

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Don Catchment Rivers Trust wins the UK's first Prix Charles Ritz

The Prix Charles Ritz has been awarded in France for many years, and has now been extended to the UK for the first time in 2019.

Anglers have a long and noble history of initiating and supporting environmental efforts on streams, rivers, ponds and lakes, in most countries of the world. But with so few of our rivers currently considered 'healthy' according to European legalisation, the actions of individuals and communities in caring for their local waterways have never been more important.

Now, as we enter the third decade of the 21st century, it is becoming more essential than ever to celebrate our successes, as well as continuing to learn and collaborate internationally.

For many years, the prestigious Prix Charles Ritz has been awarded in France, to highlight projects which focus on improving wild fish populations in harmony with their natural environment, and reward those who enhance their local river habitat.

In 2019, the International Fario Club made the decision to extend the Prix Charles Ritz to the UK for the first time, as a special biennial award...

"... to build a bridge between the parallel fates of our rivers and wildlife, and a link with the various public involved in water preservation, including water and rivers statutory bodies, local communities, farmers, foresters, scientists, and consumers... on both sides of the Channel."

International Fario Club director Laurent Sainsot secured the assistance of Salmon & Trout Conservation UK and assembled a judging panel of experienced river restorationists to assess the entrants, under the watchful eye of president Albert Roux OBE:

- Tony Bird, vice president of Salmon & Trout Conservation UK
- Janina Gray, head scientist at Salmon & Trout Conservation UK
- Johanna Halford, great grand-daughter of Frederic
- Roger Harrison, a former trustee of Salmon & Trout Conservation UK, engaged in protecting the River Itchen
- Theo Pike, chairman of the South East Rivers Trust, and Trout in the Town officer at the Wild Trout Trust
- Charles Rangeley-Wilson, founder and vice president of the Wild Trout Trust
- Richard Sankey, chairman of Fisheries Management Scotland & Kyle of Sutherland District Fisheries Board

A very wide range of 11 dossiers was received from communities, angling clubs and rivers trusts all over England and Wales, and the judges were eventually able to narrow these impressive entries down to three finalists:

- Don Catchment Rivers Trust's Living Heritage of the River Don project
- Wilton Fly Fishing Club's Stoford and South Newton Improvement project
- Wye & Usk Foundation's Gravelling the Elan System project

Different members of the judging panel visited each of these finalists, and eventually made the decision to award the UK's first Prix Charles Ritz award to the Don Catchment Rivers Trust.

All agreed that the Living Heritage of the Don project reflected the innovative nature of contemporary urban river restoration, with its blend of technical excellence, partnership working, community

engagement, long-term monitoring, and above all fish passage improvement - so that salmon are now reappearing in the post-industrial heart of Sheffield after an absence of 200 years.

The project has received a £2500 donation from the Fario Club supported by Peter Ahluwalia - Bellinvest Global Equity Fund together with a sculpture of a kingfisher, the river watcher, cast by renowned bird sculptor Paul Harvey.

AR Lenoble champagnes & the Grange vineyards in Hampshire kindly presented the winners with bottles of their estates. Those two houses have a special dedication to rivers: Anne Malassagne /AR Lenoble vineyard has been awarded High Environmental Value, whereas the Barings, the Grange estate owners are active conservationists of the Itchen valley.

Albert Roux also proposed a " Gavroche Angler " personal award to the Hampstead and Highgate Angling Society for their efforts to protect and promote fishing on Hampstead Ponds, including tuition sessions for local schoolchildren.

The Prix Charles Ritz was presented at the Athenaeum Club in London on 29th January 2020, followed by dinner at the Travellers Club. During the evening, the Don Catchment Rivers Trust gave a presentation on their Living Heritage of the Don project, and a raffle was also held, with many highly desirable prizes generously contributed by members and friends of the International Fario Club.

Edward Shaw, DCRT director says : It was a real treat and honour to spend an evening with the Fario Club to celebrate our winning of the Prix Charles Ritz. We received a warm welcome from the members, and it was good to chat salmon and rivers with such knowledgeable people. The venues were the icing on the cake. The Athenaeum and Travellers Clubs were full of the trappings of exploration, enquiry, privilege and attainment, and it really felt we were somewhere special. It was a night we won't forget, and we are most thankful for the generosity of the Fario Club for hosting us.

The International Fario Club warmly congratulates to the Don Catchment Rivers Trust for winning the UK's first Prix Charles Ritz for their exceptional community-focused urban river restoration project.

Notes to Editors:

1. Further details about the award please visit : <http://www.prixcharlesritz.org/?lang=en>
2. Full details of the entries for the Prix Charles Ritz were as follows:

The Prix Charles Ritz (UK) 2019

Winner

Don Catchment Rivers Trust

Highly commended

Wye & Usk Foundation

Wilton Fly Fishing Club

Special award

Hampstead and Highgate Angling Society

Dossiers be congratulated and commended

Friends of Bradford's Becks

Godinton Park Estate

Middleton Estate

Norfolk Rivers Trust

South Cumbria Rivers Trust

Wild Trout Trust

Willow Brook Flyfishers

3. The Prix Charles Ritz will return to the UK in 2021.

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