

Fishing – Still Game star sees anglers reel in big trout at Drumtassie

Busy Drumtassie trout fishery is fast gaining a reputation for regularly producing big fish with Martin O'Hara holding the venue record of 22lbs.

Jocky Weir holds the mark for the biggest brown trout of 20lbs and the two-year-old fishery was packed with anglers one day this week.

Over 30 were noted searching for hard-fighting trout in the two fly and one bait ponds on one day during the Bank Holiday weekend.

Regular visitor, William Clarkson, had other fishermen watching on in envy and dodging out of the way as the fish careered down the water with William hanging on.

It took some minutes and a lot of effort for the angler from Forth to subdue the 13lbs 5oz specimen to the cheers of surrounding anglers who helped land and weigh the fish which was released to fight again another day.

“It fought like h...” admitted the angler whose adrenaline was flowing to land the fish which was trapped on a white rabbit.

And it is not his biggest from the popular fishery as William has previously landed a trout of over 15lbs and several other anglers recorded big hauls including one of nine fish including one of well over 8lbs.

Machine operator Mark Sievewright was also celebrating after

fishing the bait pond.

His heavy haul included a prize specimen of 12lbs 8oz and one of well over 8lbs.

Several other fish were also tempted on a mixture of Powerbait, but the biggest was his first of the day on a Rapala lure bought with some cash from his 39th birthday in midweek.

He is another regular at the fishery near Blackridge, a short hop from his home in the Dedridge area of Livingston.

He said: "The big one put up a good fight and I landed it on 8lbs line on a 6ft rod. I'm a regular here, most weekends, and there are some quality fish in here."

TV star Paul Young was on site at the time helping raise funds for the Scottish Ladies fly fishing team.

He chatted to anglers, had his picture taken with several, including Mark, and signed items.



Paul Young signs a rod for young Nicole McKie from Broxburn. Picture Nigel Duncan Media

Eight-year-old Nicole McKie from Broxburn had her rod signed but she is too young to have seen Paul's celebrated fishing

programme, Hooked on Fishing, which brought a new audience to the sport that has played a major part in his life.

The 74-year-old, who has also starred in Take the High Road and The Tales of Para Handy, watched Nicole enjoying the sport with her dad Willie and she told the Still Game star – nicknamed Shug the Lug in the show – that she had already caught several fish.

Paul, who grew up in Edinburgh's Portobello area and is a former pupil of George Heriot's School, was reminded of his entry into fishing as a boy.

A relative took him to fish rivers in the Borders and he graduated to the Tweed and Tay and then world-wide.

Fishing has also taken Paul to many countries including South America as he accumulated material for Hooked on Scotland featured on BBC Television, Scottish Television and the Discovery Channel.

And he said that it was encouraging to see young anglers like Nicole taking up the sport.

Paul's affection for the sport has never left him and he still fishes, mainly at the Lake of Menteith near Stirling. He added: "Fishing was been really good to me and I am always keen to put something back into the sport."

His presence at Drumtassie was secured when fishery manager Leeanne Aitchison bid £1,200 in an auction for Paul to be there for the day.

She said: "It was a tremendous day and Paul was great, spending several hours chatting to anglers."

The actor also tucked into some of the great food produced by a talented team of on-site cooks who had produced curry, stovies, honey glazed rainbow trout, home-made chutney and even a superb strawberry-flavoured sponge cake.

Drumtassie debutant, Edinburgh-based IT consultant John Ferguson, thoroughly enjoyed his first visit to the busy fishery.

John, a regular at several reservoirs in the Lothians area and even near Dumfries, is a member of the Edinburgh Fly Dressers Club, and he was particularly impressed by the fighting qualities of the fish and the banter between anglers and the superb catering.

And he used okey dokey and diawl bach patterns to hook into – and drop – several fish during a chilly afternoon.

Despite the unseasonal weather, fish were tantalisingly making appearances all over the three lakes, tucking into black beetles, but were, at times, proving a tad difficult to tempt by fake flies cast at them by the anglers searching for the elusive tagged fish. The current prize fund, incidentally, is £400.

FACTS: Drumtassie Fishery, Heights Road, Blackridge, West Lothian EH48 3SW

Three ponds: two fly and one bait

Open: currently until 10pm but 24 hours during the summer

For further information ring 07939 249481