

Fishing – social media key to surge in membership



The weir at Mid Calder, one of the many scenic locations on the River Almond. Picture Nigel Duncan Media

West Lothian Angling Association are enjoying a record year for membership according to founder member Douglas Hall.

Almost 100 anglers now hold permits for their eight-mile stretch from near Newbridge to Kirkton at Livingston.

And Douglas also reports that fishing is good providing you use your eyes to find out what trout are feeding on.

He knows the river like the back of his hand having grown up in Livingston and he keeps things simple having only around five different types of flies in his box.

Douglas said: “The river is fishing well for the start of the season. The water is low and clear at the moment and on the brighter days the fish continue to rise well. As long as the flies are coming off, the fish will be there.

“I was out on Thursday and in two hours I had six trout ranging from half a pound up to a pound which is normal in the river for this time of year.

“As the season moves on I would hope to hit more fish than that.”

On the surge in membership he said: “It’s the best year in our six-year history and we are almost out of tickets.

“We have a lock on the numbers and our current top line is 100 members and we are up around 85 members already.”

The Edinburgh-based angler, whose fly tying videos are popular on the West Lothian Angling Association website, added: "It has been interesting to watch the club grow over these six years from very small, ten to 15 members, to what it is now.

"Each year we have managed to grow and I am quite surprised at how successful it has become in such a short space of time.

"Word-of-mouth has been key in our rise and having a better web presence has contributed. We also have more followers on social media networks than we can accommodate (with permits).

"There is interest now from people living elsewhere in the UK who are looking to come here as a visitor later in the season.

"The main attraction is good quality fishing and the River Almond offers an abundance of quality brown trout fishing."