

# Fishing – Empson emerges from the gloom with winter league win

It's nearly 9pm and pitch dark on a mild Autumnal night in the River Forth in mid-September with the tide going out rapidly.

Passers-by noted lights flickering 600 yards off the beach at Fisherrow in Musselburgh.

A wheelchair with special big wheels was noted being pushed out over mussel beds and through puddles towards the surf way out in the gloom towards Fife.

Dog-walking locals were both amused and curious. "What is going on," one asked.

The answer is simple. It was members of the Bass Rock Sea Angling League on their fortnightly outing.

They were trying a new location – mark to the fishermen – and they were searching for flounders or, in their book, flatties.

Several over 20cms had been landed from the shore next to Musselburgh Harbour as the ebb tide continued, but then the water suddenly vanished.

Hence, the exodus wading out to sea, some leaving tackle boxes on the beach, seeking those elusive fish and precious points in the first winter league match of the season.

Earlier, the 12 members had tackled up on the beach in a light breeze from the shore as the sun dipped behind Arthur's Seat.

The view down the River Forth was inspirational, with the three bridges and Edinburgh Castle and the city distinctive skyline silhouetted against the yellow and purple sky.

At 10pm the hooter went and the match was over. The guys gathered round using the street lights and headlamps to commence the weigh-in near the monument.

By then Fisherrow was deserted but the soft breeze continued, by this time including a chill factor.

For some, there was delight. For others, it was long drive home home to wash down equipment, some of which had been immersed in the surf.

So, who won this round? Dunbar angler Chris Empson, who was runner-up in the summer league, won this round with five fish for 104cm.

James Ogilvie from Haddington was second with three fish for 74cm and he also landed the biggest fish, 33cm, with Jamie McPhail of Gifford third with two fish for 52cm.

Thomas Slow from Portobello was fourth with two fish for 40cm and Barry McEwan from North Berwick, who won the summer league, was fifth with one fish of 31cm.

One of the organisers, James Ogilvie, said: "It was a good night but we have to pick a better tide next time as the water disappeared with 90 minutes to go. All who attended enjoyed it."

Well now you know what those lights in the Forth were. You can join in as there are regular matches throughout the winter. See the club's Facebook page for details.

The joining fee is £10 with a match fee an additional cost each time you enter.