



I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to PAC members in what is a new, exciting and challenging personal role – and equally such a time for PAC as a whole.

I come from and still live in Worcester, on the banks of the River Severn – so I'm a river piker through and through. I first joined PAC upon creation in 1977, aged sixteen, which was a pivotal moment. This

area has always been dominated by match and game anglers, who persecuted pike as a matter of course. My young friends and I, however, began putting pike back, aged twelve or thirteen – and were virtually vilified overnight by the local adult angling community. In those days there were no other pike anglers in this area, so we felt very isolated. The creation of PAC was an illuminating and inspirational moment – because for the first time we were in the orbit of like-minded anglers and felt supported. A year later I succeeded Des Taylor as RO, and have been in and out of the Club a few times over the years, due to diversifying angling interests and life commitments – but my dedication as a passionate pike conservationist has never wavered.

We live in difficult times. Angling as a whole is beset by many serious problems – not least fish theft and predation. These difficulties are so great that it is impossible for PAC alone to resolve them. In my former professional life I was a long-serving police officer and expert in multi-agency partnership working. Indeed, I have effectively used this approach to resolve certain issues on my personal stretch of the River Severn. That experience convinced me that the only way forward is for PAC to work harder to be seen as an inclusive – not elitist and exclusive Club – in the hope of uniting an increasing number of pike anglers. The more members we have and the more unified we are, the safer pike will be: simple as. That is the ultimate objective – so I have no time for internal politics, personalities or egos that obstruct this fundamental aim. Moreover, PAC must build and repair certain bridges to accelerate such unity – it would be a utopian perspective to think that we can unite everyone – we won't – but we can at least try. The more we have beneath our banner, the stronger our voice – as the only national organisation dedicated to pike welfare.

We will be engaging with other stakeholders to generate partnerships and increase PAC's voice on various forums – 12PAC is fully behind this strategy and we are pro-active in all areas of operations. For example, in response to the dreadful Cromwell Weir tragedy, we have worked in partnership with the Angling Trust to produce the new 'Best Practice Guidelines for Freshwater Boat Anglers' – in consultation with the GB Non-Native Invasive Species Secretariat and endorsed by British Waterways (BW) and the Lure Anglers' Society. The Guidelines will be widely circulated – and may even save a life. This is the first evidence and example of PAC's new approach to partnership working. There will be many more.

Fish theft and poaching is obviously a huge problem – which we must help address, but only through legal means. With that in mind, we have just appointed retired police officer and former PAC General Secretary Mark Leathwood as PAC's first National Fisheries Protection Officer. Later this year we will be meeting with other members pro-active in this area, including Fenland piker and another fellow retired 'bobby' Denis Moules, and Norfolk's incredibly hard working John Currie, to produce a model for application anywhere in the UK. We are also working in partnership with the Angling Trust to support their essential 'Building Bridges' project with the Eastern European immigrant community, and exploring lottery funding for two new films on pike care. These non-profit making films will be available free as internet downloads and as DVDs to PAC members and non-members. The first film will be in English, the second in Polish with various Eastern European language sub-titles – we can but try. I would also urge all members to continually report any incidents to both their local police and the Environment Agency – education and integration may well be the long-term goal but in the short-term it is zero tolerance and prosecution we need. Regarding the predation problem, I have recently become a Patron and board member of the Predation Action Group, and will be attending meetings of the Fish Welfare Group – so rest assured that PAC will also have a strong presence on these influential forums.



We are also in the process of completely revising PAC's promotional use of and multi-media presence. In just a few days there is ample evidence of this: interviews from both the new General Secretary Alan Dudhill and I have been published online via The Pike Pool; Mike Skipper is continually broadcasting good news of our progress on both the PAC website, group Facebook page and, with Mark Skinner, on Twitter. Dan Williams is now running a new, vibrant, PAC Facebook page – the more promotion the better! Behind the scenes we are commissioning a professional website design company to produce a brand new and up-to-date website and forum, in addition to publishing a new magazine - *PikeOnLines* - online. The latter will not replace the existing printed *Pikelines* but is an additional membership benefit with interactive pages and video; it will also be a market leader in that it will be available to both mobiles and tablets. This also provides our new Advertising Manager Chris Leibbrandt – another former PAC General Secretary – with another advertising income stream. Mark Skinner is currently researching a PAC 'App' for us

so collectively all of these things will move PAC forward and take advantage of the internet revolution.



During my youth we played in the rivers and the fields – and went fishing. We were very much ‘alright’. Are the kids today alright, though, glued to computer screens? I think not. PAC has already prioritised focusing on attracting youngsters – to which end Eric Edwards – who spear-headed this initiative – has been appointed PAC’s first Angling Development Officer. Eric will shortly, I am sure, report on his plans in respect of his new and essential role – which will have PAC’s full support. James Sarkar has been contributing his ‘Young Pikers’ feature to *Pikelines* for some time, which will continue – and hopefully as we attract more young members this will become another inspired area of PAC operations.

Membership benefits are being explored by our Treasurer, Giles Hill, and Chris Leibbrandt. Already we can announce that PAC members will receive a 15% discount on *Pike & Predator* subscriptions – this will be the first of many. Alan Dudhill and I have an important meeting next month, regarding which, for a variety of reasons, I cannot provide full details of yet, for negotiations are sensitive, but this will hopefully have far-reaching benefits for pike conservation nationally and provide privileged access for PAC members to certain venues – which will help new Events Manager Pete Foster in his task.

Being on any committee is a frequently thankless task. All committee members are volunteers and have to fit their work for PAC in around their jobs and families. All do their best. It is important to remember this point, because some of the negativity I have seen directed at certain committee members is both underwhelming and unfair. We are very much about getting the right people in the right jobs, using members’ professional skills and life experience for the Club’s benefit – which is why *Pikelines*, for example, is now produced by Team *Pikelines* – a dedicated team – and our forthcoming new internet presence will be administered by the new Team Multi-Media. To ensure that we are as productive and pro-active as possible the workload needs to be shared. In the past the Committee has been accused of ensconcing itself in an ‘ivory tower’. That may or may not be so, I don’t know, but 12PAC is already engaging widely by various mediums with members and non-members alike, and will continue to do so. We are also aware of problems in Scotland – and are most anxious that our members north of the border – and across the

sea in Ireland – feel included and supported. Committee members will, in short, be out there – uniting pike anglers. But next time anyone fancies a pop online, please first remember that all are volunteers – who, certainly in my experience and view, do their very best for PAC. We won’t please everyone and we’ll undoubtedly make some mistakes along the way – we are only human! – but you can rest assured that 12PAC will be giving every single area of operations its best shot. We are *inspired!*

To close, I have to mention this year’s annual Convention – an important one as PAC’s thirty-fifth year and 12PAC’s first. Our Convention Manager, former PAC Chairman Colin Goodge, works absolutely tirelessly to organise this wonderful event. We will be supporting Colin howsoever we can – as I hope members will too. We have a terrific line up of keynote speakers this year and a magnificent array of trade stands – you heard it here first!

So, in short, we have a fresh and holistic, pro-active, approach to all areas of PAC. *All* of us have a part to play to prepare PAC for an exciting future. So, please play *your* part to help us make a difference – for both pike and pike anglers – and let’s put the GREAT back into the Pike Anglers’ Club of GREAT Britain!

Dilip Sarkar MBE, President, 17 May 2012



Photograph Captions

1. PAC’s new President, Dilip Sarkar, aged seventeen, as Worcester RO in 1978.
2. The President with a River Severn ‘Unicorn’ of 26.08 caught last season.
3. 11PAC says farewell at the Annual Members’ Meeting at Nottingham on 12 May 2012 – thanks guys, for all your hard work during the past three years. 12PAC won’t let you down!
4. 12PAC takes over the reins at Nottingham: standing, left to right: Pete Foster (Events Manager), Chris Leibbrandt (Advertising Manager), John Synnuck (Chairman), Dilip Sarkar (President & *Pikelines* Editor), Alan Dudhill (General Secretary), Steve Ormrod (Design & Production Manager), Giles Hill (Treasurer); sitting, from left: Brian Birdsall & John Keeley (Joint Membership Secretaries), Colin Goodge (Convention Manager), and Mark Skinner (Products Manager). Not pictured are Dominic Garnett, our new Press Officer, and Webmaster Mike Skipper.