

**Barbel fishing on the Teme**

I found a likely spot along the river, near Martley. It was not far from a bridge and I edged my way along the bank, finding a fast section with a pool on the far bank.

I set up my quiver tip barble rod, baited up with chunks of luncheon meat, and I cast out to the far side pool and settled back to await a bite.

Passing time, I watched a water vole playing on the bank. A mink appeared and chased the vole around the bank and up a tree. This kept me amused for a while whilst waiting for a catch.

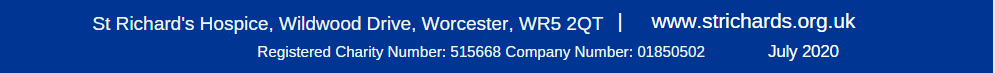
I was getting a bit bored with no bites so decided to set up a little seven-foot spinning rod I happened to have in my kit. It was the rod I carried with me for my boys whenever they came with me to learn the ropes of fishing.

I tied on a size ten hook with no weights or float and dropped it in at my feet baited with a lob worm. I thought I might try and get a perch or something whilst waiting for a barbel. I continued watching the antics of the mink and vole, staring occasionally at the quiver tip of my barbel rod.

Suddenly I noticed the little seven-footer rod scuttling off down the bank by itself! I had to dive and catch hold of it as an incredible force took it, bending it double so the tip was level with the handle.

After an intense fight with my little seven-footer and only a six-pound breaking strain line, I landed a barbel of double figures. It was huge and really strong. Playing it out, with the clutch screaming, I thought I was never going to stop it!

Then I got the upper hand and it started to come towards me. After a good 10 minutes of fight I landed my catch. I eased it over my landing net and was rewarded with an enormous barbel. Ironic, that my best barbel catch ever was incidental, on a child’s learning rod.

What a perfect day. Beautiful surroundings, the weather was bright and sunny for an autumn day and no one else was around. I had that idyllic feeling of being at one with nature. Meanwhile my proper barbel kit was sat there doing nothing and I got no action with that rod, all day!