

The River Ivel, Broom

by Neil Bygrave

Hertfordshire based Neil Bygrave has kindly written to give us an insight into what we might expect when the group visit The River Ivel at Broom on February the 27th 2010.

A brief discussion with Steve Richards early in 2009 identified the fact that he was looking to secure the opportunity of a fish-in on the stretch of the River Ivel under the control of Shefford & District Angling Society.

Given that I have fished this river consistently over the last 20 or so years, I found myself offering to write an introductory passage about the fishing that is offered by this quiet, meandering river which winds its way through the Bedfordshire countryside.



Without question, this stretch of the Ivel is one of my favourite stretches of water, especially during the winter months. With the shorter days and falling temperatures, swims where the prolific summer weed growth renders the venue almost un-fishable are now screaming perch.



Neil Bygrave with some winter River Ivel perch

Fish from this venue regularly take the Club's Specimen Perch Award and it is noticeable how the weights have improved year on year.

During the 2008/09 season, fish of 4lb and 4lb 2oz were taken, the latter of which secured the award and was caught by the former fisheries officer Nigel Gilbert. However, a fish taken from the opposite bank featured in the 6th of January 2009 *Angler's Mail* reputedly weighing colossal 5lb 6oz!



08/03/09 - Nigel Gilbert with a River Ivel perch of 4lb 2oz

The IPA Teams of 6 event was fished on this stretch of the river during November 2009 and saw the winning weight of 12lb 3oz recorded - made up of two chub and two good perch. Second place was secured with two perch for a total weight of 4lb 15oz with a couple of other 2lb plus fish being taken during the match.

The club's website www.shefforddaa.org.uk has a page devoted to recent captures entitled "Weekly News from The Bank" and recent reports in November and December 2009 detail reports of another 4lb 2oz perch and also one of 4lb 5oz fish.

Whilst my personal record from this stretch stands at just below the "3", I know it's just a matter of time before I am guiding my dream fish to the waiting landing net.

Please remember that we will be sharing the venue with Shefford members on the day of the fish-in and given the time of year, it is likely that there will be a number of anglers on the water looking to make their acquaintance with one of the venues residents. Whilst the 'favoured' swims may well be occupied, perch come out all the way along the stretch so don't be disheartened.



If you are looking to livebait - please ensure a wire trace is used, as there are many pike along this stretch, mainly jacks although one or two bigger fish are present. The club allows a maximum of 10 livebaits to be used by an angler in a day, and all must be caught from the venue on the day. At the end of the session, any unused 'baits' must be returned to the water. The club has a further ruling that states, "*fish livebaits must only be retained in a standard keepnet conforming to EA bylaws.*" It goes without saying that all rules should be adhered to.

The character of the river has undoubtedly changed over the years, with the bags of big roach being replaced with large perch and chub. Not surprisingly, this seems to have coincided with the influx of the dreaded crayfish, which can prove problematic on occasions when trying to present any ledgered bait.

There is a uniform depth along the stretch we will have access to of between 4' - 5', though there are a couple of deeper holes which often produce the goods. Any cover or area of slack water that can be located is also worth a cast or two.

As far as successful methods go, I have found the best approach to be ledgered lobworms fished tight to either the far bank or nearside cover. If the crayfish are making a nuisance of themselves, then a little rig foam to keep the hook bait out of reach is useful. Float fishing with either worm or red maggot down the inside line also produces good fish. If all else fails, then a large *Ondex*, fished on a trace, with a slow retrieve may result in a fish or two coming to the net.



There are some lovely haunts along this stretch of the river and hopefully the pictures, which accompany this introduction, are enough to encourage you to put your name down. As with all venues though, it can fish one day and turn off the next. Let's hope we get a day when the perch are in a feeding frenzy and we can all discover the treasures this stretch of the Ivel has to offer.

Directions can be obtained from either myself or Steve Richards as detailed in his 'corner'.

Neil Bygrave