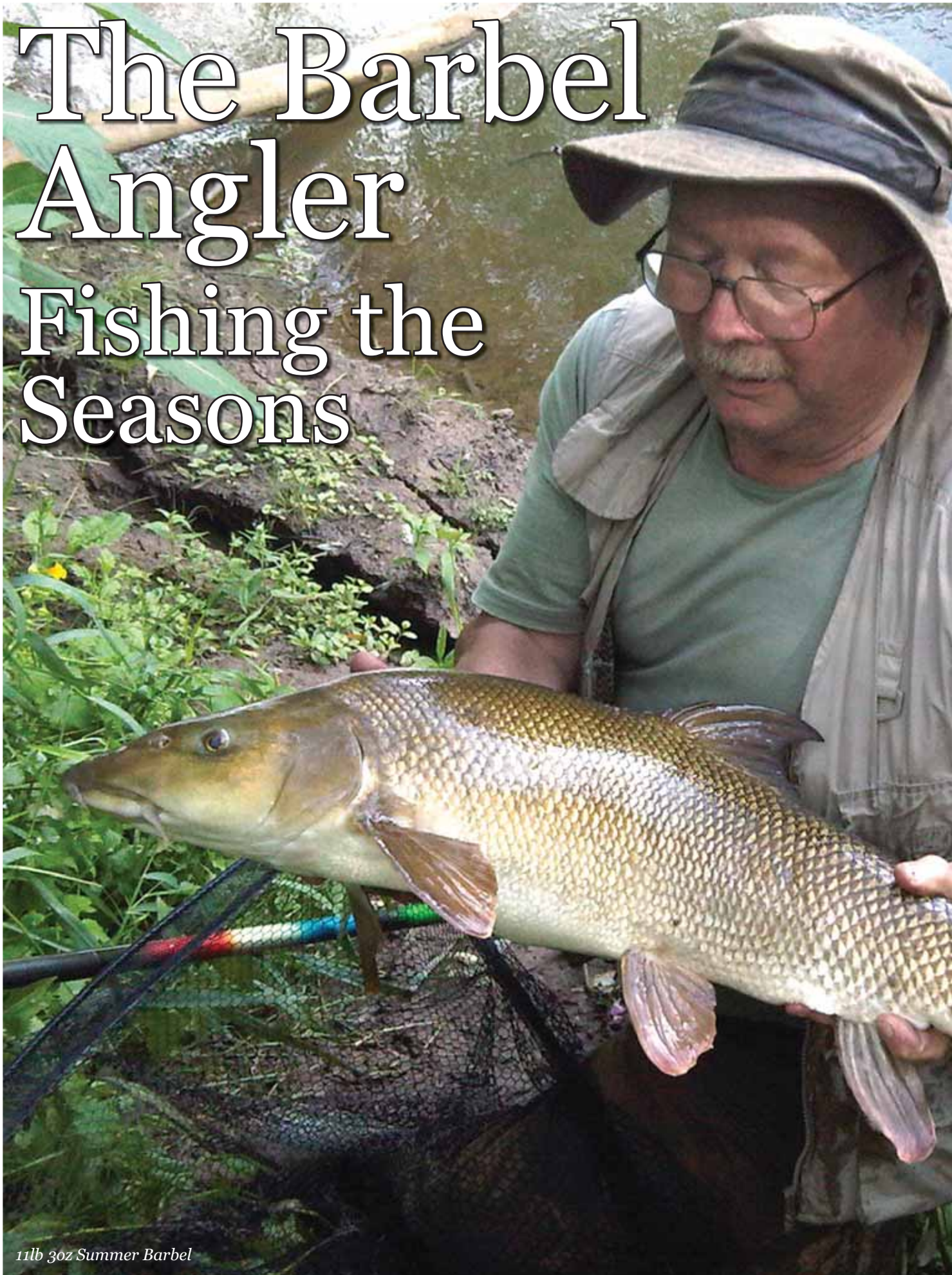


The Barbel Angler

Fishing the Seasons



11lb 3oz Summer Barbel



BILL ENLUND

BILL ENLUND WAS BORN 1945 AND IS NOW RETIRED FROM PROJECT SHIPPING.

BILL CAUGHT HIS FIRST BARBEL IN THE THAMES IN THE LATE 1950S AND STARTED TO FISH MORE SERIOUSLY FOR BARBEL IN THE EARLY 1970S WITH JOHN FOUN, MAKING REGULAR VISITS TO THE HAMPSHIRE AVON.

HE WAITED A LONGTIME FOR HIS FIRST DOUBLE BUT CAUGHT HUNDREDS OF BARBEL ON THE WAY THERE. ALTHOUGH DOUBLES ARE VERY WELCOME, JUST CATCHING BARBEL IS HIS FIRST PLEASURE.

BILL FISHES FOR MOST SPECIES DURING MOST SEASONS, BUT BARBELLING CREATES THE MOST EXCITEMENT.

HIS FAVOURITE RIVER IS THE TEME.

BILL HAS CONTRIBUTED TO BARBEL FISHER BEFORE, SEE BF 11 SPRING 2001, FOR HIS ARTICLE DEDICATED TO HIS OLD FRIEND FROM SCHOOL DAYS, GORDON SCOTT.

Summer

Ever aware of his surroundings the angler sits beneath the sun beside the river, alert, not missing a dimple on the surface or a zephyr expending its short life meandering across the river. The bees buzz, the birds sing above his head and all around him the world goes about its business but our angler sits quiet, merged with his surroundings, at one with his environment, just waiting to spring into action. A kingfisher peeps as it weaves along the far shore and alights on its favourite perch; our angler has noted all and wishes his fellow fisher well in his endeavours.

This day, is almost a life time for the butterfly investigating the riverside balsam, a brief interlude in the anglers life and the end of life for the mayfly nailed by the chub as it alights on the water after its dance in the sun. The summer lulls the body into a mesmerising trance, like a drug it permeates the senses, problems drain away, a state of almost euphoric bliss arrives. The angler lifts his rod and retrieves the bait, checks its veracity before casting to a fresh spot. Peace begins to settle again, was that a twitch on the rod? The rod answers by bending wildly round in its rest, a moorhen with a squawk takes flight from the nearside vegetation. The fight is on, the barbel runs for cover intent in its purpose, resolute in strength; any weakness in the angler's tackle will be exposed. The battle is ferocious, not for nothing are these fish referred to as "Teme Tigers", the sinews in the arm ache but the angler this time is successful and a gleaming fish of gold is landed. The angler admires his prize, it is well equipped to survive this occasionally torrent of a river, with its streamlined shape, with a smile he gently returns the fish to its river. This is fishing at its most beautiful, the angler recasts his bait and the surroundings slowly return to normality, even the moorhen nods back across the river to the undergrowth he was disturbed from.

Winter

The trees are damp with the sweat of a winters' night as the angler trudges along the towpath which is strewn with the now disposed of remnants of the summer bounty. The ubiquitous smell of decomposing leaves so encapsulates the winter outdoors, the unrelenting greyness of the sky depresses the spirits. A cyclist comes by in the gloom and a grunt of a "good morning" is mumbled from under the angler's hat. He eventually arrives at his chosen location; the river is turgid and full of the detritus of summer and

the occasional drink cans, which all swirl by. The angler puts his seat up and sits and surveys his surroundings, the Thames is quiet in contrast to the hurly burly of the summer, a lone robin sings in the bushes somewhere. He sets his tackle up and puts some free offerings out a little way upstream of his position with the help of a dropper, the rods are cast upstream of him so as to avoid the leaves sliding down the line and

covering the baits. The rods are placed in their rests with the tips close into the bank and barely out of the water to reduce rubbish hitting the line.

The Angler slumps into his seat, pulls his hat down and wraps his coat around himself to keep out the chill of the day, he now is alone with his thoughts, and during the hours that follow he contemplates many things. Eventually the angler opens the well

thumbed pages of his memory under the winter of 1975/6, remembering those bitterly cold days fishing for roach from a punt, on this very same stretch of river with Gordon Scott and occasionally John Found, when the angler had his first 2lb+ roach. His mood now very much reflects the gloom of this winters' day at the thought of one of his then companions has fell by the wayside of life.

The passer-by may think he is asleep but he is fully aware, seeing the heron fly lazily by and so gently land by the side of the river on the far side then stalking along until a suitable spot is found to take up his sentinel duties. The day, like the coffee, slowly runs out, the heron on the far side is long gone after no more success than the angler; the gloom

of the day merges into the darkness of the night. We have now entered the period that the Barbel anglers call the "magic hour" and true to form, this day, success is suddenly forthcoming a couple of twitches on the rod are suddenly turned into the un-mistakable bend of a fish. A dour contest is fought with the angler having his perseverance rewarded on this winters' day.

The walk back along the towpath will not seem quite so long today and the twinkling, beckoning lights of the riverside pub look enticing. The pub doors open before him and after the quiet of the riverbank his ears are suddenly assaulted by the hubbub of the bar, the cheery fire and welcoming pint soon put a glow in his cheeks, to match his slight smile of contentment.

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10lb 12oz
Winter Barbel