

Local rod Toby Nayar is at present at university studying in his first year and unfortunately has had very little time over the past few months to take part in his life long passion of fishing. A chance return home though saw him up early on Sunday morning at first light with the River Nene above Peterborough his chosen venue. Although Toby is only 19 years old he has already become an accomplished piker, he said" I used one rod at the start of the session as a marker rod to get the general depths of the river and the shape of the river bed. Following this I was able to float a small dead bait using finned floats that caught the wind to drift the baits along the river at about six inches under depth. I quickly realised, due to the conditions that moving to the pike was going to be the answer, as they obviously had no intention of finding my baits!"

"I knew from the cold weather and recent drop in temperature that floating the bait over the pikes nose was the only way to at least attempt to catch a fish so my new tactics were to move one rod in front of the other, working upstream, almost in an overlapping sequence. Casting about 50 yards apart from each other and letting them drift down the river. Once the upstream rod had caught up with the other, I would move the downstream rod a further 50 yards"

That might sound a bit complicated but in practice is very simple and is very efficient at covering a lot of water very quickly and easily! This tactic soon produced a fish of about 6lb. As the light started to fade the float of the downstream rod began to dip slowly away. The pike weighed in at 19lb 6lb and took a whole smelt drifted along the centre of the river. Just as dark fell the fish was landed and unhooking was made easy with barbless hooks and long handle forceps. He added "My tactics allowed me to be mobile which I truly believe is the reason I caught this beautiful fish" Perhaps not the biggest pike to come from the river above Peterborough but certainly one of the best this season, well worthy of my Catch of the Week award.

If you are looking for a really big pike and I mean really big then get over to Rutland Water before the pike fishing season draws to an end pretty soon now. It's not cheap to have a days fishing on the big trout fishery but the catch of a lifetime is always on the cards. The pike in both Rutland and Grafham have grown fat on a rich diet of trout and the thousands of coarse fish that reside in these massive stillwaters and are not that easy to tempt off massive lures but some are taken. Rutland Water's biggest pike for a very long time came out recently with a superb specimen that sent the scales around to 33lb 4oz! This fantastic fish, which measured at 114cm long, was

caught by Polish angler Artur Brzozowski. Artur was fishing for Zander at the time with a 15cm shad over deep water, but instead hooked into the huge pike which took him close to 20 minutes to land.

We seem to have been spared the bitterly cold winter and high water levels some parts of the country not far from us have had to endure over the past week. As a result we have seen some very good weights taken on fenland drains over the past month at a time when anglers are normally thinking of putting their fishing tackle away for a winter break.

Last weekend the big East Midland Winter League practice was no exception either, unfortunately all the leading weights came from the tiny Factory Bank Drain at Ramsey but there were also some very consistent sport from the other two venues being used Raveley Drain and the Old Nene at Benwick.

On current form the top weights should have come from the top end of Factory Bank but winner from the unfancied pegs further down the drain was Rob Hewison. The Sensas Mark One stalwart put in a fine display of small fish fishing on the whip and pole. Rob fished down the middle of the drain for most of the day as amazingly water levels were as low as many have seen for some time, feeding a little groundbait with squatt in it and fishing pinkie on the hook to record 18lb 1oz. Not too far away from the winner was runner up Andrew Kilby he concentrated on the whip line all day and caught right from the off, a lean spell towards the end proved to be costly though as he finished just short on 14lb 14 ½ oz. Sam Merry took third place, once again from the Factory Bank section with 14lb 1oz. Top rod away from the hot section was March angler and former World Champion Bob Nudd who put a net of small fish to the scales taken from Benwick for 13lb 8oz.

This weekend's last match of the winter league campaign looks as if its going to be a real nail biter, Stanjay Gold from Huntingdon are going to go through to the semi finals as champions but the runner up spot will see three teams battling it out for that single spot in a semi final. Its just too close to call, Sensas Mark One had a disastrous start to this years campaign but have clawed their way back into contention, while Browning Hotrods and Maver Bait Tech both have had a big slip up in previous rounds.

The Tydd Gote Wednesday matches have been very popular of late and it's no wonder looking at the results of catches being taken from the North Level drain right now. The latest match was held at Clough with John Taylor putting a fine net of small fish to the scales taken on a pole and pinkie approach for 16lb 14oz. Runner up was Sammy McSpadden, he caught on the pole and whip with pinkie for 9lb 11oz followed by Emneth rod Mick Asker with 9lb 8oz.

The Wednesday Tydd Gote matches take place on the North Level Drain system, Dave Parlett is the man to contact with all the details of forthcoming fixtures and draw times and you can contact him on 01945 463913.

In the weekends Tydd Gote Angling Trust Pike Championship Qualifier match winner Chris Longsdale proved to be head and shoulders above the field netting 12 fish for a total of 68lb 2oz from the North level Drain. Runner up with five fish was Martin Smith weighing in at 18lb 4oz followed by Robert Hurst on 16lb 8oz.

You know that winter is not too far away when even the lakes on the Decoy complex are becoming clear and difficult to fish.

Thankfully though there are still fish to be caught, but the golden rule it would seem right now is to keep in tune with the baits being used. The majority of anglers are now catching on red maggot, although those fishing the pellet have also had some success.

In the Decoy Over 55's match last Friday it was Stan Dow leading the way with 63lb 7oz taken from peg 3 on the Oak Pool. Ramsey rod Keith Rayment came in second fishing a small maggot feeder finishing on 31lb 3oz followed by Shaun Best with 23lb 3oz.

JVAC were on two of the strip lakes on Sunday, using both the Cedar and Elm Pools. Roger Gowler comfortably topped the Cedar Pool with a fine 90lb 2oz net. Drawn on peg 4 he started at 11m on pellet but moved further out with maggot and enjoyed a good last two hours, adding four good-sized barbel, to an otherwise carp net, feeding regularly with pinkies. Runner up was Kevin Wilmot again catching well on red maggot, mainly F1s plus half a dozen carp between 3lb and 6lb. The lake win for Roger saw him taking out Kevin Wilmot in the clubs winter Knockout event.

On Elm, Kevin Peacock continued his excellent season, he won with 81lb 15oz on a bomb and hair rigged approach from peg 9 which saw him well out in front. Runner up from peg 12 was Gus Gausden, he fished the pole close in with pellet, followed by Mike Mitchell on 53lb 12oz.

John Taylor was way ahead of the chasing pack in the latest Whittlesey AA Saturday match fished on the Old Nene at Benwick. He caught steadily throughout the match using the pole and whip with pinkie over groundbait and catching 188 fish, mostly roach for a weight of 7lb 4oz.

In second place on the end peg was Chris Bishop who had 5lb 15oz catching roach on pinkie and also several decent perch on the worm. Andy Bull came in third fishing a pole with pinkie approach catching decent sized roach from the far side with a weight of 5lb 15oz.

Sunday's Ramsey & District Angling Society Winter League on Factory Bank at the town end once again saw Paul Kilby prove to be much too good for the field. Fishing the whip and pole with pinkie Paul weighed in with 12lb 4 ½ oz to take the pools on the day and the golden peg jackpot. Nick Page was runner up he put 10lb 9oz to the scales followed by Mick Arling on 9lb 3oz. It's a busy weekend coming up for the Ramsey club as on Saturday it's the Junior Christmas Match on Factory Bank, draw 10.30am, fish 11-3pm followed on Sunday with the Christmas Open match at Ramsey St Marys, draw 8.15am, fish 10-3pm

Silver fish weights have been dominating catches at the Haddon Lodge fishery of late but on Sunday a positive approach by match winner George Bates saw him put a fine mixed bag of carp and silvers to the scales for 42lb 1oz. There was a good array of prizes on offer for this match as it was the clubs Fur and Feather event, so not only did George pick up the winners purse but also Christmas treats. The consistent George Scally took the runner up spot with 28lb 10oz followed by Ray Gregory on 12lb 12oz.