

# Fishing – encouraging young people to swap X-box for fly box is key



George Thomson, the oldest member of the United Clyde Angling Protective Association (UCAPA) prepares to toast the river and open the 2017 salmon season with international angler and broadcaster Hywel Morgan

Encouraging young people into fishing was the theme of the opening day of the salmon fishing season on The Clyde.

The initiative was summed up in one short sentence by international angler and broadcaster, Hywell Morgan, who said: “We must encourage youngsters to swap the X-Box for a fly box.”

The Welsh-born VIP, speaking to an audience of around 200 at the event, which was also the 130th anniversary of the United Clyde Angling Protective Association (UCAPA), said it was imperative that the next generation is given a chance to try out angling as a pastime.

He indicated that once they are hooked, then they become the future of fishing.

Mr Morgan has two daughters who have been fishing since a young age, and the key was simply taking them to the water.

Supervision was vital and, he said that in Scotland, the opportunity for young people to experience the thrill of catching their first fish was vast.

The celebrity added: “Clubs are encouraging young people to fish all over Britain and in North Wales they can fish 16

miles of river for £5 for a whole season.

“They can learn so much. There is the technical side, the discipline, the entomology and just getting out into the fresh air.”

He showed his own commitment in conducting a casting class in snow and biting winds in the grounds of event co-sponsors, The Popinjay Hotel at Rosebank.

And locally-based Daiwa Sports, for whom Mr Morgan is a consultant, offered prizes to the young people who took part today.

Event organisers UCAPA also emphasised the need to capture the imagination of youth.

Munro Reid, one of the UCAPA board, spoke about their association with a project, sponsored by Daiwa, to support a club at Dalziel High School in Motherwell. Jim Mathew, the Youth Development Officer for UCAPA and a Level 2 coach, is involved.

Mr Reid said: “Young people coming into the sport is our future. We are trying, though our work locally in schools, to do that but fishermen need to plant the seed.

“Hopefully, by encouraging young people they will get hooked for life and, if they do, then we may be around for another 130 years.

Among other guests were the Semperfli Fly Tying Pro Team of Jim Lees, Peter McCallum and Sandy Dickson. Actor, TV presenter and angling legend, Edinburgh-born Paul Young, was also there. He has travelled the world fishing for different species after being encouraged as a youngster.

They all made the walk along the twisty Clyde Valley road to the atmospheric Mauldslie Bridge to toast the river and open

the 2017 salmon season.

George Thomson, the club's oldest director, cast the first fly this year along with Mr Morgan. Mr Thomson has served the association for at least 60 years.