

Issue 4 June 1991

**DROPBACK
DBOBBWCK**

**Pike
Anglers'
Club
of
Great Britain**



**WALTON-ON-THAMES
REGION 15**

Introduction

Well here it is! Issue 4 of DROPPACK. I was beginning to think that issue 3 was going to be our last. We had a very poor response to our request for articles, but eventually we had enough to go ahead with issue 4, and here it is.

A few months ago I wrote to Keith Berry of the Northern Ireland Pike Society in response to his letter in PIKELINES and encouraged him to 'go for it' with regards to their newsletter. Imagine how I felt when the reply I received included an article for our newsletter and it was the only article we had.

Things last year within the region were a little slow, but I am hoping to improve on that this year. I have already been in contact with Charlie Bettall of wooden lure frame. He has agreed to come along to our August meeting and give a talk and slide show. (August 5th 1991 - District Arms, Woodthorpe Road, Ashford, Middlesex - for those of you that have forgotten where the meetings are held.)

I would appreciate any slides that you may have, so that we can put together our own region slide show. If you don't use slide film, why not give it a try, (you can always get prints made up from the slides) it could be quite interesting to see what as a region we get up to. It also gives those of you that don't contribute for whatever reason an opportunity to participate in an important way.

Anyway, just to remind you, that as issue 4 is being distributed in July, we only have 5 months until issue 5 (December 1991). So get your stories etc., down on paper and either hand or send them to me by the November meeting.

Tight Lines

Dave Fish

N.I. Pike Society A New Club Record

The long standing N.I.P.S. Pike record was recently beaten, and although I did not catch the fish myself, I did have the privilege of weighing and photographing it.

The story starts way back in September, whilst fishing for specimen bream on Monalty Lake (Ireland's equivalent to Queensford) I bumped into Chris Cairns, a former N.I.P.S. member who I hadn't seen for over two years. On the long fishless night that followed, a few pike trips were arranged and Chris was persuaded to rejoin the N.I.P.S.

We take up the story again on a January night where the phone rang half way through a good film. It was Chris, sniffing for the latest information, I asked him what he was doing the next day, he had planned to go on a boozing trip with friends a Portrush (Like Blackpool, only smaller) but was open to suggestions. I told him that I had to deliver a pair of backbiters to a friend south of the border and that Pip (my regular partner) and myself had planned to do a bit of piking "nothing serious, just an excuse to get out of the house" and he was welcome to tag along. Chris was in two minds what to do, so I told him, if he decided to go, to be at my house by 5.30 the next morning, at about 5.15.

Chris arrived, followed shortly by Pip, and within twenty minutes we were on our way. About half an hour after our arrival on a cold but bright morning. I landed the first fish of just over nine pounds. Pip not wanting to be outdone was quickly into a fish of around seven pounds. The weather

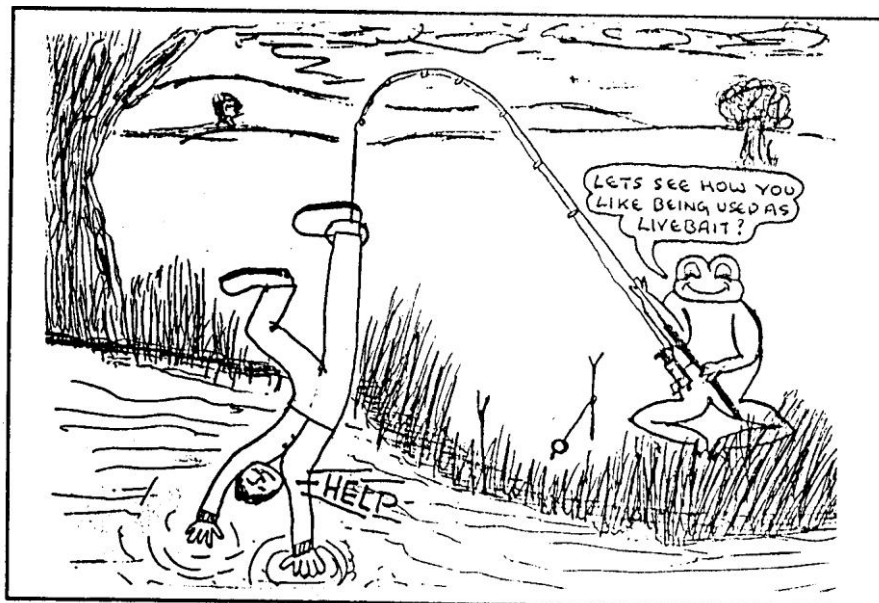
was deteriorating fast, the wind picked up and what started as rain soon turned to sleet. I had another fish of about six pounds again followed by a similar fish to Pip. The rest of the day was spent under the broolly and around four o'clock with nothing else to show for it other than a snapped rod and a collapsed chair. I decided to admit defeat. After all, I had taken a couple of fish and poor old Chris was facing a blank. Whilst I loaded my gear into the back of the jeep, Chris came running up shouting something about a massive Pike he'd just landed. "What size is it?" I asked. "I don't know, but it's big!" said Chris. "Pip's looking after it". "Is this a wind up?" "I swear to god Keith, it's a monster!" We both ran back to the water-side, where Pip stood with an expression like he had just won the pools. "Where is it?" I asked.

"In the sack" replied Pip. I walked to the bank and looked upon the huge form within the clinging material of the sack. Words cannot describe how I felt, to see a fish like this is every Piker's Dream. Pip had already sorted out the cameras and scales. Being the only one wearing waders, I was sent to retrieve the fish. This has to be a dream. I could hardly lift the thing.

The fish was deposited on the bank and the sack was gently peeled back. The fish slipped into the weigh-sling. Chris paced up and down uttering obscenities to himself. I lifted the fish clear of the ground, the needle of the 40lb Avons slipped round to 36lb 2oz, Chris was told not to get too excited, we knew the scales were out by quite a bit above thirty pounds and the fish was going to be less than thirty six pounds. I phoned Pip the next day to get the verdict; the scales were 8oz out. The final weight was 35lb 10oz. I think by the amount of alcohol consumed the previous night that Chris wasn't going to be too upset to lose the odd 8oz.

Keith Berry

NIPS

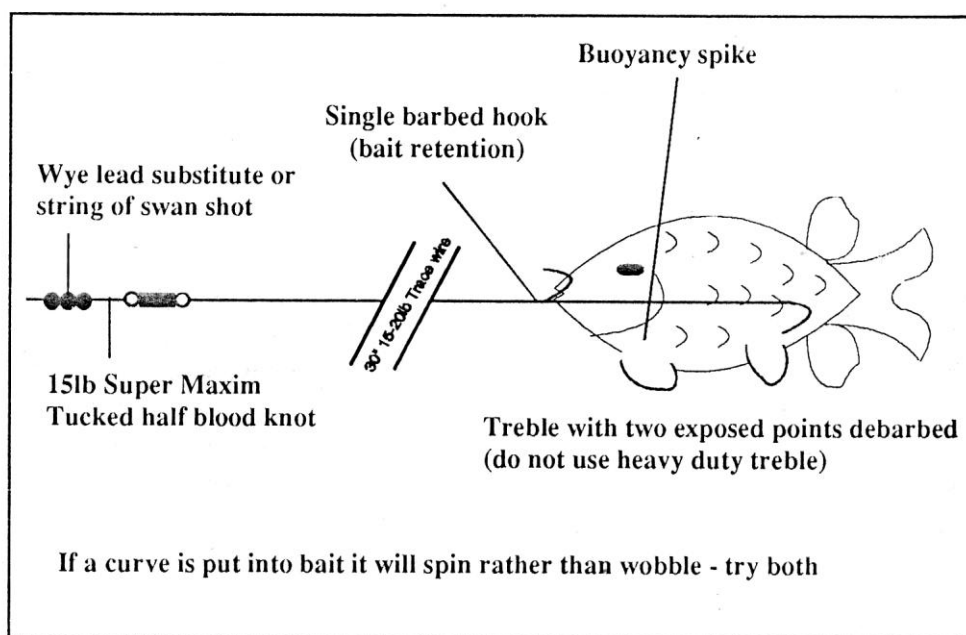


Wobbled Deadbaits

Wobbling/Spinning a deadbait is an extremely effective method of locating and catching pike in all waters and because of its mobility particularly the larger ones. I am most surprised that it seems to have become one of anglings "forgotten methods". In the colder months when the fish are more lethargic; their metabolism slows as the temperature drops, it is a way of extending ones "spinning Season" even when the fish are less willing to chase. It also rarely if ever leads to deep hooking as

one is constantly in touch with the bait. Wobbling a deadbait is just like spinning or plugging except that a natural rather than artificial bait is used. It is still attractive to the fish even when stationary so the retrieve can be slower, "inch" retrieving through a known or suspected lie when necessary. Spinners or plugs would either snag or simply fall to produce an action. Helin's flatfish is the exception to this as this is one lure designed for a very slow retrieve, as is the kwikfish. Although a lure can be made to hover in flowing water.

The rig I use for wobbling is a wire trace of 15-20lbs incorporating a single and a treble hook; the treble at the end of the trace and a swivel at the other. The single is moveable to accommodate various sizes of bait. Deceased livebaits or other very fresh fish make the best wobbling baits as not having been frozen they are tougher and stand up to repeated casting for longer. If the bait is hooked with the front single as near as possible vertically through the exact centre of both lips slightly faster retrieve will result in a most lifelike manner. Try it in clear water when you are wearing Polaroids; you will see what I mean when the rigour mortise has worn off the bait. (Casting does help to soften them!!!)



The method of retrieve should be to cast beyond the known lie or likely spot so that the splash of the bait does not frighten the fish you hope to catch, and then count the bait down to the bottom'. This will help build up an idea of the bed contours. Then retrieve slowly with a jerky 1-pause-2-3-pause action. Repeat varying the path of the bait by moving the rod from side to side as well as the sink and draw action. When the bait is close to the bank pause for a few seconds and work the bait in the shallows, in this way one can often induce a take from a fish that has followed from deeper water.

A favourite method of mine is to insert a buoyancy aid i.e. a hard balsawood spike with a loop attached to the single hook of the bait -1 find that injected air does not last long enough - then add sufficient uptrace weight to sink it quickly, out of the way of seagulls etc. Then twitch and sink and draw retrieve along the bottom letting it rest and waver above the weed then twitch again. Takes are usually decisive, there is no doubt when a fish is on - they slam into it!!!

Because of the dire possibility of leaving a bait armed with hooks in a swim it is advisable to use line strong enough to straighten the hooks if necessary. I find 15lb Super Maxima is reliable. Renew your line at least twice each season, check your knots frequently and cast accurately. Match the rod to the weight of the bait and sinker used, loz of weight to lib test curve of the rod is an old but useful guide.

I personally have a preference for longer carbon rods for this method i.e. the 12ft Tricast 2 1/21b TC extreme range v with a 35mm butt ring tapering progressively to the tip (mini beach caster this one), or the Diawa CS98 (W) 12 Bait and Spin Special coupled with the Diawa SS2600 Coned Spool Reel.

These rods have the power to put the bait where I want it to go and the sensitivity to transmit the feel of even a timid take, and coned spool reels and big butt rings sensibly positioned re- ally do add to the casting range. Essential if one is bank fishing a large reservoir or similar water.

I suggest travelling light carrying only essentials, plus a compact electronic bite alarm with a short rod rest, it is then possible to carry on fishing whilst having a smoke or a hot drink from the) vacuum flask.

This method has succeeded in tempting many pike including a 22 1/21b fish after dark one Christmas Eve. (I had managed to avoid the office party) My arrival home both wet and muddy, and my insistence on interrupting "she who must be obeyed" in the midst of her Christmas dinner preparations, to use the kitchen sink to wash the mud from my precious rod and reel almost succeeded in getting me banished for life!!!!

Tight lines

John Keating

Swings and Roundabouts

Reading the fishing glossy's at this time of year I found the same sort of stories as last close season, ie "What happened to me last season and what I've planned for next year!" It's the only thing you can write at this time of year, so what follows is a brief account of the Ups and Downs of last year and how I've planned next year's assault.

90-91 I spent a lot of time playing on lots of different waters, two of these waters I've got on well with, Richmond Park and the River Mole. All of the others I would only fish again if I was dragged there kicking and screaming. Wraysbury One and Two, I really hate those two bastards, despite having a 221bs Pike from Wraysbury II. It's here where I spent two separate nights fishing, once in the summer when I was eaten alive by mossies and once in the winter in the biggest bastard storm ever. Both blanks! It was here, where the biggest pike I have ever hooked smashed a 3lb T/C Carbon Rod in half and bugged off. It's also here that whilst trying to catch small livebaits all I could catch were loads of Perch at 1 1/2lbs to 2lbs and big Bream and then returning the next day to fish for them only to catch bugger all!!

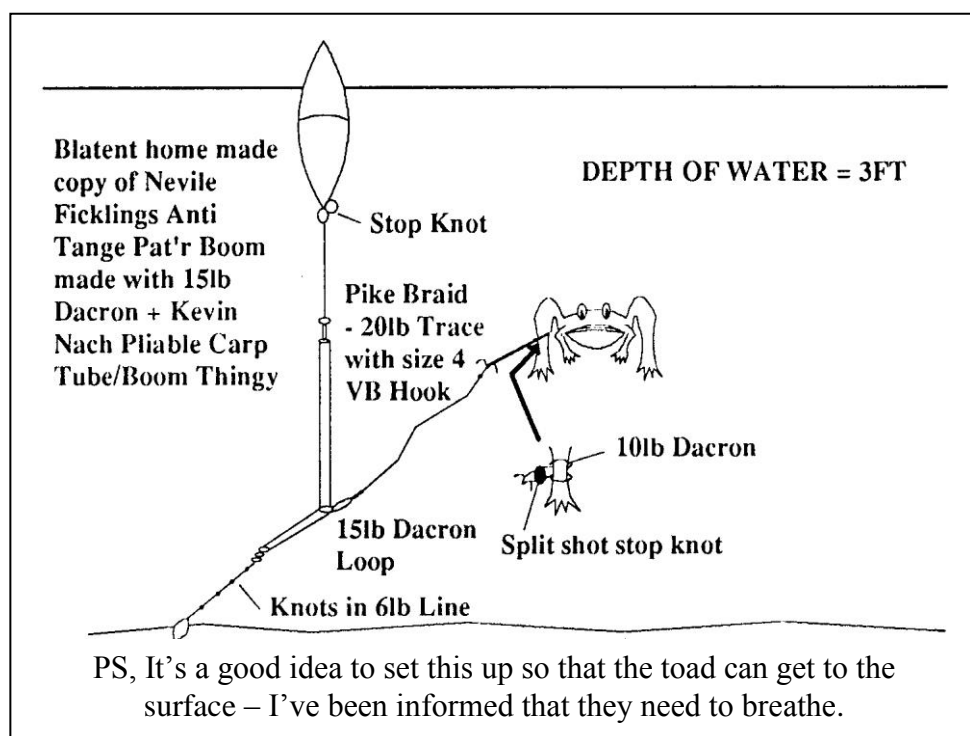
On the Thames and Hogsmill I only fished a couple of times half hearted, but I did catch a 131b Pike on the Hogsmill on a yellow hawg boss plug. It was the worst fish I've ever laid eyes on, covered in scars with lumps of meat missing on its head, poor bastard! It was a surprise to catch on the Hogsmill but what a sewer! I know the Septics (Septic-Tanks, Yanks, get it?) fix little bits of bright plastic to their lures but every time I pulled the lure out of the water to find it covered in rubbers (some with little knots tied in them!!) I couldn't help but think that someone was taking the piss!

Still I'll have another go next season. Twynersh, three separate days fishing for just one run, and that was during a fish in, however I still managed to balls that up in the finest tradition. There are other waters I've fished but it hurts to even think of them, Boldermere's the worst. All I can say

about that place is just turn up, throw a load of deadbaits in and then go home. It's a lot easier! All of these waters are a bad dream to me but I've done really well on two others. Richmond Park, I can't find words to describe this place, it looks horrible but I made a killing here. On New Year Eve I made a resolution to catch a Pike of 25+lbs some day. The next morning January 1st at 11.30 hrs and 28.12oz of pike put an end to that. 11 1/2 hours must be a record for completing a New Years Resolution. It's the same fish I caught last year. At 23.11oz which made me worry about my scales. It was caught again two months later by Keith at just under 26lb. The main highlight though was the 18.04oz Pike I caught on March 13th. I had been fishing the small lake all day and had caught that bloody idiot Pike of 13lb that I have caught four or five times before, I've nick named it "Sucker" because what I call it each time I catch it I can't be put in print. I had also caught a 17.14oz on my trusty sardine bait. I then ran out of bait!

Anyway it was a hot sunny day and only one day of the season left. So I was thinking about spinning when a toad swam past. Now I've had this long standing theory that frogs must be a good bait, live or dead.

So I collared the toad and put him in my sandwich box while I put a rig together. See the diagram for what I finally came up with. (I didn't have the heart to hook it so it was hair rigged!) This was cast out to 30 yards or so. At half past two in the afternoon the water around the float exploded and the float snapped under the surface, the monkey shot to the top of the climber and the baitrunner went into overdrive, the optonic screamed out for what seemed a life time before I stopped laughing and struck into a good fish. After striking some good pose's in front of a watching crowd I landed the Pike and one sorry looking mangled toad. The fish weighed in at 18.6oz (without the Toad!) What a way to finish the season you say. Not quite, the last day was spent on Boldermere for a blank.



I had fished the River Mole in Cobham for a couple of days with Paul O'Rourke showing me around. He is a member of the Club that owns the seven and a half mile stretch and I was on day tickets.

What a laugh! The River was in full flood and it poured down with rain and we still caught an average of five or six fish each a day. They were mainly jacks to 8lbs but they did fight! I couldn't

believe how they snapped. I must admit to feeling sorry for Paul though because on the first day at last light I caught an 11.06oz pike on that yellow hawg boss (Minus contraceptives!) Paul's been fishing this river for two or three years and I don't think he has bettered 81b. 11.06 on your first day is a kick in the teeth.

Things got worse the second day we went. We were fishing a deep bend in the river with float legered rudd dead baits when I struck at a weak bite, all hell let loose as this Pike took me for a walk. I had no control at all; the bloody thing gave me the right run around. Somehow we landed it (more by luck than skill). It weighed in at 15.14oz, all my birthdays in one. As we put it back Paul was still laughing, I was laughing and the Pike was still putting up a struggle. Mick also fishes this stretch of the river with a best of 131b+. Somehow it doesn't seem fair that two blokes fish a water for years then some sprag turns up and does so well!! Still, things turned Paul's way later that day with an 11.10oz fish. You should see the smile on his face in the photos.

So that's last season, what now?

For a start off I'm going to catch something on a "Fish In" I'm hacked off with blanking in front of everybody else. (Two years of Fish Ins with 4 runs!!) I've spent a fortune on gear for next year and I'm in going to bloody well use it. I've read all the books in Paul O'Rourke's collection and John Sidley's "River Piking" has inspired me. I've joined the Cobham Court Club for the River Mole. The £40 is worth it just for the scenery. The Mole and Richmond Park large lake are the two main targets for next year. I'm also going to try my hand at chubbing on the Mole during the Summer, it's a fish I've never done well with in the past and the Mole is leaping with them. I've also changed my transport after blowing up my last Bike. It's a right monster and can carry tons of fishing gear so I can even pose as I turn up at the water side. (Why do Carp men all drive Escort XR3i's and Capri's, don't they like getting wet and cold before they have even started or what??) Well that's finished! What an Epic! What a Saga!

What a load of Bullshit!!

Good Luck for 91-92

Paul Johnson

Trophies

Biggest fish at a Fish-in:- J Whittington

Weight:- 111b8oz

Most Meritorious:- P Johnson

Weight:- 181b6oz