

June 1996 - Issue 9



R.O.
David Fish

R.O.
Neil Depledge

RO's lines

Another year gone by (in fact it's 16 months) and a belated 'Dropback' due to a lack of literary contributions. Do I have to beat you with a stick or should we drop the idea? Looking back on the past 12 months or so, my fishing has again been curtailed due to family commitments, although my son is now showing a keen interest, but at the age of 5 I think he would not cope with the cold in winter.

The hardy few travelled north to Loch Lomond in May '95, they were Paul Smith, Robbie Woodford, Malc Jones, Rob Alien, Steve Aldridge, John Whittington and myself. A few fish were caught (very few) and Robbie managed two 19's. I fished the week with 3 on my boat, never again, two is ample.

Fish-ins were sometimes sparsely attended and we will reduce the numbers of these next year. Neil will give more details of these elsewhere.

The Foster an Angler Charity match was moved from the Fens to a Norfolk lake and due to the distance and the type of venue we did not attend as a region.

The Pike Club Convention was, once again, graced with the presence of a few WoT PAC members and a good time was had by all. If you didn't go, you just don't know what you are missing. Thanks to Neil again for the minibus.

We have survived this year at the new venue and this looks fairly secure, so the cheap beer and warm room are here to stay. Again we had a few speakers and it is in hand to arrange some more. Some of the ideas from last year did not reach fruition but a group did go to Slapton Ley in April '95 and all had a good time as well as catching a few fish. I also caught 3rd degree sun bum on the face but that's another story. A second visit was made in April of this year and more than a few fish were caught. On the Saturday 79 fish to 18lbs were shared between 9 anglers (Anthony spent the day in bed due to a disagreement with the local cider), and 38 fish were caught on the Sunday. A red letter weekend indeed. (Form a queue for next year's list).

This year's trip to Scotland was to Loch Ken, read more about that elsewhere in DropBack.

Goings on behind the scenes have continued, a few teach-ins have been supported and the Basingstoke canal pike cull has reared its ugly head again, so we have to continue to defend our corner there.

Neil is constantly moaning that he gets very few articles for 'DropBack' so I thought I would grass a few people up.

Throughout the year we have had several trips, weekend ones and longer. Below is a list of the trips and the names of those who attended. Hopefully this will goad them into putting pen to paper.

March '96 - Fenland weekend

Dave Fish, Paul Smith, Ron Parker, Chris Sims, Neil Depledge

April '96 - Slapton Lev weekend

Dave Fish, Robbie Woodford, Paul Smith, Bill Croft, Ron Parker, Chris Sims, Neil Depledge, Steve Aldridge, Jeff Kennett, Anthony Goucher.

May '96 - Loch Ken

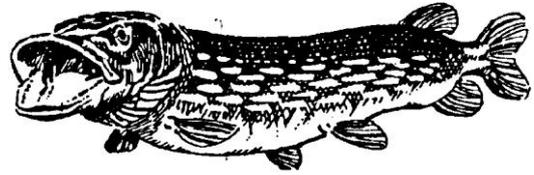
Dave Fish, Paul Smith, Steve Aldridge, Jeff Kennett, Malc Jones, Marc Spencer, John Whittington, Ian Goodchild, Bill Croft, Robbie Woodford.

Alternatively tell us about a day of your own. Whatever the subject...

Just do it!! (please)

That's all from me, Tight lines for '96/97.

Dave Fish



The Lure Box (Part 1)

by

Steve Aldridge

Hi, welcome to the Lure Box. I am going to try, through the pages of DropBack, to pass on advice and helpful hints to any of you who wish to catch more pike (or at least try to) by fishing with lures.

I don't pretend to be an expert but I do try to keep up to date with all the latest developments and techniques in the lure world and will attempt to pass this on to you. In this first issue I will be looking at surface fishing baits or what the Americans refer to as Top Water fishing. I think that this is a better description as so I will use this term throughout.

In general Top water fishing works best from spring until early autumn, although I have caught fish off the top right into the winter.

Lures for Top water fishing fall into three main categories; Plugs, Buzzbaits and Softbaits. Plugs include all those weird and wonderful lures such as crawlers, poppers, chuggers, darters and propbaits. Buzzbaits look similar to spinbaits but instead of having a Willow or Colorado blade, they have an inline buzz blade fixed to the top arm of the lure. It is this buzz blade that gives the lure its lift to keep it on the surface when being retrieved. Softbaits include lures such as the Scum Frog, the Thunder Toad and the Jerk, these lures are made of soft rubber and are virtually weedless, allowing them to be fished right through dense weed cover.

Spinbaits can also be worked on the surface or subsurface by holding your rod tip up high and winding in at quite a fast rate until the lure breaks surface and then slowing down until the spinbait just bulges the surface, I have caught many pike using this method.

Listed at the top of the next page are some of the surface lures that have worked for me.



Plugs

Jitterbug

Riplin Redfin

Sara Spook

Hula Popper

Crazy Crawler

Thin Fin

Devils Horse

BuzzBaits

Clacker

Floating Buzzbait

Moss Boss (weedless spoon)

Twin Beater

Hornet (inline spinner)

Any small to medium spinbait

Softbaits

Scum Frog

Jerk Rat

I have found that you have to be prepared to chop and change until you find the right combination of colour, action and speed of retrieve. Jeff Kennett and I have spent a great deal of time Top water fishing on our club lakes and have found that some days you retrieve as fast as you can and on other days you barely move the lure. The base colour of the lure is, I feel, not as important as the shade or tone. I find that black or dark shades are very good, this is probably because the pikes' eyes are especially suited to locating prey above it and black or dark colours produce the most definite silhouette, this is especially important in poor light conditions.

Two other important aspects of topwater lures are Vibration and Action, any lure which either rattles or has vibratory blades is a plus in most situations.

So to sum up:

1. You can never fish topwater lures too slowly.
2. Dark coloured lures seem to be best, but don't be afraid to experiment.
3. Be careful at the end of your retrieve, pike will often follow the lure right to the rod tip, taking the lure just at the last moment.
4. Use weedless lures in and around weeds and lily pads, don't be afraid to fish right through the pads.
5. Don't stand too close to the bank, fish can be resting very close to the bank. Make your first few casts from a position several feet back from the edge of the water.

So, if you have any waters that allow summer piking, give topwater lures a go, I guarantee when you have caught your first topwater pike you will find yourself "hooked", it really is the most exciting way of taking pike. As for me I'm off to Scotland with some of the lads and, yes, I will be taking my lures with me. I'll tell you how I got on next time. So tight lines and keep on plugging.

* * * * *

Across the Atlantic for that other species

In my fourteen years or so as a specialist angler I have fished exclusively for carp and pike with varying success. In that time I've enjoyed many trips to Holland, some to France and have always enjoyed my trips across the Channel in continental Europe. Actually I don't believe in luck per se, but that's another story.

Despite being widely travelled across the British Airways network, I had never pursued my fishing interests outside of Europe until March of last year, when I was invited over to Washington DC to fish for carp – there you are, I've said it - Carp - wasn't too bad was it?

Without going in to too much detail I 'met' my host, Pat Kerwin, via CompuServe which is similar to the Internet. Between us we had cultivated a group of Specimen Carp and Pike anglers from across Europe and the States - all communicating electronically and, equally importantly, meeting

from time to time to actually fish, dammit! Paul Ockendon from Peterborough was keen to join me on this trip and a date was agreed at the end of March '95.

To cut a long story short I got a pair of Andy Little Telecarps – highly recommended, incidentally from a sale at Penge Angling and started to plan what I was going to take. In the end I took a large suitcase and managed to cram in a rucksack, small Lafuma chair, dismembered rod-pod, buzzer bars and my usual small tackle box, together with a pile thermal suit-thank heavens!

I am a confirmed believer that most anglers take far too much gear with them and that we can all manage with a lot less kit. My Fox Microns, rods, baitrunners Canon EOS and video camera were all part of my hand luggage and I must admit I was obliged to rely on Paul's landing net - there was no point in duplicating tackle under the circumstances.

Bait, of course, is always a consideration and Pat said he would supply maize locally while Paul blagged us a freebie pillow of strawberry yogurt shelf-life boillies from a company that wanted us to bring back a fish-finder from the Cabelas' catalogue. I had reservations about successfully negotiating US customs with these dubious looking baits but in the event needn't have worried. Monster crab boillies would have been another matter altogether of course! On my next trip I will rely totally on maize - and why not, at 10 bucks a sack?

We flew into Dulles International and picked up a V8 rental car for silly money per week from Alamo and drove off to Pat's place near Capitol Hill. The following day we spent 17 minutes sight seeing and scrambled down to the/ waterside to start our first session in the tidal basin which is fed by the Potomac river. We could easily have spent, ooh I don't know, maybe an hour more sight seeing but you've got to have your priorities sorted, don't you? Seriously though, it is a beautifully laid out city with plenty to offer the tourist and, I understand, the highest murder rate per capita in the US. But I can assure you that although I was there almost a week I never murdered anyone - which just goes to show you!

This first session was a blank despite us having seen carp rolling but it was an interesting place to fish opposite the Jefferson Memorial and the Washington Monument, with the White House no more than a mile away. We had already bought our permits from the Harbour Police at the outrageous price of \$7.50 per annum. It was a bit like fishing in Hyde Park with lots of tourists circulating, having come miles to see the capitals famous cherry blossoms in full bloom. It has to be said that the Americans were totally freaked by our gear and if I ever fish the tidal basin again I shall hand out fact sheets to save my voice. The Americans are genuinely hospitable and a lot of well meaning but largely useless advice was offered, considered and rejected. By and large they simply have no idea of the presence of carp or what superb sport they offer - I know that this will surely change.

Anyway the following day saw us settling into one of Pat's favourite swims on the river proper opposite Roosevelt Island with our backs towards Virginia, about 100 yds away. The river here is tidal and the water under our rod tips up to 15 ft deep, if I remember right, gradually becoming shallower towards the margins of the island which were beyond our casting abilities. I could tell you an untruth - that I used a secret rig and a bait with secret additives given to me by a professor of piscine nutrition. In reality a simple running leger was deployed with a braided hooklink, size 6 hook furnished with a longer than usual hair threaded with 5 or 6 grains of Pat's maize. Loose feed was simply chucked in by hand.

We did try boillies further away from the bank but these only attracted Channel catfish - the biggest we landed being a whimsy over 6lbs. After a few hours it became apparent that the fish were coming to one or two rods amongst our battery of six and we quickly decided to share runs and this

made a significant contribution to everyone's enjoyment and I would seriously recommend this to anyone fishing a new water in foreign parts. I would certainly do it again.

We caught many carp over the following days and most were taken at the turn of the tides - all were commons and the biggest to me of just over 16lbs. The place is simply stuffed with carp and like a Princess kissing a lot of frogs to meet her Prince we could expect to catch a lot of doubles before the twenties showed. Being late March the wind was blowing most of the time and I was very grateful for my thermals under my Barbour in the absence of an umbrella. After we left the weather warmed up and Pat promptly got amongst those twenties.

I have become a member of the Carp Anglers Group in the USA and plan to attend the Potomac Fish-in in April before driving north to New Jersey and Connecticut to meet some ex-Pat Brits from the 'Net' to try out their waters.

Accommodation, car rental, fuel and food are very good value in the States and transatlantic air fares are no longer the hurdle they used to be. If you fancy something-different, why not consider the USA for your next fishing holiday?

See you on the bankside sometime soon.....

Andy Longfellow

A review of the facts and figures of the fish-ins 1995/96.

New Road 1st Oct

Seven fished and 5 caught

Malc Jones 16 lbs +

Peter Holford 15lbs 10ozs

Paul Smith 14lbs 2ozs on a deadbait. New personal best - first 'Double'.

Neil Depledge 4lbs + on a roach livebait

Bill Croft about 19ozs on a livebait.

Brooklands Lake 29th Oct

Ten fished and 9 caught

Neil Depledge 21lbs 02ozs, 7lbs 11ozs, 6lbs+, 31bs+, plus
3 fish lost

Steve Aldridge 7lb+, 7lb+, 4lb+, 4lb+

Bill Croft 5lbs+, 4lbs+

Peter Holford 15lbs 04ozs, 13lbs 09ozs

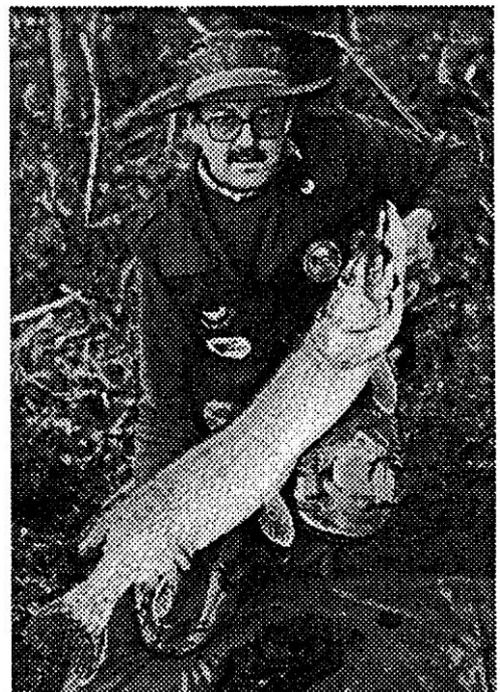
Andy Nicholls 7lbs 05 ozs, 2lb+

Dave Ouseley 8lbs 07ozs, 6lbs, 51bs+

Ron Parker 4lbs+, 3lbs+

Paul Smith 13lbs 14ozs, 6lbs+

Robbie Woodford 5lbs+, 4lbs+



The tenth angler was Chris Sims who unfortunately missed both of his runs.
Neil Depledge - Best fish caught at a Fish-In - 211bs 2ozs

Sheepwalk pit 12th Nov

Only Neil and Andy fished and had a pleasant day chatting and drinking tea.

Wraysbury II 26th Nov

On a wet and windy day 9 fished and saw nothing but birds all day, except for landed a fish of 13lbs 8ozs.

Broadlands 21st Jan

This trip had to be cancelled at short notice due to a pike match being held at the venue. Several of us descended on New Road Pit and most caught. The biggest fish of about 17lbs was caught by Andy Nichols.

Papercourt Charity Match 18th Feb.

Disappointingly only 17 anglers turned up, though this was boosted to 20 by Robbie and 2 S-W London lads going home for their gear. Six anglers caught 8 fish between them. The winner was Kevin West from the SW region with a total of 12lbs 7ozs

2nd Dave Field - 9lbs 4ozs

3rd John Byrne - 8lbs 12ozs

4th John McMorrow - 8lbs 6ozs

5th Dave White - 7lbs 6ozs

6th Bo Fenner - 2lbs 14ozs

A cheque for £100 was sent to Second Chance (Foster an Angler).

Burwood Park 3rd March

Eight of us fished amongst the splendours of the Burwood Park estate but sadly the fish didn't make an appearance. The only sign of action was a drop back on Big John's legered sprat but after carefully feeling for the fish he retrieved his hook to find just a small piece of the sprat's tail fin.

Fens weekend 9 - 10th March

Not an official Fish-In but a trip by 5 of us who were very kindly housed by Dave Fish's Dad. On the Saturday Neil caught a fish of about 3lbs within a minute of his bait hitting the water. This was followed later in the day by one of 15lbs 02ozs. Dave had three fish the biggest 15lbs 06ozs, plus two jacks,

Chris Sims had a fish of just over 10lbs plus a smaller one, Ron Parker had a pair of jacks and Paul Smith blanked.

On the Sunday we all blanked in the morning, but things changed in the afternoon. The highlight was Dave catching a fish of about 14lbs. It was safely returned and before he completed re-baiting, his second float shot away and a second fish was on. Amazingly, it was the same fish! Most of us have heard of fish being caught more than once on the same day but has anyone caught the same fish twice in less than ten minutes.

Chris had a jack and Neil caught 2 micro pike that would have barely disturbed the scales. Paul maintained his consistent record and Ron had to be satisfied with telephoning the girlfriend on his mobile.

Due to the relatively poor attendance at some of this year's fish-ins we have cut back on the number of trips. We have arranged one trip per month which will give members more scope to fish their own favourite waters and still attend. For details see the back page.

Scotland '96

It was decided that this year we would visit Loch Ken as opposed to Loch Lomond and consequently a change in accommodation, as there is a caravan park right on the Loch side at Parton. I arranged for two 6 - berth caravans for the week 11th to 18th May. There were originally 9 of us going but at the last minute Paul Smith decided to join us and crew on my boat, the reason being for his late decision was his University exams, fortunately the last one was on the 10th (He's now off until October, it's alright for some!)

This worked well as everybody was partnered, Me and Paul, Ian Goddard and John Whittington, Robbie Woodford and Bill Crofts, Steve Aldridge and Jeff Kennett and Malc Jones and Marc Spencer. Bill, Malc and I took our own boats and we hired two from a local boatyard. It was planned to sleep five in each caravan, as there were four single beds and a double in each van.

The preparations for my group, Steve and Jeff were travelling up in my car along with Paul, began on Friday and everything was packed except for the deadbaits and livebaits.

Saturday morning 4 am found us retrieving the livebaits, 150 rainbow and brown trout and placing them in the tank in the car. The pump was rigged and we were ready. We were due to meet the others at 5am near junction 11 of the M25 but were slightly late (not my fault). We then set off on an uneventful journey, stopping just twice, once for food and once for fuel. Making good time we arrived at the Loch at about 12-45.

We checked in, paid our boat licences and mooring fees and went to the caravans which were palatial and I must admit to being concerned that we might mess them up. These concerns proved groundless as some simple rules were laid down and everyone followed them.

The boats were unloaded and launched at the nearby slipway and I then took Steve, Jeff, Ian and John to the Loch Ken marina to get their boats. The boats they had hired were fibreglass with front cuddys and Seagull outboards. They were like floating gin palaces compared to the rubbish you get on Loch Lomond. The only pain was that Seagull outboards don't have a neutral or reverse. Still, you can't have it all and at least if the weather turned nasty they could shelter from it. I left them to it and went back to sort out my own boat. Everything was ready, the rods made up, bait sorted, food stowed and we were ready for the morrow. A few beers at the van followed by a shower and eight of us set off for Castle Douglas to get some food. We found a Chinese that could fit all of us in and had a mega scoff. Robbie and Ian were too tired to join us and had gone straight to bed. We were not too late as it had been a long day. No sooner had my head hit the pillow than the alarm went off. 4 am, up and at 'em. A quick brew and Paul and I were ready, mind you, so was everyone else. We pushed off from the bank and were off down the Loch.

Everybody had different ideas; they all had copies of the admiralty charts which I had supplied. Paul and I headed for the boat house bay and island. We didn't rush and had the fish finder on all the time as we zig-zagged towards our destination. The water level of the Loch was very low as we arrived at the bay and anchored between the island and a reed bed on the Loch shore. Paul fished to

the reed bed and I fished to the island. First blood went to Paul, a fish of about 5lbs on a smelt, then another, then a dropped run, then another dropped run. Then one was hooked, a small fish about three pounds, then another about the same size. This soon became the pattern, land a few, miss a few. Then we experienced dropped runs on paternostered baits. We moved around a lot, an hour here and hour there, but everywhere was the same.

Throughout the day we drank copious amounts of tea and ate loads of sausage and bacon sarnies, returning to the caravan at about 3.30 pm. I had to light the oven for the jacket potatoes, as I had volunteered to cook for the 'van, this was cheating really as I had brought along a large slow cooker and all I had to do was chuck in the food in the morning, switch on and when we came back it was ready to eat. Five o'clock was eating time in our 'van. Paul and I had a few beers whilst the spuds cooked and discussed the day. At about this time Geordie Geoff and Andy Mac arrived. They both used to be Walton PAC members but had returned North to live. They had come to fish until Thursday and gladly accepted our invitation to sleep in the lounge area for two nights, they then moved on to bivvie up on Green Island.

The weather remained warm and sunny all week and each day was a similar story. We would get up early and fish until about 3 pm, Paul and I would return to put the evening meal on and have a few beers. The rest would return at about 5 pm and we would chat about the day over dinner. Most evenings some of us went back out again.

Lots of small fish, in the 5 – 7lbs range, were caught with the odd larger fish up to about 12lbs.

It soon became clear that there was an early morning feeding spell between 4.30 and 8 am. There were still lots of dropped runs and even just chomped baits were occurring. There was no particular preference for bait type as both lives and deads were scoring well. Some of the lads fished for bait on a couple of occasions and had fun catching lots of perch, roach and small brown trout.

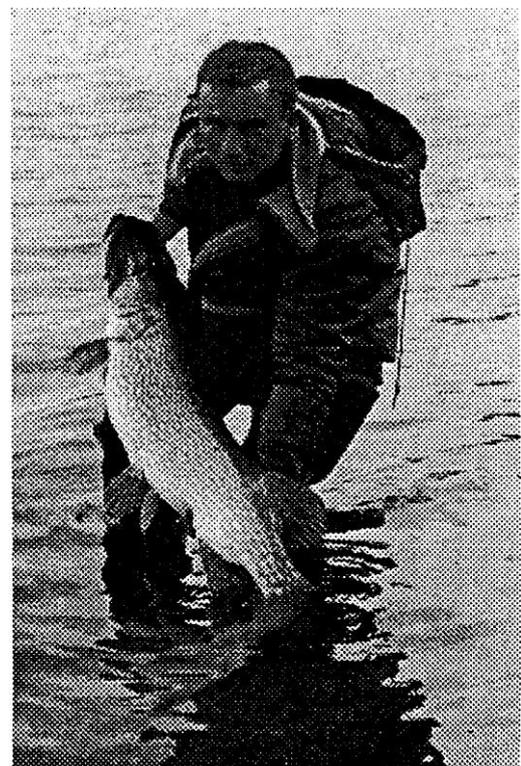
The week continued the same for us, wherever we fished we caught, we would move and again would catch fish.

On Thursday we were returning to the 'van from the lower part of the Loch when our attention was drawn to Mark who was frantically waving from the bank where he and Malc had beached their boat. Malc was standing in the water holding a collapsed landing net. We went over and as we neared the boat it was obvious that Malc had a good fish. Out came the camera and the video.

The fish was indeed a good one, 23lbs 4ozs, taken, by Malc, on a paternostered perch livebait. We took some pictures and videoed the happy couple. The fish was carefully returned and it swam off strongly. Oh well, the beers were going to be on Malc come Friday night.

Friday, the fishing was the same and we returned early to return the hire boats and get ready for the return south on Saturday morning.

That night we went into Castle Douglas again and ate at the same Chinese. The week had been a resounding

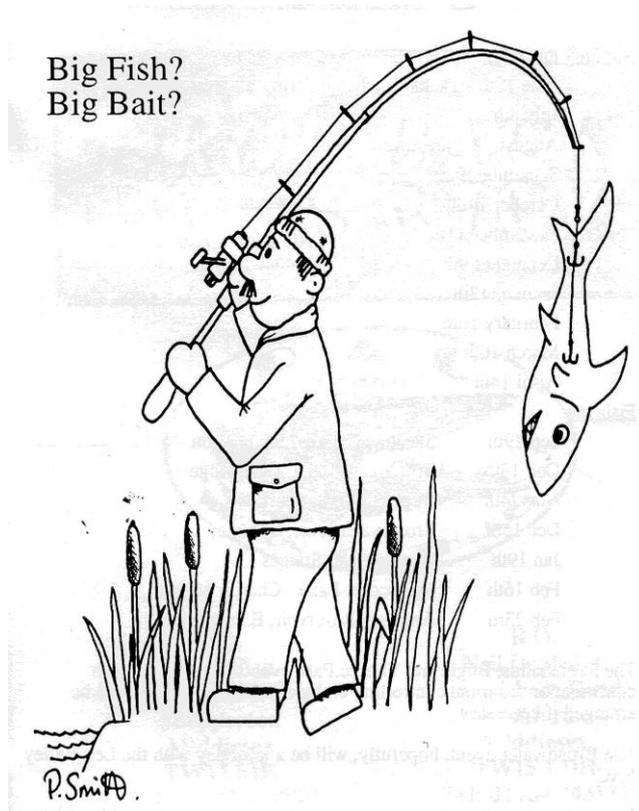


**Malc Jones with his superb
Loch Ken fish of 23lbs 4 ozs**

success, everybody had caught and the total for the ten of us was about 250 fish. The weather had been excellent and it rained on only two occasions, once in the evening which did not affect us and one short shower during the afternoon. The accommodation was good and everybody got on well.

I am already looking forward to next year, but I doubt I will ever bivvie up again; the cost and comfort of the caravans make it a much more sensible option. For those who are interested, the caravans cost us £38.50 each, the food bill in our 'van was £8.60 a head, not including the Chinese meals and though I say it myself, the food was excellent.

Dave Fish



Dates for your diary 1996-97

Monthly meetings

June 10th - Tackle Exchange, bring all your unwanted gear

July 8th

August - No meeting

September 9th

October 14th

November 11th

December 9th

January 13th

February 10th

March 10th

April 14th

Please note:

All meetings are now on the second Monday of the month.

Fish-Ins

Sep 29th Sheepwalk Lake, Shepperton

Oct. 13th Brooklands Lake, Weybridge

Nov 24th Bugle Lake, Sunbury

Dec 15th Broadwater Lake, Denham

Jan 19th Thorpe Park, Staines

Feb 16th Papercourt Lake - Charity Match

Feb 23rd Ardingly Reservoir, E.Sussex

The Brooklands, Bugle and Thorpe Park events are all subject to confirmation from the controlling clubs. Alternative venues will be arranged if necessary.

The Broadwater event, hopefully, will be a joint day with the Lee Valley PAC.

In addition, there will be the annual club week to Scotland in May (dates & venue to be confirmed), plus the possibility of weekends in the Fens, the Broads and even a trip to Holland. Places on these trips are limited.