



# Bemersyde Estate

Dear Friends,

After five years of low water during the spring and summer months, it has been a joy to see this year's rainfall bring a welcome return of salmon in better numbers. While the anglers celebrated, it has been a more challenging year in the fields, although one memorable week in late April provided just the right balance – enough water for the river and dry conditions for tractors to work the land.

Bemersyde is a vibrant estate, supported by a diverse range of activities. From our permanent residents and holiday visitors to local and international anglers, the estate thrives on the energy and connections they bring. Equally vital are the employees, agents, and local tradespeople who maintain and manage the estate, ensuring we meet the many regulations governing agriculture, lettings, and conservation.

This year has seen significant achievements, including the re-roofing of the north roof of the east wing of the main house – a true masterpiece using Welsh slate, crafted to last another century.

Bemersyde also earned accolades, winning "Fishing Beat of the Year" as featured in Trout and Salmon Magazine, and was highlighted in Scottish Field's Luxury Edition. We welcomed visitors from across the UK and abroad, hosted archaeologists from around the world, and served as the stunning backdrop for a publicity shoot celebrating a new musical composition for the River Tweed.

As ever, we are grateful for the many visitors and contributors who make Bemersyde the special place it is. Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

With warm wishes,

*Earl & Countess Haig*

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## Unearthing History at Bemersyde Estate

This year, Bemersyde Estate once again welcomed an international team of archaeologists, joined by dedicated volunteers from the Trimontium Trust, to continue their exploration of Scotland's ancient past. The focus of the excavation was the native hill fort site, offering valuable insights into daily life, trade, and cultural exchanges during the era of Iron Age and Roman influences. A standout discovery included birch sticks, remarkably preserved in a deep ditch for over 2,000 years. Scan the QR Code to find out more.

Countess Haig enjoyed a guided tour of the site led by lead archaeologist Tanja, who shared detailed insights into the dig and its findings. She was joined by the Head Housekeeper Margaret who had made some of her famous plain and cheese scones—a much appreciated gesture on a cold, windy day!

This ongoing collaboration between Bemersyde Estate and the Trimontium Trust underscores the importance of uncovering and understanding the history of native Iron Age tribes and their connections with the Romans. We look forward to welcoming the team back in the future to further unravel the stories of our ancient ancestors.

The site has now been carefully filled in and returned to grazing, preserving its history.

We encourage you to explore the Trimontium Museum in Melrose, which tells the story of the largest Roman fort and settlement north of Hadrian's Wall, and the interaction between the invading Romans and the native Iron Age Tribes.







## A Busy Season For Bemersyde's Gardening Team

Peter and Rachel have been hard at work this year in both the walled garden and the formal garden. One of the key projects this year involved cleaning the sunken garden pond. Collaborating with the maintenance team, the pond's base was carefully repaired and refilled, restoring it to its former glory. This part of the garden holds historical significance as it is the spot where William Turner painted the house during his visit in 1834.

Guests staying at the house can now enjoy not only the picturesque views of the garden but also the flourishing ecosystem of insects, bees, and wildlife that call Bemersyde home.

In keeping with the estate's commitment to sustainability, every plant in the garden this year has been lovingly grown from either seeds or cuttings, showcasing the dedication and care of our team. Be sure to watch Peter share his insights on the flower beds at the front of the house—an inspiring testament to the beauty and hard work at Bemersyde. Scan the QR Code

With guidance from Margaret the team have been growing a variety of produce to sell from her Kitchen Pantry. This year the range has increased from fresh fruit and vegetables to small batch seasonal jams, chutneys, cordials and soups, which have been extremely popular with guests and visitors. Please scan the QR code to find out more from Margaret.

Guests staying at the house and cottage and anglers fishing the Tweed can now enjoy these homemade delights, available to purchase from the Kitchen Pantry.

**Margaret, Peter, Rachel and George 🐾**







## A Successful Fishing Season At Bemersyde

This season on Bemersyde has seen some excellent catches. The first fish of the season was caught on 18th March by Rob Scott in the Boat Pool, a 15 lber. Spring delivered some memorable fishing with 18 fish in April and May, including double figure fish for Tony Bell, Hugh Rutherford and Rob June continued with a double figure fish for Mary Munro in the Boat Pool. Rob Scott added a curious twist to the season with an unexpected Tiger Trout—a first for Bemersyde—and followed it up with an 8 lb salmon.

July brought two standout moments. Roger Herbert's 12 lb fish captured the public's attention, generating 81,000 views online. However, it was George Elliot playing a fish in the Boat Pool that stole the spotlight, generating an incredible 1.9 million views.

August was memorable, with good water conditions and fresh fish. Two young anglers, both aged 13, celebrated their first ever salmon and our oldest syndicate member, Rodger Wheeler, capped off the month in style with a beautiful sea-liced Grilse. The video has since garnered 1.1 million views.

Trout and Salmon Magazine printed a 10 page feature about Bemersyde fishing. Last year we had the pleasure of welcoming Editor Andrew Flitcroft and Staff Writer Rob Hardy to fish on Bemersyde and stay at the West Cottage overlooking the walled Garden.

As the season progressed, September maintained the momentum, with fish moving steadily upriver and catches reported from the Boat Pool and Woodside. By the time the season concluded, the beat finished on its best year since 2020 with 121 Atlantic salmon. We look forward to welcoming you in 2025.

*Ian, Andy & the labradors* 🐾







## Celebrating Success at the Annual Bemersyde Fishing Lunch

The Annual Bemersyde Fishing Lunch was once again a highlight of the season, bringing together fishing enthusiasts to celebrate Tweed angling achievements and the presentation of the coveted Bemersyde Trophy. This year's event was made even more special with the presence of Rachel Hamilton MSP, who joined us to honour the winners.

Mary Deakin was awarded the Adult Trophy for her remarkable 31lb Atlantic Salmon caught on Lower Birgham. Adding to the celebration, it was announced that Mary would also receive the prestigious Malloch Trophy in October, marking an extraordinary year for her angling achievements.

In the junior category, Alex Cross claimed the Junior Trophy for his impressive 15lb Atlantic Salmon caught on Boleside Beat. A huge congratulations to Alex for his exceptional skills and dedication to the sport.

Guests enjoyed glasses of fizz and Bemersyde handcrafted cordial, especially prepared for the occasion by our talented Head Housekeeper, Margaret. A heartfelt thanks to Billy and his team from the Buccleuch Hotel for their superb menu and impeccable service, which perfectly complemented the day's festivities.

We extend our warm congratulations to the winners and thanks to all who attended for making this a memorable event.







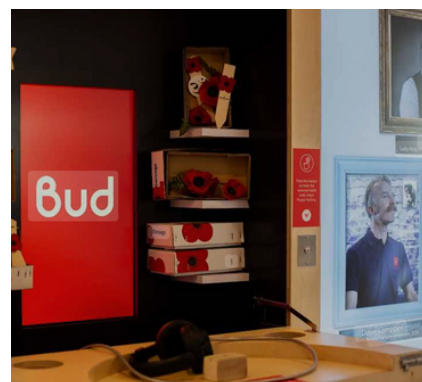
## Bemersyde Welcomes Poppy Scotland To Bemersyde

September, Countess Haig warmly welcomed staff from Poppy Scotland, along with their dedicated team of Learning Officers, to Bemersyde House. These passionate individuals travel far and wide across Scotland, bringing the powerful story of the Poppy to life for communities, schools, and large-scale events.

At the heart of their efforts is Bud, Poppy Scotland's innovative micro-museum on wheels. Bud is a unique educational experience, visiting schools and events to share the poignant and inspiring stories behind the Poppy—stories of reflection, hope, and the enduring importance of remembrance.

During their visit, the team shared insights into their impactful work, highlighting how Bud connects people of all ages with Scotland's history and the sacrifices of those who served.

To learn more about Poppy Scotland please Scan the QR Code







## Luxury Edition

Bemersyde House featured in the Luxury Edition of the Scottish Field Magazine within the top 10 exclusive fishing lodges. The house sleeps 23 guests.



## Music on the Tweed at Bemersyde

It was a pleasure to welcome Greg Harradine and Amici for a photoshoot to promote the premier of Flux Alluvia inspired by the beauty and history of the River Tweed before it was premiered in Kelso at an event that highlighted the river's timeless inspiration. The photographs appeared in the Times, Telegraph & Scotsman.



## Fishing Award

We are thrilled to have won the Best Fishing Beat of the Year at the Scottish Game Awards. Bemersyde welcomes anglers from across the UK and around the world to experience its world-class fishing.

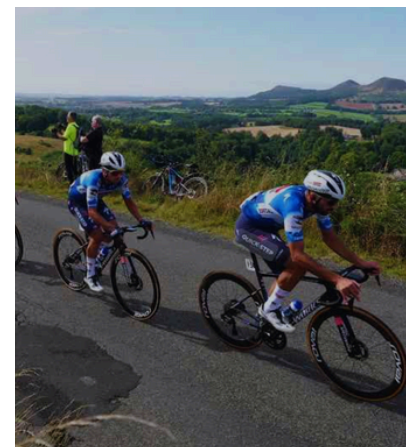
Winning this award is a testament to the dedication of everyone involved in maintaining the beat and providing an unforgettable experience for our guests.



## Get Ahead

Margaret Stewart delivered a workshop at Earlston High School which included an insight into her job as Head Housekeeper, including a session on ironing to help prepare the young students for life beyond Earlston HS.

'Get Ahead' is a partnership programme Developing the Young Workforce - Borders Skills Development Scotland & CLD.



## Tour of Britain

Bemersyde was included within the route of the Scottish Borders stage of the Men's Tour of Britain.

Scott's View was featured as a categorised climb during Stage 1 of the 2024 Lloyds Bank Tour of Britain Men, offering riders a 2.5-kilometre ascent with an average gradient of 2.5%.



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# Climate Change and Natural Capital

There is no hotter issue than the climate change debate and its cousin Natural Capital which brings the monetisation of nature.

Scotland and the UK is mainly populated by urban dwellers. What is common sense and does not need explanation to country dwellers is off the urban radar and an increasing amount of explanation is needed as everyone has an opinion about what we are doing wrong. Country folk are not necessarily interested in extolling their own virtues and there is limited time or money for PR. We are a scattered group, busy each day with the practicalities of country life which is much less available at the push of a button than in the city.

What we are seeing is that water scarcity at certain times is a problem for humans and fish alike. The rainfall is less predictable and more intense than in the past. The intensity of the rainfall brings problems with properties and land management. In times of drought, when the water in the river is low is precisely when the farmers are needing to irrigate.

Research has shown that the increased temperature, exacerbated by low water, in the river is damaging to the salmon and that the release of freshets has limited value, especially in the east. At the same time, human usage of water grows and sewage is a major problem. So it seems to us that finding ways to store the water at farm level, especially in the east where most irrigation is needed, would benefit all. This, of course, requires investment..... a thorny subject in farming circles following the recent budget.

Natural Capital monetisation has fuelled a rush to invest in land by investment trusts and corporations keen to secure the lucrative grants on offer for planting trees. The RICS has recently published guidance which makes clear that there has to be a projected gain in carbon sequestration for approval of a scheme by the WCC.

So it is imperative that the baseline of the existing carbon sequestration of the land parcel is accurately assessed. This is where the importance of carbon sequestration value of temperate grassland needs to be properly evaluated.

The farming community has been raising this issue for a considerable time, but to little avail. Indeed the carbon audits required of farmers make no mention of grassland sequestration.

Whilst financial accounting has developed over many centuries and has been refined and standard procedures tested, natural capital accounting is still being developed.

Financial accounting records the past with limited forecasts for perhaps the next year. Natural Capital accounting projects many years ahead and the bases for establishing values are, at best, untested, and, at worst, fantastic.

In the late 17th Century, Obadiah Haig wrote home to Bemersyde from the West Indies that he had heard bad rumours about the Darien project which he sincerely hoped were untrue as it would bode ill for Scotland. Sadly the rumours were true and Scotland realised that it had been scammed.

We hope the present rush to plant trees in the temperate climate of Scotland, which is so very different to the climate of Norway and Canada, will not result in similar damage to Scotland as temperate grassland and peatland is ploughed up for forestry, which has a lower carbon sequestration.

'Investment' with guaranteed returns to the investors is really a loan at a pre arranged interest rate. Scottish farmers and riparian owners have been investing for years with no such guarantees. Timber sales are free of tax and corporations do not pay IHT. If only farmers and other business had such a level playing field!

So at the very least, we ask that the baseline carbon sequestration of the land being redesignated for permanent woodland, whether dry scrub or permanent grassland or cropped land is properly assessed to a proper depth, in line with peer reviewed scientific research, and that this measure is properly regulated and audited before taxpayers' hard earned money is handed over in government grants.

*Countess Haig*

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