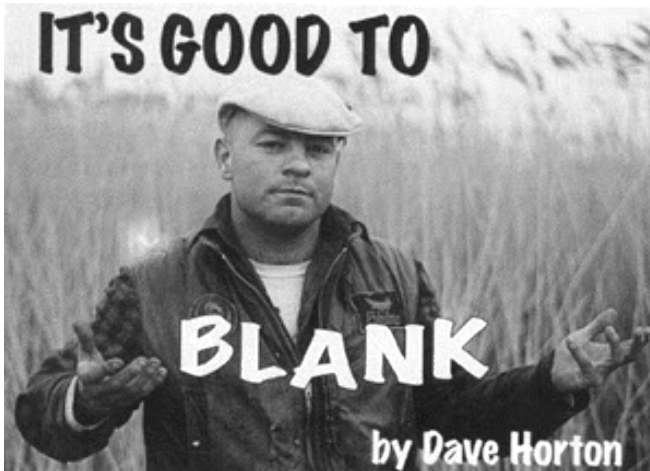


# Pike Anglers Club of Great Britain



## Its Good to Blank by Dave Horton



Few if any of us actually enjoy blanking while piking. True a blank day can be an enjoyable one, especially if the company and or scenery is good, but in general the days that we enjoy most are those during which we actually achieve our goal and put a pike or two on the bank. However, I've put this short piece together to try to assure some of you fellow blankers of the value of a good blank.

"A good blank", I hear you say. "There's no such thing!" But I have to say that I believe that there definitely is. Having said that, I'd agree that there are blank days on which there really does seem to be very little of a positive nature to draw on.

However, even some of the ghastliest blanks that it's been my misfortune to experience are eventually, in some small way, helping me to become the proficient piker that I'm starting to believe I may eventually be. Let me elaborate and try to paint a fuller picture of what it is I'm trying to say.

Take for example the experiences that I have had in the twelve or so years that I have been piking whilst fishing in the rain. Well, these experiences gained during the first eight years of my piking, when under any weather conditions, I would be out there dawn till dusk pursuing esox have led me to the conclusion that on the majority of waters that I fish the pike are not particularly inclined to feed during rainy conditions and on some of them it has actually appeared to be the kiss of death!

These conclusions have not been reached overnight, because as I've already stated, for eight years I still went piking, regardless of the weather conditions. But by closely scrutinising my results over that period it was plain to see that little of note had been caught during rainy weather and on many occasions a complete blank was recorded. By learning from those rainy blanks I have, for the past four seasons, dramatically reduced the number of times I have had a blank on a rainy day. The simple answer as to why this has been the case is that these days I rarely venture out in rainy conditions, in effect I have become a self confessed fair weather angler, and I'm proud of it too!

It is impossible though to avoid fishing in the rain at some point, due to the fact that despite the many millions of pounds that the meteorology department spends on weather prediction in this country it still doesn't prevent them from being crap at it. As a consequence it often rains when they say it won't and conversely it also fails to rain when they say that it will and so on. Of course I still blank in the rain and of course on those occasions when they have predicted rain and it has failed to materialise. I may also be missing the odd fish or two, by not going out in the rain, but it is a risk that I have come to accept.

Another example I can think of, and this is one which I'm sure most of you will already be aware of, is that of extreme and rapidly plummeting temperatures. Few of you reading this would consider this to be the best conditions during which to attempt to catch pike and perhaps you will have reached your conclusions by having blanked during such conditions on a previous occasion.

Another example that I can think of relates to lunar cycles. The relation between lunar cycles and pike captures is a relatively unexplored avenue at present but I have myself found a relationship between these cycles and my own captures, and again it was the blanks as much as the captures that have helped me to discern this relationship. In short I've found that by looking at 6/7 years of my fishing log that a great many of the better fish that I've caught from one particular water, have fallen during the same two weeks of the lunar cycle. By using this information I can now give that particular venue a bit of a miss for two out of every four weeks.

I hope that by taking on board my views on the subject of blanks that you will start to appreciate that they are of some value and that if a blank is used wisely it may well prevent another in the future. To help eliminate my own blanks I keep accurate records of most of my days out piking. Things like air temperature (rising or falling), wind direction and strength, weather conditions and even lunar cycles are all logged not only on days when I catch but also on days when I don't and the information that I gain is used to my advantage so that in future I'll hopefully spend more time catching and less time blanking.



So the next time you blank don't just rue your apparent misfortune but try to salvage something from it for the future. And remember, it's good to blank!

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