

Diary of a River Angler



Well I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and that 2012 is already proving to be a good year.

Sadly for me things have not started so well. My garage was broken into and most of my tackle stolen. It takes years and years of saving and hard work to put a tackle collection together and in just a few minutes it's gone. Some of it is hard to replace of course and how do you even begin to list what's gone from your tackle bag. In my case, a rucksack was taken and it was jam packed with odds and sods that must have cost hundreds of pounds.

What impressed me the most was the reaction I got from my angling buddies, especially those from The Association of Barbel Fishers (ABF) and my pals at Barbel Fishing World. I was quite moved by the overwhelming generosity of so many people, all offering equipment in my hour of need. It really was quite uplifting. I would just like to take this opportunity to thank them all publicly.

Anyone interested in barbel fishing my want to check out the ABF at www.barbelfishers.com. They are a really great bunch of guys that are only too willing to share information and knowledge and they have a very friendly forum plus Association waters that they control. They also have an on-line magazine which is excellent. Barbel Fishing World is also a wonderful site full of very friendly people and well worth a look.



Still, on to the fishing. A good friend of mine hadn't trotted a river and had never caught a grayling. Something that to an extent I take for granted. So I offered him the opportunity to go with Geoff, Kevin and myself to the upper Hampshire Avon. He accepted and wanted to try out his new Christmas present: a Maver float rod.

We started the proceedings in the usual way, with a full English breakfast. After that we headed straight to the river. Fortunately the levels were up a little after a fair amount of rain recently. The colour wasn't too bad either. So things were looking pretty good. I got Jules set up with a centrepin and showed him the



basic tackle arrangement. Once that was done it was time to get fishing.

We opted to fish with maggots and after a brief guide to using a centrepin, Jules was up and running. I watched on as he let the float run through his swim a few times and once he was happy with what he was doing, I left him to it. I waded out a little way upstream and ran the float through a nice deep run. After a couple of trots, the float disappeared and a hard fighting fish was on the other end. It turned out to be a nice brownie. Several more followed and then I landed a really nice grayling of about 1lb 8oz followed by another well over a pound.

Jules however hadn't caught yet, so I put my gear to one side and offered some help. We couldn't muster a bite in his swim so moved upstream and after a few trots through the float buried. Jules struck and a fish was on. After a nice little fight that big beautiful sail like fin broke surface and we new the culprit was a grayling. Jules was over the moon.



Again I left Jules to fish in this new swim and I returned to mine. Things had gone rather quiet though. I managed a couple more fish including a grayling, but we decided to move downstream. We kept dropping into likely looking swims and took a few fish here and there. Jules managed a couple more grayling and some trout and I did pretty much the same.

Kevin and Geoff were not fairing much better either. The fish were proving to be tricky today, although it was holiday season and the fish could have been quite pressured of late. Kevin finally found some nice fish, taking several over the pound mark. Despite trying corn and maggots the fish were just not having it today. It was one of the poorer days we have had here. Still Jules had thoroughly enjoyed himself and that made my day too.

Sadly the only other trip I have managed was a trip to Longshaw Lakes near Canterbury. It was an incredibly windy day and pretty chilly. Both Geoff and I managed a few roach, although nothing particularly big but I did have a bonus carp on the float rod which felt and looked about 8-10lbs, not bad on a 2.5lb hooklink.

Tight lines until the next time.

Nathan Walter