

DIKE ANGLERS' CLUB



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EDITORIAL

It would be inappropriate if we did not discuss further the zander and pike cull on the Middle level system. First of all we should like to thank the membership for their tolerance in this distasteful and tricky problem: most members appreciated that (a) the "Committee" would not act in a particular fashion without a great deal of thought and (b) it is not possible to contact all P.A.C. members, in particular when a problem arises very rapidly or when notice of an event seems almost deliberately to be withheld (c) it is not always possible for the "Committee" to put into writing exactly what the situation is. P.A.C. "Committee" have always recognised that there would be numbers of anglers (including incidently, the "Committee" itself) who for reasons of conscience could not be involved in killing of pike or zander during such a cull.

In fact we did manage to contact, or were contacted, (by 'phone, letter or personal meeting) very many members, so we did have a good idea of what the members felt, particularly what they felt emotionally about the question. At that very early stage few people, if any, had had time to consider the facts. Quite a lot of members who had questions or suggestions got in touch with us and we were able to explain some matters of which they were unlikely to be aware because these didn't, and haven't, made the press. This is quite important: if members are EVER unhappy about anything it is critical to P.A.C.'s image that they contact us before writing to the press. We will in no way attempt to interfere with anyone's writing but will always tell them what facts are available and give advice only if asked.

Quite a few people have said that we "condoned" the cull, or that we "supported" it. It should be made absolutely clear that if P.A.C. officials had not got themselves involved ALL pike and ALL zander would have been culled. As a stop gap measure we fought (at the March, Cambs) meeting, and succeeded in getting the angling clubs behind us, for pike over 10 lbs to be retained. As we say, had we not done this, all predators would have been subjected to the cull. Because of our involvement the situation is NOW that many local clubs are very very

uneasy about the cull, and would almost certainly dig in their heels at the thought of any further culls: in this respect we can mention Chatteris Working Mens' Club, King's Lynn A.A., and Yaxley A.C. Again, we must emphasise that this was NOT the situation a short time before the March Cambs meeting, the Liasion Committee having accepted the cull and voted to implement it in its entirety.

Having said all that it must again be made quite clear that if Dr Linfield's conclusions were correct, then not only would P.A.C. have looked silly to oppose the cull, but pike (and zander) would, in the long term, suffer. After examination of the documents some of us became less and less convinced that the evidence and deductions were, respectively, adequate and correct. This is not to criticize Drs Linfield and Klee personally, or in any way question their integrity, but simply to state that in the opinion of some serious and very experienced anglers the method of sampling, the location of sampling, and the deductions from those samples, were each wrong. In brief (at the moment) the method of sampling would not give a real guidance as to the proportions of prey/predator at that location; the location of sampling was most inappropriately chosen; and because of both these matters any deductions from them would be suspect (at least). Further, the extension of deductions, made from the Middle level, to the whole of the Middle level system was quite wrong. Some serious anglers feel that what sampling has been done, whatever its shortcomings provide the ONLY scientific evidence available and on those grounds alone it would have to be tolerated initially. By the way, if the sampling by A.W.A. was so good, why do anglers have to remove the pike and zander. Another question: if they killed the pike and zander during their sampling (and we doubt they returned the zander) then is the balance what they say it is anyway !!

Remember, the evidence given by AWA reached GOFCA only two days before the relevant meeting (many anglers feel this was deliberate policy, though Dr Linfield tells us it was not; we

understand that Anglers' Mail were quite unable to talk to A.W.A. officials in the week before release of the document) and only due to the energy of Colin Clare did members get a look at the papers. Similarly the Liaison Committee (attended by C.C. & H.R. by invitation) could do nothing but accept the findings for the same reasons of lack of time, although H.R. spoke strongly against the proposals which at that stage were for a cull of all predators. On such an important matter the democratically elected representative on the Liaison Committee should have had an opportunity to consult fully with their club members or committee before being asked to vote.

Even before the cull got under way it became clear from shoal sightings and anglers' catches that A.W.A. had considerably underestimated the head of roach and bream shoals: indeed, we are of the opinion that the sampling techniques almost completely missed the cyprinids. In any event the cull could only be a relatively short term measure. What is really needed is a considerable injection of cyprinids of all sizes over a long period (we never thought that we of all people, would be advocating restocking as an answer to anything!) and this the A.W.A. claims it is unable, at present, to do: in spite of having one of the best coarse fish farms this country has ever seen, namely Grafham Water. (The reason, incidently, that Grafham fish do not transport well is because A.W.A. transport them at the wrong time of the year, without the enthusiasm of the Grafton authorities, and because they grossly mishandle them).

The A.W.A. are now claiming that zander are the main culprits in the fish decline. Many of us are inclined to agree (and have been saying so since 1966). The decline of waters in direct relationship to the spread of zander has been "impressive". There are certainly other factors, like the more gradual decline of other waters (e.g. Little Ouse & Lark) in exactly the opposite direction to the spread of zander (? excessive treated effluent from the sewage works of Thetford New Town, and latterly the Old West River).

Nevertheless zander are here to stay. There's nothing we can do about them now. Even a series of culls would have little effect (and

certainly wouldn't affect zander anglers' sport much). But zander anglers now have a right to fish for zander as others do for roach, pike, or trout. What is more, a great deal of A.W.A.'s income comes from people buying licences and permits specifically to fish for zander. Look around the Fens in winter: over 90% of anglers on the waters are pike and zander fishermen.

No, A.W.A. have not only got their science wrong, but even had they got it right the efforts to correct things are a waste of public time and money, and particularly of anglers time and money. A.W.A.'s predecessors got it wrong by putting zander in : they then ignored the facts for a decade (and, indeed, suppressed facts); refuse still to acknowledge moral responsibility and have the gall to get anglers to help (!) after just asking for discussions of yet further licence increases; and only began to move when they got biologists of the calibre of Linfield and Klee. But now they are moving in wrong directions. WHEN will A.W.A. wake up and realize that experienced anglers and angler/scientists, who have been around their waters for up to 25 years, up to three days a week, actually do know something about the head of fish and the movement of fish (where, for example, have you read of the movement of cyprinids , zander and pike up the Rivers Wissey, Lark and Little Ouse during the dearth on the L. Ouse ? But it happened).

We are not asking you to indulge in a savage attack on A.W.A., and most certainly not a personal attack on its quite admirable officers, but it must be clear that the cull is only part of a much larger problem that anglers (and pike anglers in particular) have with the A.W.A. We must look at their statements with the greatest of care, and certainly refuse to cooperate in any way with respect to culls until we have had ample time to look at the facts presented.

David Hall (Coarse Fisherman) has strongly criticised A.W.A. from time to time and, frankly, we feel he is correct when he points out that A.W.A. haven't enough expertise nor enough money to do the monitoring job they are trying to do, or indeed to maintain the Middle Level in a state of balance, which is their intention from the end of the cull. He hasn't made personal attacks on its

officers, but we know he has grave doubts about the Civil Service ever operating in an open and positive manner. We heartily endorse this : only the highest officers make any decisions at all, and they make the wrong ones because, as they approach senior status, they become quite out of touch with what the angler knows and wants.

We now have, in the A.W.A. area, quite vigorous protection of the anglers' interests in G.O.F.C.A. (among other consultatives) under the dynamic chairmanship of Colin Clare, and it is up to us to feed in our opinions regularly to this body which is now looking after the interests of minority elements whatever they are.

A few final words. If you think the above indicates a complicated situation, you are correct. And we emphasize again that we cannot put down in writing, even in our own magazine, all of the factors involved; but, of course, we can communicate such matters verbally. Secondly, it is well to remember that A.W.A. (Fisheries) has a Big Brother, namely A.W.A. (Drainage), and this latter has so far refused to respond to any hints, suggestions, or questions. We do know that almost all the money received by A.W.A. goes to this section, and only about 1% to Fisheries. It considers itself too big to be questioned. But fundamental questions need asking of it. Like the Forestry Commission it will, eventually, be called to account for its actions and its exclusiveness; but probably not until we have major flood devastation: you ask the roach and bream now swimming in the inland edges of the Wash what THEY think about A.W.A. (Drainage)!

Incidentally, at the March, Cambs, meeting we were told that three months was the limit of the cull period : September - November inclusive. Now we understand A.W.A. are trying to extend it until the end of the season. But Colin Clare of Fenland Anglers has recently asked for a rapid termination because member clubs are becoming very worried indeed about further killing of pike (reported in Eastern Press week ending November 22nd).

For a long time now P.A.C. have been urging the A.W.A. to create a pike fishery as B.C. has done and as the Severn/Trent W.A. have done. Had they done so they could have taken out of this situation a great deal of the sting, and a great deal of the aggro. they have suffered.

We have been given the weakest of reasons why a pike water wouldn't work (others don't seem to have A.W.As problems). We don't feel A.W.A. is totally opposed to pike, though it may seem that way at times. They did after all support strongly the two Denver Teach-ins run by P.A.C. Particularly helpful here were the Great Ouse River Division (also known as G.O.R.D.).

We suppose every cloud has a silver lining and the culling of small pike may result in some good specimen pike fishing in the near future!

Barrie Rickards
Hugh Reynolds

P.S. Our intended venue for next year's R.O. dinner/working, at Crystal Palace has, as you know, been burnt to the ground. Is this another act of G.O.R.D. ?

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON PIKE

We have always made it quite clear since P.A.C. first started that members were not obliged to assist in scientific work. In the past, both in specimen groups and in national bodies, participation in research has been regarded with mixed feelings by anglers. After all, it can at times mean a little effort, on the part of the angler that is not obviously directly related to fishing results. So it seems strange that in P.A.C., where participation is not obligatory, members seem to participate quite well! We are now involved in a number of projects and we thought we would list them below both for the convenience of those already involved and in case others may wish to be involved. No expertise is required, although if advice is needed simply contact one of the fisheries biologists in P.A.C. (e.g. Bruno Broughton, Neville Fickling) or a Senior Member.

PIKE SCALES. Anyone who would like their pike scales reading, and at the same time contribute greatly to Dr Ted Morgan's project (Wolverhampton Polytechnic) should collect 6 scales from the shoulder of the fish (ANY weight, even small ones) and send them to Tony Hubball, 41 Tettenhall Rd, Wolverhampton. The location need only be as accurate as you feel you can disclose i.e. the exact location or a general location such as e.g. R. Severn, Kent Lake, etc.

PIKE TUMOURS. Dr M.F. Mulcahy, Dept of Zoology, University College, Cork, Eire, would like photographs (including close ups if possible) of lump-like tumours sometimes seen on the flanks of pike. There is no need to kill the pike, either send a sketch or photo plus description of what you have seen. A general location is all that is necessary.

CLEITHRUM PROJECT. Professor Ed Crossman (P.A.C. rep in Canada; address : Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S2C6) would like to see cleithrum bones, particularly from large pike. In this case the fish needs to be dead BUT if you find one dead, know of a taxidermist who receives pike occasionally, or have access to old, big, stuffed pike (!) get in touch direct with B.R. who will instruct you how to obtain the bone (and, indeed, which bone to obtain). The cleithrum is the bone just visible, on the body of the pike, behind the gill cover.

ZANDER TAGS. Neville Fickling will still be interested for some time in receiving details of any of his tagged zander which are recaptured by anglers. His address is : Dept Biological Sciences, University of Aston in Birmingham, Gosta Green, Birmingham B47ET.

PIKE GROWTH. Colin Goodge (Ely R.O.) and B.R. are doing a project on a private Fenland water and would appreciate information on suitable tags. Most of those in production seem designed for pike under 3 lbs in weight.

PIKE IN SIXTEEN FOOT. The A.W.A. in conjunction with the Dept of Zoology at Cambridge are to supervise a research student on predators in the Sixteen Foot River. Anyone wishing to help should contact Dr Ron Linfield, 13 Falcon Way, Buckden, nr. Huntingdon. This NOT a pike cull!!

If members are actively involved in any other projects, or know of others where our help would be appreciated, could they write to B.R.

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DILWORTH'S DREAMS (?) AND DOODLING

by Tony Dilworth

Every time the P.A.C. mag falls onto the floor of our hall, via the good old friendly postie, I know that on every page there will be plenty of interesting and informative items for all to read and digest. Well, I'm going to try and put a stop to that!

With pulsating sadistic vibes running through my writing impliments, I am about to embark on an article (if that's what you can call it) which you may feel is worthy of a place in the P.A.C. mag - or even better, in the dustbin. The choice is yours, so read on if you dare :

As is the wont of many and the dreams of thousands more, I shall now embark on telling you of the twenties, or very nearly twenty that it doesn't really matter, I have had the good fortune to capture during the 1978/79 season. To save you all a long boring, no holds barred, seat gripping, nail biting, long, laborious read, I have decided that all I shall do is release (mind you, this is really confidential stuff!!!), the weight of the fish; the bait on which it was taken; and the location, (YES! L-O-C-A-T-I-O-N) of my feats of piking skill and endurance.

The first fish came very early on in October - and was taken from a Birmingham Angling Association gravel pit fishery called Red House at Haversham, near Newport Pagnell. The bait was floatfished gudgeon livebait, and although this particular fish did not make the magical "20" mark, it still weighed in at a creditable nineteen (A nice fish by any standards).

The second pike came from the same complex of gravel pits, but this time the pit in the limelight was Black Horse and not Red House. The successful bait this time was a 3 oz chub livebait legered at distance. Although this fellow only took a couple of minutes to subdue, he slammed the scales down to just under the thirtythree mark.

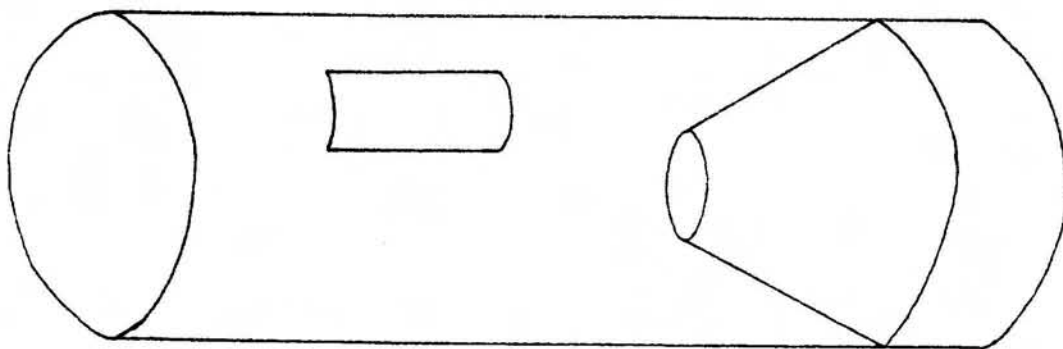
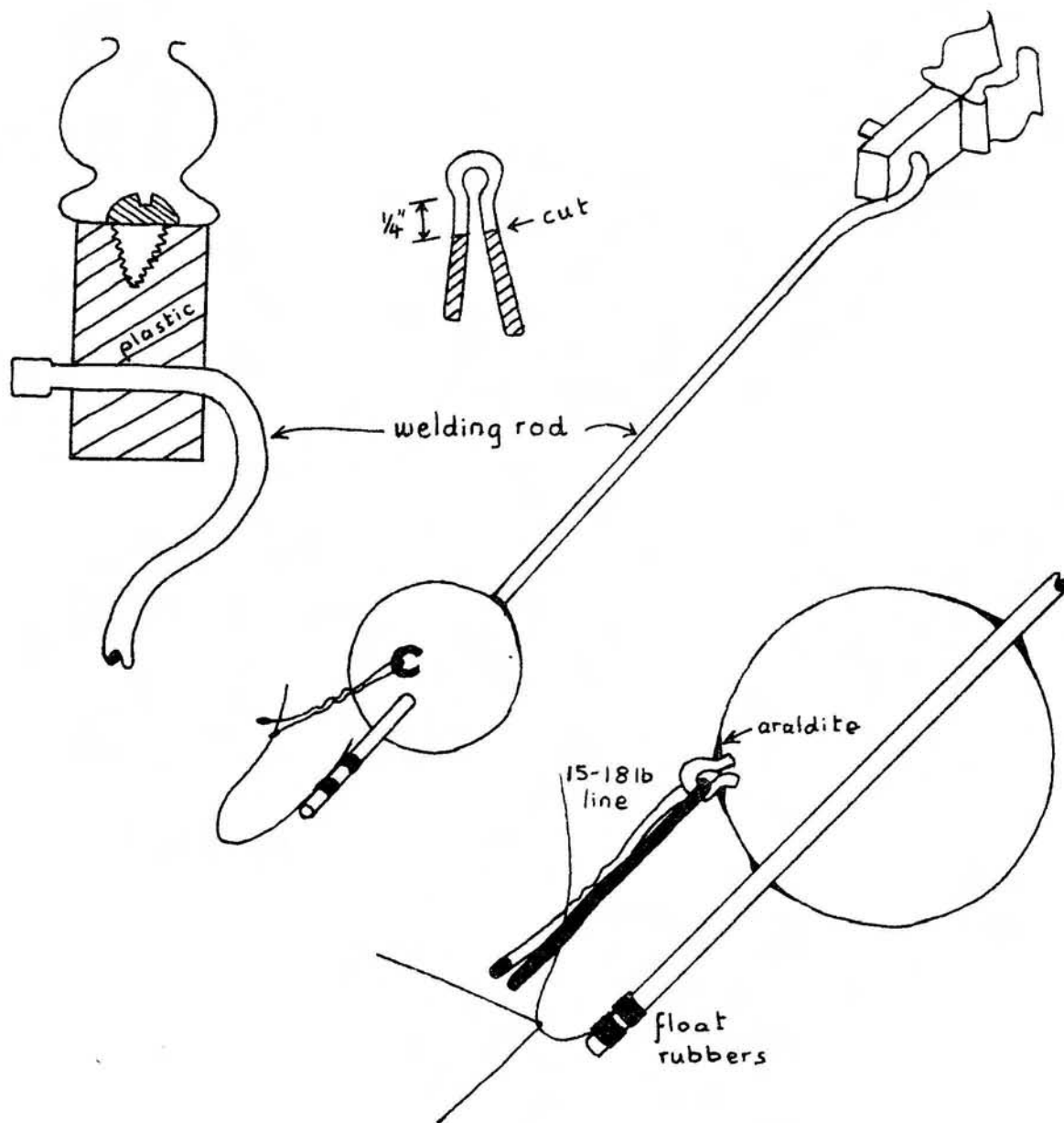
BAIT	TOTAL	Lake	Gravel pit	Loch	Reser- voir	Pools & Ponds	Mere	Norfolk Broad
Mackerel	38	17	16		3	1		1
Sprat	32	17	12			2		1
Roach livebait	31	18	4	3	4	2		
Artificials	23	5	5	5	6	2		
Herring	17	7	5		2	1	1	1
Roach deadbait	13	5	6	1		1		
"Deadbaiting"	10	3	6		1			
Perch livebait	8	2	1	4	1			
Gudgeon livebait	5	1	3		1			
Bream livebait	4	3	1					
Rudd livebait	4	2	2					
Bream deadbait	3	2	1					
Maggots	3	1	1		1			
Carp livebait	2	1				1		
Chub livebait	2	1			1			
"Livebaiting"	2		1			1		
Perch deadbait	2	2						
Trout deadbait	2			1	1			
Barbel livebait	1					1		
Bleak livebait	1		1					
Dace livebait	1	1						
Tench livebait	1	1						
Chub deadbait	1	1						
Gudgeon deadbait	1					1		
Rudd deadbait	1				1			
Fly fishing lure	1				1			
Meatpaste	1	1						
Dace deadbait	0							
Grayling deadbait	0							
Worm caster	0							

T O P 12 P I K E

No.	Weight	Bait	Method	Venue	Date
1	38 8 0	Spinner	Lure fished on 40 lb line	Upper Lough Erne System	Feb. 1978
2	33 8 0	Spinner	(No method given)	Cambridgeshire pit	Nov. 1978
3	33 0 0	Roach deadbait	Twitched slowly across bottom	Private lake in Kent	Oct. 1978
4	32 12 0	Whole mackerel	Legered with two No. 8 trebles & 14 lb line	Gloucestershire gravel pit	Oct. 1977
5	32 8 0	3" roach livebait	Bait floatfished	Private trout lake, Nr. Stainforth, Yorks	Dec. 1978
6	32 6 0	Half herring	Bait present on 12 lb line	Abingdon gravel pit	Dec. 1977
7	32 0 0	Roach deadbait	Bait fished on No. 12 treble, 5 lb line & no wire trace	R. Ure, Yorks	Oct. 1978
8	32 0 0	Spinner	Lure fished on 8 lb line	R. Thames, Eynsham Weir	Oct. 1977
9	32 0 0	Red & Silver spoon	Lure fished on 11 lb line	R. Aille, Trib. of Lough Mask, Co. Mayo, Eire.	Nov. 1977
10	31 12 0	Gudgeon livebait	Bait floatfished	Nottinghamshire gravel pit	Nov. 1978
11	31 8 0	Dace livebait	(No method given)	R. Wye, Hay, (diving pool swim)	Oct. 1978
12	31 2 0	Roach deadbait	1½ oz bait on No. 12 treble tied direct to 9 lb line	Gt. Ouse Relief Channel, St. Germans	Mar. 1978
12	31 2 0	Sprat	Bait legered on 12 lb line	R. Kennet at Newbury	Jan. 1979

S P E C I M E N P I K E

BAIT	No.	3 LARGEST			AVERAGE
		1b oz dm	1b oz dm	1b oz dm	1b oz dm
Roach livebait	59	32 8 0	30 2 0	30 0 0	23 12 13
Mackerel	46	32 12 0	30 2 0	29 2 0	23 13 6
Sprat	45	31 2 0	29 8 0	29 4 0	23 7 8
Artificials	34	38 8 0	33 8 0	2 @ 32 0 0	25 1 2
Herring	22	32 6 0	30 4 0	27 7 0	23 11 15
Roach Deadbait	19	33 0 0	32 0 0	31 2 0	25 0 8
"Deadbaiting"	11	24 14 0	24 2 0	22 3 0	21 7 2
Dace livebait	11	31 8 0	25 9 0	25 2 0	24 1 7
Perch livebait	10	29 0 0	25 0 0	24 6 0	23 5 8
Rudd livebait	9	31 0 0	29 4 0	26 12 0	24 7 3
Chub livebait	6	30 0 0	24 8 0	22 15 0	23 5 3
Gudgeon livebait	6	31 12 0	26 15 0	22 8 0	23 14 1
Bream livebait	5	26 1 0	26 0 0	23 9 0	24 0 3
"Livebaiting"	5	26 0 0	24 10 0	24 0 0	23 6 13
Maggots	5	30 13 0	2 @ 26 1 0	26 0 0	26 1 7
Bream deadbait	3	25 8 0	21 10 0	21 0 0	22 11 5
Perch deadbait	3	27 11 0	22 0 0	21 0 0	23 9 0
Rudd deadbait	3	30 1 0	22 10 0	22 2 0	24 15 0
Bleak livebait	3	28 8 0	26 12 0	21 8 0	25 9 1
Carp livebait	3	25 8 4	25 0 0	23 14 0	24 12 12
Dace deadbait	2	24 7 0	23 2 0		23 12 1
Trout deadbait	2	27 12 0	23 10 0		25 11 0
Fly fishing lure	2	30 0 0	29 0 0		29 5 0
Chub deadbait	1	23 10 0			23 10 0
Grayling deadbait	1	20 10 8			20 10 8
Gudgeon deadbait	1	27 0 0			27 0 0
Barbel livebait	1	22 8 0			22 8 0
Tench livebait	1	24 4 0			24 4 0
Meatpaste	1	22 7 0			22 7 0
Worm & Caster	1	22 12 0			22 12 0
TOTALS	321	38 8 0	33 8 0	33 0 0	24 0 6



DROP ARM INDICATOR

by Geoff Knott

This is an indicator I saw whilst fishing a club lake a number of years ago. It was devised by a member of the local specimen group to show a run or a drop back (Published Anglers Mail 1978 Oct, Nov.)

Basically it is the same as the two indicators in mag. 3 - the only difference being that it is virtually 100% wind proof. It takes about an hour to make a couple of them plus time for paints and glues.

The arm is made from a length of aluminium welding rod (not the type used in arc welding) $\frac{1}{8}$ or $\frac{3}{32}$ " diameter. It is pivoted at one end and the line is attached at the other end and is not only visual but audible (the noise comes from the arm hitting the back rod rest in the case of a full blooded run).

The drop arm is designed primarily with freelining in mind, but it can be used for legering or for keeping a tight line when float paternostering.

This is how it works :

1. Cast out the bait.
2. Sink the line and tighten to the bait.
3. Pass the line from the drop arm over the reel line and clip it in the hair grip.
4. Open the bail arm and adjust the position of the drop arm slightly below ($\frac{1}{2}$ - 1") and behind the edge of the spool (but not behind the reel. Eds)

A full blooded run will free the short length of line from the hair grip and allow the reel line to run free through the rod rings and at the same time allowing the arm to hit the back rod rest.

A drop back occurs - the line will slacken (due to being in direct contact with the bait, the arm will drop slowly as the line is drawn back through the rings). If a number of rods are used in close proximity of one another, one arm can be compared against another for twitches - pike picking the bait up and munching it on the spot.

How to make the arm

Determine the length of drop arm you require according to bait size e.g. 10-12" half mackerel, 6-8" sprat, etc. As an arm to cover most situations one of about 9" should suffice.

1. Pierce 2 holes roughly $\frac{1}{8}$ " diameter through the ping pong ball opposite one another. Pierce another about $\frac{3}{8}$ " up from one of the others - one side only.
2. Push the welding rod through the ball so that $1\frac{1}{2}$ " protrudes, araldite in position.

3. Splay the legs of a $\frac{1}{8}$ " diameter split pin and trim the legs back to $\frac{1}{4}$ " long. Squeeze the legs together and push into the third hole in the ping pong ball. Araldite in position.
4. File a suitable block of plastic, metal or wood (if wood seal afterwards with varnish) $1" \times \frac{3}{8}" \times \frac{3}{8}"$. Drill a hole $\frac{1}{8}"$ diameter through it to allow the arm to pivot smoothly but not sloppy. Drill a hole in the end to take the PK screw to fasten it to the terry clip.
5. Bend the end of the rod into a crank shape to go into the block to form the pivot and flatten the end that protrudes from the block to prevent it from coming out again.
6. Screw the terry clip to the block and araldite in position.
7. Paint ping pong ball desired colour - Flame orange seems to cover most situations.
8. Put hair grip on split pin.
9. Slide float rubbers with short length of line on to end of rod.

The arm can of course be adapted for use during the hours of darkness by gluing a beta light in position on the top of the arm just behind the ping pong ball.

Drop arms of all shapes, sizes and colours can be made for very little cost. The pivot arm can be made of anything so long as it is relatively light. I use the aluminium rod because it was available at the time when I started making my drop arms.

(Phil. Tew and Richard White (we think!) made one for B.R. and it works superbly. Indeed it's the poshest item in B.R's kit).

* * * * *

Bill Chillingworth will run, in October 1981, another teach-in at his new lakes. Interested participants should write now (The Cottage, St. Peter's Street, Caxton, Cambs) enclosing an S.A.E. to get on the list. The first 100 may be lucky! Further information will be given at a much later date to those who have registered an interest.

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PIKE PIECES

by K. Tombs

Live baiting.

Ever thought how easy it would be just to flick out the bait when after a few livebait for the day.

A couple of years back I overcame this problem by becoming the proud owner of a 9 ft telescopic rod. Not your Tench Tamer or Pike Basher but a nice little stick for knocking out the few bait required for the day.

Attached to the rod is a small fixed spool reel (compliments of Angling Times) 4 lb line, size 14 hook, a few short, and most important an isotope float, really handy for nighttime tiddler snatching. A certain drain I livebait on holds a good head of roach, usually after about an hour I can often catch 20 or more fish (My best ever Noddie casting session produced 56 in an hour).

This rod is also very handy when fishing someone's private water and the unexpected bailiff arrives on the scene, it can easily be closed up, and off you go.

I acquired a dozen or so 4 gallon plastic buckets when working in a factory some 4 years back. These made ideal livebait buckets (not all at once though). The lid has been cut about a bit to take an air pump. The handle made of wire and very coarse was the only problem, but I overcame this when a mate of mine, Steve (Bloodbine) Cheshire, suggested I put corks on it (the handle i.e.). After a couple of hours work of cutting, gluing and taping I had a perfect handle, just right for those long walks in the fens.

Plugging and Deadbaiting

During the last year I have been flattening the barbs on my treble hooks so as to give the pike a better chance of survival, if badly hooked. The hooks I have been using are Mustad 3567. I find these very strong and I do not believe that by altering them you reduce their strength. I find that unhooking a pike is much easier using flattened barbs.

During the summer while plug fishing I adapted the flattened barbs to all my plugs and spoons, also changing the meat hooks usually supplied for smaller trebles. Although only using this method for one season I can't really judge my success rate, but I have found that my pike return to the water in much better condition.

(Bloodbine- a Woodbine fag covered in blood).

F A S T T A L K

by Ray Cripps

I recently read an article in the Anglers Mail by Barrie and it's everything that I expected from him, very good indeed. I suppose that as other members of the club read through it also, not that most of us don't know your views and opinions already, but I expect some do look though to see if there is anything that can be criticised out of hand, as it appears the only thing that goes on in the monthly mags is just a one long drawn out feud between a number of parties that appears to go on and on week after week (blimey don't I go on) month after month.

Anyway Barrie, I wanted to write to take up with you this opinion of rods. No, I'm not going to criticise, I know that the type of rod you use is what you have discovered to be your choice and recommendation for general pike angling, but my opinion differs somewhat and I'm stubborn. You prefer the slow taper rods, but I feel that a faster taper rod is more adequate for the job of piking. You may ask yourself why I feel that the only use that a slow taper rod offers me is that used in deadbaiting especially for half mackerel, the whole mackerel, whole herring and maybe outsize livebaits (not that I would use anything, and never do, over 6 oz). I can't quite seem to comprehend why some people use 2 - 3 lb jack for bait, the strain on tackle must be enormous.

To me the use of a fast taper rod means more control over hooked fish, a greater distance on the cast and more accurate casting over distance. I feel that this is why this type of rod is used in the long distance beach casting contest. I believe that in a fast taper, the power build is much greater, i.e. in the top two-thirds of the blank. I fail to see how more power can come from the slow taper, for initially a slow taper is very soft with the blank flex right through to the handle.

One must start at the beginning, and we assume that our rod is the extension of one's arm. Holding a fast taper rod starting at the backcast position, the forward thrust requires much less effort than the slow taper as there is not as much softness within the blank. On the point of the bait leaving the rod, the fast taper curve has released its power much quicker (curve being in the top top two thirds) in relation to the fact that fast taper has greater, shall we say, "stiffness" whereby the point of release for slow taper has been slower due to the general softness of the blank. This also compels me to think that when using slow taper and, as I said, softer, this would also result in blank to tend to overcast in a continuing forward motion, so resulting in unnecessary drag at the tip section. In this bit of surmising, surely the only difference between a slow taper blank, test curve 2½ lb, and fast taper blank 2½ lb, can only be in the action of the said blank, and the way the user performs with it. You are

probably thinking 'what's he rabbiting on about?' but I'll continue. In this respect the only way that I can explain a slow taper rod, is that the tendency is more or less lob the bait, not cast, so I call these type of rods lobbing rods, whereas with the fast taper rod I believe more accuracy and distance is obtained. I call this type of rod a distance rod. I think you may comprehend that I use this type of rod obviously, or I wouldn't be writing this. I am of the belief that whatever you have been brought up on is what you prefer. I used to have a couple of old split cane rods of which, I suppose you could say were of a slow and soft taper, and used them for everything from bleak snatching to piking. They served their purpose well and I was more than content with their performance, but when I upgraded to solid, then hollow glass, I was more content and performed better with fast taper. I have a theory that this is gradation upwards. I believe and explain, or recommend that the slower taper rod in the 2 lb test range is easier to use than a fast taper of the same test, and I believe in an upgrade, when mastering of initial cast is made. In the instance of control the benefit of this category are to me very obvious. When using the slow taper the blank has more 'give' due to the action being throughout the whole blank. This, surely, the fish can feel, and more runs through the swim, and longer playing time inevitable, with this type of blank. Obviously I am talking of blanks with the same test curve. The only thing with a fast taper blank is that the use of the size of breaking strain and bait size has to be more carefully thought about. It's no good loading a fast taper blank of 1½ lb test with 26 lb line and a 1 lb roach dead or livebait. This obviously speaks for itself, but I feel that if there was more of an understanding of line and bait size application in this field, the question of which type of rod for the job would be obvious.

Well Barrie that's how I theorize it, what do you think? I know we all have our own ideas but this is how I thought about this complicated situation, and it is complicated. I'm sure you will probably still look at it the way that you want, but I just wanted to provide food for thought. Of course there are many other aspects as regards rods of which I said before are complicated, some of which I believe and some I do not. I feel that the only way that one could get complete satisfaction in the use of rods is to carry about 20 of them. Obviously this would not prove viable, and besides I'm skint!

From B.R.: All I know is that using identical t.c. rods and identical rigs (e.g. float ledgered half mackerel) the slow action rod outcast the fast action. The latter comes into its own with heavyish leads and small bait combinations and for this reason I use both slow and fast rods.

TITCOMBE TATTLE

by Maurice Titcombe

I've been using wobbled deadbaits, six inch roach and sprats, with their heads removed, mostly fished sink and draw with long pauses. It resulted in fish of 22.10; 19; 16.4; 11.7 and 9.2 after a long period of no takes using conventional approaches, my father taking some of the fish. After checking temperatures it was noted that the fish were in the warmest corner of the lake, near our island which gave them good ambush points. Just before the takes the wind changed from E to W and both T and B.P. began to rise. The fish lengths were, respectively : 41½; 39.1/4; 37-; 33.1/4; 31. This twenty is my fourteenth, and my 225th double, during the last 23 years. Tackle for the above catches : 3 Abu beachcasters (11 ft), 3 Abu 6000 multipliers with 115 yds 12 lbs Maxima, traces 18 inches of seven strand wire (18 lbs b.s.), size 10 trebles.

Thermal stratification

Recognition of this is of the greatest importance in piking. Wind changes alter the stratification of epilimnion and hypolimnion layers, and the nature of the bottom (weeds, pebbles) can affect the depth to which the warmer layer will reach in winter. When the layering changes most rapidly I have taken very little, even in winter when the layering is less anyway. Pigmentation of Lomond pike is affected by the layers in which they swim and the changes they have to undergo, as is the metabolism of the pike. When the temperatures are erratic the pike feed less well.

I think the oxygen content increases in the shallows after dark, depending upon how much and what plant life is present, attracting both shoal fish and pike.

Pike windows

When fishing Lomond few anglers give thought to the pike's window of vision. A pike at twelve feet has greater vision of the surface than one at three feet. I always fish my baits well away from the boat. When bank fishing I like to fish at least a rod length from the edge. Atmospheric pressure must control the degree of bending of light between air and water. I think the solving of Lomond's giant pike problem depends upon unravelling factors such as these. I suspect Lomond holds 2 or 3 40 lb plus fish, no more. These should have turned up by now in the areas receiving most attention such as Balmaha. Most of Lomond is still to be explored properly in my opinion, judging by the very few anglers I've seen using deep water electronic thermometers, charts, echo sounders, compass, barometer, etc. I spend 3-4 days just using these instruments before deciding where to fish. Then I use wobbled baits in likely areas.

If more members explored the water more widely we'd discover a great deal quickly, perhaps new areas worth serious attention. Fishing can continue even in bad and changeable weather on Lomond, though many give up and go home! I've tried courlene in really rough weather : it floats just beneath the surface thereby avoiding sinking into snags and drifting on the surface.

My deep water thermometer by the way is called the Lowrance Deepwater Electronic Thermometer, but I reckon there's only about four in the country at the moment. Should we get much interest from members I'll forward the instruction manual to B.R. to look over, and the address from which they can be obtained. Even below 18 feet it registers a marked drop in oxygen content : price £49.00 + VAT.

I think myself that fish respond to T changes as low as 0.03°F and prefer only a narrow range of Ts. I'll continue my work in this field and report again in the future.

FISH TRAPS

by Ken Hulme

Anyone who had read Barrie's book 'Step by Step Pike' will have seen a photo of a fish trap, but few people seem to realize just how useful these can be for obtaining livebaits. I have used traps for about six or seven years now and have never had trouble obtaining livebaits.

I have tried all shapes and sizes of traps but I have settled for one of the following size. 4 ft long by 18 ins diameter the funnel being 12-15 ins long starting 3 ins inside the cylinder and tapering to a hole of approx 4 ins diameter. See drawing.

I make my traps out of $\frac{1}{2}$ " welded galvanized mesh which I fasten together with 30 Amp fuse wire. This is very soft wire which will not rust.

After making your trap where do you put it? Well, I find small ponds by far the best places as the fish will find it sooner than in a large water. If you must use a large water you may find it necessary to keep moving it until you find the fish.

I bait my traps with about 4 crusts or half of a small unsliced loaf and I will leave it in the water for about 2 days after which you should have enough baits for at least one or two trips. The contents of my traps have varied from none to 200 plus, but a good catch like this will see you right for a long time.

between bricks and stones. Trying to do this is not to be recommended when the pike are feeding and indicators are going up and down! This size of ice cream box I also find useful for holding reel spools.

At the same time as mentioning the tubed rod holdall I also asked you, Barrie, about your portable barometer. Recently a friend got me an ideal barometer made by Mets Instrumentation Ltd of Victoria Mill, Pollard St, Manchester M4 7AX priced at £3.05 at the time of writing. I can now watch for any changes of barometric air pressure during the session and not just before and after as I used to before purchasing the new barometer. It isn't strictly intended as a portable barometer but provided it is placed in a foam lined container and protected from undue shock I don't see how using it could damage it.

In the past I have read that exposing line to light reduces its strength. In order to avoid this possibility I wrap spools of bulk line and spare line in the plastic from a Fairy Liquid washing-up container held in place with a rubber band and placed in a zip-up reel case (unwanted Christmas present!).

Recently bought have been Fuji Rings in the two leg 'Carp style'. Used in conjunction with medium fast taper S/U carp rods, I have found that they make casting and playing big fish a smoother operation, also they are far 'kinder' to the line. I'm not certain that the material Hardloy, used to line the centre of the rings, improves the casting potential, it might just be the height of the ring that improves that. Having mentioned their advantages, they have disadvantages. For one thing they are heavier than hard-chrome rings and as a result give the rod a 'softer' feel, the material used as a shock absorber around the Hardloy centre is fairly easily damaged (but then Hardchrome rings are easily bent and broken); also although there is no sign of rusting where this happens, when using 25 mm butt rings and the 2½" diameter rod tubes I have found that the black finish is rubbed off where the ring comes into contact with the inside of the tube. Taking everything into consideration if new rings are required on a rod then I would recommend buying a set of Fujis and comparing them with Hardchrome.

Recently I saw a young angler fishing very well for pike and I was very pleased when he asked to join my local Association as an Associate Member, but one thing I noticed was that he was using traces a little too short. Occasionally by mistake, I make a trace shorter than intended but I would seriously advise pike anglers that they make their traces AT LEAST 12 INCHES long. About 15 inches long would be a safer length. I recently landed a big double figure pike where the wire trace came out of the side of it's jaw, once around it's jaws and the line had wrapped around it's body. It was for this latter reason that it gave up fighting close-in rather easier than I had anticipated it would for an October fish. A point worth mentioning is that IF the pike had caused the trace to twist around it's jaw once more and had it's teeth come into contact with the line, which is what would have happened with a shorter trace, I would almost certainly have lost it.

At the 'back-end' of last season I began using WD 40 water repellent spray on my swivels and trebles. This is usually done on the Monday evening following a weekend's fishing. It makes sense to use it when you consider that mild rusting can happen in only 24 hours after using trebles. It is also worth spraying a small amount of WD 40 into the container holding swivels to keep them free moving. I was reluctant to use WD 40 at first because I thought, quite wrongly, that the pike would smell it on the trebles and be put off taking the bait, something

I have proven beyond doubt does not happen.

Talking of trebles and care of traces, after changing a trace I leave a small length of line attached to the swivel. This reminds me to check the trace for possible kinks and the trebles for bluntness before re-using it. For keeping traces tidy nowadays I use a piece of polystyrene measuring about 12" by 9" by $\frac{3}{4}$ " with trebles stuck in one side whilst the swivels are held in place on the reverse side with $\frac{3}{4}$ " (three-quarter) long pins. The length of the pins is important as shorter ones keep falling out of the polystyrene. I bought 40 of 5/16" long and lost the lot within a few weeks of purchase! It also helps avoiding hooking objects in your tackle bag if the polystyrene board is placed in some kind of tray perhaps with the area above the trebles being covered by a piece of hardboard. As for the trace wire, the only make I ever use is P.D.Q. braided wire in 15 lb and 20 lb breaking strain. It is the finest and most supple trace wire I have ever seen. However it is necessary to check traces for unwinding which I have known them to do occasionally after considerable use, also for kinking which all but the stiffest wire does. It is bought on a blue card but I wind it on to an empty line spool. This involves a little difficulty but is more practical to store and use like this than on a card.

There will no doubt be several other points that I will remember in the future concerning the tackle that I use. As and when that happens, provided other members do not object, I'll write about them in a future article! In the meantime I hope these few points are of interest to somebody.

* * * * *

From Professor Ed Crossman to Dr Bruno Broughton :

Dear Dr Broughton,

The note on page 7 of PAC Bull. No. 7 seemed almost prophetic. It had been my intent to send Barrie Rickards another of my infrequent snippets for the Bull. It was to describe a project I have had going here for several years. That is the use of large files of literature and literature references on esocoid fishes to prepare and publish annotated bibliographies. The ideas were that people were regularly writing me asking about literature, and that it seemed appropriate to make available to others what I had gathered in 20 odd years. Two of these bibliographies are available, one on chain pickerel Esox niger, and one on the muskellunge E. masquinongy.

The biggest project of all, of course, is one on Esox lucius which a past graduate student (Dr J.M. Casselman) and I are putting together. It is the biggest project since we decided there was no point in doing just N.A. As a result, I have for several years been making contacts in European and USSR centres, requesting that they send me citations to scientific and popular articles on E. lucius. I had intended to make the same request of PAC members as individuals. I should now like to propose it to them through you as the individual having shown the leadership in the library end of things.

I think Barrie has copies of both of those available but I would be prepared to make a copy of each available for the PAC library if you thought they would be appropriate. I shall also ask John Casselman to send copies of his paper on E. lucius.

I have here at present approximately 2000 citations on E. lucius including many European ones. I do not however feel we have adequately covered the European literature to begin on the production of the published biblio. I am however preparing cost estimates of the job in order to start seeking financial backing. So it is still appropriate to add as many European citations as we can. The existing file is far too large to type and send out to prospective contributors, so we must just ask others to send what they know of, fully aware of the degree of duplication that will result. If we waited until the list was typed for printing, it would be too late and too costly to duplicate the large list just to use it to let others see what we already have in order to make it possible for them to send only the additional ones they have.

This department has become a centre for work on esocoid fishes. If your N.A. travels bring you to a point in the U.S. anywhere near Toronto I suggest you plan on an attempt to come up for a visit. I would be happy to put you up at home while in Toronto. That way you could examine the E. lucius citation file, the 200-300 reprints on E. lucius and meet others interested in esocoids, sportfishes, and fishes in general.

Sincerely,

E.J. Cross, Ph.D.
Curator, Department
of Ichthyology and Herpetology

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON THE PIKE
ESOX LUCIUS LINNAEUS

This department has long been a centre for work on species in the suborder Esocoidae. An outgrowth of this work is a comprehensive file of reprints, and a larger file of references on those species. There has been an increasing number of requests for access to that file and recognition that the references accumulated over 20 years should be made available to others.

As a result a start was made on a series of annotated bibliographies. Two of these are available now (from Publications Services ROM) as follows :

Crossman, E.J. and G.E. Lewis. 1973. An annotated bibliography of the chain pickerel, Esox niger (Osteichthyes: Salmoniformes) Roy. Ont. Mus., Life Sci. Pubn., 81 pp.

Crossman, E.J. and C.D. Goodchild. 1978. An annotated bibliography of the muskellunge, Esox masquinongy (Osteichthyes: Salmoniformes). Roy. Ont. Mus., Life Sci. Misc. Pubn., 131 pp.

The present project is the most ambitious of all. A bibliography for the pike. Dr J.M. Casselman of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and a Research Associate of this department, is participating in this one.

Presently we have a file of 200-300 reprints and an index of approximately 2000 + references.

We seek your help in making this bibliography as useful as possible. It is to include both scientific and popular articles and to cover the world distribution.

We request your help by asking that you send

1. Reprints or photocopies of papers and articles on Esox lucius.
2. Complete references to articles on Esox lucius.
3. Knowledge of individuals or organisations who might be able to help as above, or by supplying library listings, computer listings, etc.
4. References to articles containing extensive numbers of references to this species or to partial bibliographies on E. lucius.

We are prepared to cope with the duplications which will result in this way. Sadly the file is too large to be typed for sending to potential participants. We are aware that if we could send the complete file participants could of course check it and then return only references we did not already have, thus saving themselves time.

Dr E.J. Crossman
Curator

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Royal Ontario Museum
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MY BEST DAYS PIKE FISHING

JUNE 25th, 1978

by

Alec Johnson

It might surprise some to know that this was to be for me, my first ever serious (or reasonably so!), summer pike sessions.

The day in question was my last of a week's holiday, the rest of the holiday being spent fruitlessly after carp. With such a lack of success, I decided the evening before that day that I would go pike fishing by way of a change. It was bound to be a risky session though as I had no livebaits or deadbaits, only maggots (to catch pike bait with), and lures.

Arriving at the water at about 6.00 a.m. I set up in a swim where I thought I could quickly catch livebaits. Was I in for a surprise! In spite of trying very hard for about two hours not one bit was had. A change of swim was obviously called for, so I got in my car and travelled to a new swim about half a mile away. Two hours passed away in that swim before a bite was had, but instead of the long awaited roach I was pleasantly surprised to see the mottled flanks of a pike roll in the waves before biting through the fine line and escaping. Feeling a bit dejected I tied on another hook and cast out again. Much to my surprise a few minutes later I hooked another bigger pike which I again played before losing it. I don't know why I should have been surprised to hook two pike like this. In 1974 I caught an 18½ lb pike on legered crust, AT NIGHT from the same water! Some of my friends think I have 'Pike fingers' in the same that gardeners have green fingers! So it would seem, for within minutes of casting out a perch coloured 'Big S' (by Shakespeare), using an S/U Carp rod armed with 10 lb line and wire trace, I was playing a lively pike of about 6 lb which I soon landed by hand and released.

For the next three hours or so sport was so fast and furious, what with hooking and landing and hooking and losing pike I had no time to sit down except whilst unhooking the pike. During this hectic period, the most incredible feeding spree I have ever witnessed I landed a total of 14 pike between 5 lb and 20 lb 12 oz (my first ever twenty to a plug - a Gudebrod 'Sniper'). Although in good condition it fought only moderately well shaking it's head and crashing on the surface, whipping the water a few yards out into foam and not making the characteristic fast runs and tailwalking that I have had on occasions from big summer and autumn doubles since then. In spite of the fact that the pike were really on the feed they preferred only the two patterns of plugs, other patterns were either ignored or were followed and refused. Some of the pike followed the plug right into the margins under the rod tip before taking with a solid thump. Some were not seen until they grabbed the plug and

at first I missed some through striking the plug out of their mouths. But by delaying the strike a moment I managed to hook a few whilst most took as the plugs passed over the marginal 'drop-off'.

After the big fish was weighed, photographed and returned I had a well earned sit down and ate my lunch. Upon returning to my fishing I was, I suppose, hardly surprised to find that the pike had stopped feeding in the immediate area and it was necessary to move further along the bank and fish various swims to accumulate a further 6 pike only, to amass 20 pike totalling at least 130 lb. Most of these were in the 6 to 9 lb bracket. By that time had arrived I had caught enough and anymore would have spoilt me on a water where I rate five pike in a day, including a double, as a good day. Had I continued, or caught pike earlier in the session, more could have been caught. Nevertheless, I had caught the most and heaviest bag of pike I have ever caught in one day. So feeling on top of the world I packed up and left for home.

Thinking about the catch even now, I cannot believe I actually caught that many pike in one period lasting only about 6 hours. Also prior to that memorable day the amount of pike I had caught on plugs could have been counted on two hands. Little did I expect to catch not only my first double of the season, on my first pike trip of the season, at over 20 lb, but also my biggest catch of pike ever. It certainly goes to demonstrate that on the right days plugs are highly efficient catchers of pike and not just small ones either, as many anglers think. I doubt if I would have had that many on livebaits even, the most I have had on livebait is fifteen pike in a session, whilst the most I have had on deadbait is eleven, proves the point, I think!

By the way, another more optimistic trip to the same swim a week later produced no takes at all to various pligs, neither did swims further along the bank or on the far bank produce any pike. The only difference I could detect between the two sessions was it being slightly calmer on the second session with a drop in air pressure of only ½ inch. Carp, it would appear are not the only contrary fish!

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE or 'WHATS ALL THE FUSS ABOUT ZANDER'

by Ron Pendleton

The Canal was built during the Industrial revolution, by one of those great Engineers that contributed so much to the wealth that this country of ours once boasted of. Alas, today it has gone the way of so many of its counterparts, falling into neglect, save for those few stretches that have been kept and cherished by local angling clubs.

The St Helens Canal, that which is leased by the St Helens Angling Association, has had one unique advantage over many other canals throughout the North West, in that it never freezes over, even in the hardest of winters, due to the influence of that Glass Empire Giant - Pilkington Brothers, who employ the major part of the town's labour.

Pilkingtons Sheet Works backs onto the canal just off the town centre, where, I'm glad to say, the water used by Pilkingtons for their Water-Cooled Glass making process, re-enters the canal, at some 80-90°F, thereby creating an artificial situation where the fish in the canal are kept in a perpetual condition of summer temperatures.

Going back 15-20 years or so, it was by no means unusual to see match-weights coming from the canal of 15-20 lb. Pleasure anglers, and I am including the Specimen Hunter type in that description, enjoyed some of the best fishing to be found anywhere locally. Good catches of roach were a particular feature of the water. I myself had my first ever 2 pound roach from the water, whilst my best ever roach - 2 lb 8 oz, is still from there.

Perch were another species that sometimes made a surprise appearance. I saw a number in the 2-2½ lb range, but never managed to take one myself. The species that attracted most of my attention at that time in the canal, was the carp, and good carp they were too. Double figure carp were what one could normally expect, few there were that didn't exceed 12-13 lb and the best I ever saw taken there went 21 lb 6 oz.

During the latter half of the 60s, a change occurred that was to completely change the whole ecology of the canal, this was the illegal introduction of tropical fish. These included Angel Fish, Guirammis, Guppies, Tetras, Mollies, various kinds of catfish, and what was to prove to be the real villain of the piece, members of the cychlid family, of which the Angel Fish is also a member.

The cychlids have dominated the canal for the last 15 years, to the obvious detriment of the other species, save for the carp. In the early days of their introduction it was something of a novelty to catch them. These small Wrasse-like fish would attack every form of bait possible.

We were wrongly informed that they wouldn't grow much above 5" in length. In those few short years after their liberation, they grew and grew and grew. They began to come out in ever increasing numbers, weighing over one pound. The best I've ever had weighed 2 lb 12 oz, and I've seen thousands over 2 pounds, while the best I've heard of weighed - wait for it - 4 lb 12 oz!

The trouble with cychlids as the matchman is only too willing to tell you is, they keep biting the hooks off! They have a perfect set of teeth - just like the Wrasse in fact. Its not just the matchman that have this problem though, all the carp anglers fishing the canal have had the same problem. At first we thought it was Old Cypri (carp) doing the bite-offs, but it was happening too regularly to be carp. I think I was the first to pinpoint the culprits, after one particularly bad spell, when I was losing on average 3 size 2s hooks a night! I decided to step the B.S. of line up to 13 lb! On the first occasion out

went the bait, and a short while later in came the first cichlid. Great! I thought, that's cured that. However, next cast, and I'm minus another 2 hook. Well, back to the drawing board.

Being loath to use wire trace for my carp fishing, I reasoned that a short length of braided terylene could be the answer. My mate Dave McGibbon had been using some B.T. on one of our carp lakes that summer, so I borrowed some off him. I used a short length of about 6", and as Dave had already dyed it black, it blended in perfectly with the dark canal bottom.

Initially, this idea was a resounding success, no bite-offs and the carp didn't seem to mind the set-up. However, after a while, it became apparent that although the cichlids were having a great deal more difficulty in removing the hooks from the braided terylene, it was by no means impossible, and it was plainly obvious that after the attention of a few cichlids, the B.T. was becoming the worse for wear. In fact, on reflection, I'm pretty sure the cichlids were enjoying the challenge!

By 1969, we had given up trying to combat the cichlids, and had turned to the only other alternative left open to us, we decided to fish where there were less cichlids. This gave us quite a few options, or so we thought. We believed that the cichlids weren't half as troublesome where the waters of the canal were substantially cooler than in the hot waters or 'Hotties' as we referred to them.

This approach meant a return to fishing what was, up to the time of the tropicals introduction, the most noted carp 'Hot Spot' on the canal (Pardon the Pun). This swim was on a bend in the canal, just below the weir or outflow from the hotties. The weir was supposed to reduce the amount of infiltration from tropicals from the hotties we thought, and as the bend in the canal was only some 50 yds or so from the weir, it was only to be expected that the carp would move up closer to the warm water flowing over the weir.

Over the years we had found the most successful baits for these canal carp to be cheese and worms, in that order, so we started our new approach by embarking upon what must have been and probably still is, the biggest baiting up programme the canal has ever seen.

We found a pig breeder who used to dump all the waste from the styes near some easily drained land. This resulted in the acid wastes draining away, and what was left was a deposit of very rich waste containing tons of the biggest brandling worms I've ever seen. In the dead of night, Dave McGibbon and myself use to load up old bath tubs, bins, buckets, you name it we filled it, with these brandlings and take them down to the canal where we dumped them on the bend. After 3-4 weeks of this, nearly every carp below the weir must have moved up the bend for the free nosh. The fishing was terrific, many doubles being landed.

Occasionally we'd hook something that would move off against steady pressure, and would either snag you on something, or would carry on moving slowly down the canal, until it disappeared under a

tunnel in one of the railway bridges on the canal, with the inevitable results. Some thought that they were big carp, foulhooked, but it was a newcomer to carp fishing who provided us with the answer. One night, my cousin Jeff, hooked a fish by this tunnel which swam into open water, and when eventually landed tipped the scales at 7 pounds, nothing strange in that is there, apart from it being a tropical catfish!

After the appearance of this specimen, smaller ones began to become more regularly to the anglers fishing the canal, so we took one of these small catfish to Liverpool, where one of the tropical fish dealers told us that that particular species went to 190 lb in the wild, needless to say we didn't tell the club members about that, they'd have wanted the canal drained!

Some of the things that happen on this canal just take some believing, like the time someone released two alligators in it, that's right ALLIGATORS. I was fishing for carp on the bend one night when I saw what appeared to be a water rat swimming along the bank towards me. As it got closer, I realised it wasn't a rat, but couldn't quite decide what it was until that is, it came up level with where I was fishing when it left me in no doubt about what it was. It was one of the alligators. They were only about 10-12 inches long I'm told, I tried to net this one, but it dived as soon as I made a move towards it. I never did see or hear about them again. I think the winter must have killed them off, when they came out of the water at night to sleep, unless of course there's something in there that feeds on alligators.

Then there were the terrapins. Yes I know you'll be saying by this time, this bloke's been on the meths, but nevertheless it is true. There are terrapins in the canal. AM Dave Jones' brother was once with a lad who caught one 8 inches across the back. I told this to a few of my friends but none would believe me, until that is, a photo of that particular terrapin appeared in the papers. I took another bloke down the canal once, just to show him the tropicals, asking each angler with a keepnet out, have you any tropicals to show this bloke, he hasn't seen them before. Each angler produced a keepnet containing fish with the inevitable cychlid amongst them until that is, we approached this young lad and received the classic reply to our question, have you any tropicals to show this bloke, the reply came 'Yes, I've got a TURTLE!!' Of course he meant a terrapin, but he wasn't to know that was he, and he proceeded to show us his 'Turtle', all 3 inches of it in fact, I think that finally proved my point.

Then there came the famous 'Running Catfish' incident, involving Liverpool match angler - Brian Ellis. Brian was fishing the 'Hotties' and caught this catfish, as he turned to reach for his keepnet, he dropped the catfish on the bank, and before he could reach out and grab it, it ran off down the canal bank! Brian gave chase and eventually caught it before it could get back in the water, he later took it home with him, and the following day had it identified as the species of catfish called 'CLARISS' or 'Walking CATFISH'!

The only things that don't seem to have suffered as a result of the introduction of tropicals seem to be the carp, though they don't seem to be there in the numbers of former years, probably due to the cychlids eating their fry before they can become big enough to be safe from attack

The Carp caught these days all tend to be doubles, and the canal record was raised this year to 22½lb, a beautiful conditioned common carp.

Whenever I pick up a paper, and read about the threat of ZANDER, I usually have a chuckle to myself. Anglian Water Authority don't know how lucky they are! Pilkingtons are slowly folding up their water cooled system, and it will eventually mean that the canal will become a cold water fishery. The question I wish to know the answer to is this : as the water becomes cooler and cooler, will the tropicals become acclimatised to the cooling water? They have already adapted to a 30 degree temperature drop, and are breeding as prolifically as ever. If they do eventually become a cold water species, isn't it likely that they will be transported across the country like so many other 'Live Baits', released in other waters; and once there, set up breeding stocks of their own.

Having experienced more than 15 years of this menace, and the problems they cause, I feel justified in claiming that should the zander ever make an appearance in our local canal, then it will be its last! The zander is to the cychlid, what the Minnow is to the Chub, just another meal!

* * * * *

SOMEONE IN MY SWIM

by Michael Barles

It was 6 a.m., Ugh! My alarm let me know its time to get up and rush off to Jackson's Lakes in Kent, to do some pike extracting.

A quick 90 m.p.h. dash to the water, and what's this. Two lumps of human compost fishing in my swim and for roach as well Ugh! After wiping my eyes I realised I wasn't dreaming and there was actually two people fishing in my swim

This left me in the predicament of where to fish. Thoughts of going over to these two poor roach anglers and sticking the wader in flashed through my mind. After all they were fishing in the well known pike hotspot and I don't like sharing swims. Well, there was nothing else for it but to find somewhere else to fish. So I carried on around the lake to where I couldn't drive my car any further. Unless, that it I wanted to carry my tackle to the water.

So I chose a spot not too far away from where I usually fish, except that it is separated by two gravel banks. As there was a strong wind blowing it also meant the wind was coming from behind me, so I parked and went and fetched my neatly hidden keepnet full of roach and bream I'd caught the day before for livebait. It was getting light by now. I was tackling up my first rod when I noticed a few rises in the lake, plus what appeared to be an underwater gravel bar and dense weed. This meant I'd have to cast over the bar approx. 20 yds out and into the gully behind it before the gravel island. I must admit I wasn't feeling very confident at all by now with the spot I'd chosen. I felt I was in for a certain blank day. But with the gusty wind behind me, I decided to stick it out. With my first rod assembled, I was at that time using Bruce and Walker stepped up carps, 10 lb line to size 8 trebles, I decided to use a float fished roach deadbait. I've found that frozen solid roach or bream deadbaits are very deadly in the frozen condition, I believe it's the thawing fish smell which attracts the pike.

Anyway, a beautiful wind-assisted cast saw my deadbait land straight on the gravel bank in the lake. So a quick rewind and my deadbait plopped off of the bank into the water, just by a small overhanging tree. Satisfied, I put the rod in its rest and began to set up my other rods. Then to my amazement my bung disappeared. On recovering from shock, I quickly struck and I was into a fish. Bld this pike go, it felt good. There I was quietly singing "I'm forever catching doubles", when I saw a pike of only 4 lb 7oz come to my awaiting landing net along with about ½ cwt of weed. I couldn't believe my eyes after such a good fight. Still I had caught a pike and my deadbait was still in reasonable condition. So I placed the pike in my keepnet and recast. This time I missed the bank and landed in just the right spot for my bung went under straight away before I even had chance to put the net down. On striking I was straight into a pike of 7 lb. Well, I caught two pike in 5 minutes, this is good. So now with two pike in my net I rebaited another deadbait and recast. Well, this time I managed to set up rod number 2 with a float-fished livebait and cast out, only to see my deadbait bung disappear yet again. I struck immediately to another pike of exactly 7 lb again. By this time I couldn't give two -----s about my normal hotspot. Fate must have sent me to this spot instead. Whilst placing my 3rd pike in my keepnet my livebait bung disappeared. Hardly believing my eyes, I struck into another pike. This one was only 1 lb 14 oz but another pike (coughy "Jack pike"). So with pike number 4 in my net, I recast my two float rigs, one deadbait and one livebait. I actually had time for a while to set up rods 3 and 4, legered deadbait and livebait. The time was now approaching 9 a.m. This was the usual start of the feeding time at the other spot I'd intended to go to. Meanwhile I was concentrating on catching the odd roach and silver bream as a past-time and to stock my livebait net. Then all of a sudden, off went my heron bite indicator. This informed me I had a run on legered deadbait. I hit it, and was in to pike number 5. This one was bigger, it shot straight through the underwater weed bank which had really caused me much aggro, up till now. This pike wasn't going to give up easily. Running hard to my right, heading for even thicker weed beds. Holding on as hard as I could I gave no line and eventually the fish swam towards me, a few minutes passed, then I slipped my landing net under a superbly conditioned 13 lb 8 oz pike. At this time I was stuck at 13 lb 8 oz, three fish in fact, the same weight, but I wasn't complaining. For had I discovered a hotter hotspot? So far the fish had all come from within 10 feet either way of this small tree. Well I wasn't to wait long for pike number 6. Before I could recast, off went my deadbait bung again.

This equalled my best one day pike haul of 6 pike. Although this pike was only 3 lb 4 oz and the fight very poor. My record was level, now could I break it? Well I did, at 10.15 a.m. my buzzer sounded and my legered livebait had been seized. Record broken an instant strike secured pike no. 7, again not a large fish, 4 lb, but good sport nevertheless. By this time it was reasonably sunny though still windy. My next run was dropped, well bitten through. My roach livebait had just been bitten in half. Could there be a twenty out there I thought? With a thumping heart at that thought I saw my deadbait bung disappear again. There I was wondering if it would be 21 lb, 24 lb or 28 lb when in fact pike number 8 was 6 lb 3 oz. Sport then died for a while. I was still rather pleased with what I had caught - I was still catching roach quite regularly when at 2.15 p.m. it went dead, no more bites. The next two hours I was to find out why, as if pike had suddenly learnt how to be like mackerel, I had bungs and buzzers going off and under almost constantly. Between 2.15 and 4.15 I had 6 more pike, 3 dropped runs, pike 9 4 lb 6 oz bung deadbait; pike 10 2 lb 9 oz bung deadbait; pike 11 5 lb 2 oz legered livebait; pike 12 3 lb 13 oz legered deadbait; pike 13 7 lb 7 oz floatfished deadbait; pike 14 2 lb legered livebait.

What a day, I finished the day in a totally different mood than I had started. 14 pike from 1 lb 14 oz to 13 lb 8 oz. I never returned to my usual spot again. This proved to me it sometimes pays to try less popular spots. I returned to fish this new swim many times. I had my best season's pike fishing, so good was it at times. I'd carry on fishing through the night, till the next day leaving in the evening, I caught pike at night. But strangely only on legered livebaits. I used to slip a betalight quill float through a bung for night fishing. But legering paid dividends. I did break my 14 fish record just one week later: this is from sunrise to sunset when I caught 16 pike, not all large by any means, ranging from 3 lb to 8½ lb. All bites this particular day started from midday onwards. Most fish once again on deadbaits. I've fished Jackson's lakes nearly 6 years now and had no joy at all with sprats, mackerel or herring. I've had one small jack on sprat and never even had a run on anything else. However, I did have one slack day. Looking back through my records I had one pike during the day, but 7 pike up to 6½ lb during the night. During all this time I had had a ¾ lb bream deadbait, legered out by the tree again. This had been in the same spot for 32 hours. The following day was also quiet, with only 2 small jacks for my efforts, so at 3 p.m. I decided to call it a day. The last rod I decided to pack up was this legered bream. As I went to pick the rod up, up shot the bobbin, off went the buzzer. I had a run. Line was peeling off the reel at a terrific rate of knots. I quickly piked up the rod and struck. My first impression was I had hooked a smallish pike, rod barely bending and little resistance. Then bang, once I got the fish over the underwater bank, my rod took a different shape plus the fish decided to fight. All of a sudden a very large pike leapt clear of the water and started tailwalking across the lake. A full tense 25 minutes of fight

passed. A small gathering of anglers had by this time surrounded me and one kindly helped me net the fish. A superbly conditioned pike of 17 lb 9 oz. I had it witnessed and photographed and then returned it to the water. This is still my best pike, but I often wonder, that if it wasn't for the reason that someone was in my swim one day, I doubt if I would have ever discovered this spot.

My total pike for that season was 88, 73 pike coming from this new spot, 11 being doubles. This season results have not been anywhere near as good. Perhaps the pike have moved elsewhere, so I shall have to change places again. My advice is to try different spots occasionally. You might not be lucky first time, but it's worth a try.

R E V I E W

The Art of Fly Fishing by Brian Harris, published by Ward Lock Ltd at £7.95. 1980.

Brian Harris was editor of Angling for several years, and during this time he reviewed, or had reviewed, some of my own books. I never remember getting a good review from him. Not once did he do a "This is a damn good book" type of review, though others did. Therefore, when I received the above I did so with glee, thinking I'd get my own back not only for those failures to appreciate my own penned efforts, but for his appearance on "The Fishing Race" which irritated me enormously.

It's a pity I can't get my own back, because Harris' book is a damned good book. One thing I like is that it is divided up into parts based upon the fish, rather than upon tackle or water type. Thus it begins with 6 chapters on brown and rainbow trout; followed by 3 chapters on sea trout and salmon; 2 chapters on grayling; 2 chapters on coarse fish and ends with 2 chapters for the do-it-yourself man. In addition there is an appendix on knots which could have been longer; a glossary and index, the former excellent, the latter less so; and two sides of reading list and addresses; a good idea. The whole text is compact, 184 pp, well written, and with an easy-on-the-eye print and format. Some of the photographs are quite magnificent, the rest always good (though some b & ws are not printed too well), and the text figures are well drawn and sufficient in number.

I don't want to comment in great detail or depth on the text, but it certainly is packed with information directly from the author's experience. In places I'd have liked to see him write more - just as it got deeply interesting he moved on, journalist style, to another

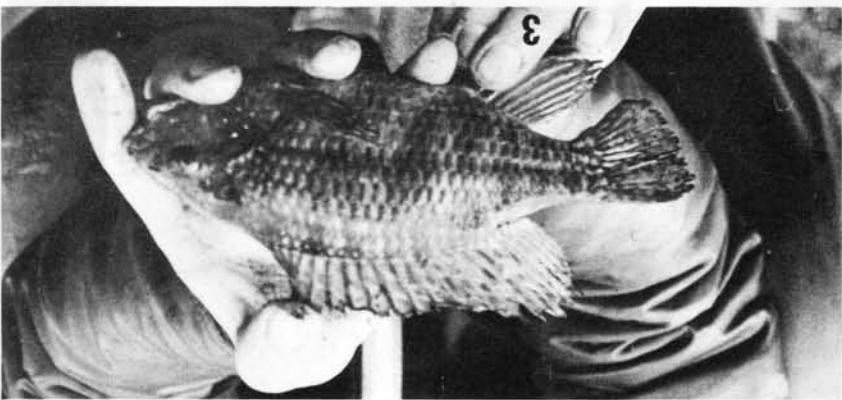
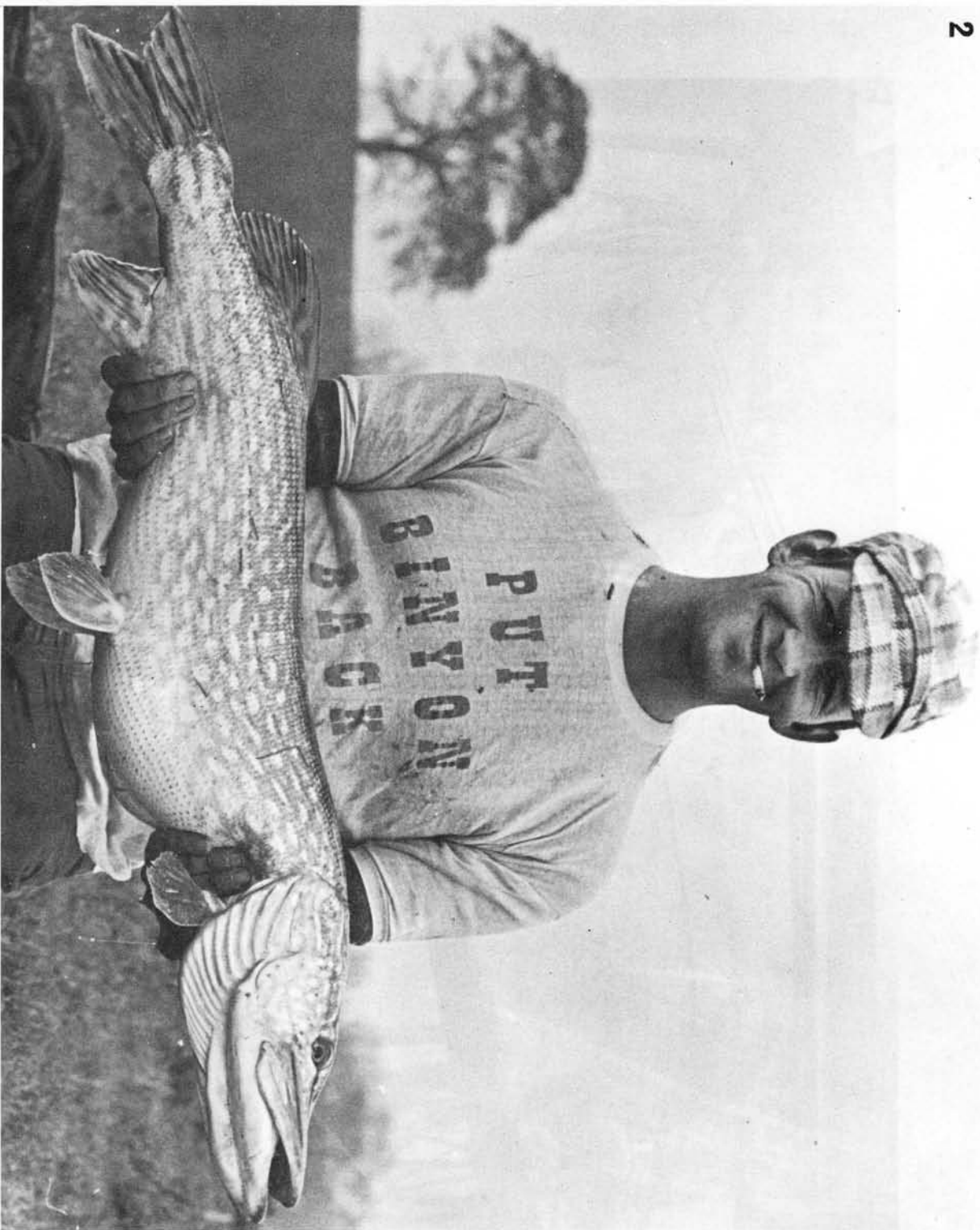
topic. But it is all good reading and will be of great practical help to fly fishers old and new. There's a little bit of text on pike and perch and good stuff it is too. Nice to read a fly fisherman advocating returning most pike to the water, although, as most people are aware, Harris is a fisherman, not just a trout angler.

B.R.

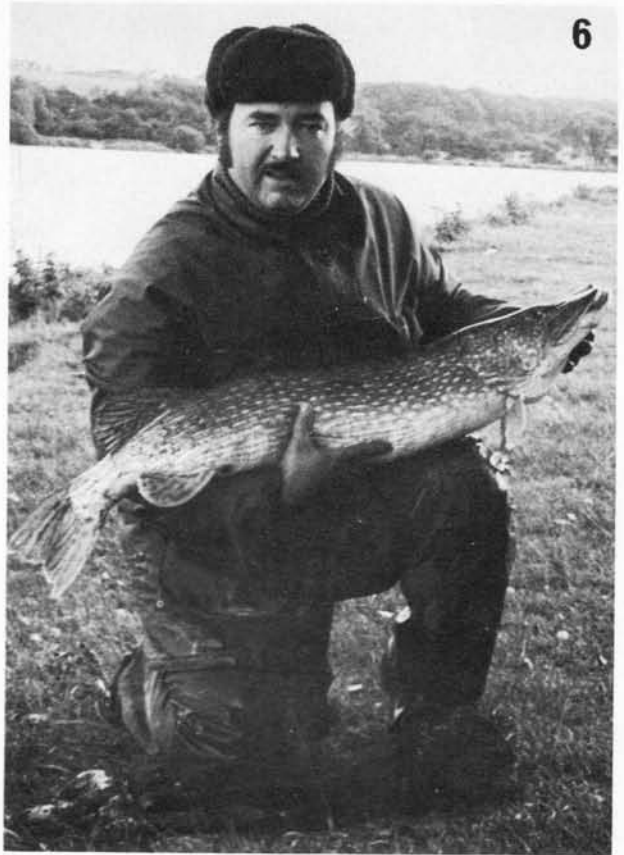
CENTRE SPREAD

1. We are due for an embarrassing time in the near future : not only can we not remember which fish this is, but nor can we remember who sent it in. Please enlighten us. Worse is to follow. Somebody at the Loughborough angling conference gave us pics of the Endrick pike head - who ?
2. Less trouble with this one. Sch.....you-know-Eustace with a big Irish twenty, and a plea close to his heart
3. Cichlid (?pronounced sicklid!) from "The Hotties". See Ron Pendleton's breathtaking article.
- 4, 5. More cichlids and cichlid anglers amongst the Turkish bath of "The Hotties".
6. Ron Pendleton with a 20½ lb fish from colder climes.





Garry Bramwood - 231b 8oz



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FROM THE REGIONS

From Phil Poole (Stoke on Trent) a letter belated for editorial reasons not because of Phil's slowness :

Many thanks to all the regional organisers and members who attended the Stoke Regional Organisers Annual Working Dinner, particularly those who travelled such a great distance. We thoroughly enjoyed having you.

It was a pleasure and privilege to organise it and I am grateful to those members of Stoke R.A. who helped on the day, Graham Keeling, Mick McEwan, John Gater, John Jones, Jeff Bourne and Brian Mountford.

I also appreciate the letters subsequently received and those who took the trouble to apologise for not being able to attend rather than leave me wondering what was happening.

See you all next year.

Since I last wrote we have continued our monthly meetings with attendance around the 20 mark. July we organised the 'Fish-in', August we had a general 'think-tank' on the forthcoming season, September Graham Marsden talked about big fish in general with a lot of interesting stuff on photography, October our local Severn-Trent Fisheries officer gave a talk with slides on the work of the ST fisheries dept., and of course in November we have the mighty Ronnie and his films. This short run of 'outside' speakers coupled with our usual business is working well and attendance would have been higher were it not for holidays and foreign trips - I even missed the September one myself and Graham did a good job considering particularly that he hates standing in front of an audience!

The 'Fish-in' was on a small square reservoir of some 20 acres in the heart of Stoke-on-Trent. We had a lot of publicity including Angling, Coarse Fisherman and the weeklies and I picked the place because of its high population of small pike, and its location and easy access. The weather was a disaster - rain and wind nearly all day - and the fishing a failure - only three small jacks despite 4 of my lot fishing supposedly as an extra means of demonstration. However we had about 30 fishing during the day and well over 50 others in the tent, at various times during the day. In the tent (thank goodness we took it) we had 4 rods set up, loads of other tackle on display, photos, mags and tea brewing, and the majority of people just dropped in for a chat. It was embarrassing at times with people queuing in the rain to get in. Severn Trent and Radio Stoke came as usual and we had a very satisfying if exhausting day. I think Ronnie will be surprised at the numbers at our next meeting and whilst I obviously will not charge them this year our membership in Stoke is bound to go up significantly.

We had a supposed 30 (20+ our guess) killed in Stoke recently and it was pleasing to receive a lot of support to our constructive protests. PAC men apart the paper had a bigger mail on the subject than they have had on any other fishing matter this year - we are getting the message across - and I had an anonymous lady caller even. (The following is published as an example of how to run a fish-in).

WESTPORT LAKE FISH-IN SUNDAY OCTOBER 19th 1980

Please note the following action :

1. Advertised to start at 8.00 a.m. and so all PAC members should arrange to arrive as near to 7.00 a.m. as possible.
2. No special arrangements have been made for tickets - everyone should pay the attendant on the day.
3. Everyone should wear their PAC badge if possible.
4. Registration will be run by little Johnny Jones (6 foot +) abetted if not aided by the Alan Price set. John will hopefully not forget his tent and would find a small table useful. I will provide the necessary paper and PAC handouts, and photo display, receipt book, badges and mags.
5. The Noddy (sorry finger slipped) Dobby Wells syndicate tea men will arrive complete with brewing devices and paper cups etc. Any reasonable expenditure may even be reimbursed particularly if the charges they make show us a profit. Thank you John Gater and Roy Nixon.
6. Irish Mick O'Ewan will be demonstrating his wonderful selection of antique angling equipment (the reel goes on the thick end Mick). Little bird told me that Irish Pike are getting difficult - any truth in the rumour Mick ?
7. We agreed to work in pairs - pause for naughty giggles - as follows :
 - J. Jones and A. Price - AP fishing once the rush subsides!
 - M. Morton and M. Beardmore - MB fishing.
 - J. Gater and R. Nixon - brewing and fishing both.
 - R. Thorley and G. Minor - one fishing - you decide.
 - G. Keeling and J. Bourne - JB fishing.
 - Family Simms and family Allen - all fishing or something.
 - B. Mountford - spotted dace spotting (caught using live trout last year, told bailiff it was spotted dace!!) and generally making himself useful (sure that's not the word I meant).
 - M. McEwen - tackle demo.
 - P. Poole and R. Perry - passing on their accumulated vast experience.

8. Anyone not mentioned must not have been at the meeting - please come and fish or patrol as you wish.
 9. Geography - Jones the book & Co, and Tea Tea Gater & Co. ought to be as near to the car park as a decent swim dictates. The other pairs should pick one side of the lake each so that we are spread out to cover the lake best - please decide between yourselves. Remember that the idea of pairs with one fishing was that both practical help and demonstration could be given. The three pairs to cover the sides left by JJ are MM/MB, RT/GM & GK/JB.
 10. Mr McEwan (it pays to be nice if you want something) will be bringing his fish tanks please.
 11. The patrollers - MM, BM, RP, GK, PP & RT or GM plus JJ and MMcE when possible should carry trebles, wire, unhooking kit and net along with the floats which GK and BM are making.
 12. Thank you all for your help - the only condition the SOT City Council have made is that we clean up afterwards - I am confident we shall have a good day.
-

We continue to get reports from Eire where the Irish Pike Anglers Club is well established now. They have expressed an interest in helping visiting British PAC members so, to take some of the strain off Hugh Gough, you might like to get in touch with : Enda Lee, Secr. PAC of Ireland, 73 Esker Park, Lucan, Co. Dublin, Eire OR Paul Sheehan, 36 Hyde Park, Dalkey, Dublin, Eire.

I don't think I've read such an impressive document as the verbatim evidence given by George Higgins and colleagues of NIPS to the Black Committee of Enquiry into angling and commercial (freshwater) interests in Northern Ireland. If the findings go against NIPS it certainly won't be for the lack of knowledge, common sense and deduction on the part of NIPS. And their fish catching continues as a never-ending saga : six twenty pounders in August and September from 23 to 28½, the last by Vic Young, and a quite superb fish. We'll have a b & w of that fish for you before too long. In the year ending 30th September 1980 they had 106 doubles with 21 of 20 lbs or more. The twenty pounders were caught by 11 members. (The NIPS year runs from October 1st to September 30th - no close season in Ireland! and the Piker's year from April 1st to 31st March so we won't hear their results for a while yet). The Piker's annual Captain's Day was held recently and resulted in 59 pike, averaging 9.2 lbs with 22 doubles : George reached his 30th twenty with a fish of 25 lbs and Ray Smyth his 31st with one of 21½ lbs. Alex Dickey won the day for the second year running, with a fish of 24.1/4 lbs.

We've had several copies of P.A.C. local branch newsletters sent us, the most recent being from Martyn Page and Dave Walls of the Norwich branch and John Duffill of the Hull branch. These, and the several others coming out on a regular basis, are usually a couple of sides of A4 and packed with information for the local P.A.C. member.

We've been asked by Paul Blackburn now running Region 16 (Bracknell) to produce an up-to-date R.A. list, and this we'll do in the near future (We have, in fact, just prepared it for running off).

The Ely branch of the P.A.C. will need a new R.O. by the end of the season when Colin Goodge, who has run it since P.A.C. started almost, comes to the end of his stint. Any offers? Ron Pendleton, too, will be "retiring" this year but we understand matters are in hand in that region.

From Phil Poole, Stoke on Trent, we've enclosed a "plan" of a day's fish-in that Stoke on Trent did (see above) just as a good example of how to plan those things.

We've also had an interesting communication from Lawrence Piele on behalf of NIPS concerning a problem they have to do with research and pike. We'll be keeping you informed when Lawrence and colleagues have it sorted out.

Paul Armstrong will be stepping down this year from running the Northumberland branch, after a hefty stint of three years, and the region will be run by a small committee, secretary Chris Dunn. Many thanks to Paul and Mac for their efforts in the past.

The Cheshire branch runs very actively under Gordon Stanier (John Rookcroft has now left permanently for Eire, and we all wish him luck there). Monthly meetings are held and a newsletter is running, with a local sub to cover running costs.

Steve Wills and the Bridgwater R.A. have produced a one page guide on the unhooking and handling of pike - excellent stuff. The Barnsley R.A. (87) recently formed, is also running along nicely with Chris Smith: two meetings and two fish-ins, at one of which an angler had his first ever pike of 5 lb 4 oz and was shown how to deal with it properly.

Regular reports, too, from the Carlisle R.A. (Slim Baxter) and from Carl Knowles (Barrow in Furness). The latter would like to know if any members have taken scale readings and followed the "Ford Walford" plot, (perhaps John Robbins could get in touch with Carl). Carl sent a couple of tips: one is to use a link swivel on the reel line end for attaching to the trace swivel, enabling rapid dismantling after netting a fish; the second is to have two spare rod rests set up near the unhooking area so that the rod can be placed in them instead of laying it on the ground. (The only problem with the first tip is that in the hopefully rare situation

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M A I L B A G

From Andy Barker :

After winning first prize in the raffle at last year's social which turned out to be a long weekend for two at Derek Lynch's place in Scotland, my wife and I journeyed up there last April with all the fishing gear hoping for some sport.

Unfortunately the weather was against us and very little action was to be had. Derek showed me some of the lochs that he has sussed out as promising waters for visiting pike anglers and I am sure that with a bit of angling pressure some of them will turn up big fish.

In Loch Ken we looked at many gill nets set up in the shallow bays, most of the pike hopelessly entangled, luckily all on the small side to about seven pounds. I wonder if many big fish get caught in these nets.

Any pike anglers considering fishing the area around Loch Ken will be well looked after at Derek's guesthouse in Creetown. The food supplied by his charming wife is both excellent and filling, and with two pubs only yards away, what more could one want ?

From Alec Johnson, Northampton :

Please find enclosed contribution for the magazine, thought it was about time that I wrote something ! It has occurred to me for some time that some young anglers buy tackle that they don't need, but don't know what they DO need. I think young anglers are blinded by an array of tackle in their local tackle shop. Perhaps my views are biased because I'm a tight-fisted b----- and buy very little that I don't need. Seriously though, I make most of my tackle when possible.

The meeting of the Northants Regional Association went down well on tober 18th with about 20 A.Ms attending plus 8 prospective A.Ms. The only thing to marr the evening was the presence of three pike killers, or should I say fishmongers for that is what they are. They apparently fish the Fens only to fish for pike and zander to eat what they catch, irrespective to size. It is fortunate for them that I did not know the latter before I gave them a half hour lecture

on the reasons why big predators should be returned and what the aims of P.A.C. are. When they made themselves clear to me I told them it was quite obvious to me that they did not respect pike (with which they disagreed), and that their actions would be seriously objected to in my R.A. if they were to join P.A.C. After that I felt it wasn't worth wasting further time talking to them as I had others to talk to. They left not half an hour later - I wonder why?! They took advantage of my hospitality and they will not be entertained with politeness if they attend another meeting, that is as long as their attitude and behaviour remains the same. If some of the members had known what they were they would have been told to leave the meeting in the strongest possible manner. They would not have tried to change their attitude as I tried.

The next meeting was on Wednesday 19th November at the Spinney Hill pub again on the Kettering Road (A43). The Northampton Specimen Group hold their annual stag night further along the Kettering Road the evening before, which I also attended. Any chance that you will be able to attend a meeting of this region?

Four circulars were sent out advertising the next 'Fish-In' of this Regional Association which was on Sunday November 9th at Daventry Reservoir.

With local A.Ms standing at 29 I really am pleased with the way things have progressed. Since January 1st this year about 17 have joined. If membership continues at this rate I will suggest that a new R.A. be formed for the Kettering/Corby area of Northamptonshire in about another 12 to 18 months time. We already have eight members in that area which is more than this R.A. started with. The problem will be finding someone to run that area. How important do you feel is it that the Regional Organiser for an area is an experienced pike angler?

(Eds : We do try to get to local R.A. meetings several times a winter, but with nearly 90 R.As in operation now our attendance isn't all that noticeable. We've been very unfortunate in failing to get to Northampton despite several invites from that quarter. We hope to remedy this in the near future. Regional Organisers have shown that they do not have to be experienced anglers to run a region well : organising ability, obviously, but enthusiasm seems more important particularly where the R.A. is smaller than in Northampton.

From Richard Walker, Biggleswade :

Thank you for your letter. I am not going to get involved with debate about barbed versus barbless hooks because it is already clear to me that one doesn't have to choose between the usual thoroughly bad, big rank barb and no barb at all. I have been screaming for tiny neat-barbs for about thirty years and I believe

From Phil Tew, Harrow :

Thanks for the tie, I think the colour will do. As I said to you in our little chat, Leisure Sport are getting a little fed up with P.A.C. members trying to run their Pike Qualifiers, for a start they have not been invited on to the waters so that makes them trespassers. Leisure Sport have agreed that if the P.A.C. want to steward some of Pike Qualifiers they would be only too happy to allow this. If the P.A.C. is interested could you let me know and I will put you on to the right man to approach. Incidentally, Richard and myself have been invited to Steward the Thorpe Park Final of the A.T. A.C.A. Pike Final.

Regarding the Thorpe Park affair, Allen Edwards was, I think, totally wrong in his actions in killing a 21 lb pike to have it set up for A.C.A. displays. Ken Sutton and Allen are both P.A.C. members and should be setting an example. It seems to make the whole of what we are trying to achieve a complete farce. I'd have thought they could have arranged for a carcass from Grafham Water. Or why didn't they fish the Middle Level for one! Ken and Allen knew the risk they were taking. Secrets soon become Hot news.

Phil, Richard, B.R. and others have since discussed this event with Allen, and we, it is fair to say, amicably disagree. Allen has explained fully his reasons for needing a striking feature for his displays, and whilst respecting his opinions and feelings, most of the rest of us wouldn't agree that this was the best way of doing it.

In P.A.C. debates we have talked about this question at length, in general as well as with respect to Geoff Smith's fish. Whilst it is clear that each circumstance is slightly different from the next, the P.A.C. "Committee" strongly recommends that in future it's members do not kill sizeable pike : if someone needs one I'm sure they can be obtained from some other source.

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