



The Keepnet of The proposed way for

I have been co-opted onto the BS committee to seek the path for the education of better barbel welfare to our fellow anglers, be they pleasure, specialist or from the match fishing fraternity.

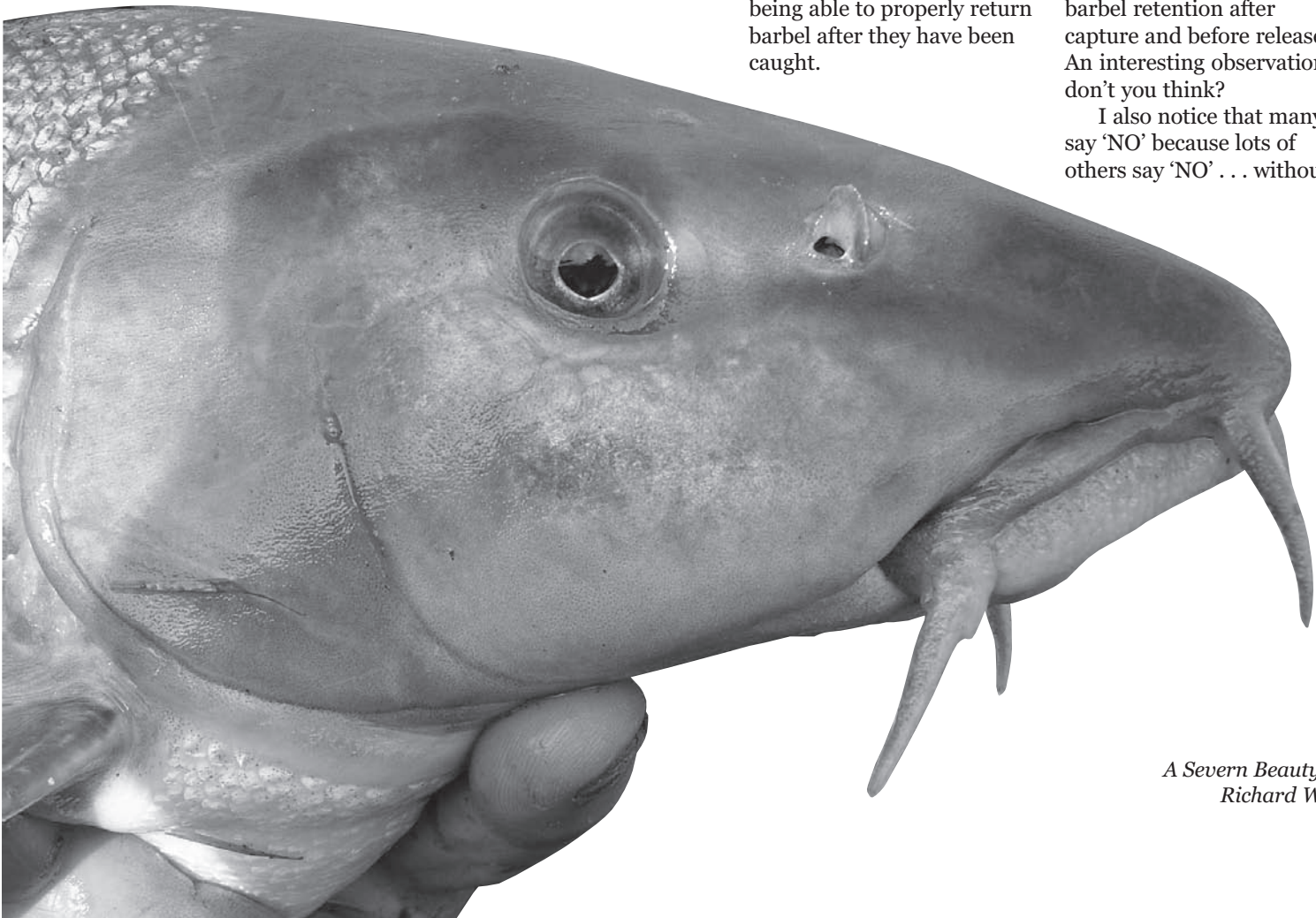
Like a 'walk in the park' they say from the sidelines. If only the rest of life were this easy a task!!!

I have decided to write two articles for the Barbel Fisher magazine, publications 21 and 22 . . . cleverly entitled 'part one' and 'part two' . . . they are both going to be a tad contentious and they are both going to be about keepnets and their use when it comes to barbel. Part two will also cover handling, swim selection and the prospective problems of being able to properly return barbel after they have been caught.

Some of you might say "why bother writing about keepnets within our own society membership . . . surely this is preaching to the converted?" Well, I have strange sight and my hearing also plays havoc with me as well at times. I hear nearly all BS members saying 'NO' to keepnets with regard to barbel retention.....and there is the cross over of words that could be miles apart or side by side. 'Keepnets' and 'barbel retention'.

Now nearly everyone of those members who say 'NO' to keepnets also say 'YES' to barbel retention after capture and before release. An interesting observation don't you think?

I also notice that many say 'NO' because lots of others say 'NO' . . . without



*A Severn Beauty for
Richard Wells*

t debate... y forward

“I also intend to write to those angling clubs that do not yet have, in my considered opinion, sensible barbel welfare guidance within their framework and rule books”

real thought as to why they say ‘NO’.

It will be my intention to make our membership think about the ramifications of our collective ‘NO’ to the use of keepnets within barbel fishing or fishing where barbel can be caught.

Some of the membership reading the first article who don’t realise where I come from on this issue, will probably call for me to be thrown out of the BS because, put simply, even though Pete Reading and Paul Owens have covered my introduction into the BS committee on barbel welfare within the last newsletter, quite a lot of those reading the magazine article will not have absorbed that information. Rather strangely, I find that particular fact very exciting.

I have penned part one and hopefully it follows this ‘introduction’ of the arena that I have been asked, and agreed, to work within on behalf of the BS.

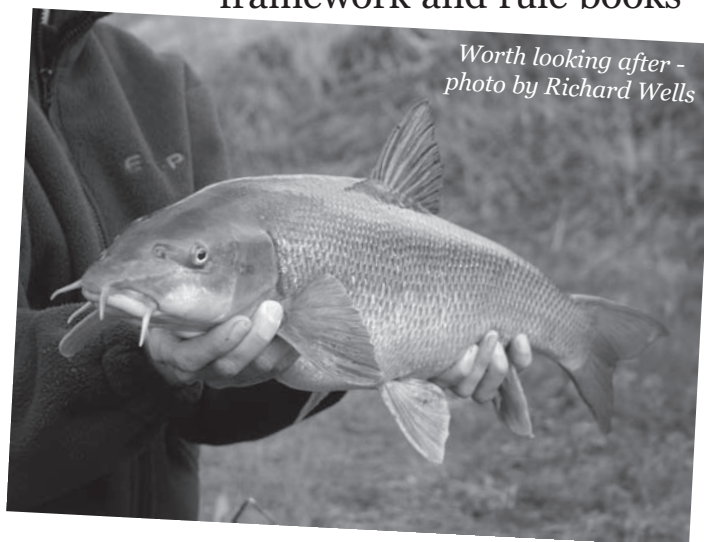
I have now received from Steve Pope and other members some asked-for bullet points that are relevant to the BS in this issue and which will be useful in my task of drafting a letter that can be sent out to angling clubs throughout the country, with its sole intent of ‘offering’ education in barbel welfare and the hand of help in seeking to achieve this goal . . . if it is desired by said club.

I initially intend to write

to those angling clubs that already state in their rule books that keepnets are not to be used to retain barbel, in order for them to be offered the BS handling code and a short concise barbel welfare plan for their membership to have issued to them when they re-new their club books. This welfare plan will contain points covering thoughts about swim selection with regard to safely landing any barbel, the issues of adequate tackle to be used, the thought to leaving the barbel in the water for a few minutes immediately after capture before unhooking, the use of an unhooking mat being a sensible addition to their tackle requirements and also to the considered correct method for returning barbel after capture.

With this, will come the offer to organise a practical day for their members, where a couple of BS members living in that said region will be present to seek to educate those club members who are interested in such an idea and that the above points can be seen in action by them as an aid to better barbel welfare procedures.

If one angler follows our lead, that will be a huge step forward . . . they, as club members, remain behind to possibly convert one more fellow club member further down the line by word of mouth or direct action and so on . . . every small step



*Worth looking after -
photo by Richard Wells*

forward is a step in the right direction.

I also intend to write to those angling clubs that do not yet have, in my considered opinion, sensible barbel welfare guidance within their framework and rule books.

I won’t write to every club at once. I shall select clubs on a one at a time basis. I will write the letter and see what the reaction of their General Secretary is to me.

If I get a positive reply, then I shall seek someone in that area to make contact with the club and move things forward. I shall delegate the action.

So, I write and others will be asked to action the move forward. It’s a simple task. I believe in keeping things simple. Complicated and huge active workloads on one person doesn’t sit well with me. The BS is, I am told, a collection of like minded barbel anglers . . . well, lets see what we can do via our regional sections in making headway into positive barbel welfare.

Every club that already supports a sensible barbel welfare policy will be named

in any correspondence I send out. Hence the reason I will send out on a one at a time basis. Every addition to the better view of barbel welfare will be added as we move down the line.

Just how I am going to choose where to start and where next to proceed I don’t know . . . I think I’ll speak with a few ‘in the know’ barbel anglers and see which clubs they feel I should target initially and then just plod on relentlessly.

I am lucky in that I know this will take a long period of time to bear fruit . . . I only ‘hope’ that the BS membership accept this fact. The Beatles once sang ‘The long and winding road’. I prefer the Pink Floyd’s stance of ‘Another brick in the wall’ for every victory along the way.

Anyone out there who thinks it can be done in months and by mass letter writing had better get in touch with me and enlighten me as to how . . . I am always up for education.

Anyway, good fishing to you all and, as ever, the cry is . . . ‘Rock on RATS’.