

Angling
Week

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LOUGH CARRA BOOK IS A REAL TREAT FOR ANGLERS

There is a publication that will be of interest to anglers around the west this Christmas, featuring one of my favourite trout lakes in the region - and not just for the trout alone but also for its unparalleled scenic beauty and having, for the most part, spring-fed gin-clear water throughout.

Lough Carra is self-published by Chris and Lynda Huxley; Chris, an ecologist, and Lynda, a photographer launched it at Castlebar's Linenhall Arts Centre earlier this year.

Chris and Lynda describe Lough Carra is one of Mayo's most valuable natural assets, having in the past been the subject of study by many famous scientists and naturalists, including Robert Lloyd Praeger and Major Robert Rutledge.

It harbours a rich variety of archaeological treasures, has fascinating and complex historical interest and has been the inspiration of novelists (especially George Moore whose novel 'The Lake' is set on Lough Carra), poets, musicians and artists.



These themes have been brought together in a lavishly illustrated book by Chris and Lynda Huxley, who have been studying the lake and gathering information for the past 15-years.

Now, they have produced a synthesis of what is known about this wonderful site, illustrated with Lynda's photographs (many people will know of her photography from her 'Mayo Calendar' and greetings cards). There are also reproductions of many of the impressionist paintings of Lough Carra by Partry artist Deirdre Walsh.

Carra's marl and limestone bottom over mainly shallows is most unusual but often helpful as one can easily see its trout rise to take a fly. The trout are very silvery in colour and more like sea trout than brown trout.

Another unusual feature of the lake is that it's one of the safest to navigate, not having a dangerous rock or stone found anywhere.

The lake is very much associated with the famous Moore family of Moorhall, who took care of dozens of local people during famine times, providing money and food for workers and neighbours alike.

The book covers geology, climate, archaeology, history, art and literature, flora and fauna, aquatic ecology and angling, and ends with a discussion of what the future might hold for the lake and its surroundings.

It contains information on all these topics, presented in a way that will be readily understandable to everyone. The book marks the first time that a wide-ranging summary of one of Mayo's natural assets has been produced in such a format.

Dr Ken Irvine, currently Professor of Aquatic Ecosystems at the UNESCO Institute for Water Education in the Netherlands, but previously leader of the Trinity College Dublin Lough Carra research team, formally launched the book and opened the associated exhibition of Deirdre Walsh's paintings and Lynda Huxley's photographs.

Following the book launch, a series of short illustrated talks about Lough Carra took place

A beautiful picture taken by Mark Wilson showing Lough Carra on a recent visit there. Inset: Mark Wilson and his friend from Belfast having a break from trout fishing at Lough Carra.

in the auditorium of the Linenhall Arts Centre. Chris Huxley covered the fauna and flora of the lake, Cilian Roden of GMIT gave a talk about the aquatic ecology, Dr Yvonne McDermott of GMIT discussed Burriscarra Friary and the mendicant friars, and Deirdre Walsh described her work to capture the changing moods of Carra on canvas.

Signed copies of 'Lough Carra', by Chris and Lynda Huxley, is available for purchase through most of Mayo's bookshops, or directly from Chris & Lynda Huxley, Carra Books, Carra-james, Belcarra, Castlebar, Co Mayo. For more information, contact 094 9032422.

Meanwhile, Robbie Pitman, secretary of the Galway Fly-tying Guild (0863617361) sends word that the Guild holds a course in fly-tying every Friday night between 8 and 10pm in the Bridge Club Rooms on St. Mary's Road, Galway. All are welcome to come along.

And finally, fifth and sixth class students from St Mary's Senior School, Dunmanway, Co. Cork, were this year's National Winners of Inland Fisheries Ireland's 'Something Fishy' competition award at a prize giving ceremony held in the West Cork Education Centre.

The competition is nation-wide and is aimed at fifth and sixth class students at primary level and successfully has been running since 2005, first initiated by the Central Fisheries Board in

conjunction with the Black Educational Centre in Dublin.

Susanne Campion of Inland Fisheries Ireland says the programme is based on the life cycle of salmon and gets students to explore, water, fish, fish stocks, angling, conservation of rivers and lakes and fish as part of the food chain.

The students received the award and a €700 prize for their class project 'The Wonderful Water Kids Show'. Project entries in this year's competition addressed the themes 'Water: A Precious Commodity' and 'Water Quality and the Environment'.

Their innovative entry comprised a digital and artistic interpretation of the theme, presented through a video format.

Jim Daly TD and Noel Harrington TD, congratulated the students while presenting the perpetual 'Something Fishy' award to the students on behalf of Joe McHugh, Minister for Natural Resources, who was unable to attend

the event.

The 'Something Fishy' programme is, once again, aimed at fifth and sixth class students at primary level and is broadly based on the life cycle of salmon and to encourage students to explore water, fish stocks, angling, conservation of rivers and lakes and all relevant parts of the food chain of fish.

To help participating schools in the programme and projects, Inland Fisheries Ireland fishery officers take students and teachers to waterways so to get a hands on experience of aquatic in streams and rivers. A comprehensive set of resources for teachers and children is available on www.somethingfishy.ie.

Schools interested in participating in the 2015/16 programme should contact their local Education Centre for details. This year's winning entry 'The Wonderful Water Kids Show' can be viewed online: www.somethingfishy.ie/blog.html

