

Get hooked on fishing, that's the advice from world champion Morgan

Hywel Morgan, a world champion fly caster, a Welsh international, and one of the best-known fishermen in Wales, plus a man who has numerous instructional videos on YouTube, stressed it was not expensive to get into fishing. Picking up an inexpensive kit was one way to start.

Morgan, who is a consultant to Scottish-based equipment manufacturer, Daiwa, said that around 30 years ago he would have argued against buying a starting kit because they were made up of items people could not sell, but not now.

He said: "Buy a rod, reel and line for as little as £60 and get out there to fish. The rods now are light and youngsters aged five, six or seven can now start fly fishing, and the good thing is that there are loads of small fisheries around.

"Especially with children, you want them to have success, basically catch a fish, and if you go to places where there are a lot of stocked fish and they catch then they are hopefully hooked for life."

He agreed that children tend to, when they become teenagers,

slide to other hobbies and pastimes, but, if you are a fisherman when you are a youngster, you tend to gravitate back to the sport when you settled down, have a job and a family.

Morgan stressed: "It is very important to get kids into the sport at a young age as they, in the future, will be the people looking after the rivers and the environment."

He has been picked by Wales to fish in the Home International Bank Fly Fishing Championship for Wales at Largs in October and argued that it was 100 per cent important that young people, or those coming into the sport, go to a recognised casting instructor when they start.

He added: "People will say they will learn from a friend or relative who fishes. With the best will in the world, they might be really good but people will learn their bad habits so there are qualified instructors all over the UK and it is like building a house.

"If the foundations of that house are correct then the house will end up being built properly, it is the same with fly casting, if the grounding is right everything you add to that will improve you.

"Starting on the wrong foot means that sooner or later your technique will fall down. See a casting instructor then spend a little bit of time practicing on grass and then get out and catch some fish, get some fresh air and enjoy yourself.

"By doing that you would forget all the troubles you may have and de-stress for a couple of hours and relax and get some exercise."

He admitted that he has a number of videos on YouTube, including a very successful one on casting – it has his largest hit rate – and he also has DVDs. His best seller is his casting DVD.

Morgan said he knows anglers who take the DVD out with their laptop, set it up on site, watch what is happening and try to replicate that.

He added: "Nowadays, most people have a mobile phone and people should get out there to practice by propping up their mobile phone or get somebody to video you casting so you can see what you are doing."

The Welshman also produces popular fly tying videos and he said: "Honestly, the best guy to watch by a mile is Davie McPhail (who represents Fulling Mill) and has 30 years of experience in fly fishing.

Morgan said: "I make flies to catch fish and some fly tyers produce flies to catch fishermen but Davie, who is probably the biggest YouTube man in fly tying in the world, produces quality flies.

"If you understand his Scottish accent then all the better for it. The good thing about YouTube is that you can actually pause the video and watch the next step then pause it so it is like having an instructor in the room.

"During the winter a lot of areas have fly dressers guilds or clubs and they meet regularly, once a fortnight or something like that, and the good thing with that is that they say in 14 days we are going to produce this fly.

"You can buy stuff in conjunction with other fly tyers. If I live to the age of 180 I will still not finish all the fly tying stuff I have in my house. Anglers are like magpies, if they go to a store like the Glasgow or Edinburgh Angling Centre and what is on display is shiny then we pick it up.

"Try to find a club because there is nothing better than somebody standing by your shoulder saying try this way or that. The thing is, start with one fly, move on to the next pattern and, once you can make four or five flies, you can

then say, hold on, I can make one fly or another fly. You can make it as expensive or as cheap as you want.

“My father started by picking up stuff. If you know people who shoot you can get feathers from them. My dad used to tie in his fingers, he did not use a vise, I think he was too tight to buy a vise, and you do not have to go for the best of the best when you start.

“Get tying and enjoy yourself and the beauty of fly tying is that every time you sit down at a vise you could be tying the next magical fly.”

PICTURE: Hywel Morgan on the Daiwa stand at the Open Weekend hosted by Glasgow Angling Centre. ***Picture by Nigel Duncan***