

Fishing – lovely Loganlea, only 30 minutes from town



The harbour created by Karen's father Alex at Loganlea Reservoir. Picture by Nigel Duncan Media

It's a long and winding road from the homely, old-world, Flotterstone Inn, just off the A702 Biggar Road, to Loganlea Trout Fishery, high up in The Pentland Hills.

The distance is roughly three miles on a single track road past imposing Scald Law, the highest of the Pentland hills, and the ascent is much-valued by walkers and cyclists.

The drive is worth every inch if you are blessed by the weather as I was.

However, to get there, I had to dodge a number of scared sheep and their lambs and also a stern-looking brown cow who stood Canute-like in the middle of the road and refused to budge.

He stared me straight in the face for several minutes before taking his leave to have a drink of water. Phew.

The dreaded midge also, thankfully, not in evidence as I was greeted by Karen Jack, the owner of the popular fishery above Penicuik.

Her father Alex took over 19 years ago in the middle of the foot-and-mouth outbreak which caused a huge crisis in British agriculture and tourism.

It was also a financial headache for Alex as he was only allowed a limited window to open because of the deadly disease.

Karen took over from him six years ago and the business is bolstered by a number of regular customers who rave about the water. Some travel long distances, including one from Lincoln.

And they catch fish. So far, the best trout landed this season is 10lbs but one angler hooked around 100 trout on three, early-season visits.

The sport has tailed off since then but on the day I visited several anglers had claimed their bag limit.

They were aboard one of the eight boats on offer from the harbour area mid-way along the picturesque reservoir.

The harbour was created by Karen's father. It was tough work and tons of hardcore and rocks had to be moved to make room for it.

A JCB was also brought in to help dig into the rock to create the car park and space for a container unit which remains the HQ of the fishery.

It has now been covered by a skin, but Karen well remembers the sweat and toil which went into creating the space for the unit.

She also recalls how her father enlisted the help of a tradesman who cut through the metal to create the windows.

As we looked out at the water Karen warned me that catching fish was challenging.

She also said that you had to persevere. There is no doubt that there were fish around.

They kept popping up all around myself and two other anglers enjoying the late-evening sun at the dam wall, a favoured location.

I took Karen's advice and tied on a black shipmans buzzer to my floating line and long leader. Then I changed to green and finally red.

A red diawl bach pattern was on the dropper. That changed to blue and also green before being ditched.

A black spider, favoured by fish in the early morning, size 18, was introduced.

That also failed to lure a feeding fish. A damsel then a hot-head version was then tied on and jettisoned, then a foam-backed daddy.

By that time, the sun had sunk behind the hills and it was time to head home.

Despite my inability to hook a fish it was a most enjoyable evening.

How could one not enjoy fishing in the middle of scenery like that?

What's more, Loganlea is only 30 minutes from the centre of Scotland's Capital.

FACTFILE:

Address: Pentland Hills Regional Park, Carlops Road, Penicuik
EH26 0PP

www.loganleafishery.co.uk

Telephone: 01968 676329

Contact: Karen Jack

Open: seven days (March to last Sunday in October) but advance booking advised

Times: March: 9am to 5pm after that 9am to a maximum of 10pm

Car park: up to 50 cars

Species: brown trout, rainbow trout, tiger trout and blue trout

Basic prices: four hours and keep one fish £15; four hours catch and release £13

Concessions: child (under-16) £5 if accompanied by a paying adult; concessions for senior citizens are a free boat or £2 off a day ticket from Monday to Friday and not on holidays or weekends

Rod hire: no

Catching method: fly only

Pegs: 30 on the bank

Boats: eight which take up to three but comfortably two with oars provided. Anglers can bring motors

Equipment available: flies, including ones relevant to Loganlea, and tied by Tom Gray of Lanark, inventor of the Yellow Dancer

Outings: contact Karen on 01968 676329

Discounts available for eight-plus anglers and Monday to Friday bookings in advance

Food available: snacks and hot/cold drinks available in bothy shop

Cooking facilities: a microwave and an oven

Bothy: seats

Toilets: Portaloo

Optional extras: coaching from Steve Culbert who visits on the first Sunday of each month.

Other rules: Fly only and the first fish caught up to the

permit limit must be kept.

All fish must be weighed in before starting catch and release and no fish should be removed from the water during the unhooking process.

Barbless hooks must be used on catch and release and no boobys are allowed for catch and release fishermen.

No trawling is allowed and no deep wading is permitted.