

Two new Wheelyboat models designed and launched

Boating and angling opportunities for disabled people take a giant leap forward

Mk III Wheelyboat



Andy Beadsley and Martin Johns take Chew Valley Lake's Mk III Wheelyboat for a spin

The most versatile Wheelyboat to date, the Mk III, had its first UK launch at Chew Valley Lake in October. The Trust has spent most of this year designing and developing the brand new model. At 17' long and 6½' wide (5.3m x 2m) it is larger than either of its two predecessors and has a carrying capacity of 6 people including wheelchairs. It has been designed for multi-purpose use on inshore and inland waters and with a 30hp outboard will provide some exhilarating sport for the more adventurous. It is equally at home, however, with the more leisurely pastimes of pleasure boating, nature watching and angling.

Like its two predecessors, the Mk III has been designed to be operated by disabled people themselves—it has a bow door for easy access on and off and its level deck throughout provides access to all corners of the boat, including the helm. The boat is extremely stable even in rougher conditions and can be powered by tiller or remote control outboard, petrol or electric.

Chew's boat was supplied with a specially modified 15hp Yamaha outboard which has electric start and a power tilt facility to make it easier for disabled people to use. It joins the large fleet of angling boats on this famous fishery and was funded by Bristol Water plc in celebration of the lake's Golden Jubilee. It is named 'Elizabeth' after Her Majesty the Queen who opened the lake in 1956.

Chew's Mk III, the 110th Wheelyboat to be built, is the first Mk III in the UK. It was the fourth Mk III off the production line and the three before it were purchased by venues in the Republic of Ireland and Denmark. Seven Mk IIIs were built in the initial run and formal launches for boats just delivered to Patshull Park near Wolverhampton and Sutton Bingham Reservoir near Yeovil will take place next spring. Production of the next twelve Mk IIIs starts in January.

Tweed Wheelyboat

The second brand new model launched in October was the Tweed Wheelyboat—a dedicated fishing boat designed to provide disabled anglers with hassle-free access to large rivers like the Tweed. It was formally launched by TV personality and passionate angler, Chris Tarrant, on his 60th birthday.

The Tweed Wheelyboat has come about due to the difficulties of access faced by disabled anglers on this world famous game fishery. Along with the impossible bank fishing (wading is a must), the fishing boats operated over much of the river are very difficult for disabled anglers to use. Wheelchair users in particular require a considerable amount of assistance from several boatmen to get on board. The Tweed Wheelyboat solves these problems and means that the disabled angler and his or her boatman *on their own* can board and disembark a purpose built craft which is safe, comfortable, spacious, easy to use and, for the boatman, almost as easy to row and manoeuvre as a standard Tweed boat.

Commissioned in 2005 by the Tweed Foundation to develop this solution, the Trust has been working with naval architect Emrhys Barrell and professional boatbuilder Jim Coulam and the Tweed Wheelyboat is the result of more than a year's development from initial idea to fully-working model. The new boat is based on Jim Coulam's 15' reservoir rowing boat which has been ingeniously modified and includes a manually-operated hydraulic platform to lower the wheelchair user from gunwale to deck.

The boat will be available to any Tweed beat for wheelchair-using or less able-bodied anglers where access arrangements can be made. It will be delivered by the River Tweed Commissioners staff and all running (**cont over**)



Chris Tarrant rows Barney Wilson in the new Tweed Wheelyboat, which Barney christened with two salmon on its first formal outing!

Tweed Wheelyboat continued

costs will be met by the Tweed Foundation, which also fully funded the development costs of the first boat, named 'Tweedability 1'. This new boat is only the beginning of the process to improve access for disabled anglers on the river. In his speech to accompany the boat's launch, Andrew Douglas-Home, Chairman of the Tweed Commissioners, appealed to agencies like Scottish Natural Heritage to look favourably upon applications for the construction of suitable launch sites up and down the river.

If the boat proves a success, additional boats will follow as demand requires. But, it is not only disabled anglers on the Tweed that will benefit from this new design; the Trust is already receiving enquiries from other river and lake fisheries across the UK and Ireland which are interested in providing the craft for their disabled anglers.

Lake of Menteith wins AFMA 2006



The Lake of Menteith in Stirlingshire is this year's winner of the Alan Faulkner Memorial Award. The presentation took place at the CLA Game Fair at Broadlands in Hampshire. Douglas Fraser (right), assistant manager of the Scottish fishery, received the prize of a 4hp outboard from Richard Whittaker (left), Sales and Marketing Director of sponsors, Suzuki Marine. Bernard Cribbins hosted the ceremony in front of a packed grandstand on the river Test and Andy Beadsley, Wheelyboat Trust Director, presented Douglas with a framed certificate.

Created in memory of the Trust's Founder President, the award is presented annually to the game fishery that provides disabled anglers with the most outstanding service, facilities, opportunities and access. The Lake of Menteith is Scotland's premier rainbow trout fishery and has long been accommodating disabled anglers on its 720 acres. This last year, though, has seen a considerable investment in new facilities principally with disabled anglers in mind. There was stiff competition for the award this year and the judges had several excellent candidates to consider. The Lake of Menteith, however, excels in all categories and the judges felt the overall contribution the fishery makes to accessible angling in Scotland put them ahead of the field. They are very worthy winners joining an elite group that includes Eyebrook Trout Fishery and Grafham Water.

Wheelyboats For All Project

The Wheelyboats For All project is promoting the Wheelyboat to a wider audience of users, supplying more boats to a greater variety of venues and broadening the range of waterborne activities Wheelyboats are used for. It got off to a great start earlier in the year with the appointment of John Hood as Field Officer. In addition to the work John is doing in Scotland and northern England, Trust volunteers Sue Hiatt and Rex Harpham are providing invaluable support elsewhere; Sue is helping venues in the Midlands while Rex is raising the profile of Wheelyboats in the South West.

The new Mk III model is crucial to the success of the project because of its size and versatility enabling the Trust to meet a variety of different needs on a wide range of waters. For example, the type of opportunity the Mk III has opened up is one that is developing in the idyllic surroundings of the River Fowey estuary in Cornwall where sightseeing, birdwatching, pleasure boating and both sea and game angling will all become accessible to local and visiting disabled people. More news on projects like these will follow as Wheelyboats For All gathers more momentum in its second year.

We would like to express our enormous thanks to the following for their recent generous support:

Trustees of the S K Ismay Will Trust, Tweed Foundation, Trusthouse Charitable Foundation, Environment Agency, Truemark Trust, George John Livanos Charitable Trust, Strangward Charitable Foundation, Mrs Catherine Melhado and the friends and family of Maurice Melhado deceased, Raymond & Blanche Lawson Charitable Trust, HDH Wills 1965 Charitable Trust, Suzuki Marine, Charles Shorto Charitable Trust, Scott Eredine Charitable Trust, M J Hindley Charitable Trust, Mrs D Pulman, Mr R Bomford, Mrs M McCabe, Mr & Mrs P Beadsley, Mr R Prince, Southern Water plc, Verdon Smith Charitable Trust, Shrewsbury Folk Festival, Mrs Jean Fuller and the friends and family of Reg Fuller deceased, Mr W Foxall, Mr A Faulkner, and all contributors to last spring's Waterwheels appeal.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Recent Wheelyboat arrivals:

New Wheelyboats have been delivered to the River Tweed, Chew Valley Lake near Bristol, Sutton Bingham Reservoir near Yeovil, Patshull Park near Wolverhampton, Lough Owel in Ireland and Vilsted Lake in Denmark.

### Wheelyboats coming very soon:

Mk IIIs to Siblyback Lake near Liskeard, Clatworthy Reservoir near Taunton, the River Blackwater at Fermoy and Llyn Clywedog in Powys.

## New boat developments

Although two new Wheelyboat models have been introduced this year, more new designs are already on the drawing board. The Trust is looking at developing a stillwater version of the Tweed Wheelyboat and a GRP version of the original Mk I. A stillwater Tweed model would be a popular choice among disabled anglers and fishery managers for its looks, performance and cost. The Mk I is a popular small water craft and, although no longer built, the Trust still supplies refurbished secondhand originals. Stocks are dwindling, though, and a GRP Mk I would be a practical and relatively inexpensive addition to the Wheelyboat portfolio.

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#### DIRECTOR & OFFICE

Andy Beadsley, North Lodge, Burton Park, Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 0JT, tel 01798 342222, e-mail wheelyboattrust@btconnect.com, www.wheelyboats.org

#### FIELD OFFICER

John Hood, 7 Barbara Stocks Lane, Culross, Dunfermline, Fife, KY12 8HQ, tel 01383 881476, e-mail johnhood5@btinternet.com

Reg Charity No. 292216 Reg Company No. 1872144 Registered in England & Wales Reg Office: 20 Eversley Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN40 1HE