

# MTSFC



## The Masonic Fishing Charity

# Masonic Trout and Salmon Fishing Charity West Kent Branch

Annual Report for 2019 prepared by George Buckberry

The following table shows the events scheduled in 2019 with the number of schools and children hosted.

Date	Venue	Type	Schools	Children
25/04/2019	Spring Hill Trout Waters	Trout	2	17
16/05/2019	Spring Hill Trout Waters	Trout	2	22
06/06/2019	D.D.A.P.S.	Coarse	2	24
03/10/2019	Spring Hill Trout Waters	Trout	1	9
		Totals >	<b>7</b>	<b>72</b>



Casters and Support Team



Great days out with the Children – Fish caught along with many smiles and some nature watching.



### **Chairman Anecdote – Keith Fairweather**

A Downs syndrome girl who was my charge for the day. I was told by her teacher she was probably the most impatient girl in her class. The teacher went on to say that this young girl had today been the most patient she had seen her, this may have been in part because she had had one to one attention for four hours.

### **Event Organiser & DBS Co-ordinator – John Berry**

We held four days events during 2019, with up to twenty four children attending at either three fly fishing and a coarse fishing venues. These events were held on a weekday as it takes part during school terms.

The day starts with setting up for the day quickly followed by a hearty breakfast for helper and coaches. Before the children arrive a very important health and safety briefing is held and I have to point out that all those involved have a DBS certificate of clearance to work as volunteers with the children.

The Children usually arrive around 10.00 and are paired of with their coach for the day. At lunch time everyone assembles for a BBQ after which every participant receives a certificate and in some cases a medal for any outstanding performance. The children have to get back to school in the afternoon, leaving us to clear away.

The highlight of each day is not the fish caught but the smiles caught as they drive away. Truly events which every member of the province should be proud to be associated with.

### **DBS Clearance**

The West Kent branch pays particular attention in making sure every member of its committee, its Helpers, Casters and Coaches have up to date DBS clearance without exception.

We are always looking for keen fishermen to help us at our events so if you can give up a day let me know and ( [johnberry1948@googlemail.com](mailto:johnberry1948@googlemail.com) ) I will arrange to get you cleared to participate.

### **Schools Liaison Officer – Sue Purser**

The events that were actually held were well attended with the number of schools and children listed in the summary show. There had been a second event planned at DDAPS for 19th September which had to be cancelled for two reasons: Firstly, that it was early in the school year and the school that were to attend couldn't get parent permissions in time. Secondly there was a shortage of Casters available which would have made it difficult to accommodate a large number of children. Learning from the first point the corresponding event for 2020 is planned to be held later in September.

If your Lodge or Chapter would like to sponsor one of these days out or if you know of a school for children with physical or mental difficulties that might benefit from these events then contact **David & Sue Purser**.

### **Secretary & Health and Safety Officer – David Purser**

I am happy to report that there were no accidents to anyone attending our events in 2019 largely due to the preparation and briefing to all of the West Kent volunteers and also to the care exercised by the Casters on the bank to ensure that all participants wear the required hat and safety goggles and due care when back casting at fly fishing event.

### **Treasurer Anecdotes – Ken Parry-Husbands**

At the event at the Dartford and District Angling and Preservation Society (DDAPS) held on 6<sup>th</sup> June I had two very disabled, wheelchair children and a carer was fishing for them. He was on a short whip using maggots when he caught a small roach. As he was playing it in a sudden swirl in the water. He jumped and I said 'probably a pike going for the roach'. He asked will it come back and told him it is fishing anything can happen. Then a very big splash which threw water over the carer and the roach gone. Pike ate the roach, bit through line and splashed the carer. He was very surprised and hooked on fishing for life. The children laughed at his mishap.

Again at DDAPS coarse fishing and I had two persons in wheelchairs, both very incapacitated to the extent that they had to have everything done for them the carer even feeding and wiping their lips afterwards. I managed to get two short whips lodged in their arms but they only extended about four feet into the water (the wheelchairs cannot be brought too close to the edge of the bank). They caught many very small fish on maggots. Some smaller than the hook! But the screams of laughter were frequent and loud and heard by everyone. It made all the preparation and work to make the day worthwhile.

Another time we were fly fishing at Trosley and I had a person with Down's. The carer was with us and saw a male coot covering a female. Coots are only just buoyant as they dive a lot for food, so, as normal, the female was under water. The carer shouted 'that bird is drowning the other'! I explained that this was normal, and as the child was there I could not say what they were doing but not to worry. They finished and she dived. 'Look she has drowned' said the carer. I waited until she came up with weed in her beak and said 'Look she is feeding quite happily'. Unfortunately some people never see nature.

Another time one of our very experienced fly fishermen had a child in a wheelchair who could only move his hand about an inch at a time. The fly fisher set him up on a fly that imitates an insect that crawls slowly on the bottom and is retrieved very slowly. Ideal for the child who caught four fish. When he arrived he was solemn but each time he caught a fish he laughed (talking was difficult) and he went home happy and smiling. JOB DONE!

### **Publicity & Event Reports Anecdotes - George Buckberry**

One girl at one fly event who had little use of the right hand to hold a rod but found her own way to clamp the rod under her right arm and retrieve with her good left hand. She got a medal for best retriever.

A boy in a wheelchair with similar right hand disability who, at another fly fishing event, when the rod was held by me, thought of a way in the retrieve with his left hand to give a jerky movement to simulate a distressed fish.

At the DDAPS event with two boys to cast for one was nearing his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday so was so pleased to be counting the fish to see if he could get more than his age – he caught 24 including Carp, Perch, Roach, Bream and Tench. His friend was close behind with 20 fish. That little bit of competition between them to catch the most had them talking about it during lunch. Their carer was amazed at how immersed in the fishing they had become especially as they had never fished before. They went home so proud of their day very happy with their certificates of achievement.

### **Trailer Towing**

Following the West Kent MTSFC AGM I circulated a request on the Provincial facebook page, for volunteers to assist in towing the trailer to events when the Secretaries vehicle was unavailable, and received quick responses from six volunteers who will be DBS checked in preparation for the new season.