



[www.fishabilityUK.org](http://www.fishabilityUK.org)

## Newsletter No.3

5<sup>th</sup> April 2013

The charity has been running since the beginning of 2012, and we are extremely pleased with progress made so far.

The idea of Fishability UK is simple, but also unique.



**First warm day of Spring – and last? – at Wherwell Estate, Hants**

We set out to offer something different in the realm of ex-forces support, by directly providing monthly fishing experiences.

With plenty of positive feedback coming in, those that need our help most are letting us know that the effort is really making a difference.

All involved providing this support find the experience quite humbling, so worthwhile, and totally rewarding to be able to give something back to those that have given so much for the rest of us.

For our peace, and for our freedom.

Particular thanks should go to the magnificent support offered by the fishing guides that take part, truly a critical part of the success. They are delighted to be able to pass on their experience, skills, hints and tips – sharing the very joy of *going fishing* - and the resulting therapy that this brings both to individuals, and to groups of veterans.

We are there for ex-forces who are not only in need of rehabilitation in a physical sense but also in a

psychological way. Most of the guys we host suffer really badly from Post Traumatic Stress.

Physical injuries can be dealt with in the relative short term. In the longer term, psychological ones are often much harder to heal.

So, by networking the very kind donations of services and opportunities, Roger and I can mould together some really worthwhile fishing days, where angling is the essential therapy.

As we say in the motto, we deliver *Angling Therapy for Forces Veterans*.

Reviewing the coarse fishing year, Roger Sharp, co-founder of Fishability UK writes.....

With the fishing at Thorpe Park proving to be an extremely hard nut to crack and the summer's weather being the worst I can remember, the veterans still rolled up all year round achieving good numbers for every event. Best turn out being for the Jim Guthrie memorial pike fishing day in November when we had 21 veterans attending, including several new faces, which is always pleasing. It didn't matter how early I turned up, there would always be several veterans already waiting patiently for a brew and a bacon roll.



**The reward for all his perseverance, a Thorpe Park Pike for 'Dog'**

Thankfully, other venues came into play as the year rolled on, giving us the chance for a change of scenery and a few more fish on the bank.

Thanks to 'MBK Leisure' who hosted two events for us at the coloured ponds near Rake, one being at very short notice when the rivers went into flood and a much awaited trip to a weir in Hertfordshire had to be cancelled. Both trips provided some really good fishing and photo opportunities, including of course the

video that can be found on our web site.



**Nick Watkins coached this veteran into catching his first ever fish. MBK Leisure's coloured ponds on a bright December afternoon**

Walton Angling club, after allowing a trial event on one of their still waters, are now happy to allow use of their lake at least twice a year should we wish, with a third to be held in case of cancelation or flooding at another venue. They will also allow me to take any veteran for 1:1 tuition for the day free of charge, whilst having promised full support from the committee and it's members. This is a really pretty place to fish and so quiet and secluded, I cannot wait for the next trip. The morning always starts off with a hearty full English breakfast at the nearby golf club where they lay up a large table in our own room. This is just as well; if you were to hear the banter you would understand why.



**Ready for some piking**

As this year has progressed several more venues have responded to my emails and have also come forward (very few do not) which is really exciting for me and I'm sure the veterans will enjoy these new locations and some potential big fish. I intend to hold several of this year's

trips over a two day period to include fishing through the wee dark hours, one will be near Oxford and the other in Bedfordshire something we can now do as Rob Kinge from Hampshire Tackle has generously supplied several brand new matching bivvies for use by those requiring a warm dry shelter.

I'm now at the point, unfortunately or not, in having to turn any further venues down for this year because there are just not enough months in the year to use them all.

I will continue to be encouraged in putting the time and effort in to arranging these trips spurred on by the great comments and thanks we always receive by email or Facebook after an event, and, by seeing the veterans enjoying the day's fishing, and hopefully the food and cakes laid on for them as well.

I need to say 'Thanks' to all the coaches who also give up their time to support me, Rocky Rockett for his help at events, and friends and family for help with preparing and delivering the meals. And of course not forgetting the people whose very kind donations of money make the whole thing happen.

Desperate now for the weather to break soon so we can all get into tee shirts and shorts for more than just the occasional Wednesday afternoon.

Roger.

**On the game fishing front**, help has come in via a number of avenues, including sponsorship, with days out for quite large groups. 32 attended the day at Bewl Reservoir, Kent in November. Luckily, we were blessed with the very last weekend of mild weather before the long cold winter set in. Agreement was struck for a special deal with the very helpful folk at the Lodge there to permit boat fishing and three meals. Grateful thanks to Telereal Trillium for sponsoring this very successful day, to be repeated this coming September.



**First of the day for Frank at Bewl**

We are only a week days away now from a similar boat fishing venture, this time to Farmoor Reservoir, Oxon, with the very kind help from Rohde and Schwarz UK Ltd at Fleet, Hants. Fittingly, the nearby base at Brize Norton is instrumental in supplying the boat guides, drawn from the ranks of the RAF Greylags, their national flyfishing division.

There is always opportunity for improving game fishing skills, and with this in mind, we have run a few sessions where fly-casting instruction has been offered as the main event, particularly when the weather has been a bit iffy, and also some fly dressing. There was a very enjoyable evening just before Xmas spent at Combat Stress HQ in Leatherhead, tying delicate flies for catching chalkstream grayling at the surface, through to pike flies, tied on 6/0 salmon irons!



**Dressing mayflies prior to fishing the evening rise**

We have enjoyed excursions onto the chalkstreams of Hampshire on three occasions during the past 12 months. Kind offers of beats on the Test and Itchen saw us fishing at Winchester, Wherwell and below Stockbridge, which absolutely thrilled the veterans. Browns were very hard to tempt in high summer, as were winter grayling, but the challenge, in such breathtaking scenery was superb.

Lake trips have included Albury Park Lake, Vale End, again at Albury, for a fantastic mayfly carnival evening, and

also Clandon Park with temperatures approaching 30c – quite a rarity for 2012!



**Scoff at Clandon Park**

A little more about donating.

This has been by varied means, although fairly steady through the year. The offer of a lake or a river beat is a wonderful gesture gratefully received, and the complimentary instructing and guiding offered by fishing contacts cements the whole day in place. Grateful thanks to the superb guides in their support, patience, and interaction with the banter too!

Catering comes in the form of various guises. Cakes and puddings turn up at events, where we like to put on three meals during the day, a hot meal is a given around lunchtime usually, barbecuing if the weather permits, otherwise, heart-warming stews or curries through the more temperate months. A local butcher has been particularly supportive of us, and even hosted an event for Roger on their farm where chub were the quarry on a raw old day in early March.



Tackle can often sit idly in cupboards or 'up in the loft', but donated to the charity, it is immediately given a brand new lease of life. Clearly, some rods have seen plenty of work already, but the majority are pressed into service with a matching reel and line. Some of the gifting is clearly too precious to use, and we aim this at the auctioneers gavel. A recent series

of job lots went under the hammer on 23<sup>rd</sup> March at Ludlow racecourse, and made £615 for us – brilliant!

Into the mix come landing nets, boxes of flies, and other sundries, and at regular intervals, we can share this out amongst the troops.

Cash contributions are also very nice! An elderly lady I know always gives me a fiver when she can, and I can report back to detail how it was spent! As they say, every little helps.

If you think you can help us in any way, please do get in touch and we will mould your contribution into the mechanics of a day out with Fishability UK.

A good indication of how well an event is going is via the banter generated on the day. It is part of Forces life, but wonderful interaction between clients and guides ensues all day long.

Driving the charity is a committee which meets on a regular basis at the West Clandon British Legion building, and I would like to thank them again here, for their kind support towards our venture.

Meanwhile, we cover all the latest action on the website which provides news and accounts of recent trips and what's coming up.

For the year ahead, we already have a pretty full calendar of events, something happening every fortnight effectively. It would be nice to get back to some warmer weather, so looking forward to this persistent easterly wind dropping out and allowing winter to turn to summer (let's forget spring this year shall we?)

Happy Fishing everybody and thanks again for all your support with the project, rest assured it is being put to very good use.

**from Albury Park**

For enquiries, donations, or further details, please send us an email:

Coarse Fishing  
[roger@fishabilityUK.org](mailto:roger@fishabilityUK.org)

Fly Fishing  
[tony@fishabilityUK.org](mailto:tony@fishabilityUK.org)

Roger Sharp and Tony Hern.  
Co-Founders  
FishabilityUK

[www.fishabilityUK.org](http://www.fishabilityUK.org)



**A nice bag of rainbows**