30th Anniversary Celebrated

Launch of brand new Wheelyboat model highlight of the celebrations

ON TUESDAY 15th July 120 specially invited guests attended a reception at Bisham Abbey National Sports Centre to celebrate the Trust’s 30th anniversary. The occasion also marked the launch of the Coulam Wheelyboat V20, the Trust’s latest model and most versatile Wheelyboat to date. The new Wheelyboat was the 160th to be launched by the Trust and, being based at Bisham Abbey Sailing & Navigation School, it is the first Wheelyboat to operate anywhere on the River Thames.

The celebrations were hosted by Trust President, His Grace The Duke of Roxburghe, and guest of honour was Claire Lomas, sportswoman, author and disability campaigner. Claire famously walked the 2012 London Marathon in 17 days in a pioneering robotic suit following a life-changing eventing accident which left her paralysed. She spoke movingly about life since her accident and her remarkable success in fundraising for research into a cure for spinal cord injury. Claire was delighted to be at the celebrations, saying “I am honoured to be involved in the launch of this new Wheelyboat on the River Thames. It is so important to encourage people with disabilities to get outside and enjoy outdoor pursuits and sport, and this is exactly what The Wheelyboat Trust is enabling every time they launch a boat.”

The climax of the celebrations was a Wheelyboat sail past compered by Trust Patron, Bernard Cribbins OBE. Seven different Wheelyboat models have been developed by the Trust since its work began, six of which featured in the sail past. Never before have so many Wheelyboats been in the same place at the same time! Bernard delivered a thoroughly entertaining commentary as each model from the original Mk I through to the brand new V20 made its way past the crowd. Finally, in a feat of considerable coordination, all six lined up abreast and sailed past together.

Andy Beadsley, Wheelyboat Trust Director, said “This has been a fantastic day celebrating all that The Wheelyboat Trust has achieved over the last thirty years. Wheelyboats are so important for breaking down the barriers that people with disabilities face when looking to participate in waterborne pursuits. Looking ahead I cannot predict where we will be in another thirty years but I am confident exciting times lie ahead. The new Wheelyboat model is a huge leap forward in terms of looks, capability and performance. With the 160th Wheelyboat being launched today and the 161st following in just a few weeks, the 200th Wheelyboat launch is well in sight and the new model will help us reach this next big milestone even sooner.”
Boatability—Award-Winning Project

THE COULAM Wheelyboat V20 launched amid the Trust’s 30th anniversary celebrations has been supplied to Boatability, an award-winning project and joint-venture between the Rivertime Boat Trust and Bisham Abbey Sailing and Navigation School.

The Rivertime Boat Trust is a registered charity with the principal aim of addressing the lack of accessible boating for disabled people on the River Thames between Windsor and Oxford. It operates Rivertime a 42’ day boat based in Henley. It has joined forces with Bisham Abbey Sailing School and set up Boatability, a project that provides disabled people with a dedicated and unique boating facility. Boat trips in Rivertime provide a valuable service but disabled people’s participation is rather passive—the aim of Boatability is to create more active participation. It offers fun and experience in a variety of activities including dinghy sailing, bell boating, raft building and kayaking. Boatability’s participants, mostly young people of school age, are able to develop their skills in an extensive activity programme that includes training and tuition. Boatability sessions have exclusive use of the sailing school and thus maximise the facilities, experience and supervision available. The project formally commenced in April 2014 since when there have been 22 half-day sessions with 221 disabled participants. Next year, 32 half-day sessions are booked and 500 participants are expected to attend.

The V20, named ‘Rivertime II’, is the only wheelchair accessible powered craft on site and provides a variety of essential roles from pleasure cruiser and powerboat tuition to support, safety and rescue. Rivertime II enables users to attain recognised qualifications such as Powerboat level 1 and 2 certificates and Inland Waterways Helmsman. In addition, a club is being formed so that mobility impaired individuals, their friends and families and organisations of disabled people and schools for Special Educational Needs can use Rivertime II independently for their own trips and outings.

Raising funds to build and equip Rivertime II was a joint effort between the Rivertime Boat Trust and Wheelyboat Trust. The Wheelyboat Trust would like to thank the following donors in particular for their support: Bruce Wake Charity, Thames Water Utilities Ltd, Leathersellers Company Charitable Fund, Grocers’ Charity, Wheelwrights Charity, Gold & Silver Wyre Drawers, Alchemy Foundation and Loseley & Guildway Charitable Trust. Rivertime II is dedicated to the memory of Barmey Wilson, a Trustee of The Wheelyboat Trust who sadly died last year.

Boatability has just won Wycombe District Council’s Sports Project of the Year Award and was Highly Commended in the Bucks & Milton Keynes Sports Awards 2014. We congratulate Simon and Pat Davis, the Rivertime Boat Trust’s founders, and Peter May from Bisham Abbey Sailing School. Keep up the excellent work! www.rivertimeboattrust.org.uk, www.bishamabbeysailing.co.uk

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Coulam Wheelyboat V20

The Wheelyboat Trust’s most important step forward since the design of the original Wheelyboat

The ORIGINAL purpose of the Trust was the supply of Wheelyboats for the simple pleasure of fishing on stillwaters, an activity still very much at our heart. However, 30 years on from the launch of the first Wheelyboat the role Wheelyboats now play in enabling disabled people to fully participate on the water is far more extensive than originally envisaged. As disabled people’s aspirations and expectations have developed and society has become more inclusive, so too have the performance, versatility and appeal of our Wheelyboats.

The desire to continually improve our fleet and offer disabled people craft they want to use led to the V20’s development. From pleasure boating on small inland waters, rivers and canals to more adventurous powerboating on larger lakes and inshore waters, it is no exaggeration to describe the V20 as the Trust’s most important step forward since the

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The V20 can seat up to 10 adults on inland waters and up to 8 adults on inshore waters. Its huge 84sq ft of floor space accommodates six wheelchair users in comfort and the drive-from-wheelchair helm enables people with the severest of disabilities to drive the boat themselves.

The V20 is a joint-venture between the Trust and J M Coulam Boatbuilders. It is not the first time we have joined forces with Jim Coulam; he builds the Coulam 16 Wheelyboat, based on his popular reservoir fishing boat. The V20 was designed by Andrew Wolstenholme whose brief was a new Wheelyboat that could perform across a wide variety of waters and carry out a broad range of functions. What we needed was not only a multi-purpose craft but our most versatile Wheelyboat to date. The challenge we set Andrew was therefore considerable. We could have ended up with something quite utilitarian, but with Jim’s keen eye and Andrew’s skilful design, the end result is sleek and sporty.

The development of the V20 has been an expensive investment, around £50,000, but the end result has fulfilled all our expectations. We are very grateful to all the donors who contributed to the project (see below), to Andrew for his expertise and to Jim for the immense amount of hard work involved in transforming Andrew’s drawings to finished product. A special mention to Suzuki GB for their donation of a 60hp outboard for our demonstrator.

The V20 is a fantastic craft – it looks great and performs as a proper powerboat should. It is these features that will make it a popular and desirable craft. The V20 will be instrumental in changing the perception that Wheelyboats are just for wheelchair users. The role the V20 will play will be much more mainstream—as a water-taxi, for trips and sightseeing, for safety cover and rescue, for general purpose leisure, etc. The provision of wheelchair access on board ensures that the access needs of all its users are met.

Project donors: Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust, Monument Trust, Suzuki GB, The Anchorites, Anton Jurgens Charitable Trust, Hedley Foundation, Goldsmiths’ Company Charity, Swire Charitable Trust, Dunlin Charitable Settlement, Inchcape Foundation, Freemasons Grand Charity, Misses Barrie Charitable Trust, Linnardon Charitable Trust, Clark Bradbury Charitable Trust, 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, Joseph Strong Fraser Trust, Raymond & Blanche Lawson Charitable Trust, David Laing Foundation, Omonde Charitable Trust, Lionel Wigram Memorial Trust, Mrs Collins, Mr Clarfelt, Sir C Keswick, Mr Delmar-Morgan, Mr Upton, Mr Pilkington.

New Logo and Livery

Our logo served us well since 2004 when we changed our name from The Handicapped Anglers Trust. But the design had become dated and we were keen for a more contemporary look that reflects the multi-purpose role most Wheelyboats supplied today undertake. Along with a new logo, Wheelyboat livery has been given a comprehensive make-over and we have completely redesigned our website—www.wheelyboats.org.

Our 30th anniversary celebrations and Coulam Wheelyboat V20 launch were a great success thanks to the enormous help and hard work behind the scenes from:

Firebird PR—Jane Bevan and Lyndsey Smith, Chris Matthews Creative Design, Karen Woolley, Peter May from Bisham Abbey Sailing & Navigation School, Serco (Bisham Abbey’s managers), Jim Coulam, Ian and Julia McCoy, Peter Beadsley and Michael Joyce.

Many, many thanks!
Mk III Wheelyboat Launched at Galloway Activity Centre

A Mk III Wheelyboat for Galloway Activity Centre on Loch Ken was launched in April. Loch Ken is southern Scotland’s largest loch but is mostly inaccessible to disabled people. However, Galloway Activity Centre’s new Mk III Wheelyboat will provide people with mobility impairments, their families, friends and carers with safe and independent access to the water.

Richard Herman, Director of Galloway Activity Centre explains more: “I am delighted that we are now able to open up this stunning loch to all abilities. There are other Wheelyboats in the area, however this is the first one to be used for wildlife spotting and pleasure boating. My aim is to be able to share the wonder of the wildlife, including red kites, otters and lots of seasonal birdlife as widely as possible and being out on the water is a really special experience.”

The Mk III Wheelyboat is boarded via a drop down bow door for roll-on, roll-off access. The deck is open and level throughout with room for eight adults, including wheelchairs. It has a drive-from-wheelchair console giving people even with severe impairments the ability to helm the boat themselves. With thousands of acres of navigable water directly accessible from the centre, the Wheelyboat will be used for pleasure boating, nature watching, coarse fishing, powerboat training and instruction and as a support vessel for other activities. It will provide the centre’s disabled visitors with a level of independence and freedom unavailable in any other craft.

Andy Beadsley, Director of The Wheelyboat Trust said: “Being a wheelchair user myself, I understand how important it is for disabled people to take part in activities alongside and on equal terms with everybody else. Wheelyboats overcome the problems of access to waterborne activities and give disabled people like me freedom and independence on the water.”

Established in 1988, Galloway Activity Centre organises adventurous land and water based activities, courses and holidays for groups, families and individuals. It has a variety of accommodation from loch-side cabins and traditional campsite to tips and a Mongolian yurt. The centre is wheelchair accessible throughout and a number of groups and organisations, such as South West Scotland RnR, Barnardos Scotland and Dumfries & Galloway Befriending Project, visit regularly. It makes an ideal Wheelyboat venue—the facilities are excellent, there is an established disabled clientele and the management is wholeheartedly committed to activities that include everybody.

The Wheelyboat was formally launched by Jennifer Tobin, Founder and CEO of South West Scotland RnR, a charity that provides adventurous holidays for injured service personnel.

Funds for the project were generously provided by Scotbelge Charitable Trust, Galloway Activity Centre, Hugh Fraser Foundation, WA Cargill Fund, Barfil Charitable Trust, JTH Charitable Trust, RKT Harris Charitable Trust and Sylvia Patterson. www.gac.co.uk

New Outboard for Lake of Menteith’s C16Wbt

THANKS TO grants from Anne Duchess of Westminster’s Charity and Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs, the Trust has been able to equip Lake of Menteith’s Coulam 16 Wheelyboat with a brand new 10hp outboard. The C16Wbt was launched last year following a legacy from the late Christopher Graves and is proving very popular with disabled anglers. The new outboard replaces an old pull-start motor that was unreliable and difficult to use. The new outboard with its push-button-start means that disabled anglers can operate the Wheelyboat independently and safely. Menteith’s 700 acres is one of Scotland’s premier waters with fly fishing for brown and rainbow trout. Sean Roake, Wheelyboat user, said “I think the new Wheelyboat is superb, it’s comfortable and handles beautifully. The old Wheelyboat drifted too quickly and I was over my flies before I could start retrieving them. I used to avoid coming if it was windy—not any more though!” www.menteith-fisheries.co.uk
LAST WINTER a Mk III Wheelyboat spent seven weeks bringing much needed humanitarian relief to the stranded community of Muchelney on the Somerset Levels. Somerset County Council sought assistance from local boat operators and suppliers in order to deliver aid and relief to the villagers who were cut off by flood water for several weeks from early January. The Mk III Wheelyboat, supplied by The Wheelyboat Trust and Living Options Devon as part of their Countryside Mobility Scheme, is based at nearby Maunsel Lock Canal Centre. After an inspection and trial run by Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, the Wheelyboat was given the thumbs up. It was in operation every single day and made hundreds of trips in and out of the village. It was the community’s lifeline to the outside world.

At 5.3m long, the Mk III is a versatile craft with a carrying capacity of eight adults including wheelchairs. It has a bow door that lowers to form a ramp for roll-on, roll-off access. The Wheelyboat Trust helped raise funds to supply and equip it and its principal role is to help people with limited mobility enjoy trips on the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal. It was formally launched at Maunsel Lock Canal Centre in August 2013.

Just after the Wheelyboat started its rescue work, Andy Beadsley, Director of The Wheelyboat Trust, said “We are happy to provide as much support and assistance as we can at this time of dreadful flooding. Any relief that the Wheelyboat can bring to the villagers is welcomed by us and the team at Maunsel Lock Canal Centre who have worked incredibly hard to make this relief effort possible.”

The Wheelyboat was a constant feature in the media throughout its operation making the front pages of national newspapers and reports on national and local TV news. On his visit to Muchelney, HRH Prince Charles made the return journey in the Wheelyboat.

The Wheelyboat’s sturdy construction, easy manoeuvrability and very shallow draft made it the perfect craft for flood relief, so much so that Somerset County Council have now purchased one as a dedicated flood relief boat on permanent standby. As well as for emergency relief and rescue, while on standby it will be used by the community for pleasure trips and nature watching on local waters and for training community flood relief volunteers and Fire and Rescue Service personnel. Its main base is likely to be alongside its sister craft at Maunsel Lock where there is demand for a second Wheelyboat.

The Council’s dedicated relief Wheelyboat will be built with a reinforced hull in order to cope with the harsh conditions of operating on flooded roads. The Wheelyboat will provide a vital transport link for people and provisions and help sustain communities, farms and rural businesses throughout the Levels during times of significant hardship and isolation caused by flooding. www.maunsellock.co.uk

Set up in 2012, C&R is a national charity that took over the work of British Waterways and acts as guardians of the 2,000 miles of inland waterways in England and Wales. Among its strategic priorities are making their network of canals, rivers and reservoirs accessible to everyone and encouraging disadvantaged groups to discover and enjoy these waters. C&R has asked The Wheelyboat Trust if it could help deliver these priorities. Wheelyboats already operating successfully on rivers and canals provide a good model for rolling out to new venues and there is scope for Wheelyboats operated by groups to be launched at different sites if the necessary infrastructure can be provided. The two organisations are in the early stages of formulating a plan of action. www.canalrivertrust.org.uk
South Shields Sea Cadets
Launch Mk IV Wheelyboat

TWO YEARS of fundraising culminated in the launch of South Shields Sea Cadets’ Mk IV Wheelyboat in September. The Wheelyboat’s arrival came at the end of a period of significant highs and lows for the unit. They have recently undergone a substantial upgrade to their facilities including accessible dormitories, showers and loo. But a storm surge last December that saw the Tyne reach a historic high left the ground floor of the unit’s HQ underwater. John Eltringham, the unit’s Chairman, said ‘We lost a lot of good work but the people of South Shields came together with materials and help while the staff were just remarkable in what they achieved.’

The Wheelyboat was blessed on the slipway by the unit’s Padre, Rev Paul Kennedy. One of the first on board was local MP Emma Lewell-Buck who praised the unit for providing the facility. John Eltringham said the impetus for the project came from a cadet who was a double-amputee. “He was able to join in all the unit’s activities but we were unable to get him on the water. In spite of this, the camaraderie between him and the other cadets was remarkable.”

Fundraising for the project was a joint-effort between the unit and The Wheelyboat Trust. In all more than £50,000 was raised. Donors were told of the 550 disabled young people in the unit’s catchment, 150 of whom are in the Sea Cadet’s age range of 10 to 18. The Wheelyboat enables the unit to offer boating and sailing for all. “Training a disabled youngster to drive a boat at 20 knots from his wheelchair would bring a smile to anyone’s face,” John said.

The Wheelyboat Trust would like to thank the following donors for their generous support: Sir James Knott Trust, Ballinger Charitable Trust, Port of Tyne Charitable Foundation, Joicey Trust, Emerton Christie Charity, Pritchard-Gordon Tankers Ltd, Odin Charitable Trust, Schroder Charity, Rothley Trust, Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust, Fairfield Marina, Advanced Power Technology, R S Brownless Charitable Trust and Carr-Ellison Charitable Trust.

www.sea-cadets.org/southshields

Mk III for Families at the Waterworks

THE FAMILIES at the Waterworks Fishing Club is a cross-community club founded in 2001 that is committed to participating in the ongoing regeneration of the Waterworks site and surrounding neighbourhoods in North Belfast. The site’s two ponds were built in the 19th Century to provide drinking water to Belfast. In the 1950s the site became a public park. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure working with Sport Northern Ireland funded a fully fitted Mk III Wheelyboat and new outboard for the fishery’s existing Mk I Wheelyboat. Their investment in the site also included a new cabin, boathouse and secure compound. As a result the club will be able to enhance its community activities which include competitions and fun days for young anglers. This unique fishery offers local and visiting anglers an opportunity to enjoy urban trout fishing in the heart of North Belfast. The club regularly stocks with rainbow trout averaging 2lb. The ponds also contain bream, roach and pike.

www.waterworkstroutfishery.com
Busy Year for Chichester Harbour’s JQD

THE JOHN Q Davis has had a very successful year with 439 people using her. Tedworth House Army Rehabilitation Centre once again found JQD an important aid to their personnel’s recuperation and had three trips including a training day for support staff. Glenwood School had a successful trip with young people with learning difficulties—they were very enthusiastic and enjoyed taking turns driving JQD under guidance. Thorney Island Sailing Club used JQD as a support boat for their Junior Week and enabled some of their wheelchair-using members to get on the water. During the Chichester Harbour Federation Week, JQD provided an opportunity for spectators, photographers and racing officials to observe the dinghy racing close hand. Service families from Thorney Island continue to derive much benefit and enjoyment from JQD, not least the opportunity to take part in seal watching activities. This has proved to be very popular with more than ten trips undertaken to observe the seal colony. JQD has been successfully used to train a wheelchair user to RYA Level 2 Powerboat, an activity we are keen to develop. Our huge thanks go to Carl Jarmaine and MDL Marinas Ltd for their sponsorship as a result of which JQD is provided with a free winter berth at Northney Marina. JQD is Emsworth Business Association’s Charity of the Year 2014 and a number of fundraising activities have been organised including a charity ball at Emsworth’s Brookfield Hotel that raised a fantastic £3,500! Many thanks to EBA and all its members. www.jqdwheelyboat.co.uk

Southampton Boat Show 2014

THANKS TO sponsorship from Suzuki GB, the Trust had a marina berth at this year’s Southampton Boat Show where the Coulam Wheelyboat V20 was given its ‘world show premiere’! There was much interest in the new model and the work of the Trust throughout the show’s ten days. The berth on the marina gave the V20 access to the high speed test area for demonstrations of which our Director (and self-appointed chief demonstrator) took full advantage! As well as generating lots of interest and two or three potential new projects, groups working with the Trust on current V20 projects were able to visit and experience the V20 on the water for the first time. Attending was a great opportunity for the Trust and the first time we have exhibited there in our own right. We aim to be back next year along with stands at Seawork (16/18 June) and the RYA Dinghy Show (28 Feb/1Mar).

Featured Wheelyboat Venue—Arlington Reservoir

LAUNCHED IN 2002, Arlington Reservoir’s Mk II Wheelyboat continues to provide disabled anglers with access to this delightful Sussex stillwater. With stunning views to the South Downs, Arlington’s 120 acres offer first class fly fishing for trout with nymphs and dry flies proving particularly effective. Bank fishing starts at the beginning of February with boats available from April. The fishery usually closes in the summer and reopens in September. Anglers have the reservoir to themselves, apart from walkers and birdwatchers, as there are no watersports. Arlington is a wildlife haven and SSSI where ospreys often stop on their annual migration. With friendly, knowledgeable and helpful staff, anglers are guaranteed a warm welcome. For Wheelyboat users, the lodge has an accessible loo and there is level parking close to the Wheelyboat. www.southeastwater.co.uk/our-environment/activities/fishing
Bushyleaze Trout Fishery Wins 2014 Alan Faulkner Memorial Award

Bushyleaze Trout Fishery in Gloucestershire won this year’s Alan Faulkner Memorial Award. 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 award was presented by well-known angler Chris Ogborne at the CLA Game Fair, Blenheim Palace, in July. The prize, a 4hp outboard motor, was provided by Suzuki GB, the award’s sponsor.

There was a really strong shortlist this year but Bushyleaze’s fantastic facilities and ease of access, plus their committed staff, gave them the edge. Bushyleaze bought their first Wheelyboat 10 years ago after holding a celebrity fishing day to raise the necessary funds. The Wheelyboat is free to use on their 22-acre spring-fed lake.

The Trust is delighted that Suzuki GB generously sponsored the award again this year with the main prize of a 4hp 4-stroke outboard, worth £980. The Suzuki small outboard range, from 4 to 15 horsepower, has attracted a strong following amongst anglers, due to the quiet running, low emissions and 4-stroke fuel economy. In common with the rest of the 2hp to 300hp range, they offer excellent value for money.

Bushyleaze is partnered with Lechlade Trout Fishery and the award has spurred Lechlade on to acquire its own Wheelyboat. A slipway has been built in November. There will be a full report in the next issue.

Please Donate—It’s Very Easy....

Our work is entirely reliant on income from donations, we receive no statutory funding. Enclosed is a Gift Aid form for single or regular donations, or donations can be made online at www.justgiving.com/wheelyboattrust or from our website, www.wheelyboats.org. We welcome legacies, so please remember us when writing your will. Members of clubs/societies/fisheries—please nominate us as your charity to support.