

**Pike: the one that got away**

I used to make my own spinners out of old-fashioned dessert spoons. I have used these to catch many a pike.

It was a winter morning and I was fishing off a concrete bank five foot above the water at Stanchards Pit in Tewkesbury.

After a dozen or so casts, I saw what looked like a polythene bag approaching my spinner – and then the spinner disappeared as this monster pike devoured it. The plastic bag was actually the open mouth of the pike.

The rod bent and I felt like I had hooked the bottom of the river – there was a solid resistance like a dead weight!

Then, it started moving like I had hooked a submarine and it was pulling across the river and away from me, stripping line from the reel against the clutch.

I gained some line and then it pulled back. This happened time and again like a game of cat and mouse. I was fighting it for a long time; it came to the surface after at least twenty minutes I’d say; played out and exhausted.

I felt the pain in the upper arms from the handle of the rod wedged under the elbow, taking the weight. It came in under my feet all played out and rolled over ready for the net – which unfortunately, I did not have with me!

Normally, I fished the opposite bank where you can beach your fish so I was unprepared. I thought I would try and lift it out and slid my hand down the line to the wire trace.

I grabbed the trace but he flicked his head and snapped it! The wire was digging into my hand, it was frighteningly big – size of a small alligator I’d say. I was absolutely gutted – the fish of a lifetime and I kicked myself for not having my net with me.