

Accessing all areas

ANGLING NOTES: ‘THIS development is a success story about what a small group of volunteers can achieve with enthusiasm and professional guidance,’ declared secretary and founder member David Tantrum of Waterford City and County Trout Anglers’ Association at the launch of a new harbour complex at Carrigavantry Reservoir, Fenor, Co Waterford, last weekend.

I took the car ferry to Passage East, scenic route to Tramore and the short drive to Fenor. I was a little dubious negotiating the lengthy breen. After all, this was my first visit to Carrigavantry.

A big surprise was in store, though. There it was, this hidden gem of about 20 acres, wild and beautiful. Not a house in sight and just four miles from Waterford city.

The new harbour development is fantastic. Step-on, step-off, it’s every boat-angler’s dream. Co-funded by Waterford Leader at a cost of €220,000, there are moorings for 20 boats, protective piers, security fencing and CCTV surveillance that includes the car park.

Anglers with disabilities are also well catered for, with toilet facilities, parking and delivery last autumn of a Coulam 16ft Wheelyboat, the Johnny D – the first of its kind in Ireland and capable of accommodating two wheelchair users.

My invite read: “The official launch is 2.30pm, if you wish to go fishing first, be here at 10.30am.” I didn’t need a second offer. I was teamed with Tony Fagan from Stevenage in the UK. Originally from New Ross in Co Wexford, he left Ireland in the 1950s and returns every year for the fishing.

Conditions were windy, very windy but we managed with our electric engine and drogue to catch about eight good-sized rainbow trout and a jack pike. Nearby, an RTÉ Nationwide crew were busy filming Donal O’Halloran and John O’Dwyer, both wheelchair users, aboard the Johnny D.

Over lunch, a steaming bowl of fish chowder and top notch hot food soon had the large gathering of guests and anglers warmed up and in cheerful mood for the launching ceremony.

The secretary said the harbour complex idea was aimed at keeping “all that we loved about Carrigavantry”, but also to bring it into line with what tourist anglers expect. “I had an angler over from the UK recently and he landed two trout within two hours of leaving Luton,” he said.

Waterford County Manager, Ray O’Dwyer, said: “This is a great development and it shows what various agencies can achieve when they work together with a community group. I’m sure it will be a great asset to the people of the county and beyond.” Guest of honour, Suzanne Campion, head of Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) Business

Development, said: “This type of project is what IFI will be trying to promote from now on. We will do our utmost to help in any way we can.

The work is to continue at Knockaderry, so hopefully we can continue to work together in harmony.” A commemorative plaque was then unveiled to conclude a windy but highly successful day.

DEREK EVANS



Donal O'Halloran and John O'Dwyer aboard the Johnny D and ready for the fishing trip