

The Savills Malloch Trophy



NEWS RELEASE

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2011 winner of Scotland's most prestigious angling award, the greatest honour in British gamefishing

The Chairman of the Tay Foundation, owners of the Savills Malloch Trophy – for the largest salmon caught on the fly and safely returned during the year in Scottish waters – is delighted to announce that this year's winner is Sam Valentine for a fish of 34.5 lb landed on the River Nith.

Mr Valentine commented on being told of the decision of the Savills Malloch Trophy Committee on December 12th: "In 27 years of fly-fishing it has always been my ambition to catch a salmon of over 20 lb. In November this ambition was well and truly achieved! I saw something huge breaking the surface of the water. It appeared almost like the back of a seal. Two casts later my line just stopped. At first the fish seemed unaware that it was hooked. Then it took off and I had an epic battle of 45 minutes before eventually we were able to land it. After quickly weighing it, we returned it to the water and with a flash of the tail it swam off very strongly".

Mr Valentine's magnificent salmon was caught on the Dalswinton beat of the Nith on November 16 and weighed in a weigh-net, before being carefully released back into the river. To be eligible for the trophy a fish must be caught on a fly in a sportsmanlike manner and be returned unharmed in accordance with best catch and release practice.

At the Savills Malloch Trophy Committee meeting on December 12th nine possible contenders, the great majority in excess of 30 lb, landed by both male and female anglers in a wide range of rivers between the north Highlands and the Solway, were considered. Mr Valentine's entry, which fulfilled the relevant criteria including best evidence and careful handling, was after lengthy consideration endorsed as the winner for 2011. His name will be engraved on the Tay Foundation's trophy, joining an illustrious list of previous winners which stretches back four decades.

Savills Director Roddy Willis said: "As sponsors of the Savills Malloch trophy we are delighted to see it head south to the River Nith. It exemplifies that one does not have to fish one of the Big Four Scottish rivers to be in with a chance of winning this trophy and indeed of catching a leviathan salmon".

The Committee also agreed to make a special award to 14 year old Frank Cotton, who landed and released a fine 28.5 lb spring salmon in the Tweed at Sprouston in May.

Robert Rattray, of CKD Galbraith and Secretary of the Savills Malloch Trophy for the Tay Foundation, commented: “Frank’s tremendous achievement should be a real inspiration for all young salmon fishers. In his youth he has caught the fish of a lifetime! Furthermore the fact that he returned the fish sends out a highly positive conservation message”.

The encouraging number of large salmon entered for this year’s Savills Malloch Trophy is consistent with a remarkable, unprecedented in recent decades, increase in 2011 in the numbers of larger salmon – fish that have remained at sea for three or even four years. On some rivers fish in the teens of pounds dominated catches in May and June and throughout the season heavier fish have been unusually common with plenty in the 20 lb to 30 lb class and several in the 30 lb to 40 lb class.

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Photo caption information Sam Valentine (right) and Dougie Smith, gillie at Dalswinton on the Nith, (left) with the 34.5 lb salmon from the River Nith, which was carefully returned to the water. (Additional photos available on request)

Issued on behalf of the Secretary of the Savills Malloch Trophy by Andrew Graham-Stewart; for further information telephone 01863 766767 or mobile no 07812 981531. Alternatively contact Robert Rattray, Secretary of the Savills Malloch Trophy, on 01738 451600 or 07899 877720.

Notes for editors

- 1) The Malloch Trophy is named after the Perth manufacturer and retailer of fishing tackle, Mallochs of Perth – recognised as the greatest name in Scottish tackle history and founded by P D Malloch, one of the leading salmon authorities of his day. The Trophy was first awarded in 1972 for a 43 lb fish caught on Tweed by Lady Burnett and awarded in 1999 following a run of 28 consecutive years (when it became the most keenly contested angling award in Scotland) for a 33 lb fish caught on the Spey.
- 2) After 1999 the trophy was not presented and remained locked in a cupboard for over 10 years; it was lost to the salmon fishing world until the [Tay Foundation](#) was able to acquire it. In 2009 the Tay Foundation entered into a three year partnership with Property Specialists Savills (www.savills.com) to relaunch the Savills Malloch Trophy with the aim of promoting voluntary catch and release programmes, and the conservation of large salmon in particular, on all Scottish rivers. The 2010 winner was Huston McCollough for a fine 36 lb salmon landed from the River Spey.
- 3) The Savills Malloch Trophy Committee, including representatives from across Scotland, met on December 12th 2011 to consider this year’s contenders. The Committee’s decision in all matters is final and no correspondence will be entered into subsequent to the award winner being announced.

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