

What's In It For Me?

By Dave Johnson *R.O. Berks/Oxon*

I joined the Barbel Society after reading an article in a fishing magazine. I had caught barbel along with other species, but had attempted to catch barbel by design rather than by chance. Once I became addicted to *Barbus Barbus* I sought out everything and anything barbel related and the natural progression was to join the Society. After a couple of seasons the regional organiser for Berkshire indicated that he wanted to resign. After a very exciting meeting in the Wiltshire area I contacted Alan Oliver to offer to run the Berkshire region. At this time two other members (unknown to me at the time) also offered so we took on the region together and we now have the Oxfordshire region to look after as well.

What's in it for me?

This is a question that is asked both on the bank and at meetings and exhibitions. It's not as selfish as it first appears, after all we all have financial demands such as E.A. Rod License, club ticket, day ticket, bait and travelling expenses etc so another cost may be too much unless the outlay is outweighed by the benefits.



St. Patricks Stream

I open my reasoning by talking about fishing trips, AGMs, Regional meetings, rubbing shoulders with Guy Robb and Ray Walton (but not at the same time!), having access to exclusive Barbel Society fisheries at a reasonable cost and so on.....

I enjoy the company of like-minded individuals and talking about fishing is almost as good as actual doing it. No two fishermen are alike, thank

God (Do you know Agent Orange?). We may copy and use styles and methods from books and magazines but the wealth of experience and knowledge gained from regional meetings and A.G.M.s is invaluable. You will not get a six figure map grid reference from any angler but guest speakers at meetings are there because they want to be and are more than happy to discuss their individual styles. You can't ask a book questions! But John Baker will talk forever on his baits, Guy Robb on swim selection, Martin Ford on pellets and many others on such diverse subjects as pollution and fish breeding. As an R.O. I have the pleasure of inviting the speakers and therefore it is my choice, however, I run the region for my members and their input and feedback is essential to the quality of the region. I have sought and received feedback both positive and negative but all

very constructive. The list of prospective speakers is now greater than before.

As R.O. I have regular contact with anglers that I otherwise would not know. Recently I had the pleasure of having two R.O.s staying with me and fishing the whole weekend on the Loddon and St Patricks stream. The weekend did not go to plan – 32 C in the shade – Australia gave us a batting lesson – *Barbus Barbus* went on holiday!

However, Steve Hastie caught a six pounder that he stalked in the crystal clear water of the Loddon, he was using a John Baker boilie that had not been used before on that venue, in a swim not prebaited, on a home made rod. Relief for me and pleasure for him. Ian Sadowski was feeding fish in the same river in 18 inches of water and of course they wolfed down the freebies but avoided the identical bait with



Ian Sadowski enjoys the fishing

the sharp, spikey centre. So only one fish, but a great social.

My point? I didn't know these two anglers before I joined the Barbel Society but now I know about home made rods and fishing up north. I also know that if I am in any region a phone call will ensure local knowledge and details of fisheries in the area. I know that other members feel confident about contacting me as they often call, if I don't know about a particular venue I usually know another angler who does. This local knowledge is available to all but is easier to tap into for members of the Barbel Society as they have contact numbers etc. The value of membership is improving.

Twice a year the 'Barbel Fisher' falls through my letterbox and it is read cover to cover at least three times that day (reading about fishing is almost as good as talking.....) I was bought a Seer 'S' series trotting rod as a result of the Barbel Fisher.

Picture this, it's Autumn.....
Liz (understanding partner) "What do you want for Christmas? Big Boy"

DJ "Oh, anything to do with fishing".

Liz "Okay, give me a clue".

DJ "Barbel Fisher, page 36 right hand side, Seer rods advertisement 3rd rod down, silver whipping, sensory grip, reversed Fuji reel housing".

Liz "Okay".

Happy Christmas!!!

And I know I don't have to be a member to own a fantastic Seer rod and Andy Orme has adverts in other publications, but I only became aware of the superb Seer rods by using one, fishing as a guest of Chris Taylor (another members of the R.O. team) on the Wasing Estate section of the Kennet.

Also as a result of my membership I've been fishing on the Wye as part of a fish-in organized by the society.

Dave Burr hosted the event, what a laugh we had, get your name down for the next one! 3 doubles, 3 PBs, one angler caught his first barbel and one his first double. I would not have considered going to the Red Lion as an individual but by being in the Society I have the opportunity to join a group of like-minded individuals.

Although I must remember to duck next time or ask for a different room.



'Agent Orange' Steve Hastie

It's more attractive to be in the Barbel Society than out.

In Summary

My fishing is fun, be it in sunshine, frost or flood, but I take my fun seriously and I realise that membership is not for everyone. So anyone considering not renewing their membership should first ask themselves. "What's in it for me? Have I been to the meetings? Have I joined in with the forum? Did I ask the R.O. for information about fishing etc? Did I criticise in a constructive manner or just

walk away?

If you don't like what is happening in your Region or the Barbel Society please don't vote with your feet, but contact your R.O., Chairman, Editor (who really is very good looking) etc. Give the society an opportunity to address problems and offer solutions, even offer help.

What's in it for me?

Controversy, discussion, meetings, Red Lion, away days, Barbel Fisher, Beauchamp Court, Agent Orange, news letter, junior fish ins oh and fishing.....

All this for the price of a few beers and a curry, without the hangover! Money well spent.

Dave Johnson

If you were not already aware, Dave is the newest member of the Committee taking over as Regional Co-Ordinator. I am sure that his enthusiasm for the Society is going to be of benefit to all of us.



Dave Johnson, Paul Read and Laurence Howse

