

# Double Dutch

## Hard hat on and flak jacket secure here we go!

**I have for a long time thought our close season rules are outdated and long overdue a complete overhaul, why do I and many like minded anglers who want to fish our rivers have to stay away whilst the rivers are in prime condition and the Otters, cormorants and Eastern Europeans carry on regardless.**

So just what does a dedicated river angler do to pacify the urge to sit by the river and catch fish, it's easy really, find some fishing in a country without the antiquated close season

rules. So when a few years ago the invitation came for some guided barbel fishing in Europe I couldn't wait to wet a line and catch a barbel or two.

It was early May when I boarded the Stenaline ferry at Harwich for the overnight crossing to The Hook of Holland, I have been told by many people who travel to and from Europe its far cheaper to use The Chunnel or Dover-Calais route, well yes the crossing may be cheaper but the 4 hours or so driving either side take up all the money saved in extras fuel costs. In all honesty it's less miles to drive from my home in Norwich to the

German Dutch border than it is for me to drive to the Middle Severn.

I like the overnight crossing, it's always great after a decent nights sleep to start a fresh day and a fresh adventure, remembering to drive on the wrong side of the road (the right) it's only a few miles from the ferry terminal and you are onto the very impressive Dutch motorway network and a steady drive of less than 2 hours takes you to the main area that I have fished around Nijmegen.

The Dutch are easy going and speak good English, be warned they can appear a bit arrogant at first but it's the way they come across rather than arrogance it's a confidence thing, The Dutch still remember the big part we played in freeing them from the claws of Nazi Germany and the numerous cemeteries and museums are well worth a visit if you are interested in modern history or warfare.

The two main rivers I have fished in Holland are the Waal and Ijssel, The



## Double Dutch By Ade Kiddell

Waal is essentially The Rhine but as the river crosses the border it changes its name to The Waal, the IJssel is a river which is linked to The Waal via a man made shipping canal and unusually the flow is from the bigger river (Waal) to the lesser river (IJssel).

The Waal is in places over 400 metres wide and can be 8 metres or more in depth with a substantial flow, because of this heavy flow and the subsequent risk of erosion and flooding much of the river has breakwaters that project from the bank out into the river at right angles from the bank, made of heavy rocks they control the flow therefore reduce erosion in high risk areas. In some cases these Kribs as the Dutch call them are 50 or 60 metres long and 5 to 10 metres wide. The heavy flow of the river is broken by the kribs and in turn that creates

back eddies and increased areas of concentrated flow which the Dutch call nearings. As a result of this the increased areas of flow keeps the river bed clean and large gravel beds are created, perfect habitat for barbel to both feed and reproduce, hence a healthy population of barbel with great juvenile retention.

The IJssel I would describe as The Trent on steroids smaller than The Waal but with a strong flow and the kribs are much smaller but their very presence creates the increased flow and perfect barbel habitat. In places where there are no kribs the banks like the Trent are lined with hefty boulders. The boulders from the banks and kribs unfortunately do create some rather awkward snags, some swims are unfishable just too many boulders to make it viable to fish, but

as we all know snags mean barbel so it's a matter of trying to balance lost tackle against potential fish.

It soon became obvious on my first visit that the Dutch anglers although confident and skillful anglers their knowledge of barbel fishing was more by chance than experience, yes they had been catching a few but more by luck than design. By looking at match results and the angling grapevine they had located areas where barbel had been caught, fished them and caught barbel.

The first couple of sessions I fished we caught barbel, not big fish and not many but 3 or 4 barbel in the 4 to 6lb range with the best bait being cheese followed by maggot and an odd fish on pellet, but being such a vast and featureless river makes it hard going. Something I learnt years ago about big

rivers is although they may not have nice overhanging trees and other obvious features all the features on a big river are below the surface, our skill as an angler is to read the river and find the feature. My feelings were that I needed to use some of the skills learnt to locate and catch a few fish, my Dutch host had found us some good areas but I needed to be sure we were fishing the right swims and then the most favorable area of the swim. By using a heavy gripper lead and some braid on the reel a few casts around soon found some nice areas of gravel at the end of most of the kribs, those areas fall into a bit of a pattern with a nice area just off the end of the krib and slightly downstream and another around 30-50 metres downstream of the krib in the main flow as the water runs away from the



krib, a perfect scenario for a two rod attack.

My next thought turned to bait and all the dutch anglers I had spoken to were happy to fish feeder and use that as a delivery to draw fish and hold them in the swim, I knew it wasn't enough and a massive river like the Waal could have a ton of hemp put in a swim without over feeding so a few pints of bait through a feeder wasn't enough. Whilst on the Trent I like to spod, the fact the kribbs create the swim I want to fish meant a spod wasn't needed, simply feeding into the flow would take the bait to the gravel area, a bit of trial and error was required but I was confident it would work.

With just a couple of days left of my first trip I decided to feed very heavy with a mixture of pellets, hemp and mixed corn so before we started fishing I fed a good 3 gallons of the mixture. Fishing started slow but came to life with the best fish of the trip so far around 8lb followed by 7 or 8 others as the session progressed. By using a huge feeder and trickling in loose feed I kept the fish feeding and confidence grew as the session progressed. As I packed in I fed another good helping of my mix including some hemp that had started to ferment a bit never the less in it went.

Last session of that trip was to be a few hours before the 2 hour journey back to catch the evening ferry home, I again fed plenty in fact everything I had left went in, aside from enough to keep the feeder filled for the session. First cast I was rewarded with my first Dutch double and the feeling of satisfaction that my method had worked was completed as whilst weighing and photographing that fish the other rod leapt into life. A hectic couple of hours followed with a total of 10 barbel including another

double and a fish a couple of ounces short of that magic figure. Pellet accounted for half of the fish and the others came to the Dutch favourite, cheese.

I returned the favour my Dutch host had offered and he and his family spent ten days or so fishing the Severn with me and my family, giving them a taste of English life and more importantly English barbel.

My preparations for the next trip were much easier; the first trip had given me a good grounding I knew what tackle and bait I needed. Tackle was easy, the same setup I use on the Trent, Korum Neoteric rods and Freespin reels loaded with 15lb mainline free running rigs and selection of feeders up to 12 ounce that Mr FFF Fisky had custom made for me. I don't bother with a chair but a tripod is a must and the Korum freestanding 2 rod tripod is perfect, Jammed in the rocks, it's solid and completely adjustable, yet not too heavy to carry to your peg. Bait wise I needed plenty and my sponsor Sonubaits couldn't have been more helpful, instead of taking bait with me I was able to go direct to their warehouse in Holland and pick up what I needed.

During the next trip I ventured further afield and fished different area on both the Waal and Ijssel, catching plenty of barbel as well as some huge bream and winde (ide). We were dogged by bad weather, the problem being that the kribbs and river side rocks are treacherous when wet and my host was not keen to fish when it was raining, for me if I didn't fish in England when it rained then 50% or more of my fishing activities would be curtailed.

With only a couple of days of my second trip left I was keen to fish an area I had been baiting heavy all week, my Dutch host wasn't



so keen, it had been raining and the rocks were slippery to say the least, but I told him I was going whatever, he decided to join me but not fish.

I didn't even manage to cast the second rod when I hooked and landed a decent fish and wasn't surprised when immediately after casting a screamer of a take signaled another hooked fish which played hard and deep and was obviously a good fish, as it came to the surface for the first time I knew it was bigger than anything I had landed in Holland before. Worryingly at this point one of the huge ships that travel the Waal passed close by and the back wash from the multi thousand tonne ship swept the barbel away and back out into the main-flow and it was a good five or so knee knocking minutes before I caught site of the huge fish again.

Netted at the third attempt I and my Dutch host knew it was something special and once rested and unhooked it was placed on the measuring board and declared by my host to be a new Dutch record, the Dutch measure the length of fish not the weight this was 87cm beating the previous record of 83cm, pictures taken the fish was safely returned to fight another day.

News soon got around that I had broken the record and a stream of texts and e mails came my way, from

the Dutch barbel enthusiasts many whom I now am very close friends with.

One of the first I heard from was the previous record holder Rinko Oostervneen, his congratulations were the start of a great friendship, I have since fished with him in Holland and Germany and this year he will be in England to catch his first English barbel.

So the second trip ended very successfully and as my knowledge has grown so has my confidence and consequently my catches, I now fish in Holland and Germany at least 3 times a year and this year will also visit France and Belgium with a group of Dutch barbel anglers, watch this space to see how the trip goes.

**Ade has been able to persuade Sonu Baits to offer a barbel bait pack prize worth £50 to the individual who sends to me on a postcard, or on the back of a sealed down envelope, the weight of Ade's Dutch record fish pictured at the front of this article. The first correct answer received by me will get the prize delivered direct to their home by Sonu Baits, so don't forget your address please.**