



Coulam 15 Wheelyboat

The Coulam 15 Wheelyboat has come about due to the dearth of disabled-accessible angling on large game rivers like Tweed. There is very little bank fishing and the fishing boats (cobles) that are used over much of the river are very difficult for disabled anglers to get into, especially



wheelchair users. Standard Wheelyboats provide easy access but they are not easy to row and, although they have a shallow draught, their need for an engine makes them inaccessible to large parts of the river in low flows. What is required is a boat that combines the simplicity of the Wheelyboat's access yet is easy to row like a coble.



This new boat is a departure from the Trust's Mk I, II and III Wheelyboat models which have always been designed to provide their disabled users with maximum independence. The Coulam 15 Wheelyboat's accessibility remit is, by necessity, a little

narrower.

Commissioned by the Tweed Foundation to develop a solution, The Wheelyboat Trust has been working with boating expert Emrhys Barrell and professional boatbuilder Jim Coulam and the Coulam 15 Wheelyboat is the result of more than a year's hard work from initial idea to fully-working prototype.

The boat is based on Jim Coulam's standard 15' reservoir fishing boat which has been ingeniously modified to include a hydraulic platform to lower the wheelchair user from gunwale to deck. A purpose-built wheelchair ramp fixes to the boat and provides the disabled angler with access from the bank (with the boatman's assistance) through cut-outs in the gunwale directly on to the platform. Removable safety handrails around the platform keep the angler in place until the platform is lowered. The angler, at this point, moves down the level deck to his fishing position at the stern. Although the boat is very stable, a D-ring in the deck can be used to secure the wheelchair if required. When the angler is ready, the thwart is repositioned and the ramp disconnected (either being left on the bank to return to later or folded up and put on board the boat). The boatman or angler can then operate the outboard or the boatman can take up the oars and row.

The boat is most stable for boarding when it is grounded in the shallows but can be safely boarded even when fully afloat. It can be accessed from both right or left bank with the bow facing upstream. The ramp is hinged to the boat and therefore adjusts to differing bank inclines. The boat is fully compliant with the Recreational Craft Directive (category C) for two people, an outboard motor and equipment. The first Coulam 15 Wheelyboat ('Tweedability 1') has been available on Tweed since the autumn of 2006 and was joined by 'Tweedability 2' in October 2007.

For more information please contact:

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www.wheelyboats.org

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