

Pike Anglers Club of Great Britain



How must it feel to catch a 44lb pike? By Mike Lawrence

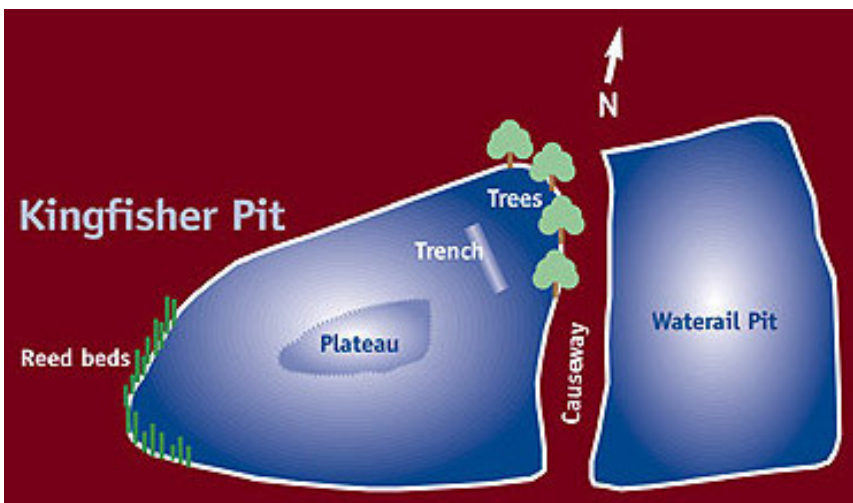
In late 1998 'Anglers Mail' wrote about a trout lake that was opening for a limited pike trial. The water, called Barnes Fishery had produced a new English record of 45lb 12oz the previous winter. I applied and was accepted along with eldest son Andrew. The gravel pit called 'Kingfisher' is roughly triangular in shape, has open well-mown grassy banks. One reedy bay in the west corner, gin-clear and VERY weedy. There was a line of partly submerged trees in the North-east corner and a narrow causeway separating it from another pit called 'water rail'.

The first visit in 1999 was sea-deads only, 5 other anglers were there, wind blowing from the South, we tried a variety of methods, mainly drifting and wobbling. The drifted baits kept snagging on a plateau in the centre which was festooned with Canadian pond weed. Only when the floats were shallowed off to about 3 foot deep could we clear this feature. A number of large trout and a small jack were caught.

The second visit allowed the use of supplied trout live-baits, again the same result, except when Andrews float-fished trout reached the deeper water, past the plateau in front of the sunken trees where it disappeared. He tightened down expecting a jack and the rod was nearly pulled from his hands. The fish kited down the pit with Andrew's rod under full compression. for a good 100 yards it went without Andrew being able to gain any line, then all went solid! It had managed to transfer the hooks into the prolific weed growth around the back of the plateau. "That must have been some pike".



It was another year before it opened for fishing again, during the wait I was constantly thinking of areas and different techniques to try. The week before was very cold and ice had formed on the water, by the Saturday it had started to thaw and when I arrived at the fishery before dawn on Sunday the 30th of January 2000 it was blowing a gale from the South-west and very mild. Andrew had started at university, so my friend Bill Rolfe accompanied me. I was determined to fish the area around the submerged trees where the fish had been hooked the previous year, the area to the left of the trees was already taken so we had to settle for the right-hand side.



Casting was going to be very difficult because of the strength of the wind funneling down the trees and directly at us. I plumbed the depths and found a trench 12 foot deep and a few yards wide approximately 40 yards out. Running left to right and opening out towards the corner. A paternostered trout live-bait was positioned on the first shelf. It was light by this time and a shout came across that one of the anglers was into a good twenty at the reedy bay end opposite to us. Then a high twenty was caught on

the South bank, another fish of 24lb was banked on the side opposite to us, Bill went over to get a photo.

Still, I could not reach the trench with a live-bait and the fish were feeding. Looking at my watch it was 9 am. a rummage in the dead-bait bag produced a very large herring which was made neutrally buoyant, two 3 x Swan shots were pinched on the long up-trace to pin it down. I duly cast it to the trench and the indicator tightened before I could switch on the alarm. The line twitched and pulled out of the clip. I picked the rod out the rests and line was running out. Tightening down I pulled into the fish, the rod arched over

to it's three and a half test-curve and stayed there! After a few moments thinking it was snagged I pulled harder, a thump on the rod told me that was not the case. Slowly, I gained line, then she was off to the left, trying to reach the submerged trees. Heavy side-strain made the rod bend to the butt and catapulted the fish in front of us. Seeing it in the waves my jaw dropped, she was HUGE and looked a full foot-thick across her back, with a massive head and two evil eyes looking at us. Bill netted her first time and stood in the water with her while I set up the unhooking and photographic gear.

When lifted onto the unhooking mat the immense size almost took your breath away, over four feet long and fin-perfect. My head could have easily fitted into those HUGE jaws which still contained all her teeth. Keith Tailby carried out the weighing and as the sling started to leave the ground the needle of the Reuben Heatons spun round and just kept going, "44.02", shouted Keith.

What a 44lb pike looks like! My God. I had caught a '40. The joy and sheer excitement at that moment is indescribable, I could have jumped up and down with the enormous amount of adrenalin rushing through me. She was released back into 'Kingfisher' to a barrage of video cameras and photographers. It was at this time I felt uneasy with all the attention I was receiving, almost wishing I had not caught her, this soon passed after all the congratulations. I had to sit down and collect my thoughts, my head was buzzing. It was later confirmed as the same fish that had made the record weight. I felt extremely proud to have seen such a magnificent creature on the bank, an experience I will treasure for the rest of my life.



When asked later how I could continue to fish for pike with no goal to aspire to, my only answer could be that catching any size fish is like a drug and I can't wait until my next fix!

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