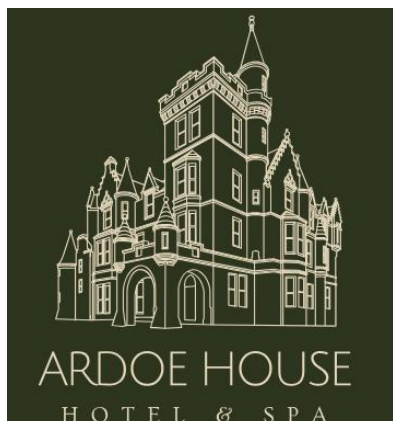
Mike Cordiner competed in April in the SANACC qualifying heat at the Lake of Menteith in his qualifying heat for the Loch International which he qualified for the Semi-final at Lintrathen Loch, so we wish Mike all the best and sure he'll do the business.

Ernie MacKay, Paul Toseland and Graeme McPherson competed in the SANACC 3-man team heat again at the lake of Mentieth, to which they also qualified and will go forward to represent the ADAA in the final at the Lake of Menteith. I'm sure the guys will do us proud.

Kenny Riddell & Ernie MacKay both qualified for the SANACC River International heat on the River Tummel and River Tay heat on Sunday 1st June, both Kenny & Ernie will now go forward to the final on Sunday 27th July, we wish them the very best of luck.

Kenny

The ADAA's yearly competition programme has been progressing as always, with some good returns being made.



The Ardoe House Hotel and Spa trophy was competed for in May at the enjoyable away day on the Lake of Menteith and around 20 well-conditioned rainbows were accounted for by the attendees.

Kenny and Richard McHattie fished a recent national competition and, according to Kenny, failed miserably to feature among the leading rods; a strangely comforting thought for the rest of us also-rans that even top experts like them can have the occasional off day!

JWS

9. Events and Promotion

From: Ash Mckinnon



The ADAA "roadshow" attended the Culter Gala on the 31st of May. I was ably assisted by Junior member Lewis Allan; this seemed to encourage interest from younger people to talk about what we were about. I would have been happier if it was busier but all in all a good day.

On the 12th of June Myself and Gerry attended the "Torry men's health & Wellbeing" event at the Torry Hub (very impressive facility) Gerry was in charge of casting instruction in the gym and had some great success, while I busied myself fly tying and answering enquiries in the main foyer, again whilst it could have been busier it was definitely worthwhile, some serious interest and some hopefully worthwhile contacts made.

Our next outing is scheduled to be the Banchory show on Saturday the 26th of July, we have never done this show before, but I know it is always well attended and hopefully we can get plenty interest. Campbell Pert has graciously offered to help on the day, so once

again pray for nice weather.

Ash

10. Membership Matters



No organisation such as ours could operate without administrative expertise of the highest order and this is provided by our hard-working Secretary Paul Toseland. Paul has been an ADAA and committee member for many years and this experience allied to his own background in administration has been invaluable.

For quite a few years now, Julia Fleming has been ably assisting Paul with the important matter of membership movement and the task of direct debit monitoring and recording has been the responsibility of Shona Wylie for the last couple of seasons.



In the modern world, knowledge of, and expertise in, website matters and the like are all-important, and Matt Hart is the committee member who guides us in that field.

Induction Days: The Management Committee will be holding “Induction Days,” open to both new and existing members. These will be held at the ADAA Bothy on Riverside Drive and will cover all aspects of ADAA membership, including rules, beats, beat parking and access. These sessions, which members are sure to find helpful and informative will be advertised on the ADAA closed Facebook page as well as on the ADAA website.

How you can help: An angling club the size of ours, with a large portfolio of fishings and the attendant demand for maintenance etc, will always be reliant to some extent on its members to assist when and where possible. As an ADAA member, opportunities exist to volunteer in many ways including, for instance, if one is so inclined, to join the Management Committee, either as a full member or even as an assistant beat convener, Such a role may well suit anglers who are especially acquainted with, and know well, certain beats. Secretary Paul Toseland is one point of contact and there is an online scheme to register your interest also. You will be made most welcome.

11. In Conclusion

Fellow members, although our rivers currently remain low, our ever-present brown trout are in peak condition and providing challenging angling, the Loch of Loirston is fishing well with excellent rainbows coming to the net and the Millpond will shortly be stocked following the extensive upgrading work.

Sea trout and occasional salmon are still running under cover of darkness, and it surely cannot be long before we experience “the day that the rains came down” (to quote the title of a fifties number one!), and our beats will again be alive with tide fresh migratory fish!

Tight lines!

John W Stephen