

## President's Report 2025 Season

### Boats

The Club began the season with well-attended work parties and launched boats to Loch Avich, Loch Oude, Loch Seil and Loch Gleann a Bhearraidh at the start of the season. I made a commitment that any boat found to be leaking would be withdrawn from service until fixed and so the Sior Loch Boat and one of the Avich boats were taken ashore where repairs were made. The Loch an Droguinn boat also sprang a leak and took some time to make watertight but this was done successfully on the lochside. We were very fortunate to receive the offer of a boat share on Dubh Loch Mor, Barcaldine. A new member, Adrian Hatton, found a boat which he offered to allow us to use if we assisted with the mooring and getting the boat to the loch. We were successful in this and the boat was used by many members who enjoyed access to a water on which we have not had a boat before.

I hoped to get the boat for Loch Dubh Mhor, Kilmelford ready for use but the distance and demands for repairs to the other boats meant that this did not happen. Perhaps more pertinently, we found that we did not actually have permission to moor a boat on this loch. Whether this was an omission from the current lease or an historic oversight we do not know, but we now have a firm lease in place that allows us the use of a boat on Loch Dubh Mor, Kilmelford. We just need to put its keel bands back on and it's ready to go. This will be done as soon as possible so that the loch can be fished from a boat once more.

Loch Nant remained very low for the bulk of the season and we were only able to put the boat on its mooring shortly before the competition against Lochgilphead in September. By this time the loch was so high that we were able to put the boat onto the old mooring beside the track to the Sior Lochs, where it remained until the end of the season. It gave a few good days' fishing at the back end. Loch Nant remains an excellent water to fish, so long as we can get the boat in at a place where it is safe and convenient to access.

With the problems on Nant and Loch Dubh Mhor, the Avich boats were worked hard and needed some maintenance in the year. In fact their workload was heavy enough to prompt us to ask Forest and Land Scotland whether we could put another boat on Avich to make three in total. Their answer was favourable and we now have permission to moor three boats at Dorlin Point. If we can achieve this, the wear and tear on each boat may lessen and the work required to keep them in service reduced. We can but hope.

### Disabled access

We made a promise at the last AGM to explore means by which the lochs could be made more accessible for members with restricted mobility. To this end we were lucky to be offered a new mooring location on Loch Oude. The mooring by the road has always been difficult to reach down the rock wall and the new site is a gentle five minute walk along the forestry track on the west shore. We have been given consent to park at the gate leading to the track and the mooring is now reached by an easy descent from the track to the lochside. Loch Oude is therefore markedly easier to access than in the past. In addition, as mentioned before, Dubh Loch Mor at Barcaldine is now fishable from a boat, for the first time in living memory. This loch is known for being a small-fish water but if you persist, there are decent fish to be had here and the boat makes the whole loch accessible. The drive in from the Sandpits gate takes less than ten minutes and the walk to the water is less than 100 metres down a gentle slope.

I will also mention Avich and Loch an Droguinn as being easy to get to - they are accessible in less than five minutes from your car and the boats are boarded from firm ground. If any boat is to be wheelchair accessible it will be on Loch Nell, but we need to ensure that this facility can be made available at a reasonable premium on our indemnity insurance. If the waters I have mentioned are inaccessible to anyone for reason of infirmity, then we cannot really do much more. Wild brown trout live in wild places.

## Loch Nell

In addition to improved access to Loch Oude and Dub Loch Mor we have also been able to agree terms with the owner of the south shore of Loch Nell to allow us to put a boat on a mooring here. We were not able to release a boat in time to use it on the loch in 2025, but the new mooring will be accessible throughout the season without any need to give prior notice. This will make it much more convenient than the old mooring at Torinturk. We are actively engaged in preparing or acquiring a boat to put here, where it will be one of the closest boats to Oban and will be a welcome addition to our fishing. This will, without question, be the boat nearest to your car. There is a parking space, much used as a picnic spot, within a stones's throw of the gabion we have placed for the mooring. Members will have to be careful when fishing Loch Nell that they do not infringe the fishing of those proprietors who reserve their barony rights. The Fishing Guide is being updated to show the areas which are out-of-bounds. As a loch which can produce salmon, sea trout and brown trout, we are very lucky to have access to the fishing on Nell and must observe these modest restrictions. The revised guide will be sent by email to all members before March 15th.

In summary, at the season's end, we had ten boats available on the following nine lochs:

Oude, Seil, Glen a Bhearraidh, Avich (two), Nant, Loch an Leoid, Loch an Droguinn, Sior and Dhub Mor, Barcaldine.

## Catch Returns

Members fished from the boats on more than 180 days and reported catching over 1800 fish, an average of more than ten fish per day in a boat. This compares very favourably to 2024 and shows that the fishing in our waters remains productive and reliable. We have no reliable means to record catches from those who fish from the banks. This is something which we hope to improve when the new website goes live. An easy way to submit catch returns is something which we hope to be able to make available for all members and visitors, whether they fish from the bank or a boat.

## Committee

The committee held two meetings in the year, and remained active throughout the season toiling on the Club's behalf and making full use of email, WhatsApp and Facebook to ensure that all were involved in decisions and kept up-to-date on our progress. To inform other members of our activities I sent out four newsletters, which was two fewer than in 2024 but there was in fact, less news. I can only report so much from my own fishing and boat work before it gets boring. Possibly members were too busy catching and returning fish to find time to tell me about it. The newsletters that went out received favourable comments, so if you want more, let me have some news to circulate...

Iain was worked hard as Treasurer, because the money kept coming in from new and returning members, and I kept spending it. The Anglers' Corner almost ran out of permits at one point because of the demand. Iain will give his report next, but the finances are sound, and this is in no small part due to Iain's efforts. He has been Treasurer now for ten years and has quite understandably decided to pass on the baton at the end of this season. Iain has been a great Treasurer and will be a hard act to follow, but we must find someone to take his place. If that could be you, please let us know.

Andy took on the role of Facebook updater and there was an immediate increase in followers of our Facebook Page. We now have almost 700 followers with some interesting threads developing from our posts. Peter MacKay has undertaken to act as our Webmaster. The website is being revamped and modernised and will be moved to a cheaper and simpler hosting platform as soon as it is complete. Allan has added has dealt with lots of emails from members, prospective members and visitors. I must also thank Charlie and Richard who have contributed to many work parties and given sage advice in running the Club. I am very thankful to all of the committee for your support and assistance.

## Competitions

We fished on Lochgilpheads Lochs in April and on our lochs when we hosted Lochgilphead in the return leg. Lochgilphead won in April, and they won again in September. On each occasion we were outnumbered by the Lochgilphead team and they lent us some members to balance things out. Our thanks go to Jim Grout who arranged the competitions and the hospitality after the Nant day at the Brander Lodge. The competitions provide a chance to meet other members and fish waters that you may not otherwise get to visit. All members are welcome to join in the competitions - there is no selection process and the emphasis is on pleasure rather than deadly seriousness. If you have not joined us for a competition yet, feel free to come along and see what it's all about.

## Membership

The membership exceeded 100 again after reaching three figures in 2024. This year the total of season permit holders reached 113 which I hope is a strong sign that members find joining the Club worthwhile. Sales of permits by our remaining outlets held up and we were once more assisted in many ways by The Anglers' Corner beyond their permit sales. Particular mention goes to Adam Wyness and Stephen Bullock whose enthusiastic recommendation of the Club's lochs and helpful advice to members and non-members alike, has made a big difference.

## 2026

Looking to the coming season, I have been working away at the 12 footer for Loch na Sreinge. We have had the lease for that water for some time, and have now extended the terms to allow us to keep a boat moored on it. I am determined that we shall see a boat on Loch Na Sreinge during 2026 and the sooner the better. If we have to, we will move the Nant boat to Loch Nell to get us started there. We will also continue to repair, maintain and improve the boats as and when opportunity allows. The new website should make it easier for members to see our progress, and the addition of a Facebook Group to our Page will make it possible for members to post their own news and questions. Our sound finances make things possible now which would have been unachievable in more straightened times. Watch this space. Thank you.