

# MY Favourite POOL

LLYN ENGAN, RIVER SEIONT

**T**HE RIVER SEIONT drains Snowdon's slopes to meet the tide skirting the walls of Caernarfon castle. The pool known as Llyn Engan nestles in the winding, steep-sided valley, cloaked in oak and rhododendron, of the old Glan Gwna estate.

North Wales lacks the vastness of the Highlands; everything is more compact and busy. There is a campsite upstream, and a railway bridge straddles the pool though the last train has long gone.

Anglers must park in another caravan site and walk along the old railway embankment to the same bridge. But a place doesn't get this crowded without picking up some history. Medieval deeds record the field where the campers play, a riverside forge, and a pool named Yngan – a variation of our Engan – Welsh for the blacksmith's anvil. I like to think a pool carrying a name for so long must have earned some renown. Undoubtedly when salmon run they will lie in Llyn Engan, and who knows what these wooded banks have hidden in past centuries?

Llyn Engan is a simple pleasure to fish. The wide shallows upstream are narrowed by the high near bank into a deeper neck. Above the bridge, slate steps descend to a bank partly reinforced by boulders laid straight and true at some time past, channelling



the stream to roll powerfully at a depth of three or four feet. Below the bridge the sides have crumbled: the polished boulders now lie underfoot and the pool widens, though the current still pushes strongly along – a line unfurled pulls

the pool sharply to the left, leaving the tail itself washing dark and mysterious under the overhanging branches.

On spring afternoons, brown trout can ring the pool with rises. Sea-trout pull on summer nights but for most it is the

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satisfyingly straight and a fly swings tantalisingly over the rocks and gravel to hang in the slack, where a following fish may yet rush to take. The flow then eases, pleasingly wide and deep beneath tall trees, as the main stream is forced to exit

salmon that call. A popular pool on club water, a bench offers a seat at busy times; though given water it can bear hard fishing – I once saw a movement in midstream and turned to see a following angler lift into the salmon that had

boiled at his fly. And memories? One early Saturday morning it was still dark under the tunnel of trees along the old railway line, as my boots scuffed the leaves and my nostrils caught the mossy autumnal dampness. At the pool I could just see the far bank, and felt the familiar tingle of anticipation as I eased into the stream and cast. The midweek flood had passed and I fished a single-hander but the flow was still lively as I waded under the bridge, casting sideways to avoid clipping the girders. The growing light revealed not a fin, and to search the tail I replaced the Cascade with a small tube: just a wisp of hair and a flash of jungle cock. It was a cast under the trees that did the trick. As I retrieved, a steady tightening grew into an almighty heave before the line sliced through the surface, the rod tip pulled over and a heavy salmon boiled surprisingly far upstream. I held on, clambering breathlessly on to the bank. The fight was frantic initially, but it was fully light when I saw the gleam of the fish rolling deep down and strained the rod to draw him to the net. It is almost 30 years since my first salmon and the best yet – 15 fresh, silver pounds – lay quivering at my feet, my trembling fingers smudging the camera lens. Another September on the Seiont and with it another prize had been taken from this treasured pool.

ROBIN PARRY

**OVER TO YOU** Would you like to share memories of your favourite pool? Please e-mail contributions to [troutandsalmon@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:troutandsalmon@bauermedia.co.uk) or send to "Favourite Pool", Trout & Salmon, Media House, Lynchwood, Peterborough PE2 6EA. Contributions should be no longer than 650 words.