

The Grower

Newsletter for the Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers

October 2022



Stranraer oyster festival returns



The Stranraer Oyster festival made a welcome return and despite heavy rain had a huge attendance. Loch Ryan oysters sold over 7000 oysters over the 3 days and were sold out by the Sunday lunchtime. Above are the participants in the Scottish oyster-shucking championship, two judges and compere Tristan Hugh-Jones. More details on back page. *Photo credit; Colin Hattersley*

ASSG Conference, October 6-7, "We are all in this together"



Book now for the ASSG annual conference. More details can be found inside this issue (see pages 13-16).

It's a promising title for the conference but there is no doubt that the competition will still be fierce for the coveted title of best Scottish shellfish and these prize plates from Richard Bramble!

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Advertising

The Grower is distributed to all members of the ASSG, to policy makers and scientists with interest in shellfish and is sent electronically all over the world to shellfish farmers and their ilk. It is also available online at www.assg.org.uk Why not advertise to our specialist readership?

The Grower is a quarterly newsletter edited by **Janet H. Brown, The Shellfish Team**, jan.brown.shellfishteam@outlook.com
 For membership of ASSG contact CEO **Dr Nick Lake**, Mendosa, Court Hill Road, Rosemarkie, Black Isle, Ross-shire, IV10 8UE NickLake@Assg.Org.uk
 For further information see our web site at www.assg.org.uk

Disclaimer: Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official view of the Association

4th International Symposium for Advances in Marine Mussel Research

The 4th edition of the International Symposium on Advances in Marine Mussel Research (AMMR2022), will take place from 21-23 November. Following on from the great success of AMMR2016 in Vigo (Spain), AMMR2017 in Sete (France) and AMMR2019 in Chioggia (Italy), this multidisciplinary, international meeting will take place in a glorious setting at the heart of the [UNESCO North Devon Biosphere](#), overlooking the North Atlantic. Whilst we know this isn't the summer meeting in beautiful Gdansk that many of us in the AMMR community might have been expecting, I really hope this meeting offers a worthy substitute here in the UK, until we can return to Poland for the next edition.

AMMR2022 offers a 2.5 day meeting that will celebrate the latest in marine mussel (*Mytilus* spp.) research. We want this to be a truly interdisciplinary, cosmopolitan meeting, spanning sub-cellular and molecular to whole ecosystem function, encompassing fundamental blue-skies to entirely commercial research, stretching from the sub-littoral to the high inter-tidal. Just like the spread of these incredible bivalves, we would also love to welcome researchers from across the globe. More information available at

store.exeter.ac.uk/conferences-and-events/college-of-life-and-environmental-sciences/events/4th-international-symposium-for-advances-in-marine-mussel-research

WORKSHOP: New diagnostic method for shellfish disease and invasive species.

Tim Bean

6th October, 11 am, McCaig suite, Corran Halls, Oban (just before ASSG meeting).

We will be hosting a short workshop prior to the Annual ASSG meeting to demonstrate a new portable diagnostic tool. This technique, which is quicker, cheaper and as accurate as current methods, may be suitable for improving biosecurity in both aquaculture and restoration. Note, this is not a sales pitch... we really want to know how to make this work in the real world!

If you are interested, please join us at 11 am in the McCaig Suite just prior to the opening of the ASSG meeting. If you can join us for the demo please let me know on tim.bean@roslin.ed.ac.uk



Dates for your diary

Aquaculture Europe 2022
Rimini
September 27-30, 2022

ASSG Annual Conference
“We’re all in it together”
Corran Halls, Oban
October 6-7, 2022

Masts Annual Science meeting (ASM)
Supporting the Blue Economy Vision”
November 8-10, 2022,
Technology & Innovation Centre,
University of Strathclyde,
Glasgow

National Shellfish Association
Baltimore, USA
March 26-30, 2023

Contact details

Editor of The Grower, Janet H Brown,
jan.brown.shellfishteam@outlook.com

CEO Nick Lake, Mendosa, Court Hill Road,
Rosemarkie, Black Isle, Ross-shire, IV10 8UE
nicklake@assg.org.uk

Treasurer
Stephen Cameron, stephenc@scottishshellfish.co.uk

Other members of management committee;-
Patrick Blow patrickblow@cowrieassociates.com
Sarah Evans sarahe@scottishshellfish.co.uk
Ruth Henderson ruth@fishuk.net
Tristan Hugh-Jones tristan@oysters.co.uk
Michael Tait michael@shetland-mussels.com
Gordon Turnbull gftbull@gmail.com

CEO's Column

Nick's Notes



Dr Nick Lake, CEO of the Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers (ASSG)

Six Months

If there is one issue we must not let slip from our collective consciousness, it is that others are continuing to endure the sufferings of war on the continent of Europe. Even if we have no greater vision than our own self-interest, we need to ensure the focus remains on the plight of Ukraine and its citizens.

It is easy to forget that our collective social and economic wellbeing is interlinked with issues which can appear to be of another country or time. Conflict aside, generally failing to manage the outputs of food or energy from our natural resources can impact far beyond any battlefield and impoverish others. Hopefully Ukraine will prevail in its endeavours.

Early harvest

If nothing else reminds you of the great summer weather we have had on the Scottish east coast, there is the early wheat harvest. Fields cleared of a standing crop in a matter of hours these days with modern (and extremely expensive) machinery and giant straw bails immediately stacked. One day later, large numbers of geese already amongst the stubble gleaning what they can. All very pastoral and other worldly!

Then reality kicks in that we are heading towards an earlier ASSG Conference than usual (6-7 October) due to tides and school times. Covid has also meant that the 2 year absence of the event causes the grey matter to need to be brought back to life in the organisational side of my brain!

We are all in this together

What seemed like a good working title for our conference when conceived at the start of the year, has taken on a whole different resonance now.

Noting the reference above to bountiful wheat fields, what has been for generations accepted as part of the natural cycle of rural agricultural practice, with potatoes rotated with wheat, fodder and root crops, this rural succession has suddenly been thrown into sharp relief. Fertiliser and fuel are the two key ingredients in maintaining outputs of modern terrestrial agriculture. Both the soil and machines being hungry in the need for inputs if the required pace of production is to be sustained.

We are all directly aware of energy costs – and we unfortunately are all going to become even more aware how these influence our food costs – and possible likely availability of certain products? Ammonia based fertilisers for terrestrial agriculture are also going to be in short supply regardless of the price paid.

For the top 20% economic echelon of the population this will barely register – if you are in the lower 30% you are likely to be making choices which would have been unthinkable over the last 50-60 years. We have to ensure society finds ways of supporting this impacted socio-economic group to more than just survive – we must enable our fellow citizens to have choices.

So, what about the other 50% of the population? The majority will become the “squeezed middle” in popular media parlance. Wanting to maintain their options while

recognising that they may not have the same standard of living arising from such constrained choices?

The question for those responsible for maintaining outputs of food products originating in the marine environment is - can we find a consumer group segment within this 50% that remains feasible for us to supply, given our own underlying production costs? The upper 20% will look after themselves – but we can't all simply aim to supply the high-end luxury markets.

Inflation ranging into lower twin digits is likely to make it a doubly challenging environment for those trying to keep their production and distribution costs in check. An academic consideration – but why when the current crisis is a clear indication of what happens when the supply of materials and resources is disrupted, are our financial institutions raising interest rates which will have no impact on the availability of key resources – just cause further pain to individuals and businesses alike?

Possibly global economics is not my strong point and I have previously given my views on why pursuing growth in GDP is a doomed ideology in an over populated world, but sure as eggs in eggs, we are all entering a recessionary period. Put another way a lowered standard of living which will constrain the choices of most.

Greater interdependence

Production of food is probably the most fundamental an activity a nation requires to master if it is to survive. Economics dictate it is more cost effective to grow pineapples in Brazil than Birmingham even taking into account the transport costs. However, have we become too dependent on being able to select the best of the World's outputs at any time we like? Is this a good indicator of the standard of living we have come to expect in the west? Well yes and maybe!

Without needlessly scaring our younger generations there is a need to re-establish the link between home grown food production and a reasonable standard of living, at least for the “squeezed middle”. The financially constrained lower 30% of our community will need ever greater help to survive the coming challenges and we will all need to rise to this challenge.

Diminishing options

We are all aware of the current economic difficulties – but obviously not with equal impact.

Seafood products are never likely again to become a staple as once the native oyster was for the working masses. Farmed Atlantic Salmon may well be cheaper

CEO's Column cont.

than some of our traditional whitefish species and readily acceptable to the general public. But cod and haddock are always likely to be the chip shop favourites. With whitefish supplies from Russian sources being rightly taken off the menu the popular seafood species have risen in cost and diminished in choice.

So, what does the future hold for Scottish cultivated shellfish?

Well, that depends on how we collectively manage the challenges of ensuring the Scottish coastal environment can accommodate food production. It currently is all available to play for – we just need to ensure that the true value of the resource we currently have is well understood and managed. Each element of government policy in the marine environment requires to enhance our chances of maintaining a high-quality protein supply - affordable at least to the “squeezed middle”.

Diminishing returns

Unfortunately, we currently are facing the twin evils of rising inflation and energy costs coupled with a public sector struggling to appreciate and react rapidly or decisively to the emerging crisis.

Dealing with the easiest elements of this first.

The one issue with seafood is that it requires to be

kept in a cool chain immediately post-harvest and through to final sale. This has become increasingly energy intensive and with costs escalating almost on a daily basis, and the increasing volumes of shellfish and particularly mussels being processed before sale, this is a major factor in determining the necessary retail price. The other obvious element in this equation is that in order to process you need to cook the shellfish followed by rapid cooling. Again, an energy sapping step.

The second aspect is that our Scottish shellfish are produced largely on the west coast and in the Highlands and Islands – necessitating often extensive transport links to the central belt and beyond. We move a bulky item considerable distances to reach our processing and customer bases.

Hence our costs can only increase and this at a time when the “squeezed middle” will be looking to reduce the costs of their weekly shopping.

Half full or half empty

It is very easy to be distracted by doom and gloom (especially with a national media always on the hunt for the next disaster/scare story). However, in times of recessionary pressure those consumers who are able to afford them typically will view having the occasional food-based treat as a natural mood lifter. Shellfish with



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CEO's Column cont.

its high quality and luxury image fits this bill exactly. All the better for home consumption if it is already processed or available to serve fresh with little preparation.

While only a proportion of the demographic will be able to make such a choice, many may well cherish the occasional fish and chips or even salmon en-croute!

The important point to acknowledge is that there will be opportunities for shellfish to be marketed – it is just going to be a whole lot harder to make the books balance.

Local sales of local food products have a role to play and this was a lesson learned during the Covid lockdown experience.

Productivity

So, if the shore side of sustaining a shellfish cultivation business is getting a whole lot more difficult what about the production end?

Well, this is where we return to the, “we are all in this together” theme of this year’s ASSG conference in Oban.

Why are we bringing together the salmon/trout/marine finfish and seaweed/sea vegetable sectors into the

domain of our Scottish shellfish industry discussions?

Fundamentally we are all food producers and each has a role to play in maintaining and developing their own outputs. These impact not only the local communities but also the wider interests of our nation in seeking to develop sustainable / enjoyable / nutritious and most importantly affordable food supplies for all levels of consumers.

This is indeed a mighty weight to be held on the shoulders of differing scales and outlooks of businesses, ranging from multinational companies to sole traders. However, it is the ingenuity, speed of intervention and adaptability of the business sector which offers us the best chance of delivering the goods. Whether “just in time” is still to be seen – but I am sure all will be giving it their best shot! This is where our true resilience lies.

While Governments may dream up strategies to deliver national objectives it is going to be the resolve of the business community to actually produce food for an identified market and ensure the economics stack up to instil continuity of supply.

It is such continuity of supply of materials (pineapples from Brazil?) that we have all become so accustomed to and which has supported a certain standard of living. Both climate change and other man-made shocks to the system have indicated that we can no longer simply anticipate that all will remain the same in terms of unlimited supplies of energy, feed stuffs or certain foods.

The irony is of course that the fundamental reason for aquaculture now accounting for the majority of seafood products over those from the wild, is that we have managed to over exploit wild fisheries resources and have had to develop other sources of seafood supply.

We need governments to regulate the industry in an appropriate way to ensure a balance is struck between food production and other society benefits associated with the marine environment. Such include food safety, affordability, environmental protection and community access. However, changing objectives and the regulatory framework to support these will need to keep pace with the challenges we will increasingly face in the real world.

Someone in a different era famously once said we are entering a “Brave New World” and currently we see this for aquaculture and the ability to develop resilience in our seafood supplies. We all need to think “outside the box” if this is to be achieved and this requires all parties to consider the views of others.

Entrenched positions in a rapidly changing world run the risk of becoming graveyards.

With the bigger issues of the world, and the individual lives impacted kept in our thoughts;

All the best

Nick

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A birthday celebration for a life of service to the shellfish world

Janet H Brown reports

Little did I know when I emailed Dorothy Leonard in Maryland, USA asking for her biography and portrait for The Grower that 16 years later I would be attending her 90th birthday celebrations in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland! The request at that time was for information to accompany her talk at the 2006 ASSG conference on “Are our policy decisions based on science? 4 case studies from the USA.”

The party was held at the Knockninny Country House on Lough Erne where the boat “The Lovely Leitrim” was moored up for the event. This had been the planned venue for the party but it turned out to be too small for the number of people planning to attend the celebration, coming as they did from far and wide.

The sight to greet the party guests at Lough Erne they headed to the quay was particularly enhanced by a wee oyster stall. Glenn Hunter (*seen below on left with Dot nearest him to his left*) was dexterously shucking beautiful deep cupped oysters. These were from Wild Atlantic Oysters. Glenn had two nice oyster plates to hand but the number of shucked oysters never filled the plates - I'm sure the most I ever saw was three, such was the demand. This was despite the fact that the visitors were pretty fussy, used as they were in the main part, to *virginica* rather than *gigas* oysters but their prejudice was soon worn away. It was interesting to hear that Glenn's wife, Aisling owns WB's coffee house in Sligo which incorporates the Sligo oyster experience - sounds like a place well worth a visit sligooystereperience.ie/



The party moved into the hotel for drinks still accompanied by wonderful music, but this time a different band played. Micheal O’Cinnidie* got up to make a short speech and made a lovely welcome as if he was a long term inhabitant of County Fermanagh, talking of the wonderful musical tradition which we had been enjoying and went on to tell us how the waters of Lough Erne were once the scene of much work on sea planes in the Second World War so that while Dot was enjoying her youth in USA there were equally a lot of Americans right where she was currently placed, also having some good times. So with Dot standing in front of him, Micheal then proceeded to reveal that Dot was the recipient of a Congressional Citation from Congressman Jared Huffman of California’s 2nd District!

It was explained to me later by Bill Kier what it was that Dot was receiving. The congressional record contains 2 parts, one being the official business of the US Congress but there is a second part in which members of Congress can pay tribute for special contributions made in public service. Another American visitor at the celebrations explained it to me as the equivalent of the Queen's honours system - the republican version thereof! But the citation details all her contributions in her working life; how following the adoption of the 1972 Coastal Zone Management Act, Dot proceeded to create an atlas of shellfish production areas around the entire coast of the US for the purpose of protecting these areas. This led on to producing “Best Management Practices for Shellfish restoration.” At one time she was in charge of the Maryland Department of Fisheries, and she also worked with the state of Washington as executive director of the non-profit Willapa Alliance to improve shellfish culture in the southwest corner of that state. She has been very much involved with shellfish restoration and influential in the establishment of the International Conference on Shellfish Restoration (ICSR) from its initial meeting in Hilton Head back in 1996. The citation concluded with birthday greetings for Dot, supposing, as was absolutely correct, that she would be surrounded by friends she has made from all over the world with her shellfish activities. And these activities are by no means over – there have already been 2 preliminary meetings of a potential steering committee to organise the next ICSR meeting – possibly next year in Florida.

And as this is written the happy band is trundling around Ireland enjoying the sights.

* **Dr. Micheál Ó Cinnéide**, ex diplomat, ex director of EPA and ex director at the Marine Institute, spoke highly of ASSG meetings in Mactavish’s kitchens but was NOT born in County Fermanagh!

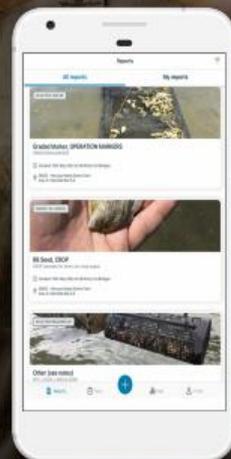


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Making seafood a core choice for UK consumers



THINKAQUA

ThinkAqua

Making seafood a core choice for UK consumers in an equitable, healthy and sustainable food system was the stated aim of the “#SeafoodMattersUK” meeting. This took place at the University of Stirling on 23rd/24th June. The event was organised by Prof. Dave Little (University of Stirling), Prof. Baukje de Roos (University of Aberdeen), and Prof. Christina Hicks (University of Lancaster); funded by ARCH-UK; and delivered by ThinkAqua. The event brought together more than 120 participants from industry, academia, government and NGOs to exchange ideas and discuss the challenges of increasing seafood consumption in the UK. There were various panel discussions, presentations and demonstrations. On the evening of 23rd a dinner was organised at Forth Valley College especially showcasing affordable, but very tasty, seafood dishes made with ingredients that are regular products at StartUp Stirling (Stirling’s food bank).

Local food author Lorna Cooper shared her recipes; Catriona Frankitti demonstrated the entertaining lessons she gives to kids to encourage more seafood consumption; researchers from Stirling highlighted the need to utilise all elements of seafood, including salmon skins used for fashion; International Canners sent sardines and mackerel samples; and the Seaweed Academy (SAMS) brought novel snacks for everyone to try.

Discussions revolved around how to increase seafood consumption amongst low-consuming categories in the UK – the young and the less well-off. Canned seafood was certainly a popular option because of its affordability and nutritional value, and mussels received resounding support because of their environmental and health credentials.

Pictured below left; Catriona Frankitti demonstrating how tasty seafood can be. She normally engages groups of children, but attracted a good crowd of the delegates with her informative and fun stories.

Below right; Christina Hicks (Lancaster University) leading a panel around ethics of seafood. Ally Dingwall (ASC), Dan Lee (GSA), Hazel Healy (DeSmog Investigative Journalism), Eva Maire (Lancaster University) and Geoff Tansey (Food Systems Academy) answered questions around the impact of global supply chains of farmed seafood.

Photo credit for all photos; John Bostock

This diverse, professional group identified the following key recommendations to support increased seafood consumption for better nutritional, health, and environmental outcomes through greater equity, accessibility and affordability:

1. Enable and promote seafood inclusion in school dinner menus. This helps to ensure children can access nutritious meals, even when that is not easily available at home. This will also increase familiarity with seafood for consumption as young adults. Some key focus points include: mussels are fun, salmon is straightforward, canned mackerel is great value, pangasius is versatile.
2. Strengthen international trade to continue the import of fish that typically enable the poorest consumers to access a healthy choice, whilst also increasing the opportunities for UK wild caught and farmed fish, shellfish and seaweed.
3. Encourage product innovation so that seafood arrives in supermarkets, restaurants and fast food outlets in formats that consumers are familiar with and will enjoy. Create nutritional requirements for fast food that can be met by a greater inclusion of seafood in menus.

There is an excellent video now available on Youtube “#SeafoodMattersUK - Voices from the Conference” which gives an essence of what you may have missed. Essential viewing for readers of The Grower!

<https://youtu.be/DXCv6GNyMvU>



Seafood a core choice cont.



*Pictured right; Jude Brown of Isle of Skye mussels also addressed one of the panel sessions. Above and top right; more scenes from the meeting.
Photo credit John Bostock*



THINKAQUA

ThinkAqua is a global non-profit delivering sustainability improvements for enhanced social, economic and environmental outcomes, particularly for smallholder aquaculture farmers in developing countries. Their current portfolio includes partnership projects in shrimp, carp and tilapia in Asia, tilapia in Africa and shellfish in Europe. thinkaqua.org/

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Letters to the Editor

Sustainable Communities Fund

From Anneli Hill, Aquaculture Planning & Engagement Manager, Crown Estate Scotland,
Quartermile Two, Second Floor, 2 Lister Square, Edinburgh, EH3 9GL

Dear Janet,

I am writing to let you know that Year 3 of Crown Estate Scotland's Sustainable Communities Fund was launched last week. Environment grants are available through this fund for Crown Estate Scotland tenants only and we are very keen to receive applications so that tenants benefit from these grants.

There is £100,000 of funding available, with individual grants of between £5000 and £20,000.

The environment grants are for projects which can deliver demonstrable environmental benefits within 18 months of award of funds.

Typical activities to be supported could include:-

- initiatives to increase local biodiversity;
- projects which can demonstrate climate change benefits e.g. renewable energy installations and natural climate solutions;
- facilitating a change to greener ways of operating e.g. measures to support waste reduction or recycling;
- enabling green travel e.g. installation of bike racks;
- activities that reduce flood risk, pollution or carbon emissions; and

- environmental education materials e.g. display boards providing information about the local environment.

The deadline for projects is

12 noon on Monday 17 October 2022.

More information about eligibility criteria and how to apply is available on our website:

www.crownestatescotland.com/our-projects/sustainable-communities-fund

If any potential applicant has any questions or would like to discuss their application, please send an email to environmentgrants@crownestatescotland.com.

Best wishes,
Anneli.



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MARINE

Mussel Float

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The Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers Conference 2022



“We are all in this together”

October 6-7, Corran Halls, Oban



ASSG conference October 6-7 2022

Following on from the themes in Nick's Notes our conference again takes place in Oban - a welcome return to all following our two year hiatus. We have a wide ranging perspective to cover given our “we are all in this together” title.

To confer in Oban

If we are to develop aquaculture, we need access to suitable marine space and the landlord overseeing this in coastal waters is Crown Estate Scotland. Their Chair, **Amanda Bryan** will set the scene in outlining the opportunities and responsibilities the CES consider relevant in granting access to the seabed estate. Such decisions are balanced against all other potential uses and the requirement to both deliver stewardship and economic returns to the nation from this natural asset.



Mairi Gougeon MSP, Cabinet Secretary Rural Affairs and Islands opens the first conference session with an appraisal of the Scottish Government's desired outcomes for aquaculture development. With both the economic health and survival of coastal communities and the employment and food production associated with rural affairs, the Scottish Government has a clear role in

guiding development through public sector interventions.

Following immediately from this will be key presentations from the aquaculture business community identifying the current production landscape and challenges. **Tavish Scott, CEO Salmon Scotland** will describe what a multinational industry salmon has become in a relatively short period of time.



Conversely an even newer (or potentially a far older?) industry focused on the cultivation of seaweed in Scotland will be described by **Dr Kyla Orr, Director of Kelpcrofting** which relatively recently started cultivating seaweed on the west coast. More appropriately termed sea vegetables (as all production is for human consumption rather than as a feed stock for the fertiliser or pharmaceuticals sectors) this is a developing food source which has potential to expand from a niche market.

Rounding off the current industry landscape will be **Stephen Cameron, Managing Director of the Scottish Shellfish Marketing Group** whose members are the leading producers of cultivated shellfish in Scotland. Supplies of both oysters and mussels are variable based on a high dependency on natural environmental conditions influencing not only annual seed supply but

ASSG conference cont.

algal productivity and nutrition. In order to reduce such variability, it is important to draw from as wide a production base as possible whilst retaining control of costs and quality.

Operational Environment

The second conference session examines just what the external market pressures are for getting aquaculture products onto the consumers shopping lists. Price may be king in a recessionary period but consumers do have an ideal of the products they aspire to.

Dr Amy McGoohan, University of Edinburgh will examine the footprint of aquaculture production in the context of some of the terrestrial agricultural outputs. Life Cycle Analysis not only considers the simple carbon footprint – but all factors such as fresh water uptake, nutrient requirements, energy consumption, packaging and transport in producing and getting the food to market. While LCA may not be of direct interest to hard pushed consumers the outcomes should be directly influencing wider government food policy and priorities.



Dealing with the perceptions that consumers have with regard to seafood products will be **Linda Wood, Marks and Spencer Plc.** Sustainability is an ever-present mantra for many producers but how much credence does the individual consumer attach to the mantle? Equally does simply being told that a food type is sustainable give the necessary reassurance? Conversely does the fact that the government allows seafood to be produced through a regulated aquaculture industry provide all the evidence that a consumer requires that it is a safe and nutritious product?

Rounding off the first day will be a presentation from **Dr Cathy Tilbrook, Director NatureScot** who will consider how the Scottish aquaculture industry aligns with the premise of natural capital – sustainably utilising the available natural marine resources for production of aquaculture outputs. How will this be sustained with potential expansion of the aquaculture industry in Scotland and are there wider benefits to be further gained? We already know of the various ecosystem services and biodiversity gains associated with shellfish farm sites. The challenge is how do we expand the gains, while ensuring that we do not materially diminish the underlying ecosystem given that climate change will be increasingly impacting the historic Scottish coastal waters environment?

Innovation and Evolution

The second day is all about how the industry is hoping to evolve based on development objectives both economic and social.

One of our nearest neighbours has shown a clear lead in how to develop shellfish aquaculture for community and national benefit. **Rory Campbell** a native of our own shores, heads up the **Seafood Technical Services division of BIM, Ireland.** The Irish development board covers all aspects of seafood production including fisheries and has excelled in having a joined-up approach to steadily increasing outputs, and creating rural employment opportunities. These include within the relatively new seaweed and sea vegetable production sector.

In terms of Scottish finfish **Iain Berrill, Head of Technical at Salmon Scotland** will outline both the technological and management interventions the sector will be pursuing in the coming years. There has been much social coercion for finfish activities to be moved either further offshore or indeed moved onshore. However, with various social, economic and environmental factors to consider the industry has specific development opportunities which will be assisted through technical innovations.



Shell-Volution is a project which has been outlined at a previous ASSG conference pre – covid and thankfully it is now coming to fruition. **Dr Gregg Arthur, University of the Highland and Islands** and a leading participant in the Islands Deal Consortium for the project, will explain the scope and intended impact. Shellfish productivity can only be enhanced by locating in the most appropriate locations. Through technological innovations the Shell-volution project will seek over a 10-year period to identify exactly where such sites are and the potential for seed supply specifically within the mussel industry.

Given that the whole industry is committed to sustainable aquaculture production it is probably worth someone explaining just what sustainable means? Step forward **Heather Jones, CEO Sustainable Aquaculture Innovation Centre.**

Prospects

The way ahead is the final session with a chance for reflection on the views of both industry and government in outlining how the sector is likely to develop and recognising the severe pressures that may be brought to bear through adverse factors such as climate change. I am sure added to this will be the double terrors of energy and inflation which are certainly sharply focusing industry minds.



ASSG conference cont.

Tavish Scott will once again take to the stage for the Salmon Scotland view.

Next up from the Scottish Government will be **Jill Barber, Head of Aquaculture Development, Marine Scotland** with an outline of their aquaculture vision. Finally, **Michael Tait, Director of the ASSG and the Scottish Shellfish Marketing Group** and the co-owner of one of our largest mussel farming operations in Scotland will present his perception of the future for the Scottish cultivated shellfish sector.

Oban Conference October 6-7,2022

So why should you attend the Oban conference apart from this range of presentations and the extremely serious debate to be progressed?

Well hopefully so you can catch up with friends old and new! Plus of course we have a range of trade stands booked with companies from as far afield as Australia and equipment manufacturers nearer to home including Ireland.

If you are an ASSG member the “Best Scottish Shellfish” competition will be seeking to determine the finest Native and Rock oysters along with cultivated mussel. Hence a chance to gain stardom and the prize of one of the Richard Bramble shellfish plates kindly sponsored by Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

There is the conference dinner and awards on the evening of the 6th October at the Fishhouse restaurant and of course our excellent seafood lunches on both of the conference days.

In addition, for those shellfish growers interested in the shell-volution project there will be a meeting

invitation extended by the Islands Deal consortium.

Running in parallel earlier on the morning of the 6th we have a presentation from **Dr Tim Bean** and his team from the Roslin Institute explaining the status of the innovations for disease monitoring at shellfish sites. This will be accompanied by a demonstration of the latest test equipment and the opportunity to participate in field trials (see page 2).

Finally, a hoped-for demonstration of the current status for a remote monitoring probe to identify and quantify a range of marine biotoxins. The project led by Dr Christine Edwards from the Robert Gordon Institute Aberdeen, has reached the stage of testing both the “electronic mouse” and a potential catalytic shield capable of breaking down shellfish biotoxins!

Add to that we will be again seeking to raise money for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) and so the opportunity is yours to walk away with a fabulous prize and feel good that even if you don’t, your money is going to an extremely worthy cause!

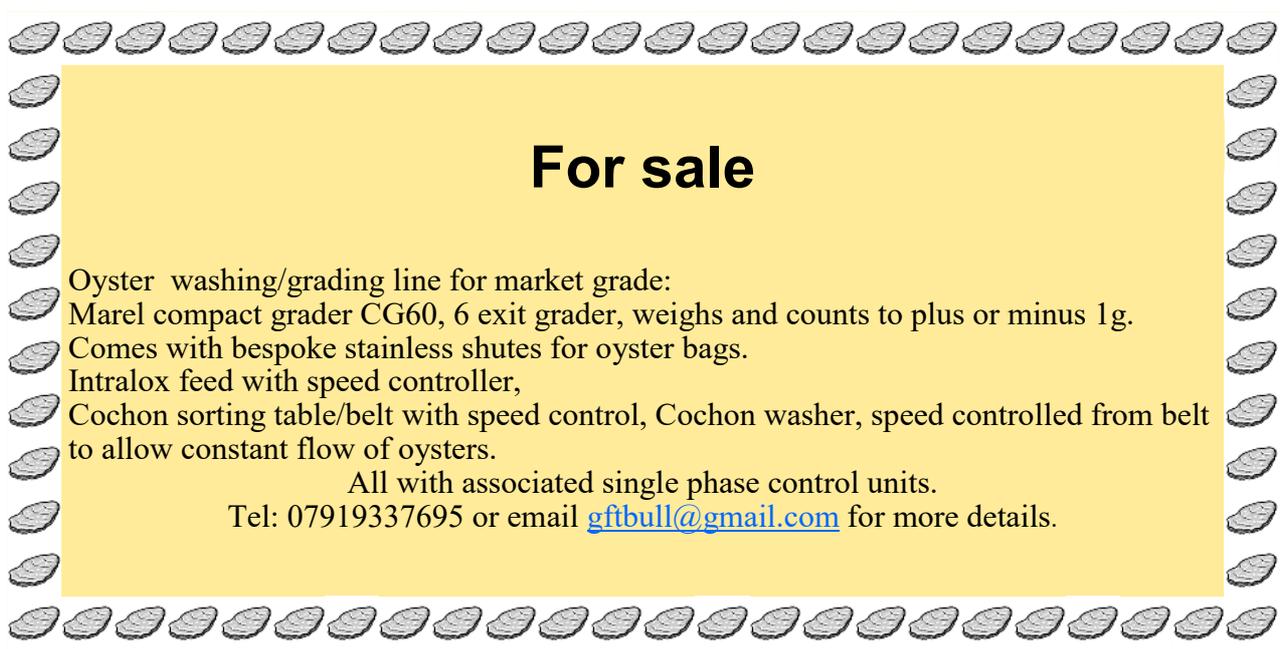
Following 2 years of covid isolation I am really looking forward to meeting up in Oban!

Booking for the conference is available through the ASSG website www.assg.org.uk

You can use this link below to book. It is the direct method and may be the easiest way.

<https://form.jotform.com/222092183862355>

all the best
Nick



For sale

Oyster washing/grading line for market grade:

Marel compact grader CG60, 6 exit grader, weighs and counts to plus or minus 1g.

Comes with bespoke stainless shutes for oyster bags.

Intralox feed with speed controller,

Cochon sorting table/belt with speed control, Cochon washer, speed controlled from belt to allow constant flow of oysters.

All with associated single phase control units.

Tel: 07919337695 or email gftbull@gmail.com for more details.

GEM PLASTICS - the specialist for mussel floats



GEM PLASTICS was established in Cavan, Ireland in 1988. Since then, GEM PLASTICS has developed and expanded its range of blow moulded HDPE Drums, Jerricans and its services and customer portfolio, supplying fillers - mainly those in the chemicals, pharmaceuticals and food and beverage industries - throughout the British Isles and Europe including some of the world's leading multi-national companies in these sectors.

The majority of GEM containers have UN certification packaging performance approved for the International Transport of Dangerous Goods. GEM PLASTICS Ltd manufactures its products using a Quality Management System which is approved to the International EN ISO 9001:2015 Standard and maintains a high regard to GMP compliance and environmental standards. The company's systems are also certified to FSSC 22000 (EN ISO 22000 & ISO/TS 22002-4:3013) which is the international standard for any organisation within the food supply chain.

GEM PLASTICS has an experienced management team who, along with a loyal and dedicated workforce, place customers' needs at the forefront of their everyday activities. Equally, it maintains an innovative R&D focus in key areas such as raw materials, processes, products and customer service.

Mussel Float

Alongside its core industrial packaging activities, GEM PLASTICS manufactures other blow moulded articles for industrial and consumer applications.

Prominent amongst these items, is its innovative Mussel Float developed in collaboration with the Irish Mussel Farmers and Bord Iascaigh Mhara - (The Irish Fisheries Board) for use in the cultivation and harvesting of mussels. Its novel and unique functionality resulted in GEM PLASTICS being granted a full European patent for the product.

The float is made in three sizes by the extrusion blow moulded process, using high-density polyethylene (HDPE) giving it strength and guaranteeing a long working life. The premier colour of manufacture is "Grey" and helps it blend in with its natural surrounding environment.

All the materials used in the manufacture of the float have been authorised for use in contact with foodstuffs.

The **GEM Mussel Float** was designed with the purpose of playing a pivotal role in the cultivation of mussel spat on ropes suspended from twin anchorage points on the float, positioned top and bottom. A special valve is fitted to allow air pressurisation before and during use (optional). This feature ensures that both shape and buoyancy are preserved in all marine conditions. Compared to the method of dredging mussels from the seabed, the GEM float offers a number of distinct advantages.

Advantages of GEM Floats

- ◆ 3 different Types (300 Litre, 200 litre, 100litre submerged)
- ◆ High strength handles for optimum usage.
- ◆ Manufactured from 100% food grade polyethylene.
- ◆ Non- Toxic.
- ◆ High Performance floats for all types of inshore & offshore farming conditions.
- ◆ Long operational life with no maintenance.
- ◆ Easy clean surface.
- ◆ Special valve fitted to allow air pressurisation before and during use.
- ◆ Excellent value on return of capital.
- ◆ Stackable easy to handle



GEM PLASTICS Ltd, Regaskin, Cavan, Ireland
Phone 00353494331077 sales@gemplastics.ie

Struggling to get equipment delivered?

Triskell Seafood

Triskell Seafood are traders in live shellfish and are based on the northwest coast of Ireland. They specialise in oysters; importing and exporting oyster seed, half-grown and adult oysters across Europe. They also run a consultancy service for new growers as well as experienced growers looking to upscale or change their operations.

Of interest to readers of The Grower is their extensive line of specialist equipment and protective clothing which they source from Ireland, France, Spain and the UK. They ship equipment across the world and say that customers in the UK still make up a significant proportion of their customer base.

We asked Company Director Marie-Aude Danguy what difference Brexit has made to exporting into Britain?

“Since Brexit we’ve all had to accept that exporting to the UK has gotten more complicated, more expensive, and requiring of much more paperwork. However, in Triskell we did a lot of prep work in the run up to the UK’s exit from the EU. We have customers in Britain that we have been working with for many years and we weren’t prepared to just cut all those ties.

So while there is undoubtedly more administration involved in a sale to, say, Scotland, it’s still possible and at this stage we are delighted to we have surpassed pre-Brexit levels of trade with the UK.”

If a grower wants to buy equipment from you what do they need to do?

“If it’s a smallish item that will fit into a parcel then the courier companies can do most of the import paperwork required but you need an EORI number. You can apply for this online very simply at www.gov.uk/eori

For larger orders that ship on pallets then we need to apply for an MRN or Movement Reference Number which is essentially an ID number for customs. The good news is that we are in a position to look after both import and export sides of the necessary customs paperwork for our clients for a small fee, making it super simple. And again all we need is a delivery address and your EORI number.”

Are there any extra costs involved in importing equipment to Scotland?

“Goods that come into Scotland are liable for UK Duty fees. You can find out what to expect in terms of cost at www.gov.uk/import-goods-into-uk. We aren’t in a position to quote for these fees or reduce them as they are applied on the UK side.”

You’re making it sound very simple Marie-Aude! Where’s the catch?

“No catch I promise! As with any new system there were glitches and slip-ups at the beginning but at this stage we are quite comfortable with the whole process. Exporting equipment and clothing to the UK is reasonably straightforward.

There’s still a long way to go unfortunately on the import / export of live seafood which obviously is a little more tricky for biosecurity reasons. Additional health checks and costs apply for these movements. We have managed to set up systems for regular customers and are hopeful that in time Scottish Shellfish will be something we can look at trading again regularly.”

Are you interested in talking to the team at Triskell about equipment? You can view their catalogue at www.triskellseafood.com, email them on info@triskellseafood.com or call +353 71 911 5886.



More news from Stranraer

Janet H Brown reports

If there is anyone still sticking to their view that native oyster do not form reefs, then see this from one of several such groups I found at the tide line in Loch Ryan.

Then the next day at the Stranraer Oyster festival who should I find but Bill Sanderson, (pictured below right)

with many such examples of mini reefs all found in Loch Ryan. He was there to explain the aims of DEEP and was attracting many curious people to enquire further.



Oyster eating competition

Sharp eyed regular readers of The Grower might have a déjà vu moment seeing the photo alongside. The winner of the oyster eating competition was once again Fin Bullough. Many congratulations to Fin! He might however have enjoyed greater competition if anyone had looked back to The Grower (October 2019) which gave the secret of his success, add the half dozen oysters that have to be eaten actually into the pint of Guinness. Easy!



From the organisers

Stranraer Oyster Festival has been hailed as an ‘incredible success’ by organisers. More than 18,000 people attended the community-led event, which is now one of Scotland’s biggest food festivals, a higher attendance than the previous event in 2019 despite extreme weather warnings and heavy rain.

The three day festival celebrates Scotland’s only remaining wild, native oyster fishery, located under the water of scenic Loch Ryan in south west Scotland. More than 7,500 oysters were eaten and ‘shuckers’ helped more than 1,000 people to try oysters for the very first time.

Romano Petrucci, Chair of Stranraer Development Trust, the community organisation behind the oyster

festival, said:

“While the rain fell endlessly from the heavens on Saturday, local people and visitors to the area came out in their thousands. As the organiser of an outdoor event you really worry about bad weather, but to see it making not one jot of a difference to your attendance is all the confirmation we need that this festival is truly special.

“It was humbling to watch people disregarding the torrential rain, filling the marquees all around and having an absolutely fantastic time. The whole festival was an incredible success, and when Sunday brought sunshine and blue skies above the sparkling clear water of Loch Ryan, it was a magical finish to a spectacular weekend.

Stranraer festival cont.



Tristan and Alexander hand a plate of oysters to a family group. What was remarkable was the number of children bringing their parents or older siblings to the oyster stall to try the oysters. Many had the idea that they had to be swallowed whole but could be persuaded to try chewing - and results were very gratifying. They returned with more members of their group to have a taste. I suspect it may have a lot to do with initiatives such as this reported alongside where Rob Lamont and John Mills take the school children to see what is coming from the seabed. The weather became something of a deterrent for the extreme pond dipping events certainly on the Saturday morning, but there was certainly a lot of marine life to see.

12 July 28, 2022 news@stranraer-freepress.co.uk

ALL ABOUT THE OYSTERS

Primary kids learn all about oysters

OVER 100 primary students from the Park Primary, Rappald Primary and St Joseph's School in Stranraer recently visited the town's harbour to learn more about oysters. Skipper Rob Lamont headed out early on his boat and caught a typical day's catch. He then brought ashore a selection of live large oysters, some smaller oysters, when some spat (the term for a baby oyster) and other delights from the sea floor including whelks, shells, seaweed and even a John Dory fish!

Above top: Skipper Rob Lamont with his haul of oysters at Stranraer Harbour and the children from three of the town's primary schools get the chance to learn about the catch and its importance to Stranraer.

Above centre: all the children had a great day out in the sun - and fresh air - over the harbour!

Left: The pupils were hands-on with the oysters and also had a tasting session with skipper Rob.

Left below: Oyster shells also make great earrings!

The children were absolutely delighted with the catch and everyone had to eat two oysters from about 100, with Rob giving careful instruction. They also had to try last year's spat and even had the difference between a native oyster and a table oyster. The children also had a chance to taste an oyster which was not cooked, with some mixed reactions, and every one went home with a shell or two in their pockets. It was a very good day.

Below: Released from Park Primary School said: "We all loved the trip to the harbour, the children don't stop talking about it all week and enjoyed getting the shells home!" Maria, 10-year-old from the Loch Ryan Oyster Primary Company Ltd added: "It is such a great opportunity to bring the message to the children to see 'to be able to touch, hold, spit and taste is a brilliant and right on our doorstep' too!"

From the NSA

A great opportunity is being offered for international students to earn a travel award to the 115th Annual Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland USA, March 26-30, 2023 and The Grower has been asked to share this opportunity with its readers. The details are below:

The FUCOBI Foundation has announced The Johnnie Castro Montealegre Student Travel Award. There are 12 awards available. The award covers NSA student membership fee, airfare, shared hotel room, meals, poster printing, and airport-Baltimore-airport transportation costs.

Students interested in applying for a travel award must present a poster at the NSA meeting and send the following information as soon as possible to fucobi@gmail.com: abstract, curriculum vitae, and copy of the visa page in your passport (ready for submission to the NSA annual meeting, 250-words).

Students should not submit abstracts into the NSA portal until they are approved by the Scientific Committee of the FUCOBI Foundation. They will select awardees based on ratings of the quality of the research. If you have any questions, contact fucobi@gmail.com.

Details are also available on the [NSA website](http://www.shellfish.org) and [Facebook page](#).



The National Shellfisheries Association (NSA) is dedicated to the promotion of knowledge pertinent to the biology, ecology, production, economics and management of shellfish resources. Join scientists, policy managers and industry members to help ensure that we all know of and use the best science and practices to manage and enjoy these valuable resources sustainably

- Meet and interact with scientists, managers and industry members at annual meetings
- Opt in to be listed on the NSA membership directory and search for other members with similar pursuits
- Receive the award winning scientific publication, the *Journal of Shellfish Research*, with online access to all NSA publications from 1943 to present.
- Receive the *Quarterly Newsletter*: Association news and activities, book reviews, information of related societies, a job placement board, and more.



Join today at <http://shellfish.org>

Photo news

Oyster shucking competition



Craig has not had a huge amount of practice with opening oysters and so went to offer his services at the oyster stall only to find they had amazingly sold out - having sold 7500 oysters.

Tristan Hugh-Jones having won the shucking competition several times was promoted to compere for the event.

Pictured left; David Jarrad, Director SAGB, Janet Brown, Alexander Wallace and Conor McClurg, a chef at Henry's Bay Restaurant

Below; Tristan Hugh-Jones made an excellent compere.
Photo credit Colin Hattersley.

The judges finally got let out from behind the curtain to see the competitors and to congratulate the winner of the Scottish oyster shucking competition. This was a new name on the record for the Stranraer competition, Alexander Wallace. He can enjoy his prize whisky but was unfortunately not able to take up the first prize which was an all-expenses paid trip to the World championships in Galway. Alexander has a long standing appointment (his wedding day) so the second place winner will go. We wish the best of luck to Craig Steele of West Coast Sea Products.



Shellfish culture

In this "Shellfish Culture" slot we have shown how you can make your own cute shellfish (The Grower, April 2021). Here we have a cute ready-made mussel – a recent much appreciated birthday gift! There are many others available – see www.jellycat.com/ocean/



Talking of birthdays, decorating cakes can certainly come under the heading of "culture" especially when it has been lovingly crafted for a 90 year old who has championed the marine environment all her working life. This was Dot's cake and the seaweed drew particular attention along with the myriad shells.(for full story see page 6.)

