

THE FIELD®

FEBRUARY 2018 £5

Redlegs and rioja

Spanish partridges that won't break the bank

The world's 10 best fishing adventures

A wish list for every passionate angler

Reeves's pheasants over spaniels

Premier cru sport at a French château

Eating up the game surplus

How to make delicious game terrines and pâtés



ISSN 0243-1170
9 4770015064991
FEB

The 2017 Macnabbers

The Field's Macnab Challenge, which celebrates the true spirit of fieldsports, was successfully completed by 17 people last year. Here are their stories

WRITTEN BY ALEXANDRA HENTON

The *Field* is proud to have started The Macnab Challenge, a sporting endeavour based on John Buchan's book, which pits skill and tenacity alongside dollops of luck and chance, on both hill and river, in search of salmon, stag and grouse. It never disappoints. Each year we see returning friends from both here and overseas, new entries into our fold, first-class camaraderie and a compelling compendium of stories from those who met with success. This year's Field Macnab Challenge, kindly sponsored by Swarovski Optik, celebrates the achievement of 17 very sporting sorts.

The first successful Challenge in 2017 was at Tulchan Glenisla on 28 August, home to Lucie and Florian Boedts-Kuehnle. Lucie is the founder of the Ladies Macnab Club, which she set up after reading about the Challenge in *The Field* and being inspired by the Editor's successful attempt. Juliette

Below, from left: Juliette Hézèques, who got the first Macnab of the year at Tulchan Glenisla; Charlotte Coups, also at Tulchan; Ben Carter at Invercauld

Hézèques from France was the first person to chalk her name on the board. An "all round" first timer, who shot her first grouse and stag, and caught her first salmon, to complete her Macnab. "The day was one of the most beautiful experiences in my life as a huntress," said Hézèques. "The morning of the challenge, I was determined to succeed. I had never shot deer before, and that was the most emotional moment of this day. I was very affected. It was also my first grouse and my first salmon."

Two days later, Charlotte Coups also took her first Macnab at Tulchan, alongside Marcus Janssen. Coups day started "on the Shee Water, a small tributary of the River Ericht accompanied by the gillie Dougie Morrison". After an hour's fishing with no sign of a take and conditions looking less and less "fishy", a last-ditch cast on a small pool hooked a salmon. "Without exception, it was the most nerve-racking 10 minutes of my life," said Coups. Then the race was on, as the fish was returned to the river and Coups headed to the hill with head keeper Bill Mearns and keeper Nick Stewart. A tough walk resulted in a brace of grouse and then "after lunch, sick with nerves and excitement, Bill and I drove to the farthest part of the glen where

we eventually spotted a small herd of deer sheltering underneath the precipice of the mountain". As the deer moved into position the shot was taken – and tears shed.

On the same day, Marcus Janssen achieved his Macnab at Tulchan. With no luck on the salmon in the morning, he bagged a brace and grassed a stag before returning to the River Ericht in the evening, where he landed the fish. "To complete a Macnab is one thing but for two friends to succeed on the same day is extremely special," remarked Coups.

Rupert Kenyon's Macnab on 30 August, from the Badanloch estate in Sutherland, was a case of third time lucky, having been one grouse short of a Macnab twice before. "After a late night, an early start and about an hour's fishing on the River Helmsdale, Angus Watson and I had all but forgotten salmon and were amusing ourselves quite happily with some light chat," he said. "And then – when least expected – a wonderful tug. The fish ran past the bottom of the pool and it wasn't until Angus understatedly said, 'Rupert, I think you should wind in a little' that I realised I was on the backing. Like a young(ish) gazelle I scampered downstream winding furiously. We were delighted to land and release a double-figure cock fish." →

