



LOCH ACHONACHIE ANGLING CLUB NEWSLETTER 40 : MAY 2022

START OF SEASON 2022

We needed some willing hands as usual before the start of the season to get the boats lifted into Achonachie, Meig and Scardroy, so a big thank you to those members who helped on the day. Ian MacPhail was in charge, ably assisted by Kenny Ross, Robert Ross, Chris Ross, David Ross, Gavin Morton, Derek Ritchie, John Ritchie, Stephen Legge and Dave MacGregor. It makes a difference for sure if you can lend a hand to club activities and maintenance tasks please do let us know if you're willing to be called upon for help.

WINTER LEAGUE 2021-22

Back in March the Winter League was fast approaching its final stage and as usual, we returned to Lagg Trout Fishery in NW Sutherland for the final with all still to fish for and with several competitors tied closely at the top of the league. It was a very fine day and though the competition was intense, the weather allowed everyone to relax and enjoy some fine fishing, especially those who ventured up the hill to the top loch. At the weigh in there were some very weighty bags coming down the hill and top rod on the day went to Stephen Dowds with 3 fish for 17lbs 12oz; followed by Lewis Ross with 3 for 17lb 6oz; and in third position on the day Andy Downie with 3 fish for 16lb 9oz. Consistent strong performances over the entire league however meant that despite dropping to sixth on the day, **Derek Williamson's** bag of 3 for 14lb 1oz had done just enough to maintain pole position and win the league by a margin of only one point from Lewis Ross. Tied for overall third place in the League this winter were Davie MacGregor and Stephen Dowds.



Lagg was quite an eventful venue for Derek this winter. He was also consistent in giving us a good laugh - namely by losing his rod out into the loch during the December leg, proving you should never lay your rod down when there are powerful rainbows waiting to tow it off into the depths. Luckily, like some angling Excalibur it eventually rose tip first from the deep allowing Derek's helpful buddies nearby to cast and hook the rod and recover face too - though not the fish! Then, just to prove he is a truly good sport, on securing the "league title" Derek managed to fall right into the bottom loch while washing his hands after the final weigh in in March.

Such wholehearted enthusiasm for rainbow fishing was well rewarded when Derek lifted the league trophy, a tackle voucher from The Sports & Model Shop and a bottle of the best! **Well done Mr Williamson!**

The Biggest Fish place had been held onto for several legs by Gordon Martin but on the final day it was overtaken by several larger beauties, the biggest of all coming right at the end of the day to **Neal Drummond**, pictured above with a fish weighing in at 8lb 3oz. Congratulations to all!

WINTER LEAGUE 2021-22 CONTINUED

As usual, Ian MacPhail rustled up a great barbecue before we headed for the long haul home. The Winter League is an entirely self-financing competition with no cost to the club whatsoever, and great way to keep your skills sharp over the trout & salmon close season. This winter we had twenty or more competitors at each outing and the craic was great even though the weather, wind then snow, proved more of a hindrance this year than the pandemic restrictions.

Dates for Winter League 2022-23 will be out late summer if you fancy a try out – all welcome.

EARLY SUCCESSES AROUND THE COUNTY

There has been lots of early action, sometimes in quite cold conditions with slow-fished intermediate lines. Graham Moss caught what looks like an overwintered stocked fish from last July in a deeper section of Loch Meig. Graham e-mailed me on 24 April

Good evening, it has been for me! Just thought I would let you know I caught my biggest trout so far in the Meig tonight. It was about 19" long and weighed 3.6lb. I returned it to the water for somebody else on another day.



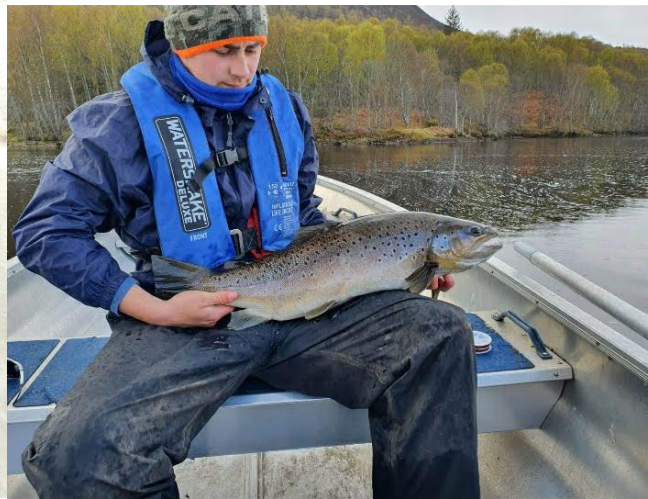
Caught on a Silver Butcher size 10 – well done Graham!

Loch Achonachie has been slow so far though a number of kelt were returned and now smolts are on the move. Scardroy is still cold but hopefully warming to it later this month. Meig has been variable but both smolts and perch have been chasing flies on this strictly fly only loch. With good runs of salmon in the Lower Conon we're hopeful of more appearing into our rivers if temperatures and rainfall increase.

Junior member Morag Ross has started the season brightly again taking this cracking pike caught & returned in Loch Garve and a fine wild trout too. **Well done Morag!**



Kenny Ross & Robert Ross were out on the loch this week too and Robert caught and returned a wild trout of around 4lb – great stuff!



PAST HAULS OF SALMON AND RECENT -- PICTURED ABOVE CALLUM BRADY

MANAGING NON-ANGLING USES

Whether the result of pandemic restrictions on travel abroad etc. the huge upsurge in water sports such as stand up paddle boarding, canoeing, “wild swimming” presents challenges for anglers, and many waters other than ours have faced these challenges before now. The committee has been examining these challenges, consulting with other interested parties and trying to find accommodations that would benefit all.

Attached to the e-mail with this newsletter is a discussion paper that has been considered by your club committee, and we now seek your views by email. Our intention is to find a consensus and a workable way forward for all respectful users of our waters.

CLUB COMPETITIONS AND OUTINGS 2022

We are hoping to return to coach trip fishing outings this season so I invite you to register your interest in an outing to any of **Lochs Shin, Badanlochs, Cam & Veyatie** etc. – outings provisionally late June/Early July then first Saturday in September. Please contact the club by email to express interest.

Four teams of two anglers are heading to **Loch Watten** to represent the club this month so tight lines to Neil Macritchie & Lewis Ross; Ally Hunter & Dave MacGregor; Neal Drummond & Archie Prentice and Ian MacPhail & George Eccleson. With talent like that we expect to see trophies heading back to LAAC no pressure Watten can be difficult and often very weather dependent ! Our own **Meig Open** is already oversubscribed with teams from around the Highlands including Beauly AC, Lairg AC, Portree, Dingwall all joining us for our **3 angler team** annual competition.

We are keen to restart a junior competition and again any expression of interest would be welcome.

COMMITTEE NEWS

Delighted to report that three new committee members have been co-opted and are making a fine contribution to the committee's work – Neal Drummond, David Ross and Chris Ross have joined us over the winter and getting to grips with work to be done.

Club membership is growing steadily and, though we need to take careful note of the losses in normal visitor tickets and boat hire income over the two years of pandemic restrictions, we are certainly in a very strong position to forge ahead. Office Bearer changes are in place too with **Ian MacPhail** taking over as **Treasurer** whilst I continue as Chairman as well as Acting Secretary to the club.

PERMITS FOR THE FUTURE

Members will be aware of the impact everything electronic is having on our lives including the way we work and our leisure activities. Most of our permit renewals and new membership applications this season have been done by digital transfer of money from members' bank account to the club account – by BACS – and by emailed applications. We have also trialled over two seasons the use of **e-permits** where no physical card or paper is issued. We would welcome your views on this as the financial savings to the club would approach £1000 per year – money that could well be used to improve angling facilities, fish stocking etc. Your views by email to achonachieangling@gmail.com

If you've enjoyed this newsletter and found it useful please let us know and **please remember your contributions in stories and photographs are always very welcome!**

Our Club website <https://highlandfishing.net/>, our Facebook page and Instagram site are all available to stay up to date with LAAC activities and news. Email me at achonachieangling@gmail.com



Stephen Dowds
LAAC Chairman/Acting Secretary
MAY 2022