



NARGC NEWS

A newsletter by the membership for the membership ©

A Message from The Chairman



Dan Curley NARGC Chairman

Welcome again to our second edition of NARGC News- a newsletter by the membership for the membership. I hope you found our first one informative and the feedback we have received has been very positive to date

While we are making it available to you on our Facebook and NARGC Web page we will shortly make it available in your e mail in box. Our GDPR policy means you must request that it is sent to you and we are hoping to have such a facility available for you to opt in, in the new year.

All the sub committees have met now, and as they begin their work for the year, I wish them well, and hope for good delivery from them for all our members. Your executive has also got down to their work in an efficient manner, and I will report further to you on these matters in the upcoming editions.

This Newsletter is for our Members. If you wish to contribute with a snippet or a more comprehensive piece, please contact our PRO, John Toal.

There is an article on our Gizzard Survey in this newsletter, but if I could ask you to get this out amongst our duck shooters. Spread the word by whatever means you can, as we want 50 gizzard from every county body before the Duck season closes this year.

Hopefully we will all make time to get out into the country and enjoy our sport over the Christmas period,

All that's left for me to say is I hope you and your families have a safe and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Dan Curley

A Message from the PRO -

John Toal



Figure 1: Mr. John Toal PRO

The AGM of 2018 saw me returned as National PRO. It is indeed an honour to have been given the opportunity to promote the NARGC nationally and internationally.

In my first year in the job there was a lot of learning to do and the more I learned, the more I realised that I have much yet to learn. Some might say that so far, I have only scratched the surface and they would not be far wrong.

Communication is the key word that I want to explore in this article, in particular how do we communicate with our membership, our supporters, various interested parties and groups and of course with our detractors? Therein lies the job of public relations.

If by now you are thinking “What is Toal going on about” you can be forgiven because as most people who know me will attest:” He does ramble on a bit” Still here goes as we pick our way through this minefield.

Communications is a two-way street.

We broadcast our message but how do we know if we have reached our target audience. Has the message gotten through? Was it well received? Did

our audience understand what we wished to convey? Do we need to reinforce the communication?

So far, the broadcast has been made but we don’t know whether or not we have succeeded in our communications goals!

We need answers to these questions. We need feedback. Feedback is the traffic in the other lane. The thing that lets us know if we are succeeding or not.

The broadcast mediums we employ are In-house Publications, Articles in Periodicals, Our Website, Facebook, Newspapers, Radio and Television.

We also use good old person to persons contact, meetings, slide shows and other meeting opportunities such as Game Fairs, “The Ploughing” and Clay shoots or open days.

Feedback

The good old face to face encounters are an excellent feedback loop but are fleeting and sometimes difficult to record.

Surveys.

Surveys and returns sheets help but are often sporadically answered or are geographically skewed.

Please send in your bag returns so we can develop some solid data that will allow year on year comparisons and trend building on game species. We have detractors and they take every opportunity to knock everything we do. Be part of the fight back to preserve our sport.

As advised previously we are seriously threatened with the banning of lead shot pushed by the European Chemicals Agency we are as an Association are fighting this proposed ban with our partners in Ireland and Europe

The Repeat of the 1988 survey on duck gizzards, for lead shot ingestion is vital to our defense. This is a vital survey and requires a nationwide response. Feedback to us by way of gizzards and then we will

publish the results that will lend weight and credibility to our defense of our membership

New initiatives

The NARGC Website is in the process of being revamped to make it more dynamic and easier to access.

Our Facebook page is monitored daily and we are happy to place items of interest to our membership and the wider shooting community. This is one of the fastest feedback loops (even if sometimes we don't like all the comments we receive) and as such is a great sounding board to our members.

This year the NEC (National Executive Committee) decided to establish a communications taskforce.

The job of the taskforce is to examine the effectiveness of our communications strategy and to progress new and complementary initiatives in communications.

The NARGC : E-Newsletter has been launched with the help of this taskforce and hopefully by now many of you have seen our first edition.

A big shout out to all Regional PRO's.

We are adding a regular feature to the newsletter. "News around the Regions"

So, let's be hearing from you. Email me at johngtoal@hotmail.com with your contributions and events.

We intend to establish an email list and or a text message list where members and friends can have the Newsletter sent automatically each edition. See the revamped website or FB link to avail of this facility.

External Promotion

The NARGC has a policy of monitoring the media for positive and negative stories. This is somewhat akin to tightrope walking as we must decide the level of our responses. Time and again detractors

seek to provoke us into reactions designed to give them the maximum air of publicity. On occasions then the correct response is to simply ignore them.

There are several friendly publications where we try to develop contacts but equally there are publications where the editorial policy and resulting journalistic style is unsympathetic to our sports and where engagement is in the main futile.

The International scene.

Over the last two years we have engaged most positively with FACE Europe. We have attended many events, participating fully in FACE matters. This progress culminated in the election of our John Flannery to the board of FACE as Vice President (Atlantic Region).

Given the fact that European law affects us and unlike our neighbours we are remaining in the EU, this closer involvement in European matters is of vital importance.

A word here about the spread of African swine fever across Europe. This is fatal disease to which there is no vaccine or cure. Since I attended a veterinary conference in February the disease has jumped from far eastern Europe to Prague in the Czech Republic and now to Holland. This killer if it reaches our shores could decimate our pork industry and destroy our disease-free status. Watch out for regulation on movement of hunters from mainland Europe and possible Biosecurity legislation here. We will keep you posted

Internally responses are not always as forthcoming. Feel free then to contact me as I am here as a resource for you

As Christmas approaches and we move into the business end of the season when the easy birds have all been had and the good gun dog comes into his own. I am prompted to remember my childhood excursions in pursuit of game adventures with my Uncle that at a young and impressionable age got me hooked.

My earliest hunting memories stretch back into my childhood. Six years old in wellingtons walking at my Uncle Peter's side behind a great big field spaniel. Mind you it was a case of stay behind the gun, the gun being a BSA single barrel shotgun carried broken with a paper cased Eley cartridge in the chamber.

The memory of the gun being unloaded and set aside as I with arms wrapped tightly around Peter's neck was carried across the stone ditches typical of the foothills of the Mourne, is forever etched in my memory, then waiting, as Peter scaled the wall again to retrieve the gun and on with the hunt. All that time Ben the field spaniel had been sitting, keeping a close eye on me so I did not stray like the loyal dog he was. I'm sure he would have herded me back to my allotted spot had I moved as much as an inch. Ben was six the same age as me and I had a special love for him and I think him for me, his great big head that would gently nudge into my hand to be petted. Even now nearly sixty years later He sits large and vibrant in my mind's eye. He is probably the reason that I have always had spaniels as my own hunting dogs.

Peter (God rest him) was the husband of my father's twin sister. They were then a childless couple and in Peter I had a second father. As I grew longer of limb and stronger of wind I travelled the mountains and foothills of the Mourne, along the streams where I witnessed the ancient art of tickling a trout and always in the pursuit of the scarce game that inhabited those green and rushy fields. Pigeon, crows, occasional duck in Grants bog, rabbits and sometimes a hare made up the bulk of the annual bag. Pheasants were scarce in those days in mountainous fields with stone walls dividing them. I lived then as now in a big town and as time went by my country holidays were much restricted. Late teens brought different pursuits and hunting was temporally abandoned.

Fast forward to my early twenties, married, settled with a house of our own I broached the subject of a shotgun with my newish wife. You are mad in the

head to be wanting to get up in the middle of the night to out shooting, don't expect me to get up with you, and don't expect me to eat any of that stuff. Oh, and enjoy yourself! The deal was sealed and off I went to my local firearms dealer to become the proud possessor of a single barrel Baikal shotgun. With that the odyssey began that brought me to the NARGC and eventually to these pages.

The joy of dog and gun still burns bright as ever, My message is simple, if you have the opportunity please take a youngster out with you, There will be those that think I'm crazy, but it is the youth that will be the future of our sport and Organization. Take an hour out of your day over the Christmas period and see if you can sow a seed of a similar childhood memory that will stay with someone forever as these will be fond memories,

I hope you all experience some great sport over the Christmas break.

John Toal (NARGC PRO.)

Compensation Fund Report



Figure 2: Mr. Chris Gavican

As the NARGC Fund Administrator, I frequently get asked *'have ye much accidents happening'?* and when I stand back and review the question, it is a fair enough one, mainly because we do not speak about

the nature and extent of accidents generally as they are all treated with great confidence.

I will be breaching no confidences by telling you the nature and extent of incidents that have occurred in the current year to date, that is since August 1st last – i.e. in just 4+ months.

On the Fund side, there have been seventeen (17) incidents reported. These can be broken up thus: -

Physical injuries from gunshot/bullets	3
Dogs injured	1
Sheep attacks	1
Dogs colliding with motorcars	6
Property damage otherwise	2
Cattle shot or injured	2
Guns damaged	1
District Court license Appeals cases	1

As you can see from the above table there has been a wide variety of occurrences and these are entirely typical of any year since the Fund began. The high number of incidents involving poor control of dogs, is a continuing and disappointing trend and is something we have alluded to before. We urge all Fund Members to exercise much greater vigilance in the management of their dogs.

You will read also that we have assisted a Fund Member in pursuing an appeal to a District Court in the matter of a firearms license appeal application and indeed a second such appeal application is also imminent. Unfortunately, there are Garda Superintendents who will refuse a license for trivial reasons and/or in unreasonable circumstances and where this arises, we will always assist our Members in the defence of their constitutional rights in the Courts and this, despite our having an excellent relationship otherwise with Garda H/Q (Policy Unit) on firearms licensing overall.

On the Personal Accident side of things, we have thirteen (13) reported incidents of injury and a breakdown of these reads: -

Leg injuries – ankles, knees, etc.,	5
Head injuries – eyes, head and neck	3
Arm injuries – hands and wrists	2
Shoulder injuries	1
Rib/Back injuries	1
Physical pelleting	1

Here you can see there has been a fair share of physical self-injuries arising while people engage in hunting, but these are, again, entirely typical of any year since the P.A. Scheme began.

As we approach the festive season we need to ponder on the fact that when we load our gun and gear into our vehicle and head away, we tend not to think too much about what might happen between then and when we might return. It does no harm to reflect of the endless possibilities that may arise and also on the reality that some don't return at all.

Christmas is a festive occasion and the consumption of alcohol is commonplace at this time. No more than for driving, WE MUST NEVER GO SHOOTING IF WE HAVE ALCOHOL CONSUMED.

On that note may I take this opportunity to wish you and yours a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful and healthy New Year.

Chris Gavican

Youth Development Report



Figure 3: John Butler Youth Development

Hi folks, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members young and old a very Merry Christmas and bring to your attention a worthwhile event that we are organising in the new year. You will also read a separate article by one of our Committee members Ray Hardie from Cavan on

Garda vetting which is part of a series of articles he will write to help you comply with this very important aspect of club due diligence

It is hoped that all Youth Development Officers in each county will shortly receive notice of a Training & Education day to be held in early February 2019. This will be our first opportunity to meet and liaise with members from each county. Details of these plans for 2019 will be unveiled and discussed at this meeting. We will also provide hard copies of "The Junior Trained Hunter Course" on memory stick and in booklet form. Provide copies of our "Youth Development Policy" and distribute a schedule along with details of our "*Transition Year Proficiency Course*"

As I keep say the Youth are our future and I urge all Clubs and Counties to make sure you have a Youth Development Officer in place before this meeting. It makes sense to link this with the child protection officer position as many counties have done.

At this moment in time we need the people in positions that are willing to work with our Youth. The NARGC will provide all necessary training and guidance over the coming year.

Details of date and venue will be circulated in the coming weeks.

If you require any further information I would be happy to discuss the matter with you, my details are on the NARGC website.

John Butler

Deer Sub Committee

Deer Poaching - Alarm Bells are ringing from many Regions

The Deer Sub Committee of the NARGC are very aware of the many ongoing problems with "Deer

Poaching". Unfortunately, the latest antics of the poachers with their newly acquired state of the art technology is causing untold damage to deer in many parts of the Country. This makes the task of proper management and culling by genuine deer stalkers even more difficult.

Gone are the nights of the give-away lamp. These culprits are now using the latest in "Heat Seeking & Laser Technology". It is now much more difficult for An Garda Síochána and National Parks & Wildlife Service Rangers, to detect and prosecute these criminals.

The "Deer Sub Committee" of the NARGC are made-up of members from Counties Cork, Galway, Donegal, Carlow, Longford and Wicklow. They will, early in the New Year, make proposals to the relevant authorities to tackle and stop these illegal practices.

We, the Deer Sub Committee are aware of many illegal and repugnant practices' being used by these Deer Poachers/Criminals, in many cases operating in gangs or groups. We the NARGC Deer Sub Committee will make contact with the many Government Departments/Agencies that must become involved in this. We will seek urgent meetings in order to make all the relevant parties aware of these practices in early course, and we will expect urgent action from the authorities.

If anyone has any information on any of these matters, please contact the Deer Sub Committee at stalking@nargc.ie or, text to 085.7423538.

We will, through this Newsletter, keep our members up to-date on these very important issues.

On behalf of the Deer Sub Committee, may I wish all our Members safe hunting and a Happy Christmas and New Year.

NARGC Deer Sub Committee

News from Around the Regions:



Cavan Regional Game Councils 40 bird Spring Clay Target league is into its 4th year and attracts 146 participants from all over the County. The League which will be kicking off towards the beginning of March has been very successful beyond everyone's expectations.

In bringing new and not so new members together this helps us develop Clubs and provides an opportunity for folks to shoot clays in the off season between March and May.

With a prize fund of 8000 cartridges it is a very simple League shot over 7 different club grounds and is based on a classification system that ensures a fair distribution of prizes from AA-D with a High Gun category included. The minimum number of shoots you must partake in to get classified is 4.

While we welcome participation from everyone across the neighboring counties and further afield, we did make the controversial decision to restrict the prizes to members affiliated to the NARGC and only through a club in Cavan, it was this reason that we have seen the event grow from strength to strength because once you are willing to get classed you have a very fair chance of winning in your class in the 50 bird final which is held in a separate ground each year.

As you can see from the picture above, *the craic is mighty in Cavan*



Figure 4: Cecil Whyte, Tommy Brady, Alan Sexton and Adrian Smith at Killygarry SC during the 2018 Spring League shoots

If anyone wants to tease out how exactly our league runs or has any specific questions even want to give it a try yourselves drop is a line on our face book page or contact me through the NARGC contacts list.

Yours in Sport

Paraic Murphy (Cavan RGC)

Wexford Regional Game Council were proud to celebrate the contribution of several long service members at a recent event in the County.

Wexford RGC are 59 years in existence and these members were the founding backbone of what is the largest shooting organization in the County of Wexford. As with many counties the passion these members have for shooting both game, clays and deer stalking reflected in the work they put into the local parish clubs and its only fitting they were honored at the event. These members not only served the County but have put years of service into National level, giving contribution from the floor and the executive ensuring the checks and balances are there.



Figure 5: BACK ROW Paul Doran David Benson Jerry Lynch Des Furlong John Dunne William Auld, Locky Murphy Donal Behan Pat Bolger Paidh Doyle Frankie Conway Turlough Coffey Robert Flynn

respecting the countryside, advancing their Clubs in a sustainable way, and that was why we are all here today, these men led from the front, ensuring young members followed the best principles of conservation and respect, and we must never forget that. The fine principles of our sport we take as normal now was fine tuned by those men down the years”.

The 7 members honoured were;

- Pat Boyle, (Bawn Rod & Gun Club),
- Liam Quigley (Clones Gun Club),
- John Duffy (Maheracloune Gun Club),
- Hughie Martin (Inniskeen Gun Club),
- Martin Gilliland (Lough Egish Gun Club),
- Jim Tomany (Doohamlet Gun Club),
- Bertie Geary (Tyholland & Glaslough Gun Club)

All the recipients thanked the RGC for honouring them. Pat Boyle congratulated Dan Curley on getting the National Chair and wished him well in the role. Martin Gilliland said, *“while he was delighted personally in having been honoured, it was tinged with a bit of sadness when you reflect on all the great members who unfortunately had passed away, and we must never forget those members also”.*

Monaghan Regional Game Council

honoured 7 of its long-standing members at their recent RGC Meeting in Ballybay when they presented 7 members with the NARGC 50-year commemorative medals, which celebrated the NARGC 50th year anniversary 1968 to 2018. Some of those members were instrumental in setting up Co Monaghan RGC, and the national body to which the County is affiliated to the NARGC.

These members had served their respective clubs and County over many years, attending hundreds of meeting, all in a voluntary capacity. Co Monaghan RGC Chairman James Bannigan commented that *“these men put this RGC on a sound footing 50+ years ago, and we are here today because of them”.* He thanked them for their service to Club and County down the years. He said *“it was great to see that they were still involved and active in their clubs and indeed the county after all those years. They are what volunteerism and putting your club and fellow members first is all about”.*

Recently elected NARGC Chairman, and Monaghan Secretary Dan Curley concurred with what the Chairman had said commenting on how *“these men and other had showed the best principles of*



Figure 6: Michael Lavelle RGC, Dan Curley RGC, recipients Liam Quigley Clones, Pat Boyle Bawn, Jim Tomany Doohamlet, Bertie Geary, Tyholland & Glaslough, Hughie Martin Inniskeen, Martin Gilliland Lough Egish, John Duffy Maheracloune, James Bannigan RGC.

URGENT REMINDER:

Survey to determine the current prevalence of lead shot in the gizzards of Ducks in Ireland.

As previously advised in the November issue we are urging members to send in gizzards from wild ducks shot during the hunting season to determine the prevalence of lead in the wild population of ducks.

You will be aware of the moves afoot towards banning lead from wetlands and indeed much more, by the European Commission (EC). The EC has instructed the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) to pursue this, which they are doing. You will also have seen the data which the ECHA produced claiming that more than 1 million water birds die from ingesting lead shot annually in Europe. In Ireland, we have never seen this alleged problem on the ground, and indeed, most of us would contend that we can see no evidence to support this at all.

This survey is being coordinated by the NARGC Research Sub-Committee and it has appointed the following four NEC members to co-ordinate the survey: -

Mayo: Mr. Paddy Flynn (085.8498650) or email pflynnmayorgc@hotmail.com

Meath: Mr. Jim Brennan (086.2725372) or email jandabrennans@eircom.net

Wicklow: Mr. Tom O'Shea (087.2430081) or email tractor.tom@hotmail.com

Cork: Mr. Raymond McCarthy (086.8456804) or email raymccarthy1210@yahoo.ie

We ask each RGC to complete this task as quickly as possible and hopefully so that we can assess its progression before Christmas.

