





**H**ow many times are committee members of the Barbel Society asked by prospective members; 'What's in it for me?' Well, with the high quality magazines and newsletters, regional meetings and annual conference, as well as the chance to meet anglers with a similar interest, and the opportunity to support the Research and Conservation activities, there are a lot of reasons to join. But wait a moment; I nearly forgot the chance to join one of a number of BS fisheries waters dotted about the country. I must admit that I had not thought of joining any of these venues, but a recent invite to fish on the River Teme at Bransford could not be passed up. In the main, when visiting the Teme, I fish on the waters provided by a Birmingham Anglers

card [BAA] and I've enjoyed plenty of success using that avenue. If there is a fault with it, it is the number of anglers that also go via that same route, making it almost impossible to fish a section on your own and normally you will have several other anglers roving about at the same time as yourself. Was the swim fished the day previous, probably, if you bait it up for later will it be available? Probably not.

I was recently given a kind invitation to fish with the society's Teme bailiff, Ron Lander who could not have been more forthcoming with information. This particular fishery, with currently less than fifty members, gives the angler a great chance of being on the bank with no one else present, especially if you can attend in the week. Ron told me that he had been fishing throughout August and September, only at weekends and had been alone or with just one other angler there

at the same time. Within that time he had taken well over eighty fish with most of them being in the 7lb and 8lb range, mint samples that live up to the name of 'Teme Tigers.' With more than a mile of river available to fish that's lots of space to move in. The next thing I liked about the venue was the ability to drive right up to the riverside; two different car parks are within a few feet of the water. Being in the middle of nowhere they are obviously totally secure as well.

The first task to be done on arrival was to walk the whole length and see just what was available in the way of swims; I was not to be disappointed. Barbel like cover and snags, if this stretch has any fault it is that there is too much of both, though I understand that Pete Reading is in discussions with the EA to arrange sympathetic tree surgery and removal. The river was low and fairly

clear, the day was quite good weather wise considering it was now October and cooler conditions could arrive any day. Although Ron had advised me of his success I had been finding the fishing to be very patchy on most of the venues I had been to, unfortunately this day was no different in the I only had one barbel while Ron made do with a couple of chub. Other than the fact that although it was a bit cooler than when he had been catching, Ron could offer no explanation for the poor results but repeated his invitation to try again. I accepted, adding that poor results are part of fishing.

It was the Saturday when England was to play Australia at rugby when I returned, getting there at midday with the intent of leaving by





7:00pm in order to watch the two teams play, not one for football but I love a good rugby match!

When walking the length the previous trip I had seen a barbel flash and marked the spot for future reference and my plans were set for that swim. The actual spot where I had seen the fish was amongst a load of boulders and it would have been suicide to fish there. I would try a further twenty yards upstream and see if I could bring the fish up with hemp and maggots; they usually do the job. The first task is to bait drop the particles, hemp first then the maggots afterwards. I use this order to avoid the fish coming straight into the swim to get at the maggots should

they be in the immediate vicinity. They might come to the hemp but do not scare off the baited area quite so easily. A dozen droppers of hemp followed by the same of maggots lays the table quite nicely. I can then retire away from the river to tackle up whilst the feed hopefully does its job.

My tackle would comprise of a 12ft Drennan Power Barbel rod of 1.75lb test, 12lb Pro Gold mainline and 15lb Power Braid for the hooklink, yes I know the accepted thing is to have the hooklink at a lower strength the main line but that makes it too fine for my taste. On this trip I would be using halibut pellet for bait combined with a large swimfeeder loaded with

pellet paste made by soaking small mixed pellets in hemp juice. My first cast had only just had time to settle when the rod whipped round in response to a barbel bite and the fight that followed lived up to that Teme Tiger title. Ron came up to help weigh and photograph the fish and he was back again ten minutes later to do the second. As he had suggested with his own captures these fish were immaculate and with one at 7lb odd and the other at 8lb odd they were well within the usual range to be taken. The next fish was a chub soon followed again by a 7lb class barbel; time to give the swim a rest. Of the biggest faults that can be made is to keep fishing when it looks like there are

a number of fish present to be caught, this certainly applies to both barbel and chub fishing, give the swim a rest and it will pay dividends later.

I walked down to Ron's swim and watched him play a chub to the net; not a big fish, but pleasing nevertheless. Then continuing along the bank I stood for fifteen minutes or more watching chub and barbel swim about near a far bank snag, safe from our attempts by the nature of the snag compared to our bank. It can be useful to use these chances to observe the reaction of fish to our bait. Slowly trickle samples into the swim and see what the fish do; will they spook or do they take the samples as offered? Do this enough times and a picture can sometimes emerge that will catch you more fish at a later date; at the very least it will give you a better

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*Ron's 12lb 2oz  
from an Autumn  
tinted Teme*



understanding of your quarry.

I returned to my swim and before the 6:30pm deadline had taken a further two barbel of similar size but added a chub that went over the magic 5lb mark. The Teme cannot match the southern rivers for chub sizes but Ron assures me that Bransford produces 6lb plus chub and not that infrequently. Ron had also caught chub and barbel but nothing to beat the 12lb 2oz personal best taken just a few weeks previously, with bigger fish known to be present it is only a matter of time before he improves on that beauty with one of the real monsters.

This is my story of a couple of days on the Bransford stretch, I'm sure others could write something similar for each of the other waters within the Societies holdings. Look at those available and consider the advantage of each compared with your local fisheries and travel arrangements; it can pay big rewards.

*There's 5lb plus chub as well*



*Railway pool  
Teme barbel*

