

Gildenburgh, July 2010

Trip organised by Dan Reynolds

Report by Neil

The Divers:

- > Dan Reynolds
- > Coleen Suckling
- > Neil Taylor

Details



A planned trip to North Norfolk had to be downgraded to a trip to Gildy. We were hoping that a trip on a Friday would give us good vis and no crowds. Coleen was driving up on her own and I was taking Dan. As Col had to tend to her urchins on the way, Dan decided there was enough time to go back to bed. Luckily he woke up enough to put all his kit in my car when I picked him up - or did he?

We arrived about an hour after Col, and found the site almost deserted - I think there were only about seven other divers there all day. It also turned out that we had chosen the hottest day of the year to go diving in drysuits!

Dan's subconscious had clearly decided that it was so hot he didn't need an undersuit, so he hadn't packed it. Hearing that the water temperature was 16°C his conscious disagreed - what could he do? Luckily for him Col had some spare clothes that he could borrow, luckily for me I had my camera, luckily all of us Dan decided that the thong and basque would only afford minimal thermal protection and weren't necessary.



For the first dive we circled the lake clockwise, as the visibility was good I wanted to see if I could get any pictures of pike. We only found one, and I was too busy looking at little crawling things in the mud to notice it hovering a meter from my head. By the time Col and Dan attracted my attention it was moving away so I was too late. Note to self - you won't find pike hiding in the silt.

We also found several small, round, red animals, about the size of a lentil which looked like some kind of tick. Talking to biologists afterwards they identified it as a "Red Freshwater Tick" - how can anyone say that a university education is a

waste of time!

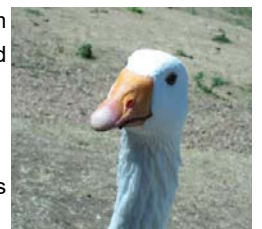
We circled the lake as far as the cruiser then followed the line to the Sky van, to give Dan a chance to play at being a lorry driver and avoid the forest to save it for the second dive.

Returning to the training platforms we found a school of perch at the 4m platform. They seemed to be resting with their fins on the platform, basking in the sunshine. There was also a school of carp hiding under the platform - they were obviously more concerned about sunburn.



Safety stops can sometimes be boring, you need to make your own entertainment, but we were lucky - Coleen treated us to a display of underwater pole dancing.

After all that excitement, the second dive would have a lot to live up to so we tried to calm down with ice-creams (there is a reason why a Mr Bubble is cheaper than a Fab) and bacon sandwiches.



During the surface interval we got chatting to the only other diver there - a guy called John who had been let down by his buddy and was waiting for another one to turn up. Taking pity on him we invited him along on our second dive.

This time we decided to go anticlockwise through the forest. A few minutes into the dive Col and Dan started to point excitedly at something up ahead. Getting closer I could see that it was a plastic fish that someone had hidden in the lake to fool people, although not very successfully as it was clearly a fake - it was much too big and didn't even look like a pike. I decided I might as well take a picture anyway. As I got closer the fake pike flicked its tail and swam off.

I decided that it would be a good idea to approach them with care.

1. you will find pike hiding in the grass
2. the pike in here get very big - that one was about the size of my leg.



I managed to get closer to the next one, they seem to think their camouflage is a lot better than it actually is - although in normal Gildy visibility it probably works much better. I also think you'd have to really piss one off for it to try and take a bite out of you. They are certainly very impressive, and quite ugly fish.

Pike in all parts, green tigering the gold.
Killers from the egg: the malevolent aged grin.
They dance on the surface among the flies.

Or move, stunned by their own grandeur,
Over a bed of emerald, silhouette
Of submarine delicacy and horror.

Pike (Ted Hughes)



As you can see from the photo, while I was fearlessly approaching the malevolent killer of the deep, Dan, Col and John were cowering in terror behind a ridge.

