

Wednesday 13 May 2009

Long Service Award for Crown Estate man after 44 years on Fochabers Estate

A well known Morayshire man who spent his working life with The Crown Estate was presented with a Long Service Award on his retirement this week.

Jimmy Gordon joined The Crown Estate in 1965. He retires from his position as foreman of the Fochabers and Glenlivet Estates maintenance squad after 44 years, a period that saw him move from salmon fishing into joinery and finally to team management.

His award, from the Scottish Rural Property and Business Association (SRPBA) was presented by the association's chairman Luke Borwick and chief executive Doug McAdam on behalf of the association and The Crown Estate at a special event held in Spey Bay near Fochabers on May 13.

Jimmy's father and grandfather also worked for The Crown Estate and he remembers a time when recruitment was carried out in a much less formal fashion than we are used to today. His father, who became a ghillie after some years as a salmon fisherman, found Jimmy a place on the estate through local contacts – a decision Jimmy has never regretted.

“I've seen a lot of changes,” Jimmy said. “Farming is more intensive now, and it is big business but there is still time for laughs. It is the babies who were in nappies when I started who are now the farmers and I still feel that I know everybody working on the two estates.”

Jimmy's team helps to maintain nearly 60 residential properties and over 80 farms across the Glenlivet and Fochabers estates which involves a lot of travelling throughout the Moray area.

As foreman, Jimmy led a six-strong team including two joiners a mason and a slater and two additional labourers. His work took him all over the estate and covers all kinds of maintenance work, from building repairs to provision of reliable water supplies. His role has involved working with a wide range of local contractors, building suppliers and farmers both in lowland and upland Moray which has ensured he has played a key part in the local community.

Jimmy's working life for The Crown Estate started out at the former Salmon Fishing Station at the mouth of the River Spey, which is where the presentation was made. "Years ago there were 50 men working the salmon nets and it seemed half the locality relied on the fishing. There are still some nets operating at Portgordon but it's changed."

After retirement Jimmy will remain in his Bogmoor home and continue with his golf and other interests. And there is one suit he is not ready to hang up yet ... he will still be heading out at Christmas time to play Santa for local groups.