

THE BARBEL SOCIETY HAS THIS YEAR DECIDED TO GET INVOLVED WITH EUROPE TO CREATE A NEW PLATFORM OF EXCHANGES TO SHARE WHAT WE KNOW AND ALSO LEARN FROM ABROAD.

EUROPE

Quite a neophyte exercise at the moment, I have been invited to become the new BS European coordinator to pull some strings and set up a team of committed European barbel anglers for starter.

So far, the team consists of Cees Van Dongen for Holland, Dr Wolfgang Stoltenberg for Germany, Jean-Noel Schmitz for Belgium and William Vacher (ABDF president) for France. And the list is still growing as we speak.

Our goal so far has been



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to get the Barbel Society directly involved to attend some European events in the near future, thus creating some new contacts and make us aware of what is going on in Europe. The barbel angling there is still

a “niche” sport often alienated by other queries. But the minds are changing and the barbel fever is catching up slowly but surely. It goes without saying that Europe is

Holland's Cees Van Dongen



Christophe Pelhate: The new Barbel Society European Coordinator



also looking at us with a lot of interest and what we have achieved so far as an organisation, our highs and our lows.

We all have problems of pollution, declining stocks, predatory issues and parasites/diseases. In France, we also have the problem of rising temperatures on big rivers equipped with nuclear stations, the use of nets by so called “professional fishermen”, the near extinction of the “Barbus Meridionalis” in the south which has now been classified as a “red” priority by the French authorities. In Germany, a political decision in the 80's to make “catch



Cees with a superb barbel

and release” a punishable offence. Fishing in Germany goes along the same lines as hunting... You catch, you kill... to keep the stress to a minimum (that's the theory). This has brought the sport to its knees with many anglers giving up their favourite pastime. Then we have the questions of “close seasons” and “night fishing rights” which affect most of us. It would be interesting to compare each other's data on the last two subjects to open a true discussion based on facts.

As previously mentioned we will be attending three different events this year and get the ball rolling before organising further gatherings.

Barbeeldag: Sunday 23d September 2017.

The first two editions of the Barbeeldag in 2015 and 2016 were essentially private initiatives with the aim to provide a meet & greet platform for the ever increasing number of barbel enthusiasts in the Benelux. Nowhere in our wildest dreams had we expected

such a massive turn-up: around 350 visitors in the first year without proper marketing etc. last year's edition, which was more professionally organised with the help of Sportvisserij Oost Nederland (one of the 6 regional federations within the Dutch Angling Association, representing around 1.2 million anglers around the country) and the active support of the Barbel Society.

Proper marketing and communication caused a sharp increase of the number of visitors to close on 900. Feedback from the participants and visitors gave us a good insight in strengths and weaknesses of the events organised so far. First and foremost: unanimously people praised the initiative around barbel and barbel angling as something that was missing in the portfolio of today's events.

Also the concept of simultaneous demonstration angling on the bank by specialists, explaining techniques and tactics, with presentations and

Europe Here We Go By Christophe Pelhate

showcasing materials and baits has been highly successful. "Seeing people actually do what you hear about in the tackle shop and what you can find on Facebook and YouTube is so much more rewarding", was an often heard comment.

A good enough reason to think through the concept and organisational aspects of a third event. The decision to take an annual "Barbeeldag" eventually was taken jointly by the two most geographically involved Federations. From now on this event will be part of their mutual event calendars including the necessary budgets. Given the development of the continental branch of the Barbel Society it was no more than logical that we would step in as co-organisers where our added value is clear: we have the

contacts and knowledge around barbel angling and handling. Therefore The BS is proudly present on the flyer for good reason and would have a proper stand on the venue.

By and large the concept will remain the same. A youth activity will be added: experienced anglers explaining and instructing interested young anglers the way to approach river angling. Also demonstrations with techniques not so often practised by the mostly big river angling barbel scene in NL like centrepin trotting and fly fishing for barbel will be added to the programme. Our marketing and communications efforts will be more intense and international, covering NL, B, D, F and GB.

Needless to say that this event on possibly the best barbel river in

**Jean Noel Schmitz
of Belgium**



the Netherlands offers a fantastic opportunity to BS members from GB to cross the Channel for a short break, visiting the event (no entry fees) and having a go at the Ijssel with the help of their Dutch mates who are more than willing to show folks around!

The ABDF (Association des barbillons De France) and BS family social:

Based in the Loire Valley in a large camp site surrounded by 25 km of night river fishing on public domain, this event will be opened for a week during next Easter

William Vacher (ABDF president) for France



holidays starting from **Wednesday 4th April 2018 until Tuesday 10th April 2018**. We intend to make it a regular family friendly gathering with a chance for the young ones to perfect their angling and language skills with their parents and other barbel anglers. As holiday licences run for a week we thought we would make the most of it. We are aiming to have a kid's match on the river Louet adjacent to the extensive "Camping des Plages de Rochefort" on Saturday 7th with trophy presentations in the evening and barbel talks. This will also involve the fishing school from the local AAPPMA "l'Ablette Angevine" to give it more of an international "twist"... (A barbel match from Monday 9th at 14.00 hours to the next day until 10.00 hours will also be organised on the Sarthe River for the ABDF cup for anyone interested).

website to discover some great barbel rivers in France.

Barbel Society Bochum Germany: Saturday 5th of May 2018.

It was Wolfgang Stoltenberg, acting point person for Germany in the newly created "continental" chapter of the Barbel Society, who

with the aim to swap stories, discuss tactics and techniques, drink a few beers and having a good time altogether.

And what a nice event it was! Around 25 dedicated anglers from virtually every corner of Germany gathered (some having to travel more than 600km) on March 18th

At the end we debated the next steps, overriding sentiment was to stick to the chosen concept for the time being and organise a similar event next year, possibly in another part of Germany to do justice to the enormous potential for barbel angling in this big country.

All in all, solid



"Around 25 dedicated anglers from virtually every corner of Germany gathered (some having to travel more than 600km)"

People will have to make their own arrangements to book at the original "base camp site" which also has caravans, huts and chalets. Canoeing and horse riding are also available. Facilities also includes SPA, bar and restaurant. Pets and BBQs allowed. More details to be communicated soon although the dates are set in concrete. People are welcome to stay for a week or a few days as they wish. The ABDF created by William Vacher over 2 years ago is templating what the BS has achieved in the UK with many R&C programs on the cards and a user friendly

took the initiative to organize a small scale – invitation only – event for barbel (and chub) anglers from Germany.

This may seem odd, why not a public event at the first go? However, bringing together people who advocate and practice "Catch & Release" and doing so against the backdrop of the current legal framework in Germany (C&R is considered illegal!) and openly advertise that could cause massive problems.

Therefore a "small is beautiful" approach to test the water, bringing like-minded anglers together

in Hattingen situated on the bank of the lovely river Ruhr. Amongst those people were the editors of renowned national angling magazines like "Fisch und Fang" and "Am Haken".

Tackle and other relevant materials for all kinds of barbel angling across the small and big rivers in Germany were on display and explained to the group by their respective owners. Several well received presentations were on the roll, followed by animated Q&A and discussion. Also the opportunity to straightforwardly swap e-mails and such like data to be in future contact for a joint session on the bank somewhere was a great added value.

preparation, enthusiastic and motivated attendants, a nice ambiance and a relaxed atmosphere made this event an absolute success! All credit to Wolfgang to take the initiative and for his splendid role as chairman during the day.

Finally, it goes without saying that a European event here in the UK is definitely cooking as we speak although no dates or venues have yet been decided. We should know more very soon and we will communicate the details in due course. I hope this little European program will make you reflect on the potentials that it offers to us all as a bigger group for the sake of barbel welfare here and there.