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Issue 5 - December 1991

**Pike
Anglers'
Club
of
Great Britain**



**WALTON-ON-THAMES
REGION 15**

Introduction

Here we are with issue 5 of DropBack, a bumper Christmas edition and may I say a big thank you to all contributors. Although it's still early on in the season, on my local waters I have seen poor handling of pike, rods left unattended and fishing without proper landing nets and unhooking equipment. I wish more fisheries would introduce similar rules to those which are now in force at Ardingly; it must be good for pike welfare.

The region is hoping to produce an information sheet about pike welfare and handling, the Reading region have produced one and Phil Wakeford gave us a copy following his talk at our October meeting. The information sheet is intended to be displayed in tackle shops or given out on the bank. Attendance at meetings continues to fluctuate, 13 for Charlie Bettell, 32 for Phil Wakeford's session, it is obviously advantageous to write to members when we have a guest speaker. The region does need your support, so please come forward with any ideas for improvement or why not do a short talk or slide show, even an article for 'DropBack' or 'Pike-lines' is easier than you think. I am particularly impressed with young Craig's poem in this issue of DropBack, it encompasses such a lot of what pike fishing is all about, if you've not sent it to Pikelines, Craig, then I will.

Although Regional Organisers do not have to stand for re-election it has been traditional to offer the RO's position at the December meeting. Dave and I have been RO's for almost three years now and although Dave is willing to carry on with assistance I would prefer to stand down.

The RO's position is not one of continuous hectic activity but it does require some basic admin and organisational skills, above all commitment and a thick skin are essential. The joint RO system has worked well probably due to sharing the bad and joint motivation and support. So if you fancy the job - speak up now!

In closing I would like to thank members for their support, and from Dave and the compliments of the season, good luck • and tight lines.

Trevor Nicholls

And in the beginning

After I left school some years ago my fishing declined rapidly and then ceased altogether. Seven years ago I was on holiday in Corfu and by chance met a couple who lived near us back in England and he was a keen fisherman. On our return to England he invited me fishing at a local lake. As I recall he caught a tench of about 51bs on sweet-corn and I caught nothing, but the fishing bug had taken a hold. As it was late summer I suggested to Mark that we try Pike fishing. He was not too keen as he had never pike fished before. I had always had an interest in this toothy predator and so plans were made.

I knew of a water I had fished as a youngster and visited to check the lie of the land. To my surprise the same club had the lake and the same key fitted the gate.

A date was set and we went 'guesting'. It was a pleasant day and we set up side by side on a small point. A gravel bar ran straight but from the point. Mark had borrowed a carp rod from a friend and had a very large fixed spool reel with the line of about 30lb bs on which was coiled from memory. He put a herring on the hooks but it was too heavy to cast (it never occurred to us to cut it in half!) so I held the rod and Mark threw the herring out. The morning was uneventful and we had the lake to ourselves.

At about 2.30 we decided to call it a day, it was turning quite cold. As we began to pack up Mark called to me saying "Dave, look at this". The line on his carp rod was slowly peeling off the reel coil by coil. He picked up the rod closed the bail arm and struck. The fight was very slow and dogged. The fish stayed deep, when we at last saw it I just could not believe it, it was huge. The problem now was how we were going to land it. I had an old triangular net with brass arms about 18" long and a shallow large mesh knotted net (I didn't know any better then and the tackle was years old.) The net was on an alloy pole. We managed to get the head of the fish in the net and I tried to lift it. The pole broke!! The pike just swam slowly away, luckily still hooked; we eventually landed it by me lifting it out. We unhooked it with forceps and then weighed it with a pair of 25lb Samson scales. It weighed 22lbs 4oz. She was photographed and returned and swam away strongly. Not bad for your first pike.

That was the beginning. The next trip was to the same water and was even more eventful. I had now bought a 42" net and pole. We fished another point on the same bank. I now also had warmer clothes. Not long after setting up I had a run on a small gudgeon livebait which resulted in an 18lb fish which easily fitted in the new net. The fish was photographed and returned. Mark was also using a gudgeon livebait. His rod this time was a 13 foot match rod, the tip of which was broken halfway along.

About 2 hours after my fish he had a run, again the fight was slow and dogged and the fish stayed deep. Mark did not have much control over it and I told him to stop playing with it and get it in. The fight went on and then it began to rise in the water. We could see the float now, a fixed bung, up it came. I had the net ready and then we saw the fish swim past. I was speechless, it was a monster. Mark said "Did you see that!!" The fish was longer than the net was wide. We eventually landed the fish after quite a struggle, we got it in the net but lifting it out was a strain. We unhooked it and tried to weigh it on the 25lb Samson scales, it pulled the spring right out of the balance and then the spring broke.

We measured the fish 42 1/2" tip of snout to fork of the tail, 26" girth. She was a beauty. We photographed her and returned her safely. After that we packed up. Mark never went pike fishing again and has now given up fishing to play golf.

If only we had gone and got proper scales, who knows.

I am now on the committee of the controlling club, and the lake has suffered a major fish kill 2 years ago, but no really big pike turned up. Hopefully that big fish survived and is still there for me to catch one day.

David Fish

Conference '91

Having not attended the conference for about 5 years, due to the dates normally clashing with my annual holiday to the sun, I was looking forward to renewing some old acquaintances.

I had arranged to pick Bill up at 7am and for a change I was early, we set off around the M25 in the direction of the M1, traffic was actually moving for a change. The journey up was uneventful, and we stopped for breakfast just South of Loughborough, and surprise I had a larger breakfast than Bill.

We arrived at the University at about 9am, and then spent the next 1/4 of an hour trying to find the conference hall. There were signs for the Craft Fair and another conference which was obviously not the right one as the men were wearing suits and there were a lot of well dressed women.

We eventually found the right conference hall and entered into the Tackle Hall. The first person I bumped into was Eddie Turner, who immediately asked about the Queen Mary Reservoir. Opposite the ET stand was the Foster an Angler stand, I spent some time talking to Doug Hulme about the Charities planned Fish-In at Bala Lake, North Wales and a recent letter to Doug and myself from an individual offering to do a weeks sponsored Pike Fish-In. I then saw Sean Stewart, who looked very hung over, one of the disadvantages of staying overnight.

I was then introduced to the new committee by Sean (his brother is the Products Manager). Bill and I continued our perusal of the Tackle displays, which included Lures direct, TG Lures, ET products, Charlie Bettell Lures, DL Rods, Graham Phillips Rods, The Tackle Shop, Foster an Angler. A.C.A., Catfish Conservation Group, PAC products, RA 53 Loch Lomond, The Tackle Box, Institute of Fisheries Management, Sports Print, Marvic and three other stands two of which were selling lures and the other was selling Bite Indicators and mega expensive boat rod rests.

The conference started at about 10 and after John Roberts opening address, Dr Bruno Broughton took the stage to discuss Pike in Trout waters. His talk was enlightening, if not a bit technical in some respects.

After Bruno, Mick Brown took the stage to discuss Gravel Pit Piking, has that man caught some big fish or what! I found his talk most interesting and it was obvious that most other people did, as you could of heard a pin drop in the hall. Unfortunately Mick went over time and he was cut short. After the break another gent, whose name escapes me, but who came from Zimbabwe, spoke about lure fishing and about the only thing I can remember is that he preferred the colour silver.

Then it was lunch, much to Bill's delight. We adjourned to the bar and had a b. I and then wandered round the Tackle Hall again, this time I spent money and bought some of the large Kilty Trolling Lures, some printed t-shirts and some raffle tickets. I also managed to shame Bill into joining the ACA. Bill also bought a few items.

We returned to me Lecture Hall and Ralston McPherson took the stage to discuss Lomond Piking. His talk/slide show included boat fishing, the use of fish finders, trolling, down riggers and various other matters. I found his talk entertaining and informative and due to the interest he was generating it was decided to drop the discussion on fish finders and allow Ralston to continue after the tea break. At the end of his presentation there was a period for questions and then some of the committee took the stage with Ralston, Neville Pickling and Colin Dyson to discuss fish finders and any other matters arising. Neville was subject to much abuse and ridicule from a section of the audience for reasons unknown to me.

The last event of the day which everyone had been waiting for was the raffle, there were loads of prizes and I was fortunate to win a Big John Down Rigger. An enjoyable day in good company, we arrived safely back in London at about 8.30pm.

David Fish

The Pike and Us Anglers

The pike is no hoax
Swims in search of big juicy roach
She swims at great pace
Attacks a shoal of dace
No mercy for fish
Not me, they wish

On the bank before the sun
Cast out our bait
And we wait
For that special
Sunrises drop-backs falls
Quickly jump to your feet
Heart skips a beat.

The wait was worth while
Strike into something from the Nile
The pike is the size of a crocodile
Hey you kill joys if fishing, isn't what you like
Leave us pike anglers alone, anti-angling brigade on yer bike
'Cos we care for our Pike

Craig Hilburn

OFF TO A FLYING START

My first trip of the year was on Friday 4th October a short session before work. I had arranged to meet Trevor at Ellis water, on the small lake known as the Lagoon. This was to be the water that I had decided to concentrate on this season.

We had arranged to meet at first light, and on my arrival Trevor was already on the water. Trevor was fishing a swim he had discovered earlier in the season, and was setting up his pole for another crack at the Bream. He was also fishing a sunken paternoster for Pike. I set up in an adjacent swim and put out a legered sardine, about mid way out and a sunken float paternoster on the other rod again with a sardine on. Both rods were clipped up to an ET backbiter alarm. I was all set up and ready by about 6.50.

Trevor was already catching on the pole and now had a small roach on his Pike rod. At about 7.10 the left hand rod with the legered sardine on was away and the line was peeling confidently from the spool, I turned the alarm off and picked up the rod, closed the bail alarm and wound down to the fish and pulled into it. The response was a most pleasing thump on the rod tip and a progressive bend in the rod, the fish was kiting round to the right, I applied further side strain and called to Trevor (I had forgotten to set the landing net up, a good start to the season!) The fish fought quite hard and stayed deep, but eventually came to the surface and was netted first time by me (there was not enough room for Trevor to net the fish).

The fish and net were laid out on the grass and I unhooked the fish, the rear hook was just in the throat tissue but came out easily. On weighing the fish it went 121bs exactly, a good start to the

season. I recast the rod again baited with sardine to the same area and re set it in the rests. The sun was now starting to break through and a light breeze was ruffling the surface.

Trevor in the next swim was getting plenty of bites and hooking the fish on his pole but the hook was pulling out, we discussed this problem and Trevor said he could not think what to do, I said that considering he was using 4lb line and 3lb bottom to a size 20 barbless hook, perhaps he should try a large barbed hook, he said he wouldn't get any bites. I said perhaps not but if you do at least you might land it. He agreed and put on a 16 barbed hook. He had a bite almost immediately and was obviously into a fair fish as the elastic in the end of the pole was well stretched. Eventually Trevor got the fish to the surface; it was a bream of about 31bs. I netted the fish for Trevor and then left him to it. He continued to get bites and land Bream at regular intervals.

I repositioned my paternostered bait and poured a cup of tea, guaranteed to cause a run. No run was forth coming so I broke out the sandwiches, I don't take the Primus on short sessions. This still failed to produce any response. I decided to set up my lure rod and just as I finished threading the line through the rings, the left hand rod was away again. Again a confident run I picked the rod up, turned the alarm off and closed the bail arm, I quickly took up the slack line and bent into the fish. The rod bent into a satisfying curve and I felt the fish kick on the end of the line. Again the fish kited to the left and I applied side strain on the end of the line, again the fish kited to the left and I applied side strain and the fish came back still staying deep, I could feel it shaking its head, normally a sign of a good fish. I applied more pressure and the fish grudgingly came to the surface, it was obviously another double, it then tail walked and dived deep again. I got it back to the surface and netted her on the second attempt. One hook was flying and the other was in the scissors, on the scales the fish went 12 3/41bs.

The rest of the session was a non event but I was not complaining two doubles on your first outing was more than I had hoped for, perhaps this year 13 going to be my year.

The next trip on Sunday was a re- sounding blank. Back to normal.

David Fish

AN "IRISH" EEL SESSION!!

On Saturday the 18th July my fishing partner Phillip Arthur, my wife Valerie and myself headed off on an all night Perch and eel session. We were to fish a 20 acre still water owned by a close friend. We have sole access to the water which is supposed to hold some good Perch and the plan was to fish for perch in the evening, eel's during the night, then perch again in the morning.

By the time darkness fell we had only taken a few small Pike and some even smaller Perch for our efforts. Maybe the Eel fishing would reap greater rewards.

One interesting thing that did happen, took place at around 7 o'clock. Phillip noticed a disturbance about ten yards from the bank and set off in the boat to see what was occurring. He was greeted by the sight of two Pike, one around eight pounds and both attached to a Pike of a low three pounds, neither one of them prepared to part company with their evening meal.

Anyway by 1.30am both Valerie and Pip were well gone and I was half way through my second angling mag, my optonics remained silent, so I decided to retire to the sleeping bag for an hour or so. No sooner had I lay down below the broolly than my left hand optonic gave a single bleep, as I fought my way out of the sleeping bag I watched the isotope raising steadily to the rod and before it

reach the butt I leaned into a very solid resistance. My first thought was that an eel record was about to fall, but within seconds my unseen opponent had realised that something was not quite right and took off on it's first powerful run, it was then I realised that I was into a good Pike.

The fish was taken in less than three foot of water on a small dead rudd and quickly took to the air where it spent most of the fight. I shouted to Valerie to give me a bit of light, I had left my headlamps hanging on the broolly and trying to control over 20lb of pissed off pike in total darkness is a hell of a task. It was at this state of the proceedings that Pip woke wondering what all the fuss was about and with the help of Valerie I was soon slipping a very undersized pan-net under a large and still angry Pike.

The pike was hooked neatly in the scissors and was quickly unhooked and returned to the water to recover from the exhausting fight. Within twenty minutes she was holding her own and placed in a large pike tube until daylight for photos, weighing and to make sure she recovered properly.

Exactly an hour later there was a repeat performance with a smaller but every bit as angry fish was to be the last run of the night and as the sun rose above the horizon both pike were taken from the water, weighed, photographed and returned as quickly as possible. The smaller fish weighed 15lb 7oz and the biggie weighed 21lb 9oz. She may not have been my largest pike but she certainly put up one of the best scraps and to take place in total darkness only added to the excitement.

We fished for perch in the after- noon without much luck apart from a few small pike falling to Pip's rods and one of around seven pounds to Valerie, and believe it or not we came across the three fish we had spotted the previous evening, still quite attached and reluctant to give up their prize.

All in all it was quite an eventful session, I didn't get the fish I was after but I am definitely not complaining.

Keith Berry
NIPS

Not Just another Blank

Oh no! Not another Fish-In at Wraysbury 2!

Of the first four I had fished at this venue only one pike of around 5 lbs had fallen to one of my rods, on a free-roaming trout livebait, which I'd been working all around the swim the whole morning.

The fish had spelt the end of a six-blank run for me, so it even warranted a quick couple of photos.

With this dubious record in mind, I'd almost resigned myself to another session which could only result in a bit more room in the freezer for food instead of deadbaits, (although I'd caught a few pike to 91b 9oz at Wraysbury 2 on solo fishing trips, in amongst all the blanks).

Driving around the School-Bay car park just before dawn, we hung around until Trevor arrived and just at sun-up, we started off round the bay.

As usual, Paul O'Rourke had a marathon route-march in mind, and set off purposefully with Paul and Mick for the swim at the end of the spit; a fair old trot even without a ton of tackle!

With a pessimistic attitude, I figured that if I was going to blank, I might just as well do a short walk from the car as a long one, so I set down my tackle in the second corner of the School-Bay, in the swim next to Trevor, so at least I had someone to talk to while waiting for non-existent bites!

To be fair though, this is a known swim for producing pike, including the 91lb 8oz fish mentioned earlier (which was the only pike landed out of six takes on trout livebaits which were a bit on the large side), and a double to Trevor at a Fish-In when he had plonked out what I seem to remember was a float-paternostered smelt into the water just in front of him, to untangle the line which had wrapped itself around the end of the rod, and wallop: 161lbs. Lucky sod! It never happens to me!

My first bait out this trip was a legered mackerel tail, with an optonic and polyball drop-arm for bite detection. Next out, was a simple float-rig and Gudgeon deadbait, set about two-feet above bottom, in about eight-feet of water, two rod lengths out.

With the breeze blowing from right to left, the float had soon drifted round to rest against the weed that was growing to six feet out from the bank all round this corner of the pit.

Time for a cup of coffee from the flask and a chat to Trevor, who was losing valuable livebaits to an annoying Jack which was haunting his swim, but at least there was one pike feeding!

Not much later I noticed that my float had sunk to within half an inch of the tip, but assuming it was caused by the wind-drift, I didn't take much notice until it disappeared altogether.

Winding down and striking, I felt nothing and had lost the bait, so out went the other Gudgeon I had in the Nash boilie Bag, and when the float had drifted round to the same position against the weed, the float soared away again, this time showing the culprit to be a jack of about 10oz, which Trevor photographed for posterity: (now on the Region photo-board!!)

Next bait out under the float was a large Sprat, top treble into an eye-socket and out through the top of the skull for a good hook hold, and the bottom one in the flank.

Fished in the same position as before, it produced a fish around 41lbs. This looks more promising I thought, so another Sprat went on, mounted the same way, head pointing upwards towards the float, and fished against the weed.

Soon this bait was away and the result a pike of 11lbs 4oz, which unfortunately came in like a wet-sack, but once landed, the "Wet-Sack" decided to do its fighting on the bank and started snaking off towards the bank side undergrowth, but I managed to grab her and stop her from disappearing forever, after which Trevor got his camera and did the honours again.

I check my watch, 10.55, proving that it pays to get my lazy arse out of bed early!

Well, at this rate, the next one should have been a 20?!?! , but after numerous changes of bait and fishing positions, (with not a touch on the ledger), no more bites came along, but as people started to leave for home, it turned out I'd been the only person to catch, so I was well pleased.

So at the end of a season that had seen the lakes and gravel pits frozen for a good part of the winter, the 11lbs 4oz fish, turned out to be the largest at a Fish-In for the 90-91 season, and the shield now has the pride of place on top of the telly!

With the pike-season approaching (5th August as I write this), I look forward to some decent fishing, including I hope some lure-caught pike, and enjoying P.A.G meetings and Fish-Ins in the months ahead, and who knows, perhaps there is a 20 out there with my name on it!

John Whittington

Looking Ahead

As I write, it's nearing the end of October and the weather is still very mild. I am sure all that will soon change and the pike season will be in full swing. I've had a successful October landing 15 pike, nothing large but all enjoyable and on a variety of methods. I approach my piking this season with new enthusiasm, why I'm not sure. Maybe it's because I only had two fishing trips between 16th June and the middle of August, maybe it's because my Sunday morning trips are now full day outings.

Although it may be a bit of both, I think the major factor is that I approach my angling as a pleasure angler being satisfied with whatever I catch. That's not to say that I don't want to catch big fish and lots of them, but I try not to get too disappointed if I fail.

I completely agree with Chris Donovan in his excellent article 'Ambitions' in the August 1991 of *Pikelines*. If you are struggling with your piking, read it and I'm sure it will help put things into perspective.

Trevor Nicholls

What A Difference A Storm Makes?

For the past three Saturday mornings Ian and I have been fishing at Virginia Water Lake, we were arriving at about 4am and the fishing was quite good between 5-6am on all three occasions. We thought we had found the magic "feeding time" having caught 12 fish for 3 visits and although they were small it was nice to see some action after last season's miserable count.

I arranged a trip for Saturday morning, as usual, but Ian was working so I agreed to take young Craig with me hoping he could share our new found secret. He turned up at my house to sleep at about 9.30, anxious to get to bed; it was a warm sticky evening and by 12 o'clock a real electric storm started and carried on till 2.30 yours truly was wide awake. The alarm went off and totally knackered we went fishing, by 4am the deadbaits were in the water and we sat under umbrellas in the morning drizzle, waiting for the 5am action to start - nothing. I tried different baits, then injected with smelt juice/sardine/air but still nothing seemed to tempt Mr Pike.

Come 9am and we still hadn't had a run with four rods working hard. I suggested to Craig to try his new floating lure and first cast he caught one (thank you God), 3lb 12oz, he was over the moon. For the rest of the morning Craig tried all my lures but all he caught were weeds and trees - 15ft high! How can you do that?

10am and my alarm croaked into life (I was beginning to think the batteries were dead) a 12 1/2lb'er was the result, 15 mins later another run which I missed.

That's how a good spot changed as a result of the storm - Perhaps?

Bill Croft