

# Back to the Ivel

*by Keith Speer*

**Dateline 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2009:** I decided to do another session on the Ivel at Biggleswade as I had guessed (correctly as it goes) that the Ivel would still be holding a little colour, in fact conditions were just right for a day on the stick float after Chub!

I decided to fish a swim that had been good to me in the past month, having got there I did my usual sit on my box and take in the early morning light with a cuppa, these periods early on have always been the source of much information for me, by sitting quietly waiting for it to become light enough to tackle up I get the chance to watch the current, observe any early fly life and watch for any sign of fish moving.

I was just pouring my second cup (I now take a separate half litre flask just for my early morning ritual) a large Chub topped right in front of me followed half way through my second cup by another near to the far margin, even I can interpret that as a good sign so it was with growing confidence I set up my tackle.

As usual I would be using my trusty lightweight centre pin loaded with 50yds of pre stretched 4lb mono on my trusty 12ft Drennan Cristalite float rod, a 6 No4 Lignum stick float with a 3lb 6oz Reflo Power line hook length and as I was to start with Caster a size 16 Kamasan B520 hook.

I would start off with a No 9 shot 10" from the hook with another 3" above that all the other shot (No6's) would be strung out shirt button style 2" apart.

There was a hint of a downstream wind and I hoped that the tackle I had chosen would do the trick. The first half an hour produced precisely no bites at all, I had been feeding Caster (12 per cast) and Hemp (10-15 grains per cast) so I changed the baiting pattern to 10 Caster twice a cast and the same of Hemp.

This produced the first bite half way down the swim and just where I expected it, I missed this bite but hit the next one two casts later which was a Chub of about 3lb.

Another half an hour and I had another bite this was a much better fish which rolled off the hook before I saw it.

The next hour or so produced two more bites, the first of which was a decent fish that broke me up in the far bank weeds and the second was a Chub of about 4lb.

The downstream wind was becoming a problem so I changed my rig at this point to a 8 No4 wire stemmed MAP shouldered stick with shot bulked up except for the two No9's and a single No6 which were still free of the bulk, hoping this would give back the control that the downstream wind was taking from me.

Jason M (who lives in Biggleswade) popped over for a chat and not long after he had got the word to go shopping Chris (The Honourable Pint) wandered along for a chat, Chris had already had a good bag of Chub and Roach and stopped by just before Pub O'Clock.

While Chris was sitting with me I had a Bite which produced this lovely looking fat fish of 5lb 6oz and he was kind enough to take some pictures for me.

Later on the wind became more of a nuisance so adopted a old trick that Mac an old friend and superb angler taught me, by placing a shot, in this case a No4 6-10 inches above my float (you have to play around and remove some of the bulk shot to get the balance right) I can partially sink the line between float and rod tip, this helps to avoid the line bowing downstream and enables you to hold back the float and

tackle using thumb pressure on the pin, just enough to ensure that the float tackle moves downstream slightly SLOWER than the current.

Now current is not the same speed at the surface as it is half way down or on the bottom, you cannot see the current speed under the surface so you have to play a game of trial and error to get the float speed right by slowing the float down hard or letting it go with little pressure from your thumb, this can take a while especially when you are not getting a lot of bites but you know when you have it right when the float buries in a solid definite bite.

Eventually I got it right, the float just looked right as it passed through the swim and the bites became easier to see and easier to hit.

I ended the day with seven Chub 2 at about 3lb, 3 between 4-5 and 2 over 5lb the best being 5lb 6oz, it was a nice fat fish so here is a close up.



Cheers for the photo's Chris.

Just one point, We have about 9 miles of the Ivel that comes with the VAC ticket, this is a super little river with big fish of every species in fact 2 14lb Barbel and one massive fish of 17lb came out this week alone.

The Ivel is about 25 mins drive from St Albans for some fabulous fishing, give it a go, you know you want to!!!

Tight Lines.