

# WOT! Nun Fish-In The Shin This Year?!!



I received a very strange report one afternoon that an odd looking person was fishing Lady Herbert. On arrival you can imagine my surprise at finding a Nun, and by the looks of things she was walking on water! On further investigation the “nun” was de frocked and found to be a Shin regular Julian Pullan. Mr Pullan (48) confessed to having a bad habit that was hard to break! His total for the week was 7 salmon, 6 before his wife Hentie arrived on wednesday, and only one after! When asked why this was, he declined to comment.

The prospects for the 2006 season were very good. Early reports from other Kyle rivers on their spring runs were encouraging to say the least. I therefore decided to fish the river myself in June, I chose the 12<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>. I was ringing Alick and Richard daily to find out how many fish had been seen jumping the falls. Their reports were becoming more favourable the closer to our arrival date. Alick and Richard had been working very hard since May, preparing the banks to the very high standard you all appreciate and now have come to expect. The first salmon of 2006 was in fact caught a month earlier, on 29<sup>th</sup> May, at 2pm on a G.P. in Frying Pan by Willy Munro, from the Spar in Lairg.

I was fishing with Alick in Frying Pan and had just given him my 9’9” single-handed rod to try. He hitched his Sunray and was fishing the mirror just below the tail of the handle. The fish took with a beautiful swirl, after a good hard fight I tailed it for him. We felt a photo was vital but we had neglected to bring a camera with us. I rang Annie at the Lodge and asked her to rush down with my camera. Now what do you do with a large salmon for half an hour? We looped some line through its gills and then returned it to the edge of the current, about four feet out from the bank. The fish sat very quietly while I held onto the tether. The camera arrived and the photo (*right*) was taken, when I asked for a second, the salmon took exception to this and gave a huge flap straight out of Alick’s hands. I shouted “don’t worry it’s still attached to the line” as soon as the words were out of my mouth Alick was left holding the line minus the fish, it had bitten straight through as if it was made of butter. At least we had our photo, but I had to order a new line!

We went on to catch & release five more fish, (and lost at least double that amount). These were all very fresh and still bore the marks of sea lice, five were 14lb or over and one was around 16lbs. As I drove home I thought that this must bode well for the coming months. In fact only 7 fish were caught in the whole of June and just 19 fish for July! What was happening to our season? Reports were coming in from all over Scotland of very small and thin grilse. The weather did not help, it was probably one of the hottest and driest Julys ever recorded in the Highlands, perhaps the heat wave would break in August.



75 fish were caught in August, and there was a great improvement in the numbers of grilse in the river, but these only averaged 4lbs. A few days of overcast skies and drizzle made all the difference. But the overall temperature was more like the south of France. In September 106 fish were landed, but they were still reluctant to take the fly. The weather was still unseasonably hot during September. We managed to have a picnic lunch on the river or outside the Lodge every day during the last week of the season.

First fish were obviously much harder to come by this year, however some still managed this wonderful feat.

Andrew Carless, Alistair Bell, Jack Femelo & Caroline Bradley (*below*).



On a rather worrying note, I have to report that as a whole, we managed to return only a paltry 67% of fish caught this year. The Lodge book managed 70% and the Twinners book 62%. This will cause a lot of raised eyebrows from the KSDFB, who will be keen to impose a more strident policy on catch and release. Their aim for all Kyle rivers is 75%. In a year where it was quite obvious that salmon and grilse were scarce, why kill fish? If this does not improve next year, I will be forced by the Kyle of Sutherland District Fishery Board to impose a compulsory release of all fish caught on the Shin.

On a happier note a fish was finally caught in Gate. Nick Latham had already caught five fish by the time his host Chris Brown banished him

from all the good pools! A side of smoked salmon is on its way. Chris's party were all new to the Shin and managed to catch 16 fish, and returned them all, well done.

Once again the fishing books were filled in incorrectly by some party leaders. Its not rocket science to use the 24 hour clock & record the sex of each fish. Four parties failed completely to record the sex of any of their fish, and three other parties only intermittently. Please read the instructions in the front of the book!

The Grudie ran almost constantly throughout August and September, due to work on the pipe and this helped a bit. One of the reasons Meadow's catches were a bit below the average may have been because they were able to run up the Grudie for a change. It is interesting to note that fish were caught and risen in all sorts of odd places. One of note has to be a fish an intrepid Grace

Everett caught in amongst the large boulders below Willies Pot. This is the water well above the Grudie. The biggest fish of the year went to one of our longest and most loyal tenants, and a guest star of TV's "Ladettes to Ladies" Cleone Stenhouse (*below*).



She caught it in a small run named after her late father George Raikes (Raikes run, below Fir 3, and well above Field). The fish measured 37" and was estimated between 22-25lb.

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I'd like to say a big thank you to Alick, Richard, Kiy, Sandra, Hamish, Martin and Agnes, for all the hard work they put in over the season. They managed to maintain the very high standard through the long hot summer. During the winter we hope to be making some major bathroom additions to the Lodge and building subject to planning, a small Scandi house on the site of the old dog kennels, for seasonal staff and winter lets.

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## Free Trout Fishing On Shin

Trout fishing on the Shin continues to suprise. Elaine Vaughan (*right with Richard Crofts*) was skating a Sunray in Suspension on the 11th September, when a fish took with a great big swirl, after a few seconds she and Richard realised it was a brown trout of 4.24lbs. Rember Trout fishing is free when taken with Reid's during April & May.



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Have a very Happy Christmas and New Year.  
Tight lines.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Iain [unclear]".