

DropBack

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Pike Anglers' Club of Great Britain

The club for ALL pike anglers since 1977



<http://www.waltonpac.org.uk>

RO's Ramblings.

Well I am surprised to be writing this. I seem to spend more time badgering you lot about writing articles for DropBack, than I do anything else! But it works, eventually! So then, here is my bit.

I thought 2006 will be all change for me. I changed jobs and had a few other plans. Some of those were fishing wise. I was hoping the new job would give me a little more freedom, what a joke. I am working more hours now than I was before, to the point where my fishing is almost non existent. I have managed a total of 3 trips. Although from what I have heard, I am not missing anything.

My target this year was to be the R Thames, but during the summer the river was so low and had almost no flow. The people I spoke to who were fishing it, nearly all appeared to be struggling. Now the winter is here the river is bank high, the colour of milk chocolate and charging through. To put a boat in with a small engine would be dangerous, in my opinion. This weekend I spoke to some anglers fishing downstream of a couple of lock cuts, normally a good bet when the river is in flood. Even they were struggling, a few roach and other small bits. So where have all the fish gone? Earlier in the year, gudgeon appeared to have made a return, although bleak had disappeared again. Have they all been swept out to sea? The EA fish surveys of recent showed the fish stocks in the Thames to be better than ever. Do you know where the fish have gone?

Even most of the anglers fishing the gravel pits appear to be struggling. If you follow the threads on the PAC and Pike & Predator forum, the suggestion is that this is a nationwide issue. But two days ago I had a letter from a local pike angler who appears to be doing alright. He was managing a low double and a few singles per trip, topped by a nice fish of 23lbs 5oz! Where is he fishing? A local day ticket carp water that nobody pike fishes!

By April this year things should have calmed down work wise and I should be able to get out and do a bit. First will be a trip to Scotland. After that I intend to go back and have a look at some of the waters I used to fish in the late 80's. Some I know will have seen very few pike anglers, but plenty of carp and tench anglers. Maybe this year I will get to increase my PB! I feel confident.

A new approach, away from the boat, back on the bank, travelling light and catching a few on baits.

My wish for 2007 is that the region will continue to grow and that more people get involved. We touched on this at the January meeting. We have an RO, a treasurer and a DropBack editor/web master. Perhaps it is time to expand and form a committee to run the Region, spread the load a bit. I will give it some thought. What do you think? Any volunteers?

Tight Lines



Dave

NORTHERN PIKE OF THE RED RIVER-ICE FISHING

Diana and Steve Crook

Whilst on our August trip to the red river at Lockport, Manitoba, fishing for channel catfish our special friend and local guide Carl Loutit suggested we might like to return in the winter and sample some Manitoba ice fishing! Sounded good to us as we were keen to have a go for the Northern Pike and also see Canada for the first time in its winter glory. Plans were made and we finally returned to the Red on the 19th November.

Not sure what to expect-Manitoba can be one of coldest places in Canada during the winter, we took one piece thermal suits and Skee-tex arctic field boots and plenty of other warm clothing. The best way to keep warm we were told is to wear a few layers of clothing under the suit. Hire a four

wheel drive truck if you fancy a trip in the winter, I couldn't get one and ended up with a Toyota Corolla which was ok but not really meant for driving on snow and ice. On arrival we were met with about a foot of snow and the river slowly icing over. The Red normally has quite a fast flow so to see the ice forming on it was quite a sight but we were uncertain if we could fish from it. Carl suggested we try at Selkirk airport where there is a cut that leads to the old docks and with flow being a lot slower the ice will have frozen over quicker and thicker.



Never fish on the ice on your own so along with Carl we also had the pleasure of fishing with two other Canadian friends- 'Scotty' and George -all three of them being very experienced 'ice-men'. The ice has to be tested before stepping foot on so Carl used an ice chisel to cut a hole through and confirm there was 3 inches which is ok to walk on. As there were five anglers fishing ten holes of approx. 10 ins were cut (you are allowed two lines in winter) through the ice. Instead of rods we used a device known as a tip-up. The tip-up consist of a base plate-made of wood or plastic, which fits over the hole, through the centre is a rotating shaft with a tee piece on the top and a small spool of line on the bottom and a flag on a sprung loaded shaft that fits under the tee piece which when a take occurs shoots up, this also acts as a tensioner. 30lb braid is used as the main line (it can withstand the chaffing of the ice) with a size 6 barbless treble trace and a small weight of about 3/8th ounce being enough to hold bottom .

The Northern Pike on the red are not fussy what they eat so baits are not a problem. They will eat anything from the river plus sea baits and on our sessions we found joey mackerel to be their favourite.

As in England the Northern pike seem to have a feeding pattern and on the Red it seems to be between 8am to about 3pm most of the pike we caught coming just before 1pm. So with baits in place and the tip-ups set it's just a case of watching for the rising flags. When a take occurs you lift the tip-up out of the hole, take hold of the line pull it towards you until you feel the fish then give a sharp yank which set the hooks. Then you hand it in laying the line beside you like in trout fishing style when the fish reaches the hole it's a good idea to have somebody with you so they can 'hand it out'.

Playing a pike by hand and seeing it fighting under the ice is quite an experience and really something to see, it really gives you a great thrill and adds another dimension to your fishing.



In total we caught seven pike with Diana catching the biggest at 21lb (41ins - the Canadians go by length) fish under 10lb were taken home for the table not the done thing in England but this is the Canadian way of life, freshwater fish are allowed to be taken for the table. To give you an idea of how many pike there are in Manitoba the fisheries agency allows you to take 6 pike a day, that's thirty fish for 5 anglers!!

Only 3 of our fish were taken home with Carl expertly cooking them and they did taste nice!!

Moving on into December the ice will be thick enough to drive trucks on and Carl and the boy's will be putting out their ice shacks which stay on the river until the beginning of March. During this time it's a lot colder sometimes reaching - 40f so fishing in the open is not on.

Carl will arrange guided trips over the winter not only for pike but also walleye with many of his clients catching trophy fish. So if anyone's interested in doing something a little bit different then call in at the Walton Tackle Exchange and Diana will be pleased to give you details and put you in touch with Carl. We hope you find this article of some interest and we would like to thank Carl, Scotty and George for some of the most memorable days fishing we've ever had...



Beach-fishing for Conger (1950s)

My favourite night fishing venue for Conger was the Martetio gap to the north of Eastbourne this is not about the event but about the gear and the way it was used.

The rod was a 12ft, 2—piece hollow glass Congerstick by Martin James, a rough idea of its dimensions, just above the 3 1/2ft handle the glass was 1" in diameter at the tip it was 1/4", its test curve was 8 1/2 lbs and it weighed 11/2 lbs without the reel.

The reel was a Grice and Young "Seajecta", a large centrepin loaded with 300yds of 80lb Dacron, this being prone to abrasion 30ft of 60lb mono was tied in forming a shock leader, to the shock leader was tied a triple swivel from which 3ft of rotten bottom lead to a large old iron bolt (of which I had a good selection).

My favourite baits were squid and a mackerel head tied with elasticised thread to a large 8/0 Mustad with a square shank (not seen nowadays). This was connected to the three-way swivel by 5ft of 20lb mono. The block of bait weighed about 10 ounces so distance casts were out of the question.

On the subject of casting heavy bait with a large centrepin, always set up your bait / spool balance carefully, you don't want any busted fingers spoiling the trip or any midnight birds nests. The afore mentioned baited hook was then cast into the wide gap between the rocks some 100ft out and you retreated as the tide rose, but did not move the bait the rod sitting upright in its pod most of the time its ratchet set fairly lightly.

In the interim I would use a small sea spoon for flatties while preparing for the off. The Conger we had were never wreck size but they fought well and were always returned; that was fifty years ago and I often wonder if they are still there.

I found a good maxim for using the large centrepin is overhead for distance, sidecast for accuracy.

Hope you find something of interest in this.

War time away-day

It was our first day away from London since 1939, and after five years of war it was like a tonic to us ten year olds, we had been sitting somewhat drowsily in the early summer heat watching our two floats sticking up motionless from the ponds greenish water.

The distinctive drone of German bombers made us bite the dirt and crawl to the top of the bank. They were two Heinkel 111s flying to low for their own good, as wartime kids we knew that unescorted bombers don't last long; it was Tommy who pointed 'Hurricanes'. They were up sun to the bombers, flying in three pairs.

It wasn't much of a dog-fight; one bomber peeled off streaming fuel and blew up on a hillside the other disappeared over the horizon still being pounded by cannon-fire. Tommy was jumping up and down, cheering and jeering alternately.

Nowadays it must seem strange to think of children cheering death, but in Tommie's case it was understandable, his father had been killed at Dunkirk leaving his mother to look after two boys and their baby sister.



Cec White

Thames Barbel

I have been after a Thames barbel for 2 years, last season all I caught was chub to 4lb, but no barbel. This season I started off with one intention, to catch one, and I wouldn't fish for any other species until I did. I was working the beginning of the season so my first day out was the 21st June. I arrived at Walton Bridge at 6pm, the session started a little slow, was very windy and I considered not even setting up, but I did, it was almost impossible to get bank sticks in the ground and I didn't have my pod as I'm travelling light!!! I managed to get them in enough to hold the rod up.

One rod was cast downstream about 20yds out, attached to the hook was 2 12mm halibut pellets and a PVA bag containing various pellets/boilies soaked in Dynamite baits squid and octopus liquid, man this stinks!!! The second rod was cast straight out around mid river, single 14mm halibut and a small bag of mixed pellets were all this rod required.

First run was the downstream rod, a proper Barbel bite, rod tip whipped round and I was on it instantly, it took a little line off the baitrunner, but I turned it and it came in really easy, I thought it was a bream until it saw the net and it charged off upstream, several minutes later I was jumping for joy as I slipped the net under my first Thames Barbel!! Claire did the honours with the photos and I weighed it, 6lb 8oz, not a monster but a good sized fish for my first Thames fish!! The rod was baited and cast to the same spot again.

The mid river rod was away a little while later, this definitely didn't feel like a Barbel, only giving one slight knock on the tip and one bleep on the alarm. Seconds later a bream was one the surface ready to slime my net!! 4lb ish a quick pic and it was returned. Rod recast to the same spot mid river and about half hour later it was away again, again a slight knock on the tip with one bleep from the alarm, again it came in quickly and again it was around 4lb.

That was the end of action and I packed up at 21.30 more than happy with the result which had ended a year and 8 months of trying for a Thames Barbel.



Schego M2K3 livebait pump. Available from www.wildwoods.co.uk

If, like me, you are brassed off with buying those £5 aerator pumps, stuck on the pike tackle shelf section of your local fishing shop, then read on!

Having got myself a boat this year for the first time, I wanted a good aerator pump that would keep the baits well oxygenated for a day out. I read a review in "Pike and Predator" magazine for the *Schego M2K3* pump, written by a guy called Phil Aylett, and it is to his credit that I prised open my shackled wallet and spent the cash, all £44 of it (had to have a lay down after ordering it) !

They are marketed as an aquarium back-up pump for serious fish keepers .What you are getting is a twin bellows pump that is 12 volt powered ,1.2 metres of tubing and an aeration stone.. Current consumption is 600 milliamps/hour, meaning that if you have a 12 volt 6 amp/hour battery; you will get 10 hours use out of the battery. I use a 19 amp/hour battery, from an electric golf trolley, which runs for 24 hours easily. As for performance, by gawd does it pump the oxygen out? It states on the box 260 litres an hour!! (Bear in mind your cheapo jobbie generates about 10 litres an hour). It actually popped the lid off my bait bucket once in the summer! It is very quiet, and doesn't vibrate its nads off like it's cheap counter parts.

As for robustness, it is pretty bomb proof. It has fallen in the bait bucket 3 times, completely submerged in water, and survived the ordeal after drying out with the cover off .I have managed to cross connect the wiring so it was being supplied off the mains battery charger rather than the battery ; it did smoke a bit , but lived to tell the tale! But the best tale of woe was leaving it on the car roof , after a session, only to see it hit the road as I drove off !! A few scratches on the case but other than that she is working fine !

So there you have it, proof you can't go wrong with this aeration pump. If you want a top quality piece of kit, made in Germany I think, then this is just the job. Its not cheap, but what price is quality bait for the day? .. nuff said ..



Tight lines, Russ Manning

A Newcomer to Pike Angling.

I emailed a PB photo to Dave Fish for the region's web site and he asked if I would add a few words or write an article for "Drop Back" to accompany it.

As a newcomer to Pike angling I thought that a few words on my beginnings leading up to my first (and so far only) twenty might be of interest, so bear with me...

I caught my first Pike by accident as a ten year old on a worm from the Thames at Reading, it terrified me! It wasn't until October 2005 though that I made the decision to properly fish for Pike and Pike alone.

Prior to that I had been Carp fishing with some success but became rather disillusioned with the immense amounts of tackle and long waits in a bivvy which began to feel more like camping than actually fishing.

I think it was watching a Mick Brown episode on Sky TV that encouraged me to have a go at Pike fishing. To begin with I bought the DVD "A Fox Guide to Pike Fishing" which was very useful for someone switching from Carp to Pike fishing. I also joined the PAC after seeing an advert in "Pike and Predators" magazine and although I didn't attend an RA it gave me access to the website data and "Pikelines".

I spent the next few months on my local gravel pit using all this new information, learning new skills and catching a few Pike dead-baiting along the way. It was all trial and error because I fished

alone but the PAC data sheets gave me a lot of confidence particularly with regards to correct Pike handling and unhooking.

Dead-baiting was good fun but I found it all too easy to glue myself into one swim and hence catch rates were hit and miss. Then I read about lure fishing.....! I bought myself a lure rod, traces, various spoons and small crank-baits and gave it a go on the gravel pit and the Grand Union Canal.

Immediately my fishing style was different, mobile and much more productive. Another thing also stood out for me personally was that a 'take' while lure fishing gives a bigger buzz, you actually feel it, and this was quite defining.

I was still only catching Pike up to low doubles but my catch rate was higher. I am sure that constantly being on the move made a great difference and by lure fishing this was no effort.

Soon my lures increased in size from small spoons to 90g soft plastics and larger crank-baits, this certainly earned me some strange looks from the Carp anglers on the gravel pit! I began to feel restricted due to the amount of bivvy filled swims so it was back to the River Thames.

I fished various Thames stretches and thoroughly enjoyed the freedom of roaming river banks with a lure rod. Not having to compete for swims I was able to fish where I chose which consequently improved my Pike location skills. I felt that I was beginning to fish a bit more tactically.

I started to catch a few more doubles and began to work out the best times of day and areas of flow that held the fish. Then very early one Saturday morning in September 2006 my target Pike came along..... I was using a 'Little Curlie' Firetiger lure from DLST and on my third cast the rod ripped round, 21lb 3oz.

I know I cannot expect Pike like this from the Thames very often but it certainly was good for my confidence. I'm sure that luck played its hand but I seemed to be doing something right.

I have since moved into fishing Jerk Baits as well as soft plastics on a multiplier outfit and much prefer this way of lure fishing. Salmo Sliders, Burts, etc. are really fun to fish.

I have been attending the Walton on Thames RA for three months now and have just joined the Lure Anglers Society so I'll hopefully learn a lot more.

I also plan to expand my river lure fishing with a Porta Bote, hopefully on the way for 2007.

It's been a steep learning curve but without a doubt I'm enjoying every minute of it.

Cheers

Matt Jahans



GBR Diary

Region Member Mark Fedorowicz (and his brave wife Victoria) took the trip of a lifetime in December 2006 flying to North East Australia to fish the far north of the Great Barrier Reef; his target species for the trip were Giant Trevally and Dogfish Tuna, here's his brief Diary.

12 Dec 2006 - Day 1

Depart Cairns Catch flight to Horn Island (40 seater). Followed by 30 min Flight - Horn Island to Bamaga (8 seater – yikes!)

Met by Greg (Charter Operator) who drives us 20 minutes to Seisia wharf to board the boat – twin hull design.

9 guests (including self & my wife - Victoria) and 7 crew, Phil – Skipper, Brian – Chef, Alison – Hostess, John – Local guide, Peter (Bubbles) – Guide, George – Guide, Al – Guide



We will be at sea for 6 days staying on board the mother ship fishing from 3 skiffs. We head east towing the skiffs, past the northern most point of mainland Australia on our way to the Barrier Reef.

Eat lunch – Chef Brian’s Chilli con-carne – while ‘steaming’ out.

Skipper Phil is mildly concerned about the sea conditions that we might face later in the day.

Everyone rigs up and is sorted out with an ‘egg beater’ style reel & casting rod for poppers and an overhead multiplier reel and trolling rod using their own and supplementing with spares on the boat.

As we pass the tip of the mainland the sea is noticeably rougher.

Around 6pm start to feel rough! 9pm sees the Chilli make a re-appearance I skip dinner while the others tuck in.

Boat anchors up at about 10pm at Drying Reef mark

13 Dec 2006 - Day 2

7am Anchor lifted and we steam until lunch to 1st fishing mark; the sea is calmer within the reef.

Victoria and I go out with guide George on his skiff “Fishaholic”; there is a bit of chop evident –we start trolling 20 cm lures around the reef which can be as shallow as 3 or 4 ft over the coral.

We troll gullies between coral ‘bommie’ reefs and drop offs.

1st hook up is a Red Bass, which have sharp gill covers and pretty big teeth.

We catch a couple more of these, some green Jobfish, a small honeycomb cod and the ubiquitous (as it turns out) Shark Mackerel.

We also cast Poppers over the top of the ‘bommies’ and are able to see Red Bass rise and attack the lure.

George is hopeful for better conditions tomorrow, the best conditions for popper fishing are glassy still waters over the reef then giant trevally (GTs) and big coral trout can be tempted up from the reef and we would be able to fish the outside edge of the reef and also target tuna species including the fearsome dogtooth (doggies)



We’re back at the mothership by 6pm for beers and food. Others have caught Coral trout, Job fish and Red Bass. Special mention for Dave who landed a rarely caught Chinaman fish.

14 Dec 2006 - Day 3

6 am up for breakfast and by 7 Victoria and I are out fishing with Guide Bubbles on Madfish.

We troll around and catch the ubiquitous Sharkies; it's a bit quiet, the water conditions haven't calmed enough to fish the outside of the reef. We head in for lunch at 12.

On strong advice Brian reloads his reel with 50lb braid, 30 lb just don't cut it (or rather does but on the coral). I'm fishing 50lb braid on a Shimano TLD15 for trolling and 70lb braid on a Daiwa Saltiga Z6500 for poppers.

The rig is basically braid (doubled with bimini twist loop) tied to 80/100lb leader (with yucatan knot) tied to wire rigged lure (1/4 inch brass ring twisted on single strand wire twisted on to 20cm long 2-8m diving minnows).

For poppers the wire is usually omitted with the leader tied direct to the lure with a half blood knot.

We steam for an hour during lunch to another mark. Victoria decides to do a bit of sun bathing on the mother ship for the afternoon so Brett partners me in Madfish.

We catch some more Sharkies a couple of small coral trout - one of which makes such a fuss on its way in that we see a couple of sharks hot on it heels as we bring it onboard but there's no trauma - and some more job fish.

I'm increasingly desperate to catch a GT.

In the late afternoon the water conditions calm a bit and we cast poppers over the reef and hook up with more red bass.

We're back with the mother ship for 6pm again others have caught pretty much the same - plenty of the pesky shark mackerel, a few large barracuda and coral trout, red bass and the odd GT, bluefin and large eye trevally; the guides discuss the fact the Spanish mackerel haven't shown yet.

Guide Al seems to be finding the most fish am hopeful I will be fishing with him tomorrow.

After dinner a few of the guys fish baited handlines off the back of the boat; they catch a few emperors and are regularly bitten off by something which pulls a bit and is clearly quite toothy!

15 Dec 2006 - Day 4

Breakfast at 6 and Victoria and I find our selves with Al aboard Longboat.

The conditions still haven't eased so we troll about; Victoria is fishing a flouro orange Yozuri floating minnow which is out fishing all the lures I try.

Victoria hooks in to a coral trout and after a fight lands it (bearing in mind this is only the 2nd time she's been sea fishing) she nominates a 'take-it-in-turns' approach on the strikes, which suits me as the Orange Yozuri regularly encourages strikes from the reef. Victoria also scores with a small member of the trevally family.

There is a lot more surface action today with bait fish and birds working several areas around the edges of the reef.

Guide Al manoeuvres the boat and I switch tactics and cast my gold rooster pooper right in to the middle of a bait school guide Al and myself see the GT take the lure off the surface and after a fight I land my 1st ever GT.

We cast to several bait schools and troll around them too; catching sharky mackerel and the odd barracuda.



At lunch we find out Brett has landed a big 50lb Spanish mackerel and the others have also caught a few Spanish.

After lunch Victoria decides its time for more sunbathing so I'm partnered with Fishing veteran and Brit ex-pat Ernie.



I stick with the orange Yozuri and hookup repeatedly with 20lb coral trout, we name the mark 'Kilnsey Park' after the northern trout farm where I took my first ever swim with the fishies as a kid – I fell in feeding 'em.

Ernie lands a 30lb+ GT while trolling and some good size trout too.

During the afternoon over the reef we get some glassy water while current and wind oppose each other and we cast poppers with the wind and alternately against the current, on one cast I see a Bluefin trevally follow my lure close to the boat

where it takes a swipe but misses.

I cast to it 4 more times before on the 6th it hooks up and I land it scoring another colourful specimen.

We head in at 5pm avoiding a nasty looking electrical storm which seems to blow around us while we celebrate a very successful afternoon - around a dozen coral trout over 15lb caught along with other species.

After dinner George, Ben and Brett give the handlines another workout catching a spangled emperor and 2 sharks - a reef and lemon shark.

16 Dec 2006 - Day 5

Morning Session: the sea conditions still won't allow us to safely fish outside the reef again so Victoria and I are back with George on Fishaholic, there's a little surface action and the orange Yozuri is nailed by a small Spanish which grazes George with its teeth while being unhooked securing it a bonk on the head amidst much cursing its thrown back without a photo I'm a bit gutted to miss out on the photo and pray I hook another but my hopes take a knock when the Yozuri is lost when the line breaks on a hook up.

We both catch some small Cod at the reef edges.

Afternoon: Victoria agrees to a 2nd session aboard Fishaholic; I hook and land 2 Spanish with successful photos, a trout and a couple of Barryfish (barracuda).

Skipper Phil steams us overnight back past the drying reef to Dugong Island and we see other signs of human life for the first time in 4 days.



19 Dec 2006 - Day 6

Morning – we troll around Dugong but the fishing is quiet, probably due to the choppy sea and swell.

We're with George again who lands us on the beach for a walk on some terra firma.

While walking round the island (30 mins) we see garfish shoaled up in one bay, I cast my popper and see a shadow strike but fail to hook up.

We call time due to the poor fishing and head back to the mother ship, I decide to have a crack along side Ben with the hand lines and land a snapper.

Afternoon we steam back to Seisia, mooring up at 7pm we are greeted again by Greg who cooks us steak on the BBQ.

Victoria and I had an awesome time and I look forward to being able to afford another chance to target the doggies with better weather conditions.

Mark Fedorowitz

Strange happenings on Deal Pier

For those who don't know it, the seaward end of Deal pier is a "T" configuration. Years ago I spent many icy, January nights along with many other anglers flogging the cod run. Many good fish were landed, sad to say, catch and release was not practised.

It was quite impressive, rank upon rank of long rods against the dark sky, looking rather like a Greek phalanx must have appeared. It was about this time that the snatch-cast showed up, it was the "in" thing we all had a go with varying degrees of success.

After the pubs closed our ranks were swelled by the drunks, strangely they all appeared to be Jocks. There was the occasional trouble, but the sight of a policeman had the required affect, there were local coppers fishing in our midst who merely removed their black topcoats.

The drunks always formed a circle, hands on each others shoulders for mutual support while shouting into the centre. On one occasion a big fellow sporting a large tartan tam-o-shanter had it whipped off of his head by the trailing hook of a snatch-cast. Everything went quiet as the drunks tried to figure out where the colourful headgear had gone, while we wondered what the large dark object was that whirled seaward silhouetted against the pre-dawn stripe that coloured the horizon.

That's just one of the many strange happenings that took place on Deal pier.

Cec White

Dates for your diary

Meeting Dates 2006/07

Mon 12th March Monthly meeting

Mon 2nd April Monthly meeting

Mon 14th May Monthly meeting

No meetings through June to August

Mon 10th September Monthly meeting

Mon 8th October Monthly meeting

Mon 12th November Monthly meeting

Mon 10th December Monthly meeting