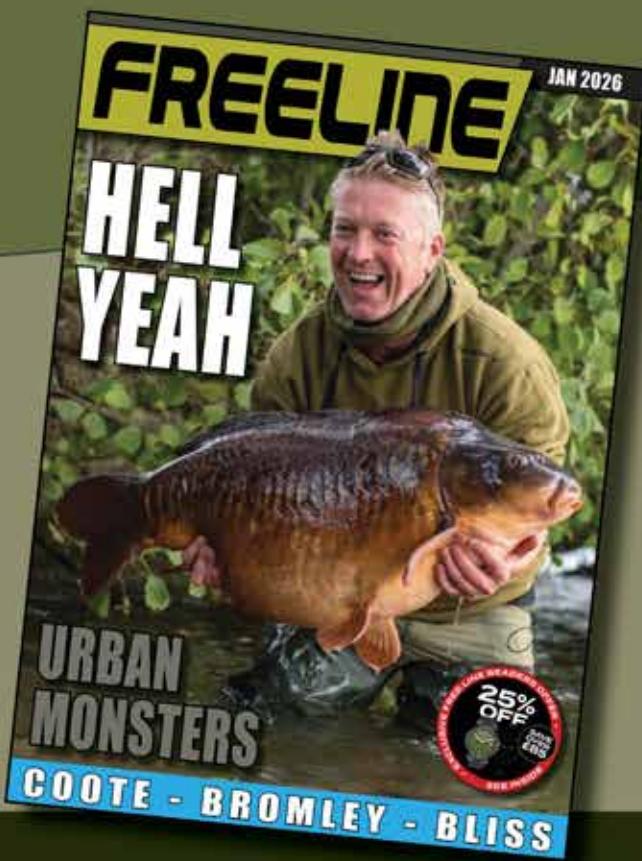


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GAZ FAREHAM - DAYS ONLY RESULT
JAMES HARRISON - FAIRY TALE ENDING
OSCAR THORNTON - TOP 5 WINTER TIPS



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- 3 FOX
- 4 THINKING ANGLERS
- 5 GARDNER
- 6 TRAKKER
- 7 BANK TACKLE
- 8 NASH TACKLE
- 9 CARP ONLINE
- 10 AVID

TOP 10 DAY TICKET CARP WATERS

- 1 BLUEBELL LAKES
- 2 LINEAR FISHERIES
- 3 SANDHURST
- 4 COTTINGTON
- 5 FARLOWS LAKE
- 6 HORCOTT
- 7 COKING FARM
- 8 OAK LAKES FISHERY
- 9 ELPHICKS
- 10 ORCHID

TOP 10 CARP FISHING BRANDS

- 1 DIAWA
- 2 SHIMANO
- 3 REUBEN HEATON
- 4 SOLAR
- 5 JAG
- 6 FREESPIRIT
- 7 FOX
- 8 TRAKKER
- 9 CHILTERN RODS
- 10 KUDOS

TOP 10 FRENCH HOLIDAY VENUES

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- 2 ABBEY LAKES
- 3 CRETE LAKES
- 4 RIBIERE
- 5 GIGANTICA
- 6 RAINBOW
- 7 THE AQUARIUM
- 8 DREAM LAKES
- 9 THE SECRET GARDEN
- 10 BROCARD

TOP 10 CARP TACKLE SHOPS

- 1 JOHNSON ROSS
- 2 THE TACKLE BOX
- 3 YATELEY ANGLING CENTRE
- 4 ANGLING DIRECT NORWICH
- 5 POINGDESTRES
- 6 KESWALLS
- 7 ANGLING DIRECT BIRMINGHAM
- 8 ANGLING DIRECT SIMPSONS
- 9 TACKLE UP
- 10 ANGLING DIRECT CHELMSFORD

TOP 10 BAIT COMPANIES

- 1 STICKY BAITS
- 2 DYNAMITE BAITS
- 3 MAINLINE BAITS
- 4 CC MOORE
- 5 TARGET BAITS
- 6 NUTRABAITS
- 7 PROPER CARP BAITS
- 8 URBAN BAITS
- 9 DAVE MALLIN BAITS
- 10 NASH BAIT



TOP 10 ICONIC CARP LAKES

- 1 YATELEY
- 2 SAVAY
- 3 REDMIRE
- 4 WRAYSURY
- 5 FOX POOL
- 6 HORTON
- 7 CASSIEN
- 8 LINCHHILL
- 9 ROACH PIT
- 10 JOHNSON'S RAILWAY

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JUST THE TONIK



**FAREHAM
HARRISON
THORNTON**

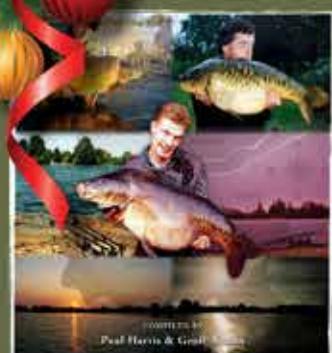
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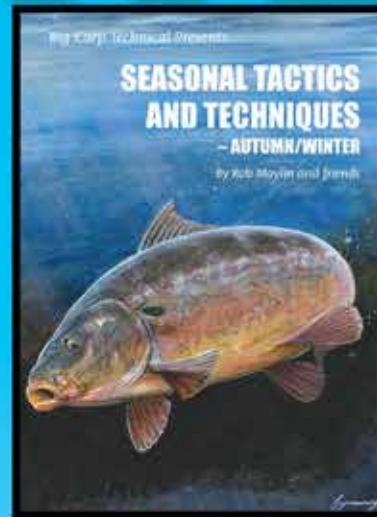
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in Oxfordshire



By Paul Harris & Geoff Smith



Big Carp
Legends
Pete
Springate



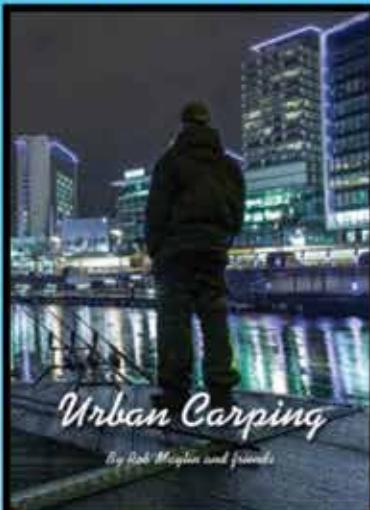
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AND TECHNIQUES**
- AUTUMN/WINTER
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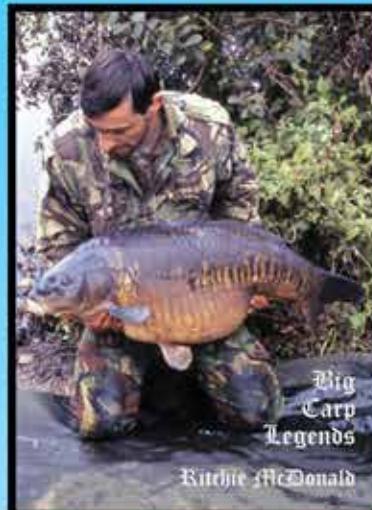
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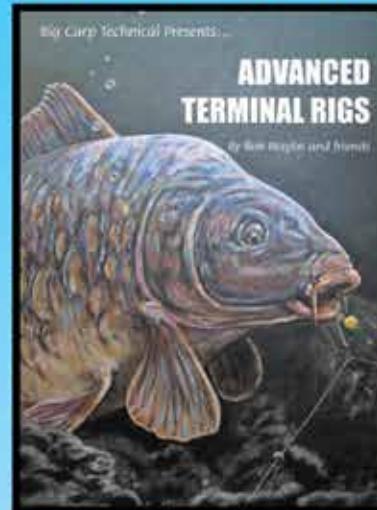


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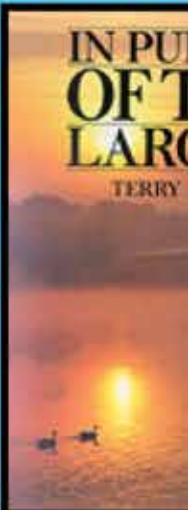


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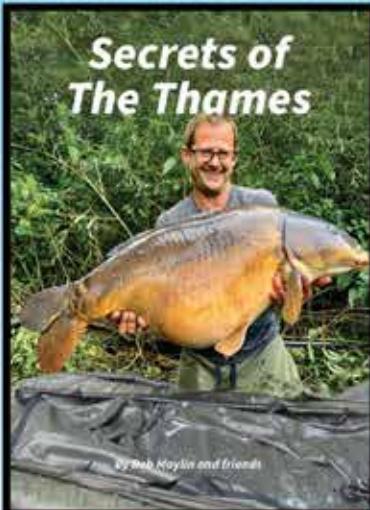
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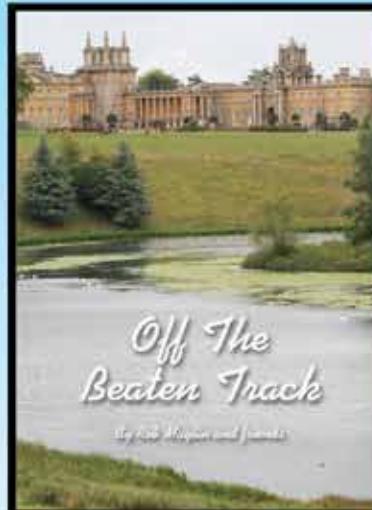
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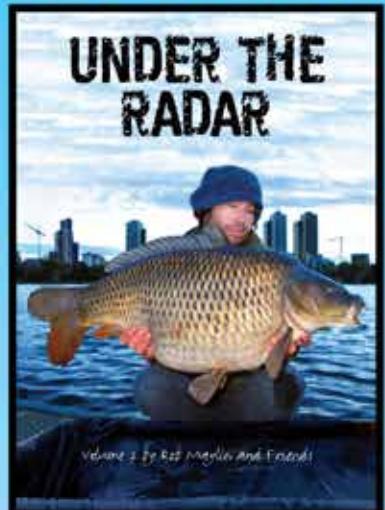
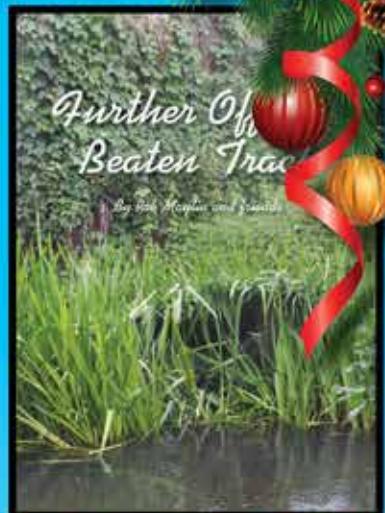
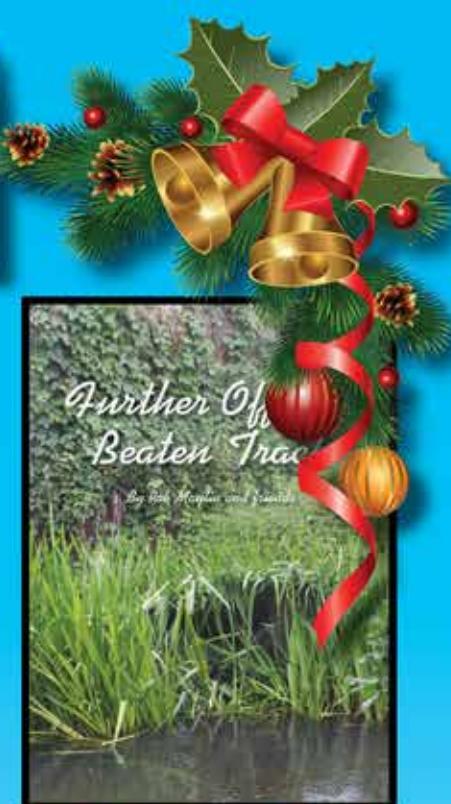
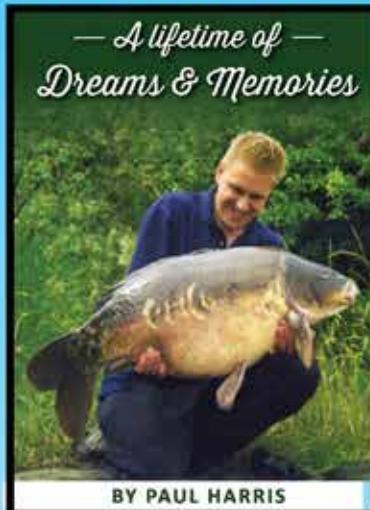
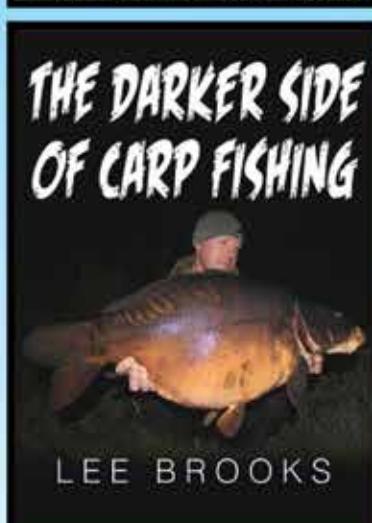
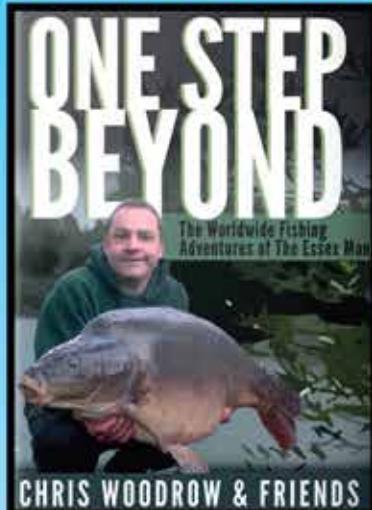
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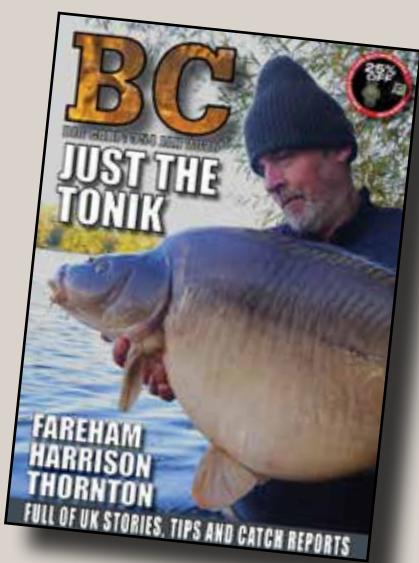
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James Harrison

Advertising Sales
Bountyhunter
Publications
mobile 07768 731425

BIG CARP 354:
January 2026
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Publications 2025



Front Cover:
James Harrison with
Carptonik's first 40!!



We're just a few days shy of Christmas as I jot this final piece of 2025. It's always a time of reflection and as I look back there have certainly been some highs and lows through 2025. The sudden passing of Johnny Mac was a real low point. He was such a character and will be sadly missed. Then we also lost the legendary Jim Gibbinson. Very much a pioneer of modern carp fishing. Then this month Mitch Smith sadly left us. From all the team here we wish all those families out there who have lost someone the very best of wishes.

I'm not one to finish on a sad note. I hope you are all enjoying the unseasonably mild weather we are having to get out there finish your own 2025 season in style. In this month's mag we have lots of tips and tricks from some of the best anglers around. Be lucky and all the best for 2026!!

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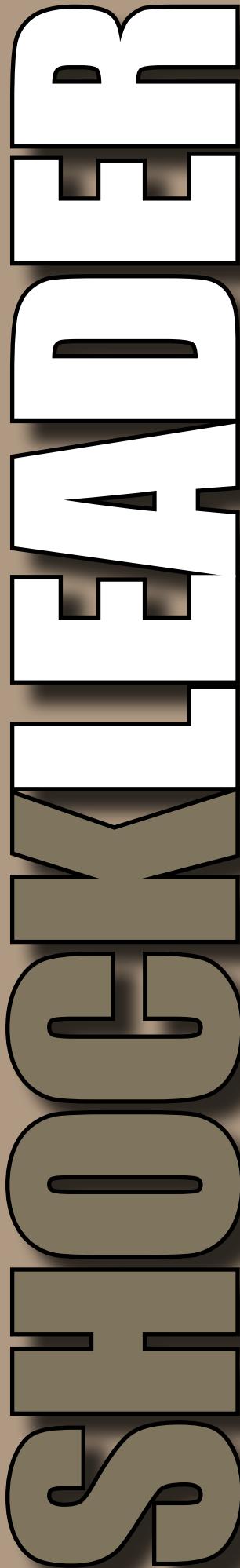


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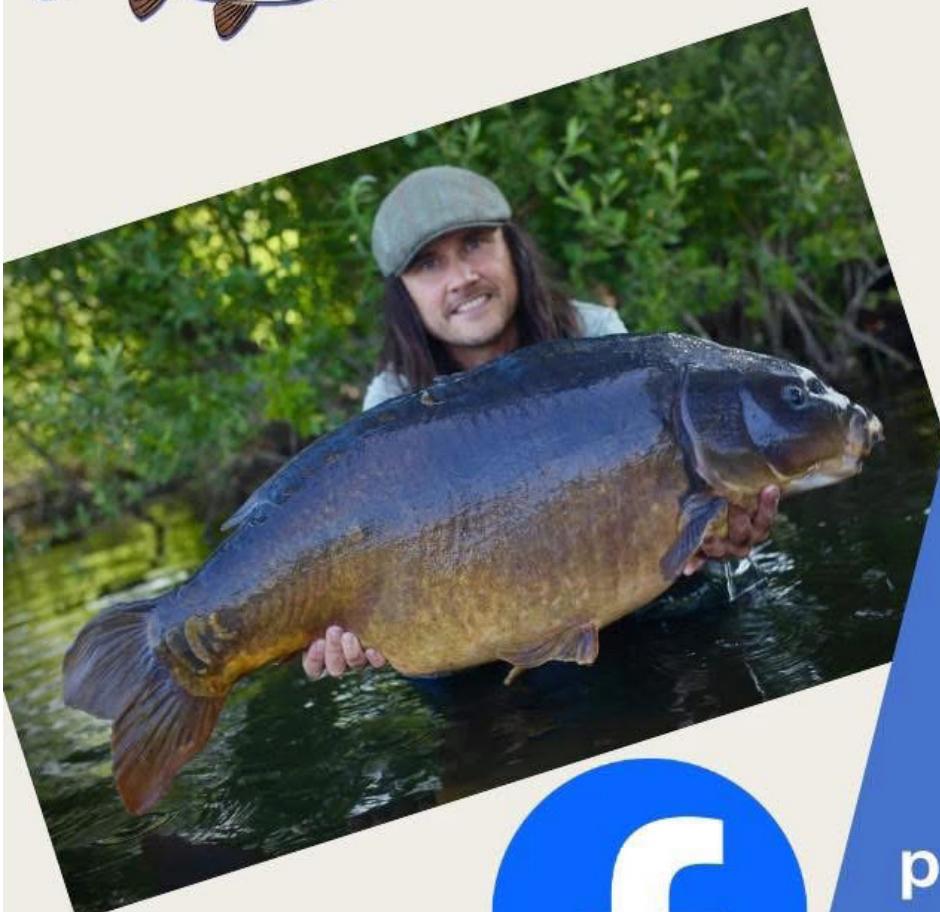


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RIP MITCH SMITH

It is with deep sadness that we share the passing of our dad/Mitch.

His funeral service will be held at Southend Crematorium on 7th January 2026 at 11am. We will be holding a wake after at Ocean Beach.

We welcome family and friends to come together to remember his life. We thank you for all of your support, love and kind messages at this difficult time.



WE ARE HIRING!

Full -Time Sales & Order Administrator

Solar Tackle is a fast-growing, dynamic business at the heart of the carp fishing industry. We're looking for a reliable and motivated Sales & Order Administrator to join our on-site team in Dartford.

This is a key position within our operations, ideal for someone who thrives on being organised, takes real ownership of their role, and enjoys being part of a close-knit, fast-paced environment. You'll play a vital role in processing customer orders, supporting the sales team, and helping ensure that the day-to-day flow of operations runs smoothly.

This is not a "tick-the-box" admin role, we're looking for someone who is proactive, dependable, and proud of their work. In addition to core duties, you'll also handle various ad-hoc administrative tasks across the business, occasionally assisting with finance or other departments as needed.



**To apply please send
a cover letter & CV to:
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Key responsibilities:

- **Experience in sales administration or order processing.**
- **Strong communication skills, both by phone and email.**
- **Excellent attention to detail and accuracy.**
- **Ability to manage multiple tasks and work well under pressure.**
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- **Confident using Microsoft Office, especially Excel and Outlook.**
- **Comfortable working on-site in Dartford and being hands-on in a busy environment.**

Benefits:

- **Stable, predictable working hours.**
- **Opportunity to gain hands-on experience with ERP systems and various aspects of sales operations.**
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TAYLOR'S LEAD LOUNGE CLOSING

A photograph of a sunset over a body of water, likely a lake. In the foreground, the silhouettes of several fishing rods are positioned across the frame. A bright sun is setting in the background, casting a warm glow. The Taylor's Lead Lounge logo is in the top left, and a 'SHOP NOW' button is in the bottom right.

TAYLORS
LEAD LOUNGE

CLOSING DOWN SALE EVENT

SHOP NOW

After much for your support over the reflection, years - it's meant the world we've made the to our family. As a heartfelt difficult decision thank-you, we're offering a to move on to new horizons. 25% sitewide discount www.taylorsleadlounge.co.uk. We're incredibly grateful

ROBERTSON'S TACKLE CLOSING DOWN



ROBERTSONS fishing tackle

Robertsons fishing bereavement. We love you all, tackle closes team robbos! it's doors. We've We've come to the end come to the end of the line! It is with great of the line! It is with great sadness that i will be closing sadness that i will be closing robertsons fishing tackle robertsons fishing tackle on december 6th. Please on december 6th. Please accept my apologies for the accept my apologies for the sudden closure, this is due to sudden closure, this is due to increasing pressures on the increasing pressures on the business and sudden family business and sudden family bereavement.

WANT TO IMPROVE YOUR FISHERY?



Want to improve your fishery? The Fisheries Improvement Programme (FIP) opens on Monday 1st December. Angling clubs and better habitats, fisheries are encouraged to enhance facilities for anglers submit projects or protect your stocks from which the EA may be able to provide some funding support. Backed by fishing licence income, the Fisheries Angling Trust will help you to tackle the impacts of prolonged dry weather. Find out more: <https://anglingtrust.net>

PHYLLIS TUCKWELL HOSPICE NEWS



Fantastic amount raised again this year at Frimley charity event in aid of Phyllis Tuckwell hospice. From Mark and Lorraine Fisher and all the team, we thank each and every one of you that helped to make this possible.



Charity Event in Aid of Phyllis ...

Rain Frimley • 6m •

...

X

**This is our 10th year
of supporting the
Hospice. In that time
we have raised a
massive £363,085!!!**



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t Goodz Carpbait, we haven't just made another bait... we've

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- Full HNV food-source baits
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- Rolled on specially designed slow-forming machines
- Built to lock in ingredients for longer during formation



This means our baits are designed for the digestive system of carp first – not to survive mass production lines. We've also developed a unique cooking process that lightly binds the natural food fibres, keeping structure to a minimum while retaining valuable soluble attractors and nutrients. This helps carp digest our bait easier while still boosting leakage and attraction in the water. While other companies are still designing baits to suit their machines.

We design machines to suit our bait!! This isn't evolution. This is revolution.

PHIL BRAUN JOINS THE ESP TEAM



We are very demanding circuit waters – and delighted to has been for the past 20 years. announce that Places like Conningbrook, Phil Braun has Nunnery Lakes, Burghfield and joined the ESP team. Phil is more recently the Linch Hill well known in the big fish Complex in Oxfordshire, are scene and has a very unique where Phil has fished his UK profile: As a traveling angler campaigns and caught some based out of Germany, he stunning carp over the years. fishes some of the UK's most As a specimen hunter Phil



likes to fish other countries and for other species as well – although carp is his first and main love, especially old English ones. Phil is a psychologist by trade and works as a university lecturer and leadership coach on topics around mental health and personal development. He has a philosophical outlook on current trends in society and a deep knowledge of our angling world which is brilliantly expressed through his writing. Check out Phil's article in the new @subsurface_journal Submag 4. We look forward to partnering with Phil and can't wait to start some exciting future!"

media projects together: especially a film to cover his angling story. X

Here's what Phil had to say: "I'm honoured to join ESP, our ethos has always been very close as ESP encapsulates the big carp spirit, a proper old school brand with a modern twist, it feels so good for me to join a team of anglers that I admire and here's to the future!"

WINGERWORTH LIDO FISHING BAN OVERTURNED



After months of from the Countryside Alliance, backlash and pressure, Big Duffs Fishing and the Derbyshire Angling Trust we want to thank each and every angler the Council has admitted an oversight on the ban they implemented on the Wingerworth Lido.

Fishing will now resume on an interim basis, which has been hailed as a success story, while providing a strong statement to any other councils looking to ban angling that it will not be taken lightly.

As well as those involved

in the original petition and completed questionnaires, as without the support, who knows what outcome may have been reached.

It just shows that despite the negativity we see in angling towards one another at times if we all stick together as we should, just want can be achieved!



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Big Carp 25

WELCOME TO PARKFIELD, EDDY STOCKER

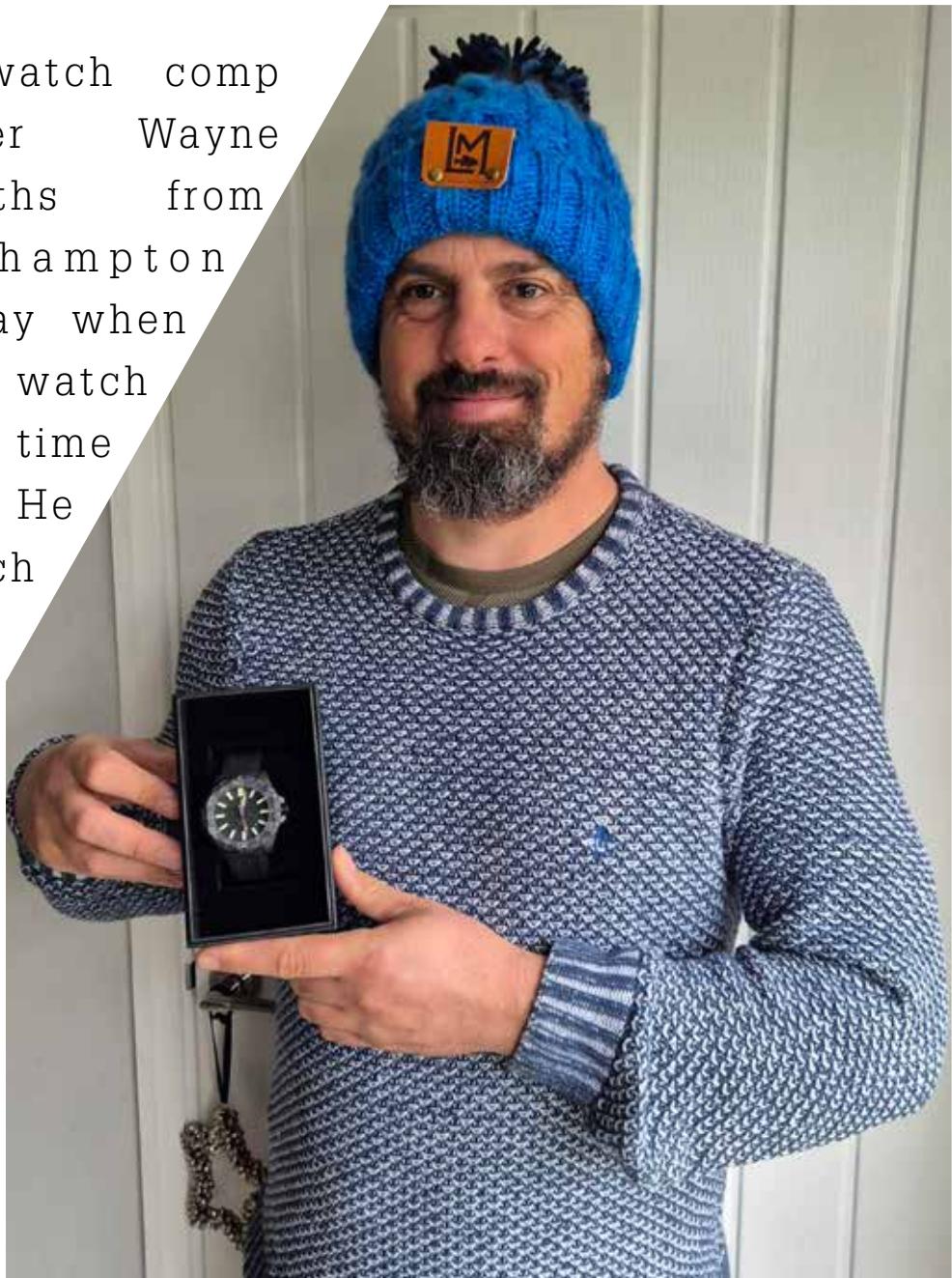


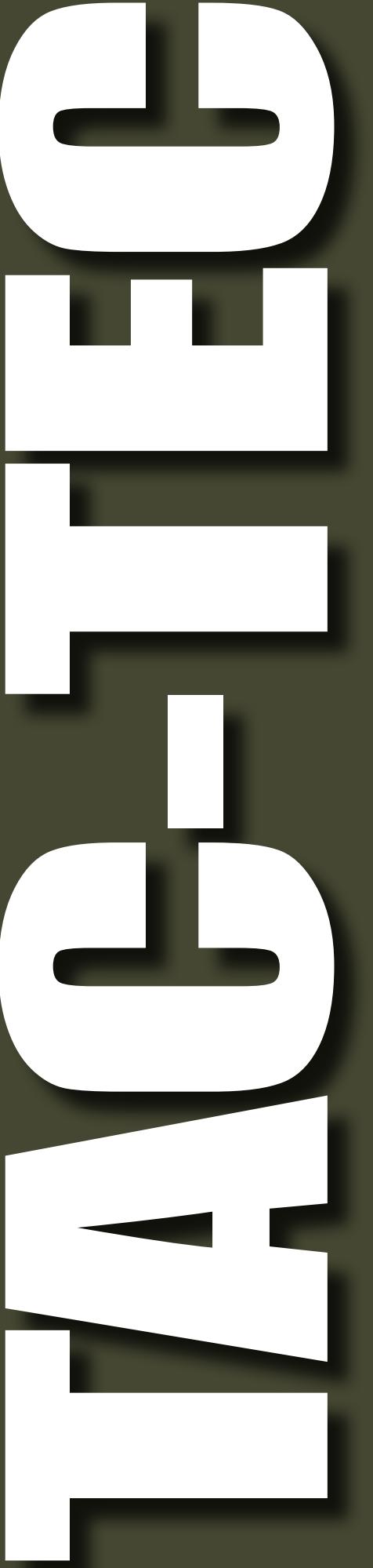
Parkfield would like has to offer! Loaded with welcome big fish advice and expert knowledge, angler Eddy Stocker Eddy has now joined the team to the team! For here at Parkfield. We welcome years and years Eddy has anyone to pop down for a chat, been one of Wirrals main BIG whether its rigs, tactics, bait or carp anglers, with success all just general knowledge Eddy over the country fishing carp is more than happy to help all! matches and chasing some of You will find Eddy behind the the nicest fish this country counter for now every Sunday

NITE WATCH COMPETITION WINNER

Nite watch competition winner Wayne Griffiths from Northampton was blown away when this fantastic watch was delivered in time for Christmas. He said " the watch is superb, thank you so much".

If you entered the competition and were not so lucky as Wayne but are still interested in getting a watch for yourself, check out the special readers offer where Nite offers Big Carp in this issue of Big Carp readers a special low price!!!





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duty corner blocks with guy be positioned on the shelter. rope carabiner attachments. Supplied with a groundsheet, 2-way heavy-duty guy ropes heavy-duty carry bag, guy ropes for increased strength during and pegs testing conditions. Side door configuration allows bivvies to

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- www.avidcarp.com

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We keep getting asked when they will be back in stock as on the initial launch. Not long to wait now!

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Upgrade your bankside organisation with the Ruggage 40 Litre Rucksack & Accessory Case Bundle. The Ruggage 40L Rucksack includes four accessory cases, all fitting neatly inside for a clean, grab-and-go setup. With lumbar support, padded adjustable straps, and five double-zipped external pockets, it's ideal when barrowing isn't an option. Featuring a magnetic EVA moulded utility tray for tying rigs, internal mesh pockets, tough Hydropel 1680D water-resistant fabric, and a wipe-clean PVC base - this rucksack is built for serious anglers. www.ridgemonkey.co.uk £129.99



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COMPLEX RECORD



Ian Craigie recently fished at his syndicate lake, banking a number of fish topped by a new PB and complex record in the shape of this brute of a common at 48lb 12oz!

**SEND YOUR CATCH
REPORTS IN TO
bigcarpmagazine@hotmail.com**

LOCAL LUNKER



A couple of nights ago my dream of a local biggun became reality in the form of this 55lber.

PB ALERT!!



Ben Watson with probably one of the best in the midlands and it tipped the scales at an impressive 49lb on the nose.

BIRCH BONANZA



Richard Delooze lived out every carp angler's dream during a recent 72-hour session on Birch Lake at Old Mill Lakes, smashing his PB not once, not twice, but three times in less than 12 hours! Richard recorded an incredible tally of fish, including Scar at 50lb 12oz and Veiny at 50lb 8oz, which he backed up with a 44lb 10oz common and a 35lb 12oz mirror, plus three smaller fish.





CATCH REPORTS

Andre Kille with what has now become Wraysbury's second largest resident, a mirror known as Rocky's Revenge, at an all-time high 53lb 14oz

ROCKY
53



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A new UK
pb 58lb 6oz
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PERFECT START



Of course, location in winter is paramount and this campaign was no different. Once I'd established the holding areas and patrol routes, I could set traps accordingly. The fish would work their way through the deeper gully's between the shallow bars, moving from one set of reed to another through the course of the day, often following the sunlight.

Having bait and rigs in place for the periods they'd be moving was essential, with the majority of bites coming from mid-morning to early afternoon. Small patches of bait (5 spombs) of easily digestible food (hemp, corn, crumb and naturals) could often produce three bites in a day.

Rig wise, due to a leader ban, I opted to fish 18lb Kontour straight through to a Lead Clip, keeping visibility to a minimum in the clear water. Rigs were combi rigs, made from 20lb IQ2, connected to 18lb Supernatural with a size 4 Kamakura Wide Gape, in which I preferred a bait with little buoyancy on the clean silt



SIMMO INNIT



Essex Manors Big simmo came out to Brett Hudson at a whopping 56lb 8oz well done Brett.

SCARRED FOR LIFE



Congratulations to Benjamin Phillips on his new PB, Kingsmead's Scarred Mirror at a weight of 53lb

WINGHAM WHACKER



What a way to end the summer! Landing our biggest resident at a whopping 63lb 6oz. Topping off a mega season for Dave.

SUPER COOPER



Jared "coops" Cooper with a stunning 45lb+

DREAM START



It turned into a dream start to December for Perry Alabaster, when he visited the Monks Pit syndicate this week, as he got his hands on one of the lake's 40-pounders that had evaded him. Following a quiet night in his first-choice swim, Perry woke to drizzly rain and a fresh southerly wind – enough reason to up sticks. Perry deployed his go-to approach: PB wafers nestled inside solid bags of Crayfish Mini Mix pellets. Just into darkness, Perry was staring down at an absolute unit, the coveted Double F, a carp he'd long hoped to cross off his hit list. Even better, this one marked a big milestone, taking his tally of different UK forties to a staggering 65!

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STUBLES' HAUL





A great session on Essex Manor for Mark Stubles taking 5 fish, 45.12, 44.04, 39.07, 34.05, 34.02, definitely made the freezing temperatures more bearable!

LONGREACH LUNKER



I started the campaign in mid September to fish Longreach and try to target the 3 well known carp that swim in this amazing venue. My plan was to fish through the autumn and build up a feel for the venue and map out some areas and gather knowledge which might give me an opportunity later down the line. Never did I expect to catch 1 of the 3 so early in the campaign but that become reality last week. Starburst at a top weight of 53.10lb

SLICE OF LUCK



When I saw the length of this carp and those big apple slice scales as she rolled a few meters from the bank I held my breath until she was soon mine! Happy days

OLD AS THE HILLS



Made up with this one, my first fish and a personal best from my Berkshire syndicate 51.6 of old English common carp"

SCOTT'S GOT A FLOPPY ONE



The Floppy Tail Lin just over 43lb!!! for Scott Lloyd



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A blend of tuna, krill and real food items with added spices and attractors complimented with GoodZ own amino booster that enhances the strong food signals emitted from this bait.

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EARL'S COMMON

Darren Earl with
the big common at
46lb



DARREN'S BELTER



Congratulations to Darren Belton on the capture
of a new lake record weighing in at 53lb 4oz

B2 RECORD SMASHED

Jo Higginson has smashed the B2 lake record with this massive 49lb 15oz mirror!!



BACK OF THE NET



ZAMORA with this insane 44lb 7oz from the dream making Grenville

URBAN 50!!

Roy Penman with
the lake record 50lb
2oz mirror



B1'S NEW 50



David Lee has landed B1's second 50
at 50lb 6oz mirror!!

Oak Lakes Fisheries

www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk



Here's a selection of some of Oak Lakes' cracking carp



COME AND CHECK OUT OUR PIKE FISHING

<< 39 lb exactly - caught this morning by Beansie fishing Pipe lake - absolutely stunning winter carp. Well done John.



25 lb from Pipe Lake - he was proper buzzing!!



17 lb 10 oz caught at weekend

Gary Pearman with an old friend of a common 26lb 8oz with a liking to A.M. Bait Services bounty happy December angling



Cheeky little overnigher. Resulted in 8 takes and 5 fish between us. Not a bad little 12 hours

LOCATION IS KEY



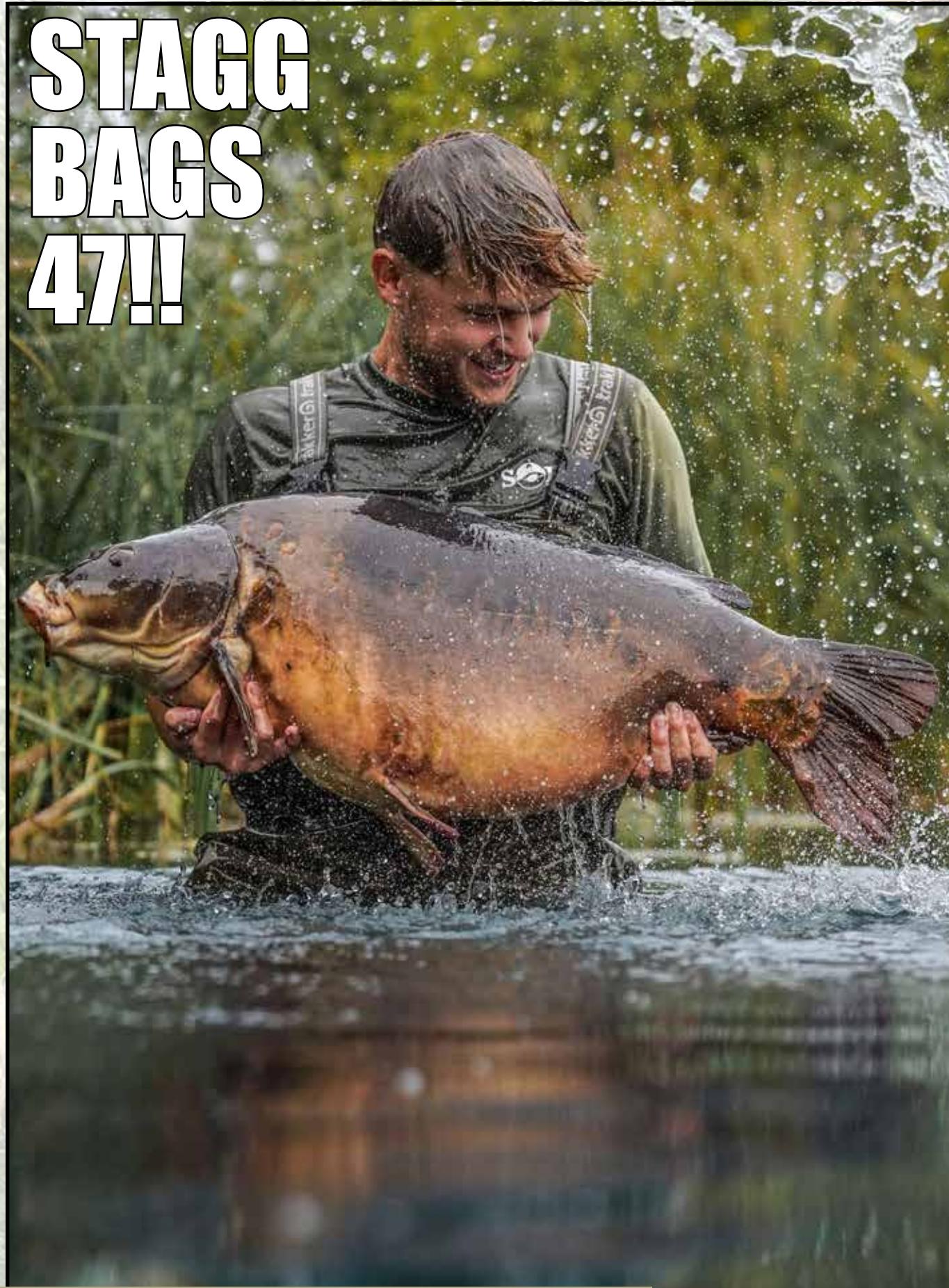
Many will know that location is key at all times when out on the bank, more so than ever during the colder months. Danny Martin proved just that over the weekend!

Opting to initially fish Peg 2 for 48 hours, it was soon known to him that the fish just were not in the peg. After finally seeing a show down in front of Peg 5 (potentially the only show seen all weekend), he opted for a quick move for his last night.

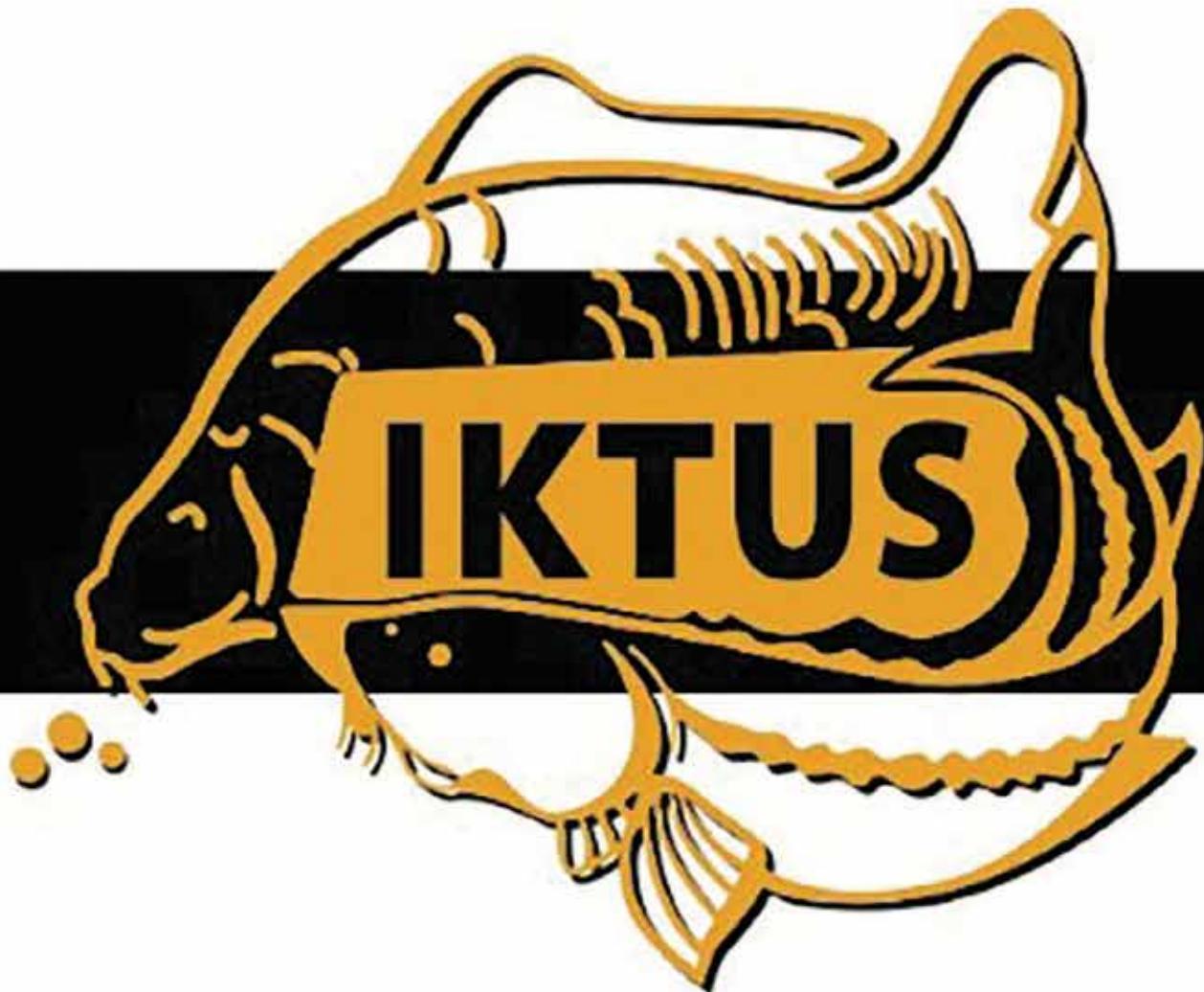
This proved extremely successful as the next 24 hours see him land 8 fish to 42lb 6oz, including 4 over the 30lb barrier!



STAGG BAGS 47!!



An awesome Church Mirror tipping the scales at 47lb 2oz for Lenny Stagg



FISHING RESORT



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BEN ALLEN

NIGHT TIME PHOTOGRAPHY

As autumn transitions into winter, the carp's feeding habits will usually switch to the hours of darkness which in turn, can mean night photography becomes an essential skill. Ben Allen, our lead photographer at Korda HQ runs through his tips for improved night shots. Camera Settings – I'll always have my camera set to manual mode. That way, I know exactly what I'm asking my camera to do. A good starting point would be F4, 1/100, ISO200 with a white balance of around 4700k. Flash & Light Sources - I use a Canon Speedlite 400EXiii and have it set to TTL mode. This is an auto setting that



enables the camera and flash to communicate and achieve correct exposure. I have my flash pointing up at a 45-degree angle and use a diffuser, this will help eliminate glare on the fish. Another thing I do is shine a headtorch or similar onto the subject, helping the camera focus on the subject (the carp, NOT the angler).

Body & Lens - I use a Canon R5 with a 50mm lens for flash

shots. This focal length gives a nice even exposure throughout the image, which is what you are looking for. Wider angle lenses can overexpose the fish as the camera is a lot closer to the subject, so I would avoid using these.

Location - Look for somewhere that offers a flat, solid backdrop; trees, bushes, reeds for example, this will help bounce the flash and light the



image. Have some separation between the subject and the background, this will make the subject stand out. Without a backdrop, you'll end up with a completely black background behind the subject.

Self-Takes - All of the above still apply, you will just need an intervalometer and a tripod to mount the camera to. An intervalometer allows you to set how many images

the camera will take, and at what interval, (some cameras have this setting built in) For the flash to reload, I would recommend about 5 seconds between shots.

Editing - Using apps such as Lightroom or Photoshop can really enhance your night shots. Upping shadows, reducing highlights and adding a small amount of contrast are good starting points.

EXCLUSIVE

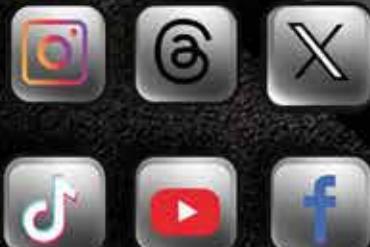




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GAZ FAREHAM

THE SHARP END

I've been sharpening my hooks now ever since the first techniques and materials became available to do so, when done well, I've always believed it to be a big edge. I'm not a fan of a highly sharpened hook where a lot of material has been taken away to create an ultra-fine point, much preferring a 'light' touch and just enough to shift the hook from the out of the packet

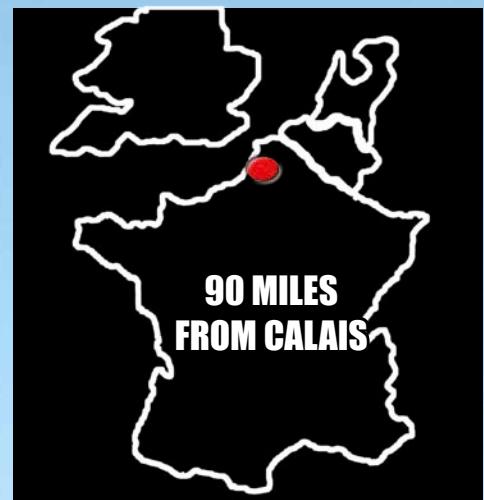
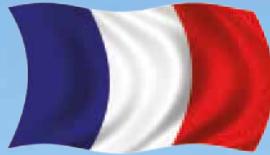


sharpness to something with a stickier, super sharp touch that will grab at the slightest opportunity. I aim for just 3/4 strokes on each side of the point, and the same on the top face, removing as little of the 'meat' of the point as I can to get that needle-sharp point I'm looking for. The main issue where real care needs to be taken when sharpening

hooks is when taking multiple casts to get a rig on a spot - sharpened hooks are a lot more susceptible to 'dinking' than out of the packet ones and it's essential to check the point after every single cast. If you don't sharpen carefully, or aren't confident to do so, a much better option is to use them straight from the packet, or a Kamakura.

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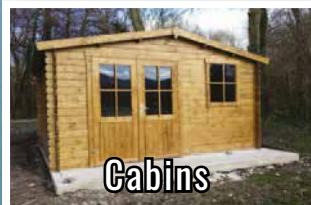
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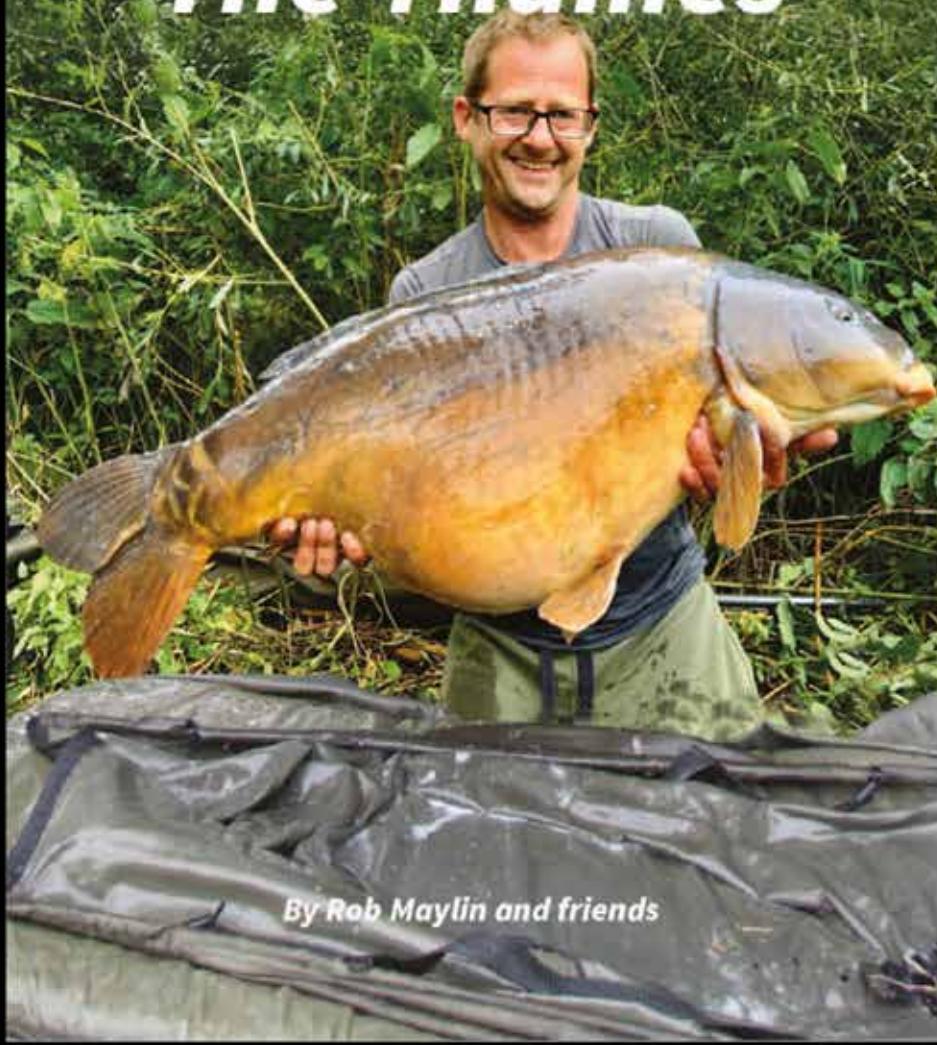
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Secrets of The Thames



By Rob Maylin and friends

The River Thames flows through southern England. It is the longest river entirely in England, with a total length of 215 miles (346km) and the second longest in the United Kingdom, after the River Severn. While it is best known for flowing through London, the river also flows alongside other towns and cities, including Oxford, Reading, Henley-on-Thames, and Windsor.

The river gives its name to three informal areas: the Thames Valley, a region of England around the river between Oxford and west London; the Thames Gateway; and the greatly overlapping Thames Estuary around the tidal Thames to the east of London and including the waterway itself. Thames Valley Police is a formal body that takes its name from the river, covering three counties.

In an alternative name, derived from its long tidal reach up to Teddington Lock in south west London, the lower reaches of the river are called the Tideway.

It rises at Thames Head in Gloucestershire, and flows into the North Sea

via the Thames Estuary. On its way, it passes through London, the country's capital, where the river is deep and navigable to ships; the Thames drains the whole of Greater London. Its tidal section, reaching up to Teddington Lock, includes most of its London stretch and has a rise and fall of 7 metres (23ft).

Along its course are 45 navigation locks with accompanying weirs. Its catchment area covers a large part of South Eastern and a small part of Western England and the river is fed by 38 named tributaries. The river contains over 80 islands. With its waters varying from freshwater to almost seawater, the Thames supports a variety of wildlife and has a number of adjoining Sites of Special Scientific Interest, with the largest being in the remaining parts of the North Kent Marshes and covering 5,449 hectares (13,460 acres).

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JAMES HARRISON

EFFORT EQUALS REWARDS

Afew issues back regroup. I documented my enforced position of having to fish overnighters due to new work commitments. It panned out well as I didn't have to leave too early in the morning and often caught within an hour of having to go to work. I'd be lying though if I said nearly 10 weeks of overnighters had not taken their toll on me both physically and mentally. Luckily spawning time came early and that seemed a good time to have a break and regroup. As is typical of many venues spawning was sporadic and dragged out for a couple of months. Our particular lake doesn't shut but does have the policy of not fishing near any spawning activity. I did do a couple of sessions in this time not really because I was dying to go fishing but more over I couldn't be arsed to drive home in all the traffic. The lake was moody though and the relaunch of Sharp Tackle was taking up more and more time and I felt out of touch with the lake.

The summer came and with it a massive algae bloom. I know many lakes suffered this with the extended summer we had. The lake turned almost a luminous green colour - it looked sick and didn't inspire any confidence in getting a bite. I know the fish are pretty much unaffected, indeed they can just swim around gulping a highly nutritious soup all day, so my thinking was why would they want boilies and pellets? I could wait. So I planned an autumn assault.

The algae bloom dragged on and on. The weed got heavier and heavier and there were very few fishing the lake through the hot summer. There was very little information to base any 'assault' on. Many swims were almost unfishable due to the weed that had gathered in front of the swims - often stretching out 20y. The modern angler has got lazy in my opinion. I'm one of the only 100 members who carries

a proper weed rake and I'm not afraid to use it. But part of me knew my efforts would probably reward others - such is the often cruel nature of carp fishing. Effort does not always equal reward where carp fishing is concerned. Needless to say the carp were loving the areas of floor to ceiling weed. They sat in there for weeks with only the odd capture here and there. I tried clearing a couple of areas but within a matter of hours they'd closed up and were back to being unfishable. I could see that the autumn was going to be tricky at best.

Time was cracking on. It was now the getting towards the end of August and the water was still green but definitely less toxic looking. A spell of low pressure was due and I felt there was a chance of a bite from one of the deeper areas of the lake. My carpy senses proved me right and the first overnighter saw a 22lb linear

on the bank. I was back again it kicked me in the teeth for 2 nights later and this time a 24lb mirror and 13lb stockie came my way. So far so good. Back again and another chunky 20 and a 26lb fully graced the net. I was back that night and landed another 20lb mirror and an 18lb common. I rolled on doing another overnighter and had two more mirrors of 20lb and 19lb. Not a bad start to the 'autumn assault'. Then, as carp fishing often does,

the next couple of weeks. It went really moody again. A few more were now fishing but there were only odd bites around the lake. Nothing that would suggest the carp were preferring one area over another. There were still some large beds of weed and they were probably just sat in them happy as Larry.

When the fishing goes like this I tend to plot up around





the middle of the lake. I can then see as much of it as possible and just hope to see something worth moving to. After nearly 3 weeks of blanks came a breakthrough. A 22lb mirror finally saw its way into my net. Nothing was really showing at all. I was relying on a bit of intuition and a lot of luck. A few days later and I tried my luck in the top bay. Some fish had been seen there

but it's a pretty deep bowl and the weather didn't really suit it. I opted to fish on the top of the drop off in around 5ft of water and I was very thankful for the 21lb mirror that came my way. I did a couple more overnights in the bay but I should have moved back to the middle area as it did a couple of bites while I was in there. They don't tend to hang around in the bay for long. 3

Dear Santa,
PLEASE
No more
socks this
Christmas!

Wish list:

Seasonal Tactics and Techniques - Autumn/Winter

The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

The Darker Side of Carp Fishing

Old School Carping Volume 4

History of Yateley Volume 3

Under the Radar Volume 2

In Pursuit of the Largest

Further off Beaten Track

Advanced Terminal Rigs

Secrets of the Thames



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overnighters was too long.

A few days later I was back in the middle area of the lake. The night passed quietly but just after first light I had a take and immediately I knew this was probably better than the low twenties I'd been catching. A slow dogged fight. No speedy runs. Just steady power and big nods on the rod. The carp got weeded up solid. The boat was only a couple of swims up so I put the rod back on the alarm on a fairly tight clutch and went to get it. Once in the boat with the rod, I slowly pulled myself out out to the solid mass. I couldn't feel any signs of a carp. Once directly above the weed I slackened off the clutch, put the rod down and started peeling away the weed from the braid. Slowly I lifted the braid and then the leader knot appeared. Still no sign of a carp. I peeled more weed off and lifted more of the leader. Suddenly the leader was yanked from my hand

and I saw the back of a carp shoot out from the weed in the direction of a another weed bed. I wound down and pulled the boat over to the new weed bed. Same process. Slowly lift and remove the weed. Again I got half way down the leader and the carp took off again. This time I kept the leader in my hand and opted to see if I could hand line the carp in. I've often found this easier in a boat, particularly when you're at close quarters. I got a better look at the carp and felt my initial feeling of it being one of the better ones might have been a little premature - typical - all this agro for low twenty. My handlining was gaining the upper hand and after about 15minutes out in the boat I handlined the carp into the net. Got you you little bastard!!

It wasn't until I'd paddled back to my swim that I noticed the large cream belly poking out from the sides of the dark

back - 'Oh hello'. Maybe I was right. Indeed I was, as I lifted her onto the mat on the pontoon. Definitely going to go close to 30 I thought. The scales confirmed it - 33lb 4oz. A carp named Yahoo at her best weight. An absolute cracker of a carp too. I was well chuffed. That made up for the past few weeks of blanks and I went to work with a smile on my face.

It was now the last week of October. The previous couple of weeks were back to scratching for a bite with only a couple of doubles for my efforts. I had however landed my 50th carp of the season - a target I had set myself. Now I just needed one over 35lb. One particular swim fishing towards an island had been doing a number of fish but I couldn't get in there. The closest I could get was on the opposite bank. I'd seen a couple of fish as I'd been talking to the angler in the going swim, so I pushed the

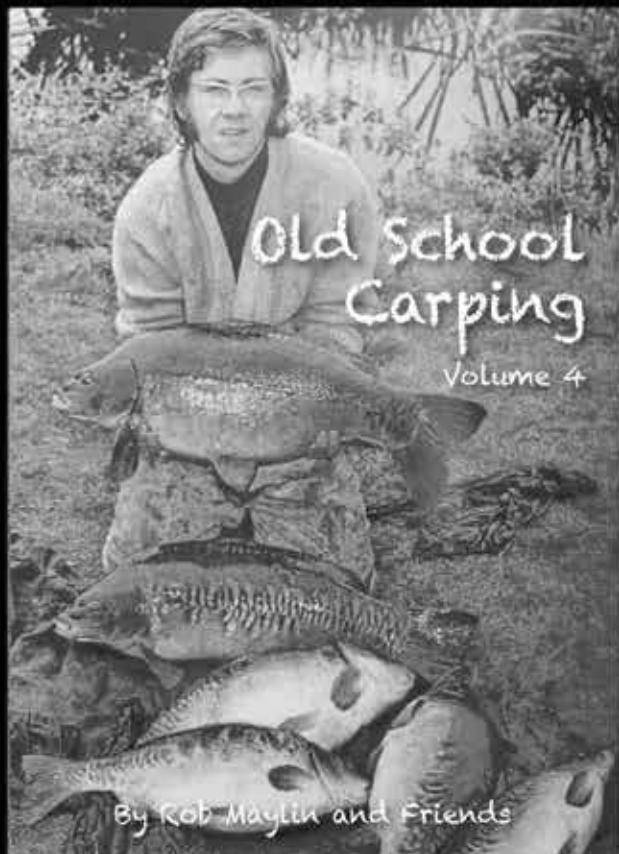
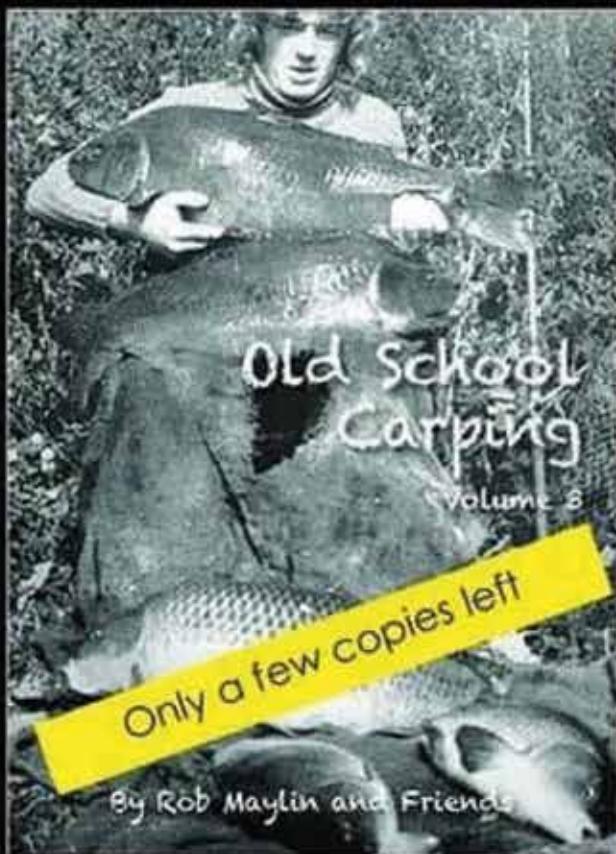
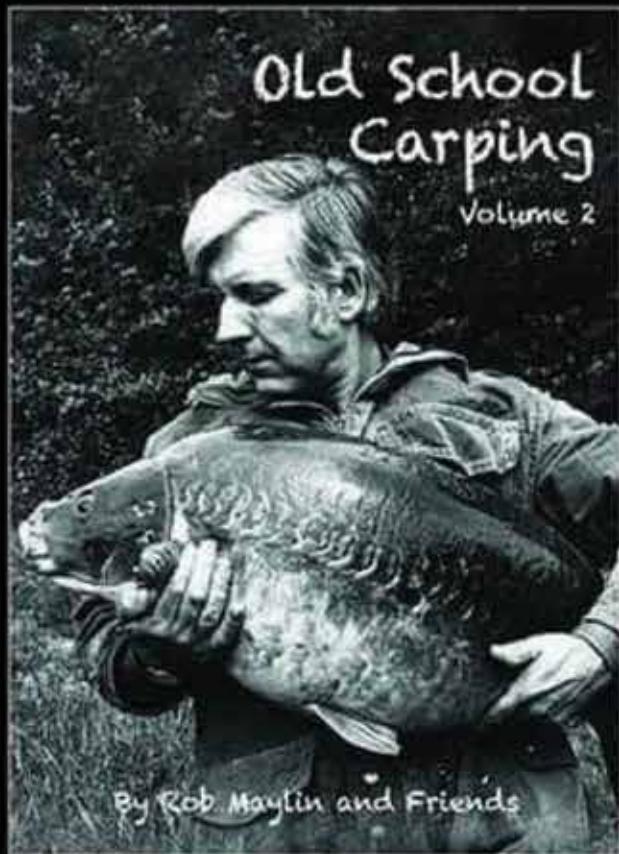
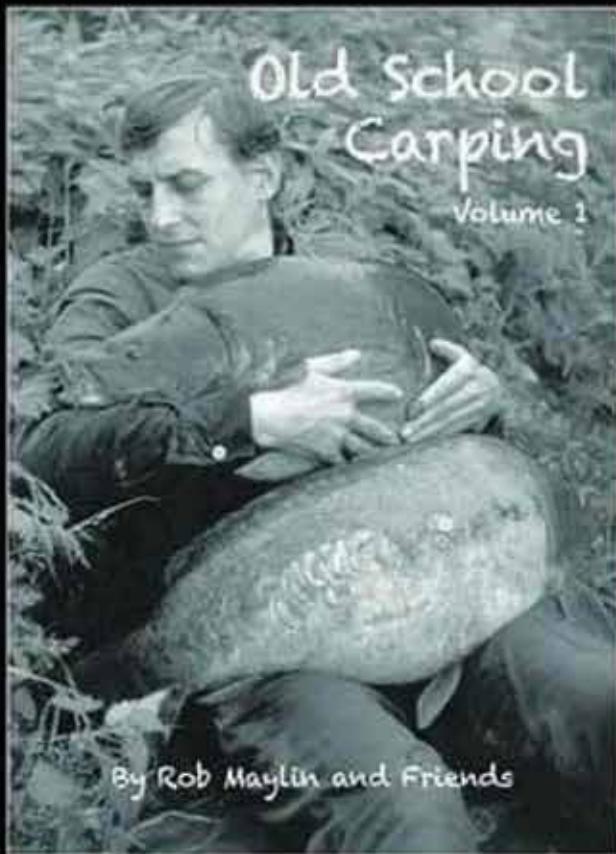
gear round and stood in the swim for a while. Something didn't feel right so I moved up to the next swim that fished down a channel between the island and the bank. This area too had done a few fish lately but again, I felt by watercraft senses pulling me to the deeper water. The air pressure and temperatures had dropped in the past few days and rain was due any minute, so I hurriedly set up the bivvy just as the rain started - 'Great!'

Luckily I knew my spots here and after making a PVA bag cover out of a pop up tub for the bait boat I was soon fishing without being too wet. It was getting dark and the rain came in fits and starts. Wrapped in my ragged sleeping bag I started to think what the f**k was I doing? All this effort and forced lack of comfort to try to catch a fish. I even posted on Facebook that we must be masochists for what we put ourselves

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through in this fishing lark.

The wind and rain buffeted my shelter through the night and by day light I'd had very little sleep and nothing to show for my efforts. The morning bite time came and I could feel another blank was on the cards. At least it had stopped raining and I might get packed up in the dry.

I was still wrapped up in my bag watching an episode of Star Trek when the bleepy background noises in the programme morphed into a slow take on my right hand rod. On picking up the rod the carp moved slowly and then went solid - for f**k's sake - it was weeded. I was stood in my pants and t-shirt getting colder by the second. Just as I was about to get the boat the weed gave way and I gained some line before being weeded up again. I don't enjoy these types of battle - not until the carp is in the net anyway. The water was well down after

the hot summer so I moved back and up the swim where I could get an extra 2 or 3ft higher. I kept the pressure on and again the weed bed gave way and I gained another few valuable yards of line. I could see another significant bank of weed between me and where the fish was. This was going to be a test of wills - not just tackle. I'd already stepped up to size 2 hooks exactly for this situation. The continued pressure eventually saw the carp move again. I could now very slowly pump it back to the bank. It literally was just inch by inch. The mass then reached the weed bed on the surface. Thankfully it moved but the mass of weed on the line was horrendous. I'd now not felt anything carpy for about 10 minutes. By now I was having to walk the weed bed back towards. I got it as close in as I could. Then slackened off the clutch and put the rod down. I got hold

of the leader and sunk the net under the mass of weed. Was the carp still there in the middle of it all. I tried lifting the net but the ball of weed was too big - shit! With one hand on the leader I stripped away at the weed, trying to make it small enough to get in the net. As I pulled one lump off I suddenly caught sight of a tail. It was outside the net. F*****K!! I shoved the net further out praying I wouldn't snap an arm under the weight. The tail started flapping. NOOOOOO DONT START FIGHTING NOW. All I could think of doing now was grab the carp and the weed and try to pull it over the net and then scoop it all up. It wasn't pretty or anywhere near text book but I managed to pick up both net arms and flop the carp and the weed into the net. JESUS!!

At this point all I'd seen was a bit of tail. What I had seen hadn't made me think

anything special was in the net. In fact I still thought it was going to be a low to mid 20. With the carp trapped in the net with all the weed I quickly got some tracky bottoms and a hoodie on. I was freezing. I then started to pull off the weed. Even as I exposed it's back I still didn't think this was anything special. As I pulled more weed off the carp just got deeper and deeper. YES!! Another one of the better ones. I couldn't quite decide what fish it was. But either of them could be upper 30. The funny thing was, everyone was after one particular fish, The Rebate, as it was bound to be over 40 and the lake had not broken the 40lb barrier yet. When I tried to lift it out in the sling I knew straight away that was indeed an upper 30 at least. It was so much heavier than anything I'd caught recently. Could this finally break my UK PB? Could it even go over 40lb? I

EXCLUSIVE





was trembling as I pulled out and I heard him shout back the last of the weed. It was "YES MATE".

a certainly a big carp. My scales were already set and I just needed to take off 3lb for the sling. The needle shot past 40lb and bounced around the 43lb 8oz mark. In my head I was certain as I always urr on the side of caution with weights. I shouted out "FORTY" at the top of my voice. Kai was fishing about 200 yards away

I quickly unhooked the carp and got it retained in an area clear of weed and started the list of text and phone calls. It was then I started to think I bet this f**cker is 39lb 15oz. I'm going to look a right twat. Kev and Simmo who run the syndicate were ecstatic but wanted a witnessed weight. I rang Fidz the bailiff who lived



nearby - he couldn't get there a weight lift from my virtual soon enough. We hoisted the shoulders. I've been fishing for sling up with the scales on a these creatures for 40 years. storm pole. Fidz ummed and A UK 40 had eluded me all arred - "just f**kin' call it," that time. In my defense, I've I shouted at him, "I'm not not fished that many waters fussed about an ounce or 2 if with them in. Well, that's my it's over 40." He just laughed, excuse anyway. I knew when hesitated some more, then I joined this syndicate, as said, "40lb 10oz" member no1, that my first UK

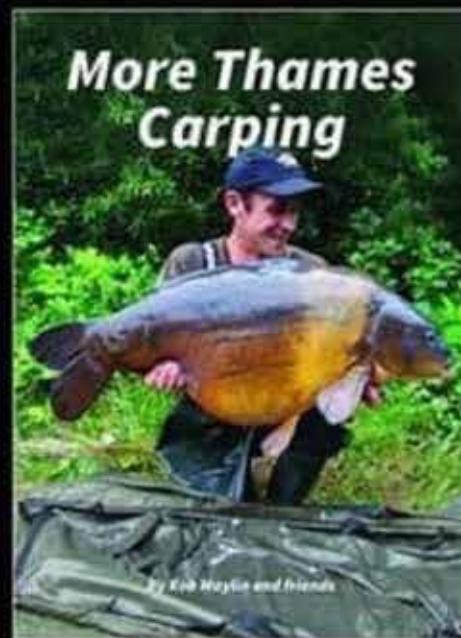
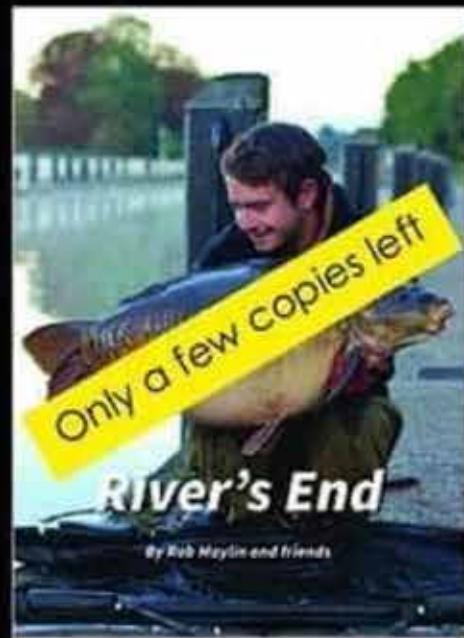
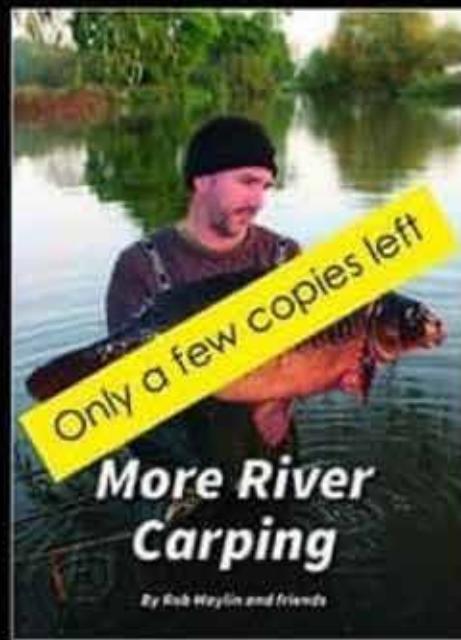
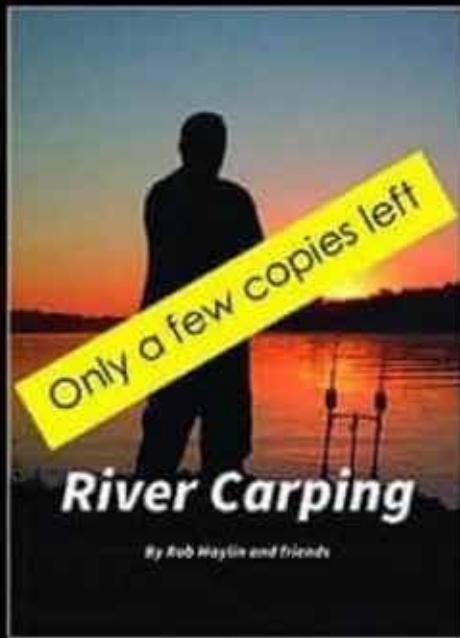
I felt a massive wave of relief, 40 would come from here. To of excitement, of emotion and see all the blood, sweat and



tears put in by Kev and Simmo 40 and I dont think it would and a good portion of the have been the same. I know members to get the syndicate quite a few hardcore members to what it is today it was all a were worried that might collective effort. I'd put a lot happen. Thankfully, someone of effort in this season. But was shining down on me that you know how carp fishing morning and the fairy tale goes. A member's guest could ending actually played out have easily landed this first for once.

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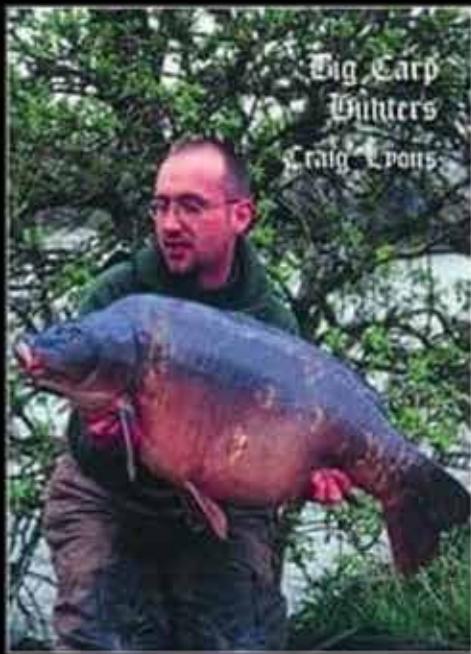


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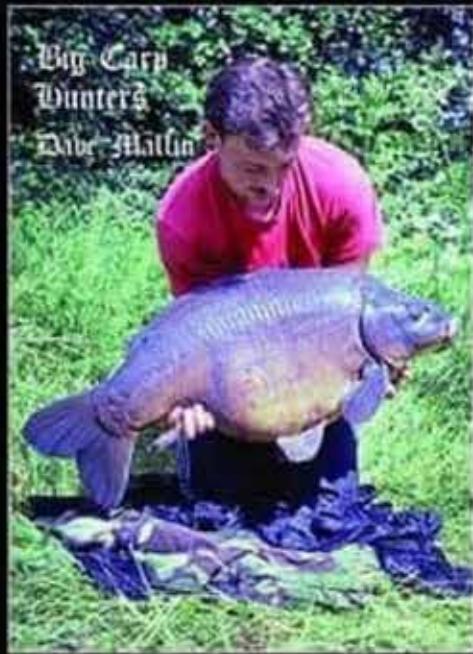
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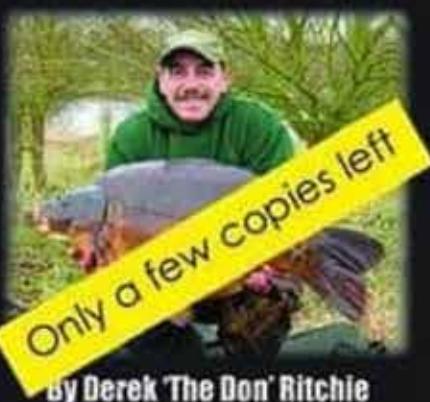
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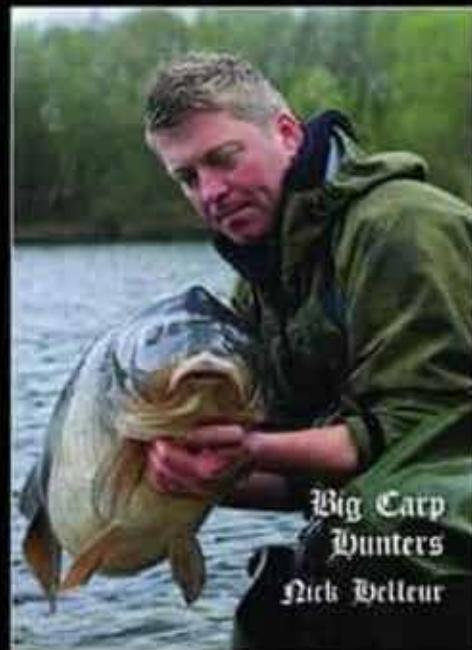


By Derek 'The Don' Ritchie

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MARK BRYANT

WINTER TACTICS

Over the years it's in my winter water choices. It seems more and more of and evident that my winter success has also small weather been off the back of finding front changes can make all the sun facing, shallow areas difference on shallow lakes of each lake I've fished. in the winter. The depth of Drops in pressure, wet and water really does play a part windy weather can certainly



create those little windows of opportunity during the coldest of months to work a bite or two.

Another crucial element of my winter approach is super soft baits, baits that have been soaked in warm water (not boiling) along with powders and liquids. Now I'm not aiming to wash baits out, I'm simply aiming to create an almost paste like, super soft ball of food which the carp find far more appealing in the winter as it takes far

less energy to eat them.

In addition to my soft baits, I like to utilise paste wraps on the lead and around the hook bait also. This gives a super soluble layer of attraction around my hook bait that seems to work everywhere, it's also a forgotten method it seems but ignore it at your peril. Lastly the carp at this time of year just look extra special, that's all the motivation I need to keep at it. Wrap up warm and good luck with your winter adventures.

EXCLUSIVE



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LIMITED EDITION • SIGNED AND NUMBERED

Legendary Carp Paintings



- Basil
- Heather
- The Black Mirror
- The Royal Forty
- The Bishop
- The Burghfield Common
- Jumbo
- Two Tone
- Mary and Mary's Mate



OSCAR THORNTON

TOP 5 WINTER TIPS

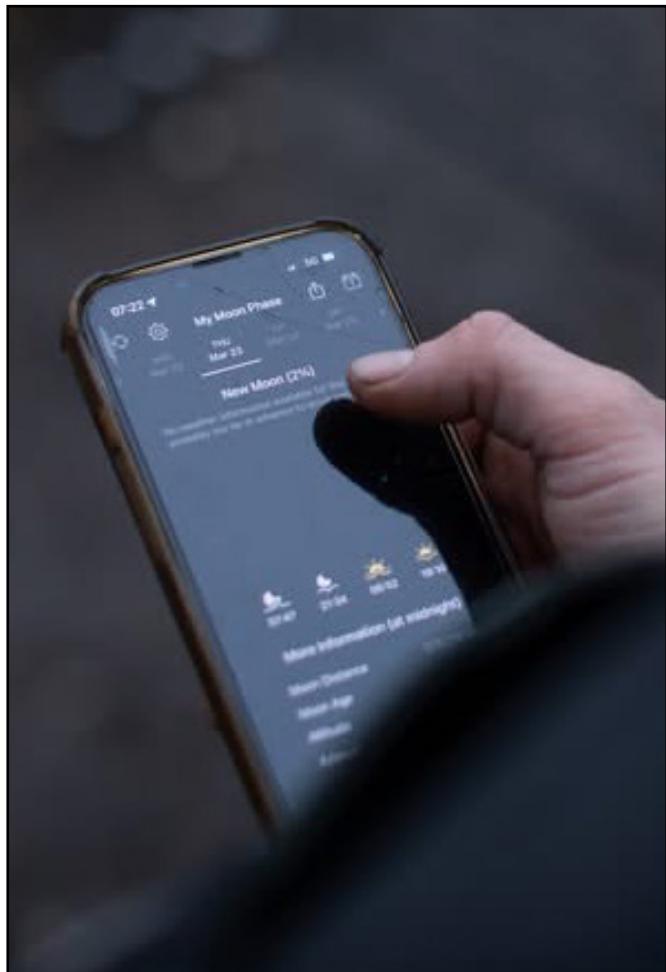
Want to make the most of your winter sessions? Check out these tips from @oscarthornton2 to stay ahead this season!

Being cold kills motivation. Invest in warm gear—jackets, salopettes, and thick socks—to keep active and alert. Get up and listen for shows instead of watching your phone!

1 - Stay Warm and Stay Sharp!

2 - Set That Alarm!

Wake up at 1 AM and listen



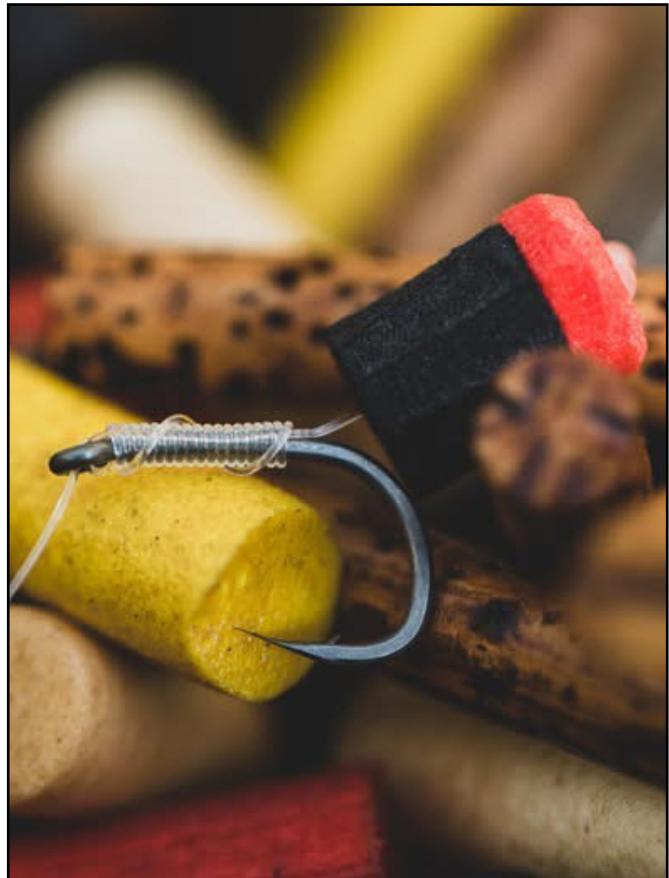
for shows. Just one show could reveal the stocks whereabouts and change your winter!

3 - Go Natural with Bait!

Maggots and casters are unbeatable in winter, carp never tire of eating them! You must try them where rules allow.

4 - Master the Zigs!

Carp cruise mid-to-upper layers in winter. Don't just half-heartedly use zigs—







commit fully! Put them on all rods, adjust depths and colours, and WORK them!

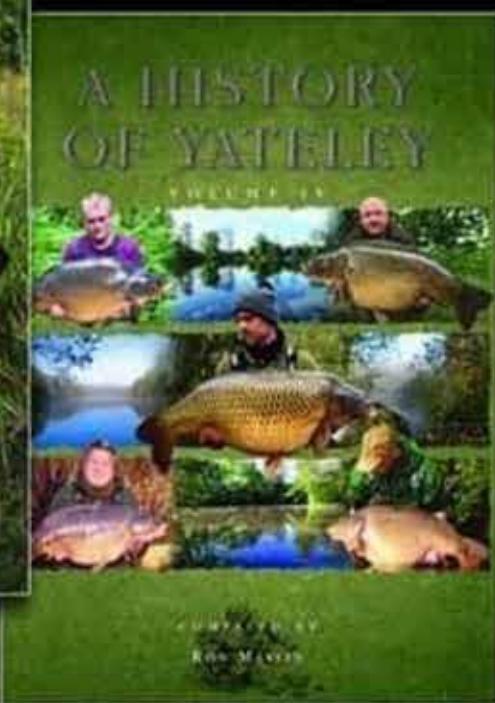
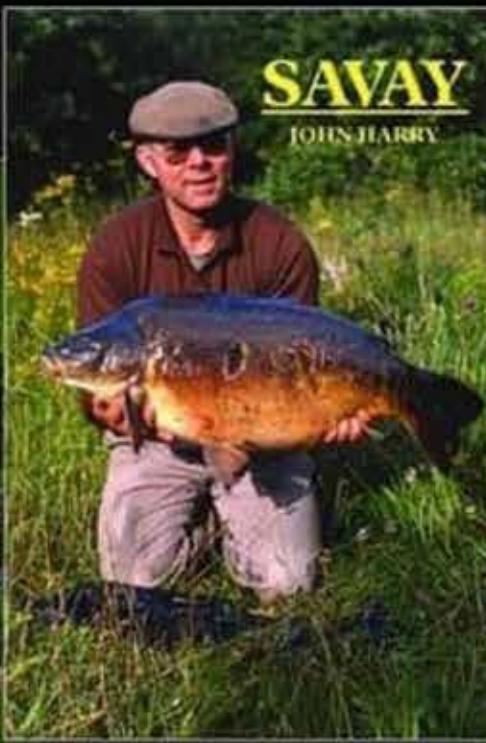
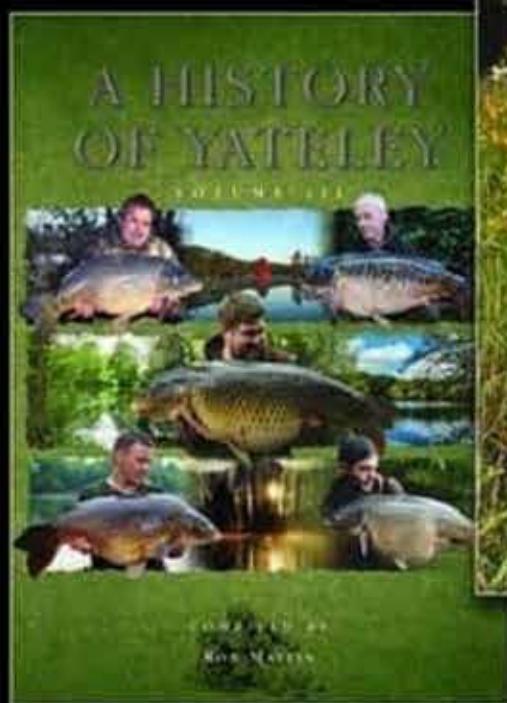
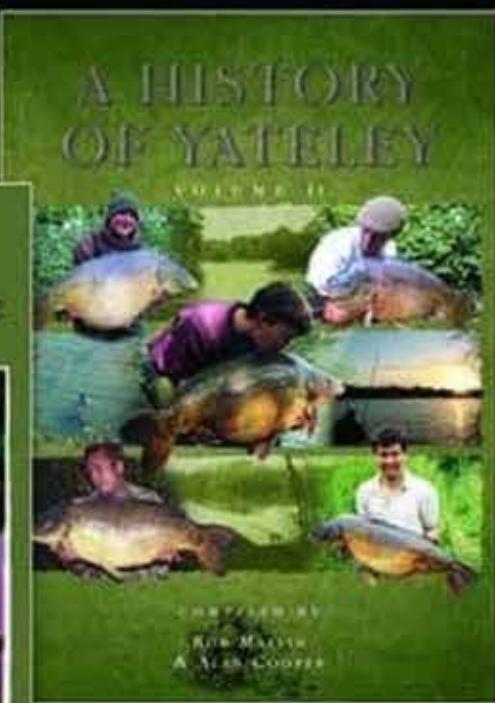
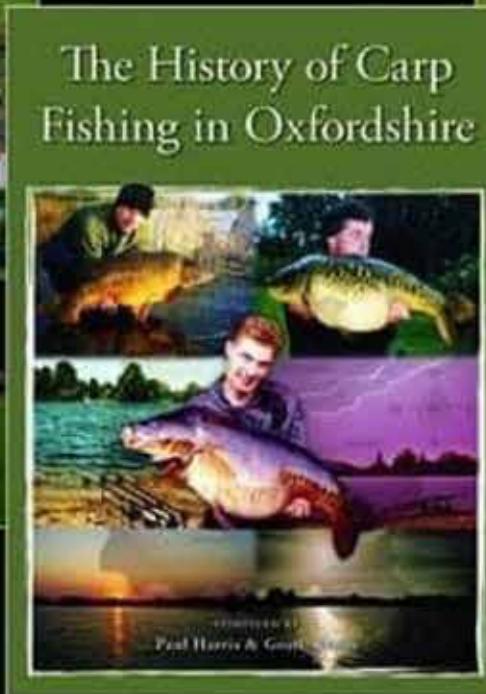
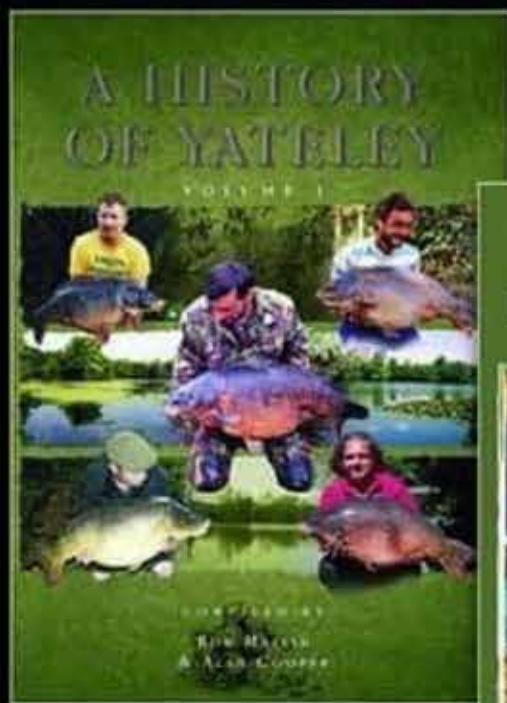
5 - Watch the Weather!

Favourable conditions like low-pressure fronts or rising temps can spark feeding spells. Sometimes, just a few hours with PVA bags in pre-baited spots can deliver BIG results!

Stay warm, stay focused, and make this winter your most productive yet!



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RICK CHRYC

HOLDEN'S HAUL

Rick Chryc's super haul is one for the HISTORY BOOKS. Rick wrapped up a 5-night session on Holdens that most of us could only ever dream of... but he went and made it reality. Fishing from Swim 2 — his last choice, by the way — things flipped FAST when the spot lit up... and it didn't just rock, it rocked the whole complex.

First up... the one and only Sergeant.NEW top weight. NEW lake record. 48lb 8oz. That alone is a trip maker — but what happened next is the stuff



anglers fantasise about...

Next in the net:

The Camel – 43lb 8oz

The Dustbin – 43lb 4oz

Holdens is chasing down Pettitt's now — and at this rate, we could easily have two super water on the complex in no time!! We didn't get proper pics of the Sergeant due to a few minor issues, but the mat shot

confirmed the ID.

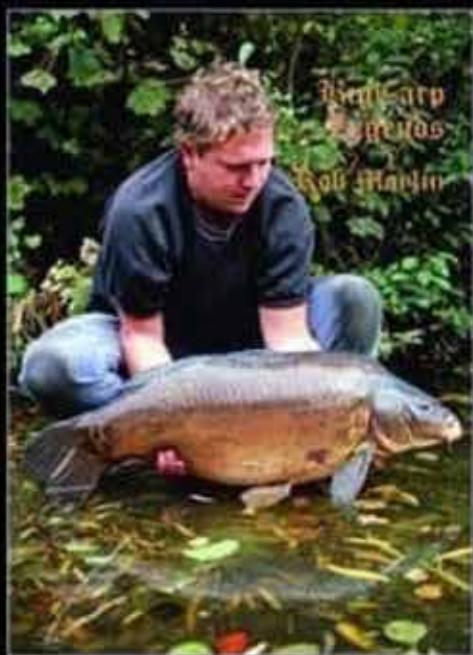
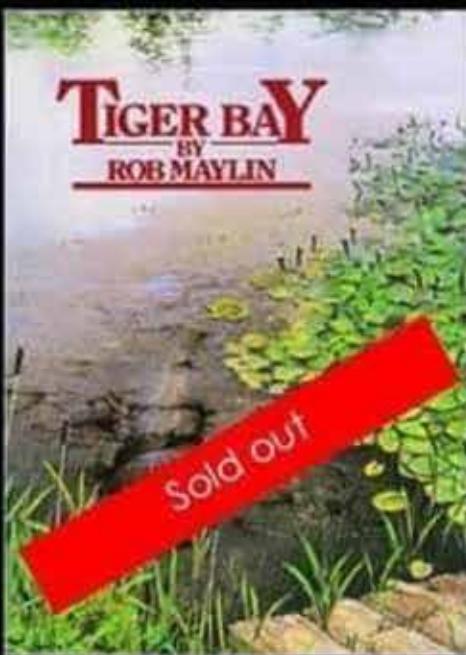
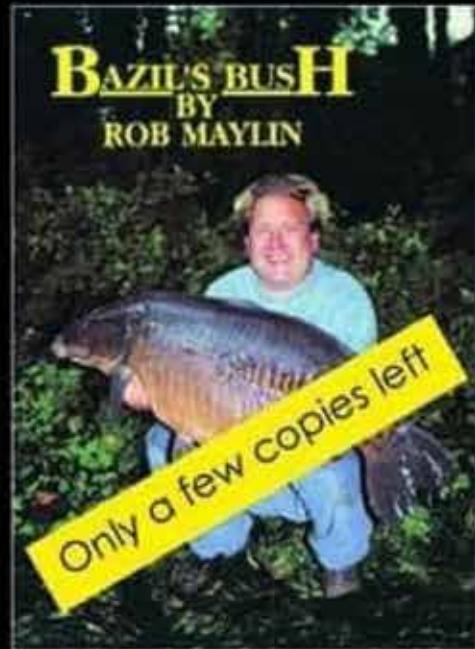
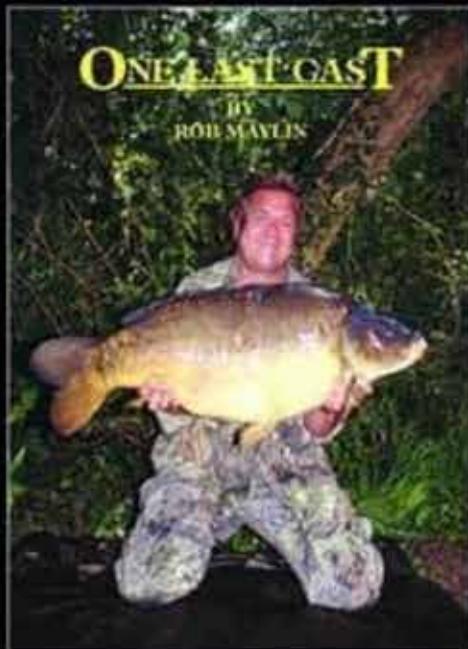
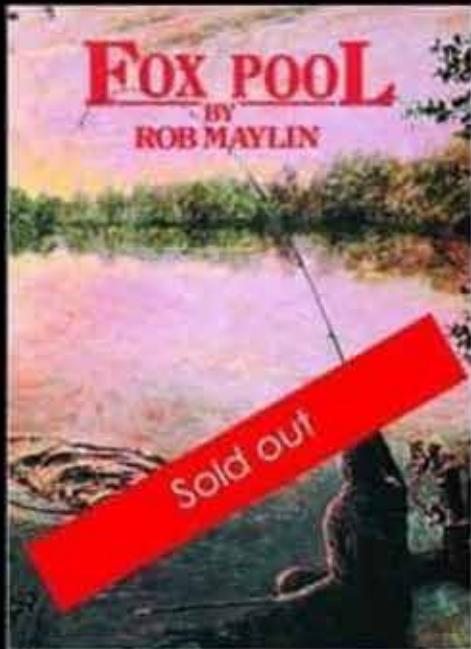
But to then follow it up with The Camel AND The Dustbin?!

Half the A-Team... in ONE session. Unreal.

Rick's spot? 19 wraps toward the dead tree left of Turner's toilet block. He had 9 bites, landing 6 fish — and yes, we DID warn him that his rigs weren't made for the smaller ones

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His winning mix: hemp, sweetcorn, boilie and plenty of liquid — IB Stick Mix Liquid + Pineapple Smart Liquid. All fished over a baited area, with his faithful spinner rigs and the deadly Isotonic Norton Special pop-ups.

Rick — what an incredible session. This one is carved into Holdens history and won't be forgotten anytime soon.



EXCLUSIVE

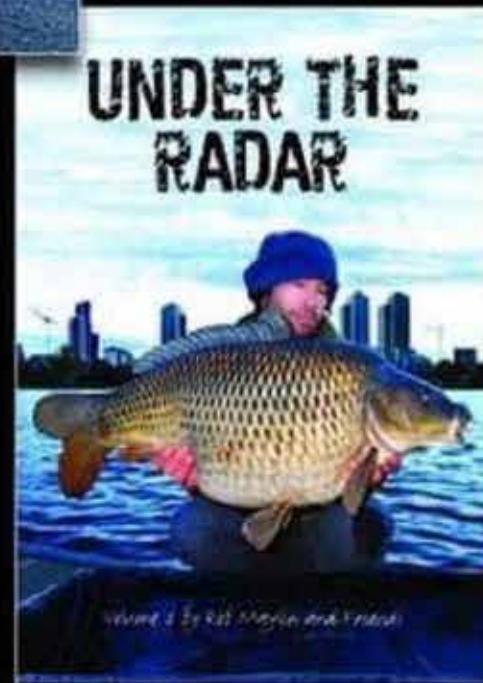
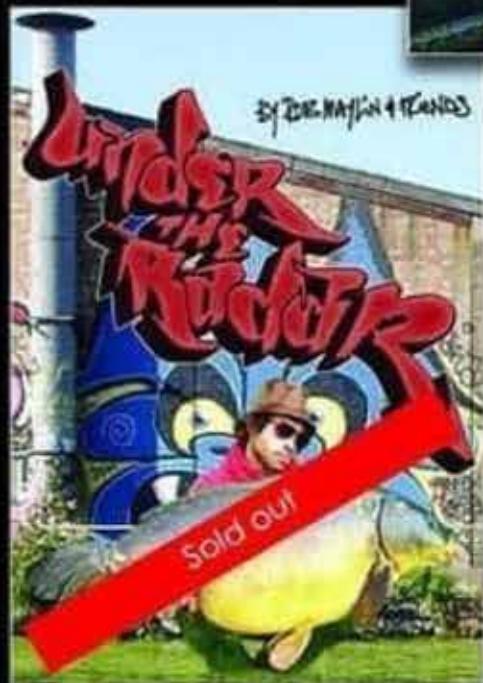
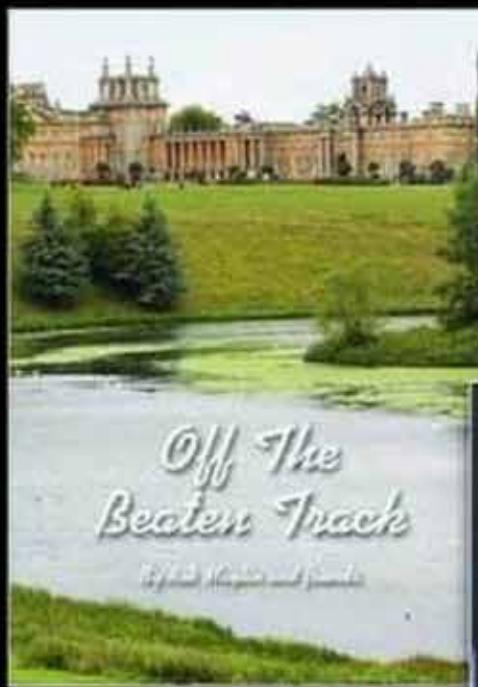


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SCOTT SWEETMAN

WINTER LOCATION AND FEEDING SPELLS

Iocation is give the game away. It's always key, but in when water temperatures are low it's EVERYTHING. With carp covering less water, getting rigs in front of them is a must. Look for subtle signs—bubblers on calm days, last-light shows, or even fish basking under the late winter or early spring sun can quickly

Look for Bubblers – On calm days, fizzing is a giveaway. It means not only have you found them, but you know where they're happy to feed. Clip up both rods to that spot, keep disturbance low, and use digestible bait applied with a Spod to avoid loud impacts.

Watch for Shows – Fish showing is a big clue,



especially around dusk and into dark. Don't rush into a swim—walk, watch, and listen. If they're feeding as they show, cast bright singles to the area to nick a bite. If you land one, note the wraps for future sessions.

Check Different Depths – On cold, sunny days, carp may sit just under the surface, soaking up heat. Climbing trees can help spot them. If

they're higher in the water, use zigs at different depths to find where they're holding.

Time It Right – At this time of year feeding windows still remain short, but are predictable. Track when you see bites happening—if the lake's 'bite time' is 2-4pm, have your rods in place well before. Minimise disturbance and be ready to react if you're not on them.



EXCLUSIVE



ANGLERS: STAY SAFE FROM CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING



Carbon monoxide (CO) is a silent killer - It's invisible, odourless, and deadly.

COMMON SOURCES AT THE BANK:

- Portable gas heaters
- BBQs and camping stoves
- Petrol generators
- Gas lanterns used inside bivvies or tents



NEVER DO THIS:

- ✖ Use fuel-burning equipment inside your bivvy
- ✖ Sleep with a BBQ or heater still warm inside your shelter
- ✖ Block air vents or close yourself in tight spaces

ALWAYS DO THIS:

- ✓ Use heaters and stoves outside, in open air
- ✓ Ensure your bivvy is well-ventilated
- ✓ Carry a portable CO alarm
- ✓ Learn the signs of CO poisoning

KNOW THE SYMPTOMS:

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Confusion
- Collapse or loss of consciousness

If you feel unwell, get into fresh air immediately and call 999.

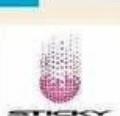
"It won't happen to me..." Too many anglers last thought.

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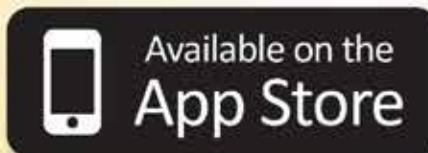
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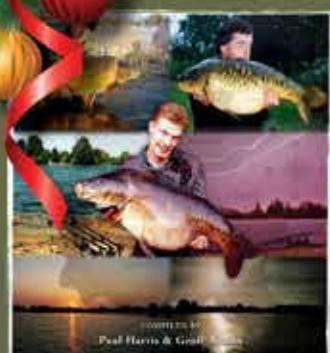
COOTE - BROMLEY - BLISS



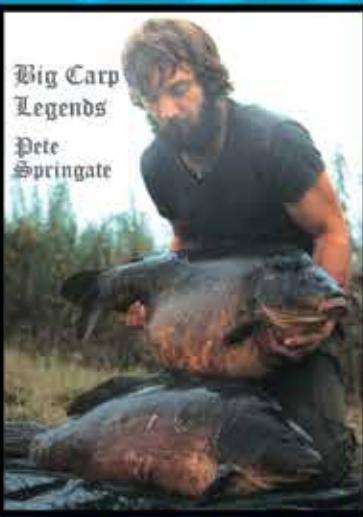
WINTER



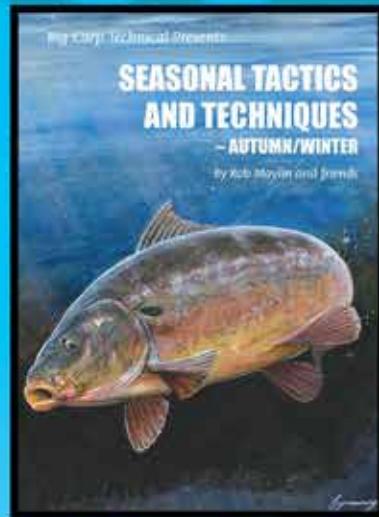
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in Oxfordshire



By Paul Harris & Geoff Smith



Big Carp
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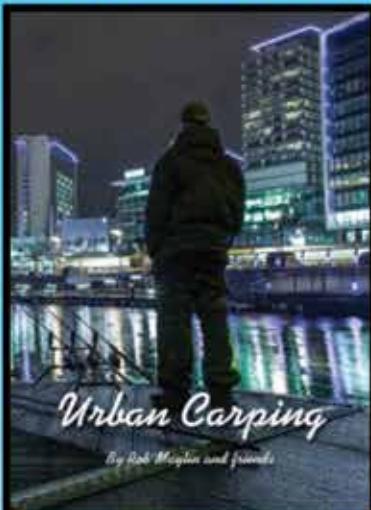
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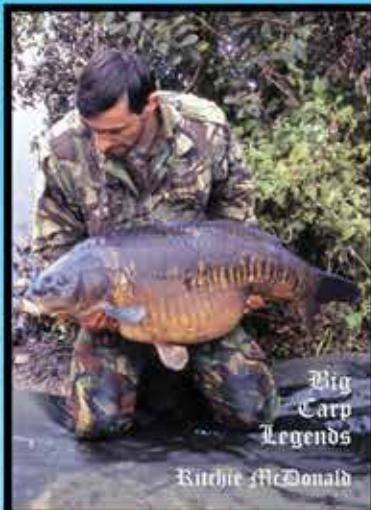
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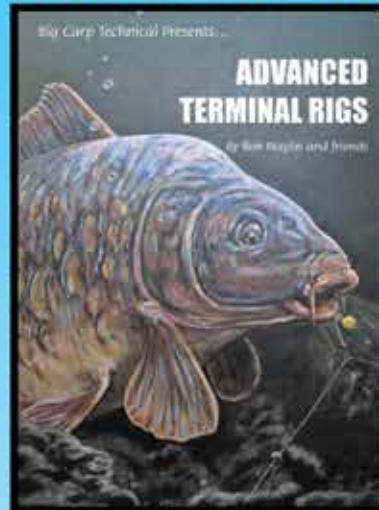


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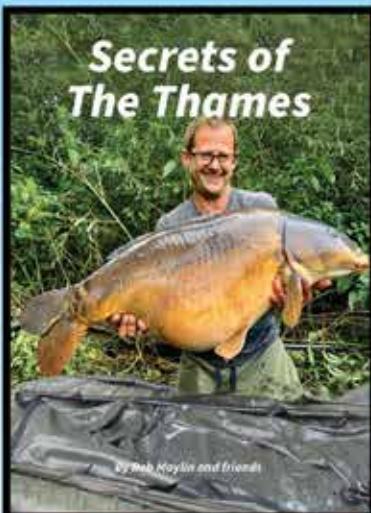


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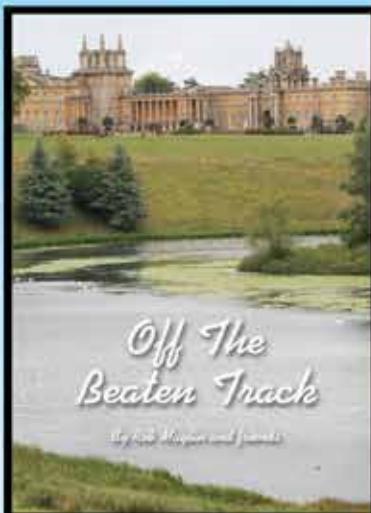
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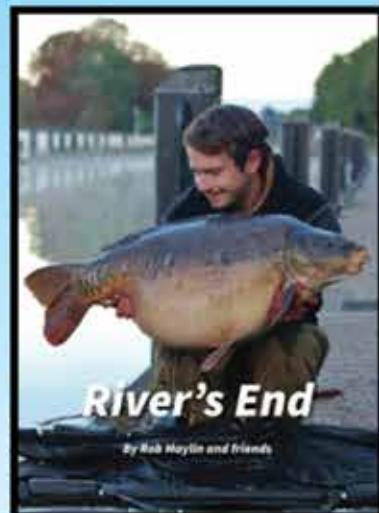
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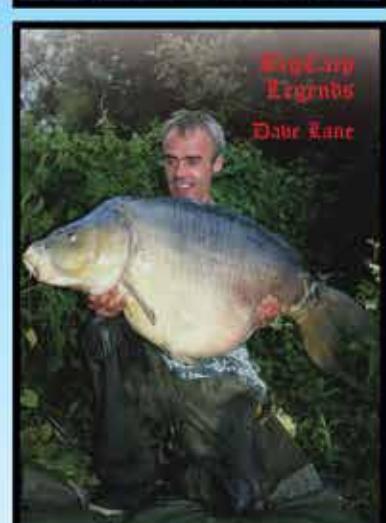
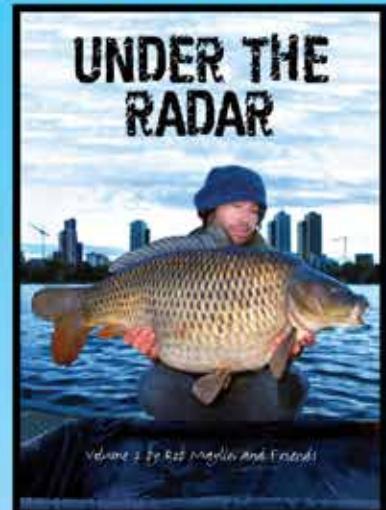
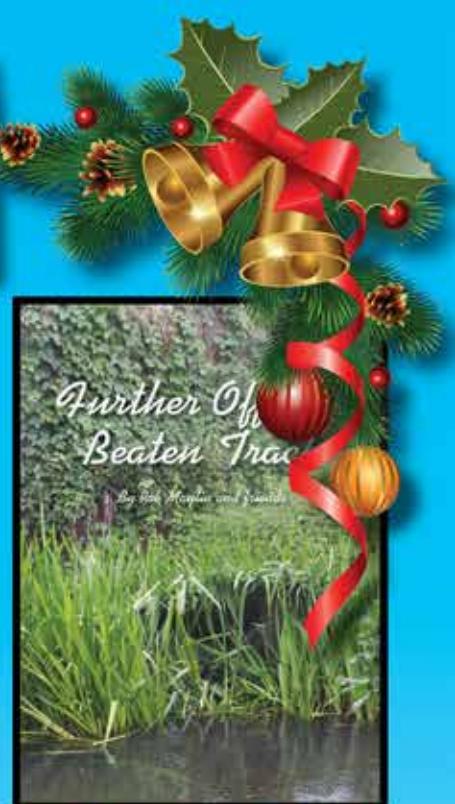
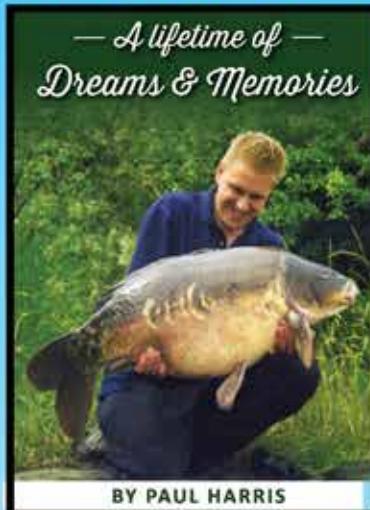
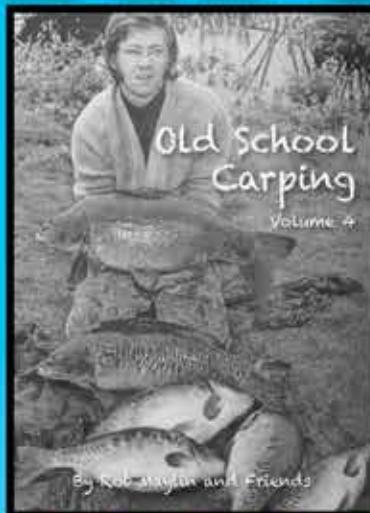
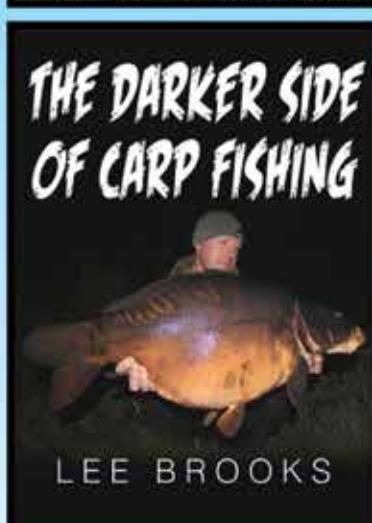
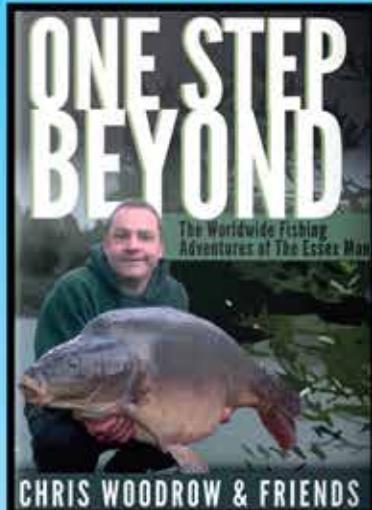
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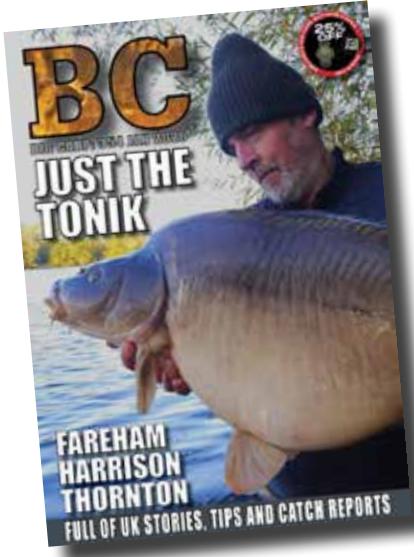
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Design & Production

James Harrison

Also available this month Big Carp issue 354.



Front Cover:

Nick Helleur with the Thames record carp.



HALLOWEEN FISHING FUN!

What a fantastic Halloween event we had! Despite the spooky weather, everyone showed up in amazing costumes — from monsters to mummies — and brought their best energy! The kids did an incredible job, with plenty of laughs, fun, and new friendships made along the way.

We even managed to catch a few fish, with Archie landing a lovely common carp and achieving a new personal best!

A huge well done to all the kids for making it such a brilliant day — rain, mud, and all!

Reel Healing Project

8. CARP CHAT



22. CARP SCENE

32. BOBBY COOTE



56. JAMES BROMLEY

78. MARCO PINTO

82. STEVE BLISS

90. NICK HELLEUR



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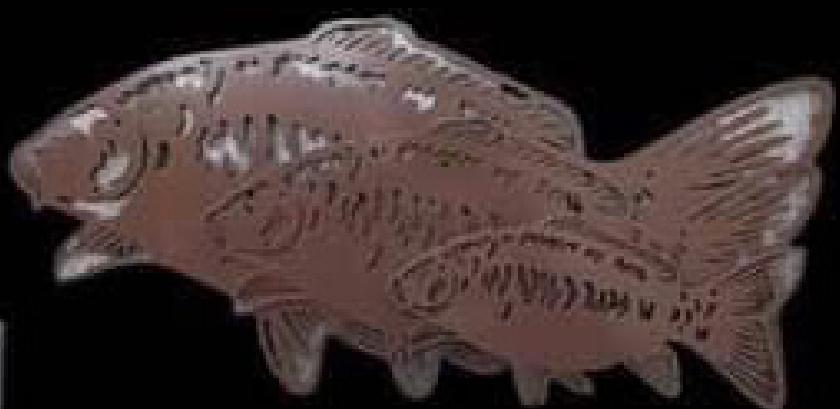
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This remarkable achievement is a reflection of years of



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From everyone at Harrison, our heartfelt congratulations to the entire England squad , an absolutely world class performance.

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Fishing for Schools

Fishing for Schools is proud to operate a scheme where schools can apply for funded sessions annually. We are now accepting applications from schools interested in taking part in 2025-26, but places are limited. Make sure to head over to our website before Monday 10 November 2025 for more information and to submit your application >> <https://carpcampaign.org/4gEI4Hf>

AWARD PRESENTED FOR A DECADE OF EXCELLENT SERVICE.



Regional Enforcement Support Manager for the East Paul Thomas was pleased to be able to present a richly deserved 'certificate of excellence' to Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officer Nick Beardmore. For the past 10 years Nick has perfectly embodied the partnership approach between the agency and our valued Voluntary Bailiffs across Norfolk, and he continues to engage fully with the volunteers in his region.

We could not think of a more-deserving recipient for this award. Thank you Nick!

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FISHING EVOLUTION FUND RAISER

Earlier in the week we had the great pleasure of catching up with the St Barnabas Hospice team to officially celebrate our recent open days fundraising

With your support of the Charity Raffle and BBQ, we raised the fantastic sum of £2,900. This sum will help them to provide 145 hrs of Hospice care, which we have seen first-hand how much that means to families in their moments of need.

With everyone's help , our last 2 store open days have now raised the incredible sum of £5,000 for St Barnabas Hospice

None of this would have been possible though, without all of the following rightly deserved mentions and thank you -

All of our customers who took part in the raffle and our BBQ. All of our reps and brands who have supported us with raffle prizes, and joined us on the open days to make them a success. Ancaster Butchers for their raffle prize donations, and great BBQ food . Heckington Angling club for their raffle prize donation. Halverholme park lake for their raffle prize donation and support. Everyone else who has worked with us to make these days a success.



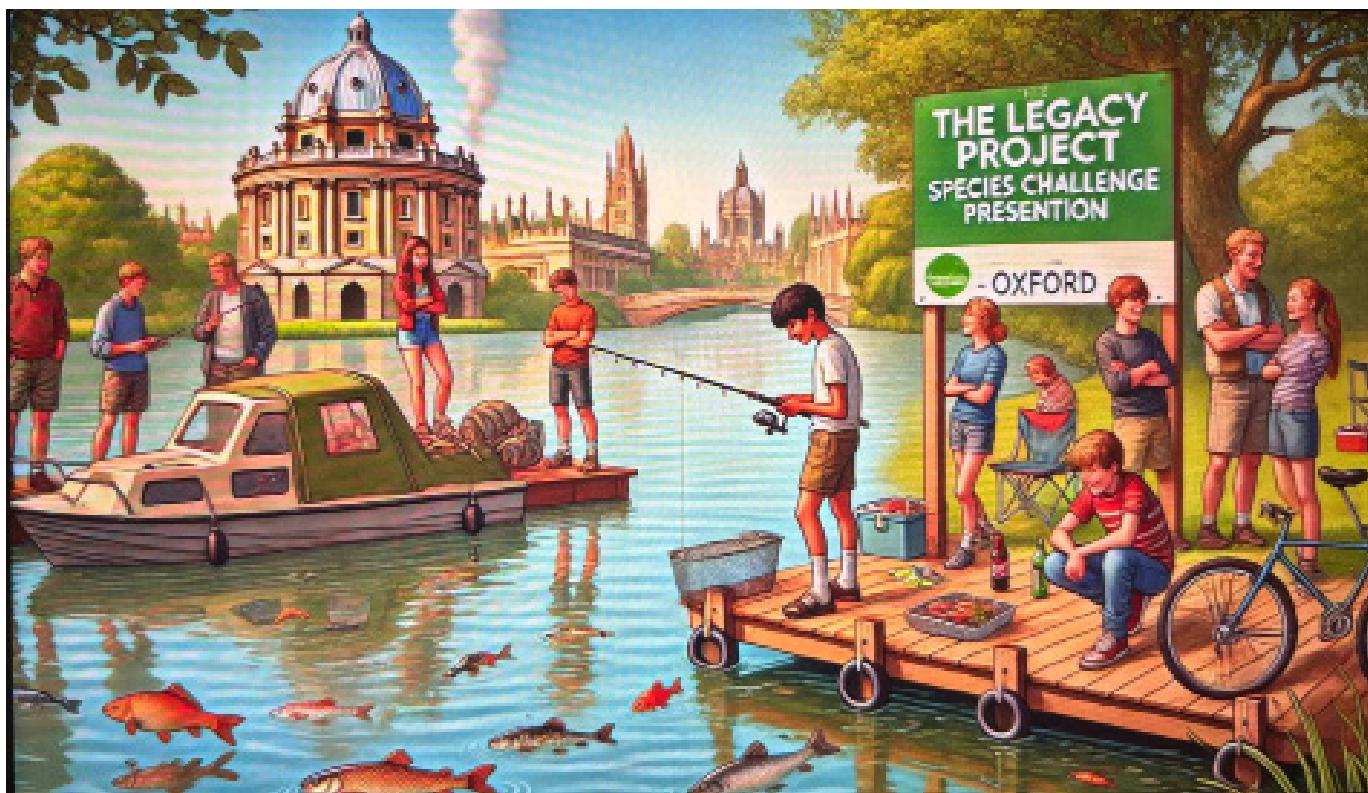
STEVE BRIGGS JOINS RG BAITS



I'm really pleased to announce that from 1st November I am now part of the RG Baits team!! I'd genuinely like to thank all of the companies that made offers and I considered all of them but really in the end it wasn't a difficult decision. Anyone who knows me will know how much importance I put on quality bait - you don't catch anything if the carp doesn't want to eat your bait! The quality of RG Baits is without question but also the old school style of the baits with modern twists is quite close to the old Nash Bait way of thinking and that means a lot to me!! Then there's the RG Baits team - I had a warm feeling when I spoke to them as I've worked with them before and really enjoyed it, in fact I found it easy as they are people I want to spend time with - and so this is a new chapter just beginning for me and I'm looking forward to the year ahead with RG Baits.

LEGACY PROJECT YOUNG ANGLERS SUPPORT GROUP FISH IN AT THE HISTORIC ORCHID LAKES

Bit of news on next year's 'Species Challenge' prize presentation and weekend fish-in. I am popping over to Orchid tomorrow - to hopefully finalise an agreement. This is one of Oxford's oldest waters and has huge history. Known nationally as the 'Home of the 30's' it was the creation of an amazing man called Marsh Pratley. I was good friends with Marsh, and close to when he passed he came to see me at Kidlington Town Hall where I had put on a fundraiser for Marlborough Pool - this raised 15K for the Otter fencing, and provided the protection that is in place for the lake today. Access and parking is excellent - and there is a quad service to move gear and food (no driving to swims). This will be for us to have PRIVATE use of the Club Lake for a Saturday and Sunday (Possibly for the Fri night also). There is a central BBQ area, toilets and plenty of space. If confirmed - this will be a FREE event for you all. Quick link below to Club Lake promo: <https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1HBcvXKzYi/>



BUT - I will be expecting people / families to support with the food and drink. We can look into organising this at a later date. I am looking at the last weekend in July - but I do not know the situation regarding available dates yet. Nev Griffin - will also look at the possibility of a riverside location, as I would like to also put on another 'fish in' during the year. This one could perhaps be a bit more 'public'. 'The Orchid fish in' will be superb. The prizes ARE superb. This WILL be a brilliant weekend and a chance for us to get together. I will confirm tomorrow - and if there are restrictions on numbers, this will also be discussed. A yearly event in association with a nationally known and loved water will provide great exposure to what we do. NB. If anyone has thoughts, comments, ideas on promotion / sharing this as information to swell our local members - ideas for the weekend etc etc PLEASE voice them - this is YOUR private group. Love to you all. Dyl.

IT'S GOOD NEWS AT GOODZ CARP BAITS



We're absolutely buzzing to announce that the one and only Rob Nunn has officially joined the Goodz Carp Baits family!

The OG himself is now on board, and this marks a massive step forward for the brand. Rob's experience within angling is second to none, and he's bringing with him a serious depth of knowledge when it comes to bait, fish behaviour, and big-fish thinking.

We honestly can't wait to see what he produces this year – it's going to be something special!

This is more than just a new recruit... this is a game changer. Welcome to the team, Rob – let's go!



EXCLUSIVE
OFFERS

Come and
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TACKLE SHOP OPEN DAY

Saturday 16th May 2026
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Charity
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History.
Come Down To
a FREE Event

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MISS OUT

Supported by:



CARP CHAT

SHOEBURY PARK REED MANAGEMENT BY DIGGER BOATS





Phase 1 of the reed management project is now complete! Around 50% of the main reed mass has been removed. Although this is slightly short of our original target, I'm really pleased with what's been achieved given the challenges faced along the way.

There's still a fair bit of tidying up to do, and we'll be tackling that as soon as possible. In the meantime, you may notice some spoil temporarily floating around the lake.

The lake is open again for you to enjoy, with the exception of the swims currently within the Heras fencing.

Please note that 'Perch' will remain closed for now while we take the opportunity to revamp the swim.

A huge thank you to the Environment Agency for supporting the project with rod licence funding, and to Digger Boats for absolutely smashing the job. We're looking forward to having you back for Phase 2!

KORDA NEW RELEASES

- **COMPAC DARK KAMO POUCHES**

These NEW Tackle Pouches provide a safe, efficient way to organise all your tackle essentials—from terminal gear and marker floats to torches and spares. Available in six sizes, there's an option for every angler's storage needs.

RRP: £13.99 - £19.99

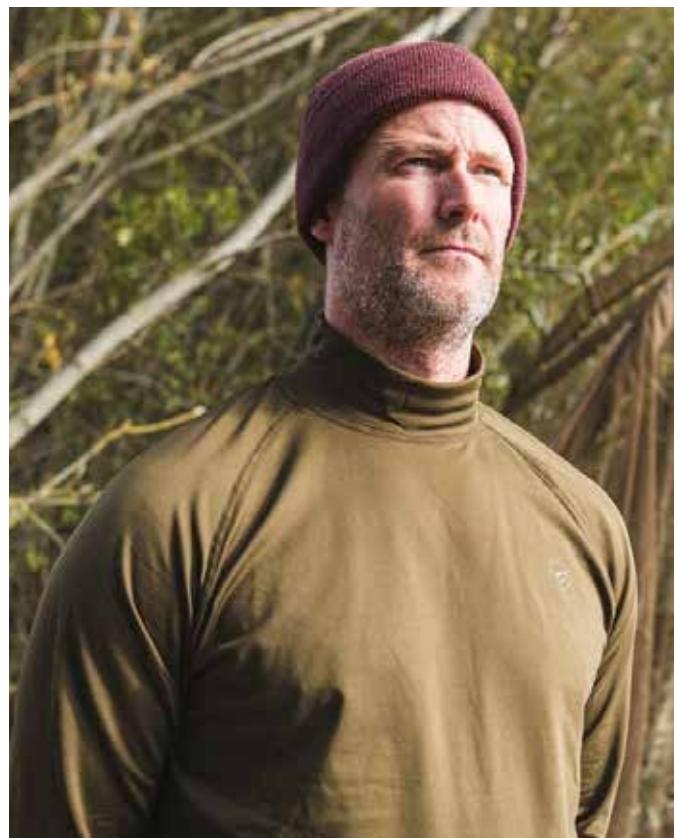
- **COMPAC DARK KAMO STOVE BAG**

The Compac Stove Bag keeps your single burner stove protected and ready to go. Built from tough 600D Dark Kamo fabric with a wipe-clean lining, durable zip lid, and handy carry handle. A real Autumn essential!

RRP: £17.99

- **COMPAC STORMPOLE SLEEVE**

Sleeve provides smart, dedicated storage for up to ten 36"/92cm storm poles. Versatile by design, it can also hold a Compac Weigh Staff and features side pockets for distance sticks. RRP: £21.99

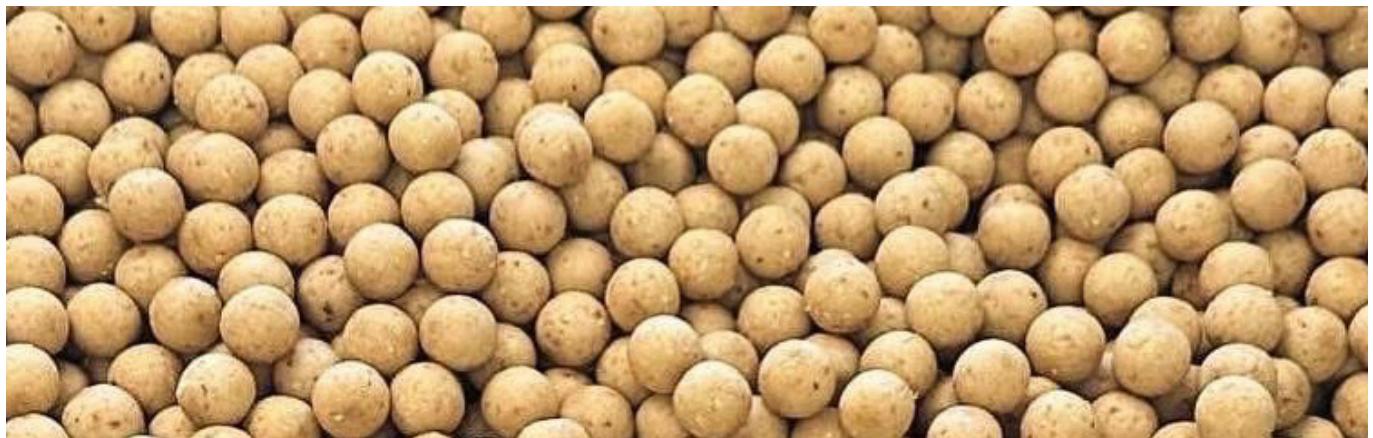


- **MOCK NECK THERMAL LS SHIRT**

Base layers are the unsung heroes of cold-weather comfort, and the Mock Neck Thermal Long Sleeve Shirt delivers warmth when it counts. Made from premium quick-dry brushed jersey, it regulates body temperature, retains heat, and stays breathable. Available in dark olive and black in the UK, and dark olive across Europe, in sizes S to XXXXL.

RRP: £24.99

PROPER CRUNCHY NUT MAPLE AND PEACH



Using the same nut base mix as our extremely popular Crunchy Nut Cinnamon & Cream we are introducing a twist on this with Crunchy Nut Maple & Peach.

Maple needs no introduction as it's a tried and tested sweet, sugary syrup!

Combine that with the sweet, sugary Peach Oil Palatant and you have an incredible, sweet tasting bait with an unreal aroma!

We are initially going to run this on a limited-edition basis, however if demand shows us, we will add it to the range on a permanent basis.

Currently only available in 15mm Freezer Bait there is a dedicated 15mm matching pop up as well as a 15mm wafter.

We are also going to add a 1ltr matching Bulk Liquid so you can boost your free offerings should you wish to do so.

GEOFF ANDERSON UPCYCLED CHEST POCKET BAG



The Upcycled Chest Pocket Bag is a very simple shoulder bag in a simple design. In fact, you can't make a bag much simpler - it is a chest pocket from a defective or worn-out jacket, which has been dismantled and upcycled into a functional bag.

The length of the strap is adjustable, and the bag has a compartment where there is space for both a phone, wallet and keys - or your fishing gear.

- 40 Euros

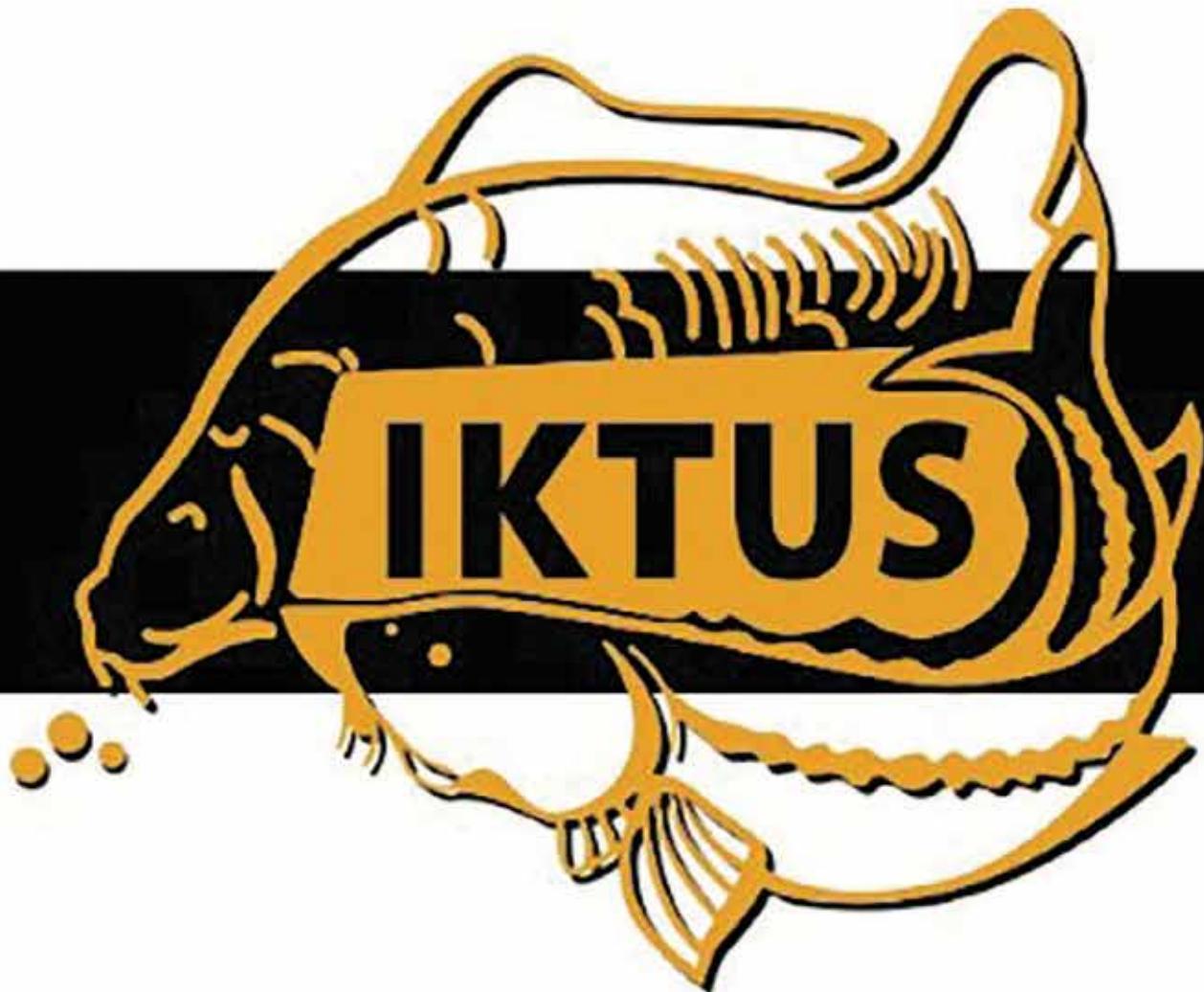
HOTSPOT DESIGN CAPS



This superior cap is manufactured in 100% cotton and features a TPU patch on the front with "Hardheaded" magnificent graphic, moreover at the center of the curved peak is positioned a text in TPU with words "Hardheaded" and "Carp Angler".

TPU patch showcases the distinctive skull of our Hardheaded collection, symbolizing the lead to be the head of the angler, it compares lead to the obsession of the carp angler, obstinate and stubborn in catching a carp. A great gift for carp fishing enthusiasts of all ages, a piece of memorabilia that they'll cherish and proudly wear.

www.hotspotdesign.com



FISHING RESORT



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WHAT IS TRITIUM USED IN WATCHES?

YOUR COMPLETE BUYER'S GUIDE

UNDERSTANDING TRITIUM: MISSION-CRITICAL ILLUMINATION

When you're selecting equipment that must perform in complete darkness, tritium illumination isn't simply another feature, it's proven technology that's kept military professionals and serious operators on mission for decades. If you've ever found yourself unable to read critical timing information when visibility drops to zero, you understand why this technology matters for self-luminous watches.

Tritium represents a specialised form of hydrogen that's naturally radioactive in the most controlled way possible for horological applications. These radioactive watches use tritium to create glow in the dark watches that outperform traditional luminous watches in every operational scenario. Whilst ordinary hydrogen remains the lightest element, tritium contains additional nuclear particles that create instability, which becomes our advantage for continuous illumination.

What we've found works best is when these particles hit special phosphorescent material inside sealed glass tubes, creating that distinctive glow you see on premium timepieces without requiring external power sources or charging protocols.

Swiss manufacturers have refined this nuclear engineering process to create watch illumination sources smaller than standard components yet capable of providing reliable visibility for decades under operational conditions. The technology represents precision engineering meeting practical field requirements for professional luminous watches.

GTLS TECHNOLOGY: PRECISION ENGINEERING STANDARDS

GTLS technology, Gaseous Tritium Light Sources, represents sophisticated miniature engineering applied to watchmaking demands. These microscopic glass tubes,

some measuring less than 0.3mm in diameter, contain pressurised tritium gas alongside carefully selected phosphorescent compounds.

The manufacturing process demands extraordinary precision tolerances. Glass capillaries receive internal coatings of specific phosphor materials that determine colour output characteristics. Following coating application, tubes undergo controlled tritium gas pressurisation before laser sealing to exact dimensional specifications.

Here's what makes this technology genuinely useful: unlike traditional luminous paint that needs daylight charging and fades overnight, tritium tubes provide steady illumination regardless of what's happening around them. The brightness stays virtually constant for years.

Each production tube undergoes comprehensive testing protocols covering brightness specifications, temperature resistance ranges, and containment integrity. The hermetically sealed construction eliminates performance degradation from moisture infiltration, temperature cycling, or mechanical shock that compromises



MX10 T25 TRITIUM ILLUMINATION

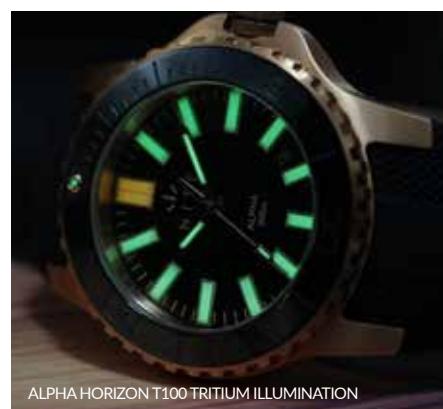
TRITIUM RATING CLASSIFICATIONS: T25 VS T100

You need to understand these ratings when choosing the right kit for your needs. T25 and T100 designations specify maximum tritium content per timepiece, measured in millicuries, directly correlating to brightness output capabilities.

T25 watches contain up to 25 millicuries of tritium, providing controlled illumination ideal for situations demanding discretion alongside visibility. This brightness level ensures clear time reading under complete darkness whilst maintaining tactical advantage through reduced signature. Military field watches commonly employ T25 ratings because they balance visibility requirements with operational security.

T100 timepieces accommodate up to 100 millicuries, delivering maximum brightness for applications where visibility takes priority over discretion. These watches produce significantly enhanced glow intensity, immediately visible at greater distances, making them suitable for emergency response, professional diving, or safety-critical applications requiring rapid time reading.

Operationally, the distinction becomes clear: T25 provides reliable time reading in darkness, whilst T100 offers noticeably brighter, more obvious illumination standing out under challenging conditions. Both ratings maintain brightness consistency over years of service, though T100 watches naturally exhibit superior luminosity throughout operational life.



alternative illumination systems. When military procurement specifies tritium watches, they're selecting technology proven reliable under extreme operational conditions where traditional glow in the dark watches would fail.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE >](#)



TIME TO FISH - DAY OR NIGHT ESSENTIAL KIT FOR SERIOUS ANGLERS

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OVER
£85**



MX10 JUNGLE

Exclusive to readers of Free Line, **save over £85** when buying a MX10 Jungle on rubber strap, using code '**FREELINE25**' at checkout. Was £350 - **Now £262.50!** Valid until 31st January 2026.

Made with quality Swiss-made components and super bright tritium illuminated our watches are designed to be worn doing what you love. Make one part of your kit for all your fishing adventures.



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MOVEMENT



TRITIUM
ILLUMINATION



SAPPHIRE
CRYSTAL



5 YEAR
WARRANTY

NITEWATCHES.COM

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This super compact, fast-charging wireless power bank is a modern-day travel essential with a 10,000mAh battery capacity, allowing for multiple phone recharges. Compatible with most smartphones and designed for MagSafe charging, it delivers up to 15W wireless output for a fast and convenient way to power up while on the move.

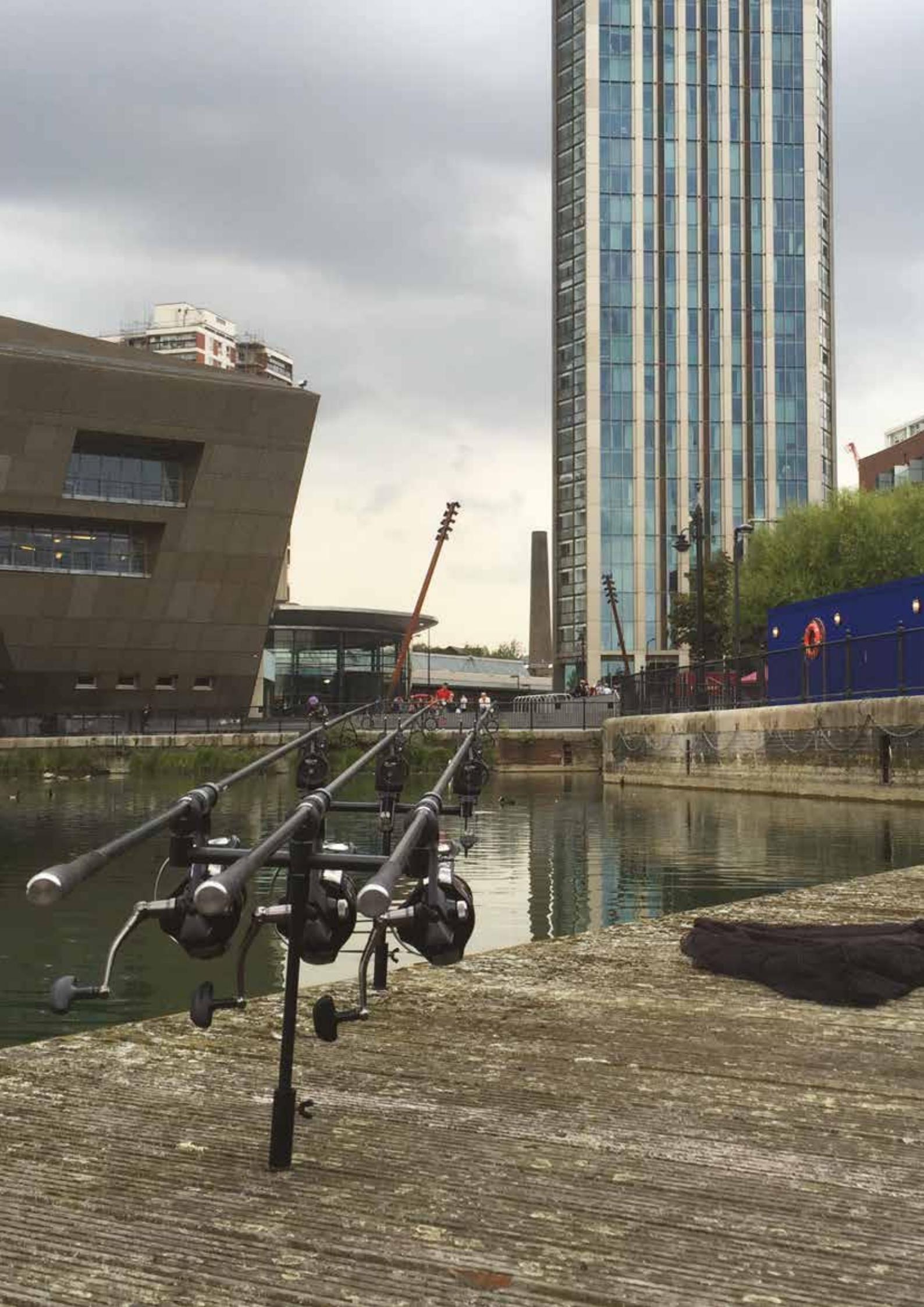
- <https://www.lifeventure.com/>
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OCOOPOA UT4 EXTREME

The Ocoopa UT4 Extreme is a versatile, ultra-durable hand warmer and power bank designed for extreme cold conditions. With dual-sided warmth, a robust 20,000mAh battery, and IP56 water and dustproof construction, it offers extended heat of up to 18 hours and power on the go. Featuring fast charge technology, it powers up quickly and doubles as a high-capacity power bank. The device includes three heat levels, plus a high-power mode, ensuring customisable comfort. Its solid metal construction, built-in torchlight, and rugged design, make it an essential companion for outdoor enthusiasts. Accessories include two pouches, two wrist lanyards, and two USB charging cables. It is available in a choice of three colours - Black on Black, Blue on Black and Orange on Black.

- www.berryuseful.co.uk.
- £74.95





THE SMALL DOCK

My previous articles written in Big Carp magazine have been about much larger sized London docks, but this article is about a much smaller dock that used to contain some very big carp. Some ten or more years ago, this particular dock contained some very large carp, tench, perch, pike and also quite a few channel catfish. I was not actually fishing this dock at the time of it holding some very large fish, but I knew about the fish that swam in these docks. I knew of many of anglers at the time who were fishing this dock for the carp and catching some really lovely big old warriors from this water – really powerful stand-out characters.

Unfortunately, some of the fish were stolen over the years and ended up in well-known syndicate tickets across the country that are stupid prices these days to fish, and then a few years later a real problem happened in this dock. I'm not 100% sure what actually happened, as I've heard quite a few

different stories over the years, but what I do know is the worst did happen, and sadly a lot of the fish if not all of the fish apparently died. They were all found belly up, and all the real trophy fish from the dock had sadly lost their battle with what I believed to be true – a water quality problem. What I found very strange about this was that the dock also held some very big tench as well, but when this so-called fish kill happened, I did not hear many stories about the tench bellying up as well, which I found very odd.

Over the years, I used to fish this small dock with my cousin on and off. We used to fish for the lovely tench, which I've seen caught up to 11lb but also heard rumours of 13lb tench being caught. We used to fish it early mornings on the cork handled float rods at over 15ft deep on a sliding float, waiting for those very memorable lift bites. For a couple of years, our spring mornings were spent trying to catch one of the monster tench that lived here, as my cousin used to love his tench fishing. We caught a few, but sadly never really hooked any of the real monsters.

Now I stopped fishing here for quite a few years, as I honestly thought it only really contained the large tench and loads of small perch and the odd pike. I used to ride through here on my bike nearly every single day on my way to the larger docks, as it was kind of on my way, and I'd always just have a look to see if I could see any fish. This dock was rarely fished for years and years. I might see the odd angler once every few months, but for most of the year, you would be lucky to see an angler. It was never easy fishing, even for the tench, as I just don't think it contained many fish after the fish kill. It still doesn't contain many fish, but I was very wrong, as were quite

a few of the locals who I spoke to as to what actually swam in this dock. Like I said, I used to ride past this dock many times in a week when I was going to bait up my spots on the other docks. I wouldn't always look hard to see if I could see fish, but I'd always make sure to have a little nose.

One day I was over at the larger docks talking to a friend of mine called Danny who was fishing a. I'd just driven past the smaller docks on my way over, and I said to him, "I wonder if there are still any carp in there," and this is where it all really began for me. I don't always listen to what people say when it comes to fishing, as there are so many tales going around... excuse the pun... but if Danny told me stuff, he was a genuine



guy, and I believed what he said. He said to me that he was standing over there a few weeks before with a friend talking about the exact same thing, and as they were standing there, a decent sized common came straight out the water in front of them. I was now standing there thinking to myself I'd got to start being serious about this and get myself over there a hell of a lot more and looking properly. So, my target for that year was to try and find a carp in this dock and actually catch one.

I was working for a very well known bait company at the time, and I was working very early hours of the morning. Most days I was leaving home at 3.30-4am to be at work for a 6am start and working through to 2pm. I would get up at 3am, make my way over to the dock and just walk around at that time of the morning trying to find any signs of carp. It used to take me about 40 minutes at that time of the morning to drive to work, so I would literally be here from 3.30am until about 5.20 just trying to locate fish, and then I'd shoot off into work for that day rolling boilies.

I hadn't said a word to anybody about what I was actually doing and didn't want anyone even getting wind of it, as if I did find some carp, I wanted to be able to catch them without any pressure other than mine. Unfortunately, there are many anglers that have jumped all over my spots with all the hard work I've put in, so that's why I operate at mad hours and also don't tell anybody what I'm doing. So for a good few months from early spring, I was out hunting for these carp if there were any. I did this for well over 8-10 weeks without one sighting, and I was starting to think that this wasn't going to be what I thought it would be.

But not really thinking, and using my knowledge from fishing



THE T.A.S.K.

A blend of tuna, krill and real food items with added spices and attractors complimented with GoodZ own amino booster that enhances the strong food signals emitted from this bait.

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A blend of highly digestible milk proteins and real food items to achieve a highly digestible, high protein all season food source bait. The Fruit and Malted Milk blend is a carp classic

THE N.M.E.

Introducing the N.M.E (Nut & Maple Extract) – The N.M.E is not just another bait—it's a revolution in carp nutrition and attraction. A true masterpiece of modern carp fishing science.

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Goodz, a company founded a decade ago, has built a stellar reputation as a premier supplier of high-quality fish bait. From its inception, Goodz has been committed to providing anglers with products that ensure success on the water, combining expert craftsmanship with a passion for fishing. Over the years, their dedication to excellence has earned them the trust of fishing enthusiasts and professionals alike. Whether it's their attention to sourcing premium ingredients or their innovative bait designs, Goodz continues to set the standard in the industry, making every fishing experience truly exceptional.

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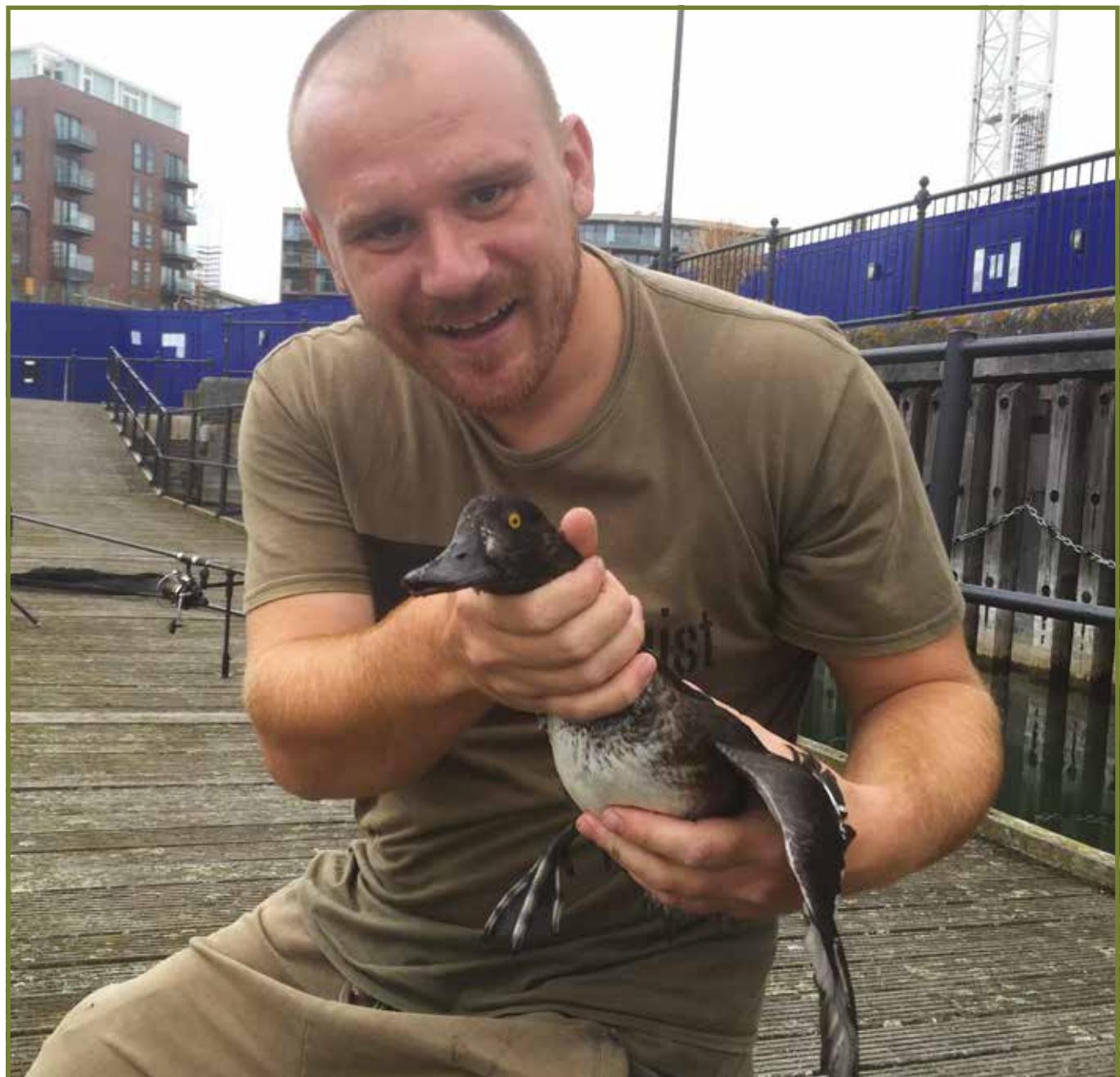
other docks, I was kind of approaching this in a different way than I was the other docks, which in some ways was good, which I'll get around to, and in other ways was really stupid. Me just being me, I was very keen to find fish no matter what time of year it was.

The other docks I fish are very deep, and this small dock is also kind of deep, but with my spot on the larger docks, I wait for a little window in the year for the carp to come to shallower water. So with me not thinking, these carp may just not have woken up properly yet and were hiding out in the deeper water. So with that being my theory, I kind of let it be for a few more weeks. I'd always had it in the back of my mind to leave it alone, but I just couldn't, and when I get a target in my head, I need to achieve it if I know it's possible. The problem was I just was not seeing any fish, until this happened...

I was riding through one evening, going over to have a really good look for the carp in the small docks and also to drop a bit of bait on my other docks spot, and I saw a guy who I knew. He knew I was known for catching quite a few of the fish in the area, so for him to tell me this was shocking, as an angler himself, as I'd have thought he would have kept this quiet. He said to me he had just seen a very large common in the edge at one end of this small dock. Now this completely changed what I was doing that evening. I was now circling this dock on my bike for over an hour, but still didn't see a thing and wondered if everyone was just winding me up, as they know I can get fixated on catching one. I rode over to the other dock, put out some bait and thought I'd stop here again on my way home. This is where a small piece of this puzzled had now been spotted, but it wasn't the common I'd now heard

two different stories about; it was a very small mirror sitting in the edge with its head butted up against a chain anchored from the wall.

I watched this fish for about half an hour, not really moving at all, in the hope of seeing another one. As the saying goes, where there's one there's another one... well, not on this occasion. I had boilies in my rucksack as always and decided I'd try and crumb a few and flick them in front of the fish. It didn't move at all and just stayed in the same position, but



eventually after an hour or so of watching the fish, it slowly drifted off into the deeps, and I now had a real buzz to try and catch this small carp.

I went off home to get some sleep before getting up early hours to come back before work to see if I could see any fish again. This wasn't the case, as I didn't see a thing. I went off to work, and working in the fishing industry most of the days are spent talking about fishing, but I just didn't really want to talk about what I was planning. I was just wracking my brains all day on what I was actually going to do, and this is when I had a master plan and thought of my plan of attack to see if I could locate any more carp in this dock. I owe the few captures I had to a guy called Mark Holmes, and I'm sure most of you know who I'm talking about. Mark Holmes to me is the guru of fishing bait. Mark, I owe these to you, as I've told you anyway...

A few years previously, I had the pleasure of witnessing one of Mark's talks on bait, and from then we became kind of social media friends. Whenever I messaged Mark, he always replied and helped out as much as he could. I asked him about targeting these fish, and this is what Mark planned for me: He told me about attracting the carp into an area before they get ready to spawn and explained to me about how carp need certain minerals to keep their saline levels up. Now we all say keep carp fishing simple, and I totally agree, but these are not the normal kind of carp in day tickets or muddy puddles, so this technical approach Mark explained to me was what I went with. He first asked me if the water was brackish. This actual dock is quite a way off the River Thames, so by the time it goes through all the channels and other waterways I'm pretty

sure it's not. So he explained to me about this, and

I introduced salt licks to try and attract carp into the area before I would start feeding them. I was very optimistic about this approach, as it was quite expensive to do, and also I didn't even know if I'd see any carp. Trying to source the right salt is hard enough and very expensive, and then once you have the fish in the area, you then have to start feeding them to keep them there. Mark, mate... as I've told you before, you're a genius.

I did exactly what Mark told me to do, and within a couple of weeks of introducing the salt licks into the dock, the magic had taken place. I went over one afternoon from work to witness three very big fish in the edge. All in all, there were about 12 carp in the area where I had introduced the salt licks. I saw a very good sized common, and then I saw a very big common and also a jet-black near-leather. Going from seeing a single fish in all those years to now seeing probably every single carp in that dock was mind-boggling. Now I had to feed them.

That night, I went over and put exactly 10kg of bait on the area. Two 5kg bags were opened and spread over the small area. I had to go to work the next morning and decided I would go over before and see if the fish was there again, and I couldn't believe my eyes when I got over to see all the bait was completely gone, but I didn't actually see any of the fish on the spot. Later that night, I did exactly the same thing, I put out the bait, and the next morning, I had to drop my partner and little boy off to his friend's to get a party ready, and I went with my daughter to the dock. Armed with a Scope 6ft sawn-off rod, a net and a mat. I said to her, "We will quickly catch a fish before going back home to get ready for the party,"

and we did exactly that. Within 20 minutes of being there, we had dropped a multi rig down on the spot with a cured salty hook bait, which the carp were now hunting for. A lovely little dumpy mirror was on the mat in no time, and we took a little video rather than pictures. I cut a little picture out of the video for the magazine pictures.

Now the puzzle had started, and the buzz was well and truly alive. We shot off home to get ready for the party, but I couldn't help but keep thinking about going back to try and catch another one. After being at the party for a few hours, my missus finally



Chiltern Custom Rods

We are based in Buckinghamshire and we specialise in building high quality rods, hand built to your requirements using the best quality products from many leading manufacturers



Our custom compact rods are available in 10ft 3lb, 3.5lb or 4.5lb spod versions. All are built to your requirements and specifications.

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BOBBY COOTE



said to me, "If you want to go and try to catch one, then you can leave if you want to." I was gone immediately, and within ten minutes, I'd shot home, changed into some fishing clothes, grabbed my little Scope stalking kit again and shot over there. On my way I called a friend, Jack, and told him where I was going. He said he would be there within half hour. Now what happened next will stick with me forever...

As I approached the dock, there's a part where many skateboarders always skate on the stairs and around the dock, and there were two little boys around ten years old sitting on the stairs away from all the skateboarders just watching the guys skateboarding. As I peered over into the water on my baited area, I could see a few fish just tearing up the bottom. I couldn't wait for my friend, as he said he would be about half an hour, another 15 minutes or so away, and I'm like a child when it comes to fishing, so I just opened up my Scope case with a multi rig already attached and started to screw on a cured salty hook bait. As I was doing this one of the little boys said to me that his dad used to fish here for days and sleep nights here and he would never catch anything.

As I was doing this with the shakes, trying to screw a hook bait to the bait screw, I attached a lead and lowered the rig over the side into the water. This is where the schoolboy error, or the pure excitement just took over, as I didn't set the net up. As I lowered the rig in and the lead hit the bottom, I pulled about 2ft of line out the reel to rest the rod on the fence, and it nearly got pulled into the water. Within literally ten seconds, I was in. I grabbed the rod, picked it up, and straight away this fish just started stripping line like no other. The little boys were just standing there with their jaws on the floor. The

picture of their faces will stick with me forever. He said to me, "What's going on? What's happening?" I'll never forget those words.

To be totally honest, I couldn't even reply to this little fella, as I didn't even have a clue myself what was going on. All I knew was that I was attached to one angry fish, and it was stripping line along and underneath the floating manmade flowerbed islands. They are square metal cages that float in the water for the flowers to be planted in. Now, this fish was on a mission, trying to get as far under these as possible while I was standing there just trying to stop it slowly and wondering how the bloody hell I was going to climb over the fence, set up the net and land this fish safely. At first I thought this would be a relatively easy task, as I've had this happen a few times with double takes and also other schoolboy errors of excitement in the past.

So, I was slowly playing this fish and also trying to pop the landing net poles into the spreader block until I saw this fish surface just down in front of me. I now knew this was a good fish, making this task of putting the poles into the spreader block virtually impossible.

The second charge of the fish became very dangerous. There's a raised bar of old concrete in this dock that I think was maybe poured there when they were being redeveloped with all the houses in the area. It went across the bar, and straight away I could feel the grating on the line. While all this was going on, I still hadn't managed to put the net up, and the two little boys were just standing there with pure excitement on their faces. Bless them; they weren't really saying anything at all and letting me concentrate.

While the fish was the other side of the concrete bar, I thought I'd better quickly get the net up. I took a mega risk and just opened the clutch right up and laid the rod on the floor for the longest 20 seconds of my life while I put the net together. Now I could just battle this fish with no worries and get the beast in the net. As it came across the bar and was wallowing on the surface, I could see how black it was. By now, not realising I had a massive crowd standing behind me, I took the first swipe at the fish. Luckily it went in first time, and I got a massive cheer from all the people behind me. The two little boys came running over, and we all peered down together as I opened up the net to have a proper look at the fish.

This is when I knew she was a good one...

Straight away I made that call. It had been less than 25 minutes since I'd last spoken to my mate Jack when I was making my way over to the dock, and I said to him, "Dude, you'd better hurry up; I've got a black miniature submarine sitting in the bottom of my net!"

He replied, "Yeah, whatever, you nutter. I doubt you've even got there yet." I was like, "Honestly, mate. I have one of the bigger fish sitting in the net!" I made it clear that it wasn't the biggest one I'd seen, but it was definitely over the magical mark. He assured me he was only five minutes away, and I just waited there, shaking like a leaf from adrenalin while the crowds of people were waiting to see what was in my net. Being the type of angler I am, I never thought I'd actually want to share any of these captures with the carp world, so we just waited for everyone to get bored of waiting around before we got this beast out of the sling for pictures.

Unfortunately, when we finally got around to getting her out

the sling, the two little boys were no longer around. I would have loved to show them the fish properly. Anyhow, we moved the fish a little bit away from the dock just so I could get some pictures of this true beast without loads of people actually seeing what I had caught – a hard task in a built-up area – urban fishing at its finest. We did the pictures and a little video as quickly as possible, and then just retuned this fine specimen straight away. As you can see, it's a proper dark old character, and I'm pretty sure it had only ever seen a hook a couple of times in its lifetime if at all.

I did the off with my friend, as that's my style of fishing so as not to spook the fish out too much. I laid down another massive bed of bait for my return early hours the next morning with a proper setup to fish for a few hours. Struggling to sleep





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that night thinking about that proper beauty that I'd caught, I returned early hours the next morning for a very hectic session indeed.

I took a different friend with me, Lee, who I had told about what I was doing all along. I keep that circle small, but I took him because I kind of knew how this was going to go. On arrival, I landed quite a few tench off the spot and honestly thought they would blow my chances of a few carp until the carp turned up and I was proved wrong. The majority of them were pretty, smaller fish, but I think I landed every single carp in this dock on that morning apart from two other commons I'd seen... and then something else mega happened. The smaller common showed up over the magical mark, and we quickly unhooked it and took a video before returning her because of what happened next.

While we were dealing with the common and making a video, one of my other rods had a take, so I quickly picked up the rod while my friend returned the fish for me. Now at first it was very weird, and the commotion started as I realised I had hooked a bloody tufty duck. Normally, I would just be able to land and release a duck safely, and as you can see in the pictures, he was very friendly, but I had a woman and a man behind me causing me so much grief, which made this task very hard indeed. It was getting on in the morning, and I was looking to make a move away from the area, as I didn't want too many people seeing me fishing there. If someone sees me fishing there, they know there must be something worth catching, and then it just gets mobbed. After this bird attack, I was thinking that the swim was probably going to be dead, but I sat on it for another hour, and in this hour, I finally caught

BOBBY COOTE



BOBBY COOTE

the last fish that I wanted. I was slowly putting my stuff away, and I needed the toilet, so I said to my friend, "Watch the rods while I quickly go to the loo."

I was gone no longer than a couple of minutes, and as I was walking back towards the dock, I could hear my friend shouting my name at the top of his voice. I ran as fast as I could, and as I turned the corner, my friend was standing there with my rod in his hand just shouting, "It's the big one!" I jumped over the fence, grabbed the rod, and he told me that as the buzzer screamed off, the fish came straight out the water. So now he's telling me I'm playing the big one!

Well, it got snagged, but luckily I got a different angle on the fish and got it moving again straight away. Then I saw it roll out in front of me, and I knew it was the big girl. It didn't fight that much, as I don't think it had ever seen a hook. By





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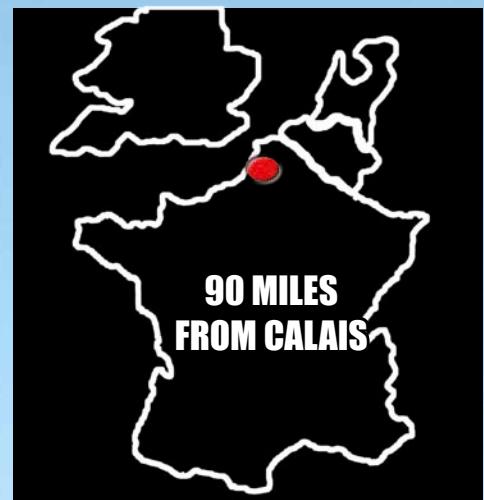
now, I had a massive crowd looking down on the dock where I was fishing. We quickly netted her, but to be honest, I was panicking, as this fish just wouldn't sit upright in the water, and I honestly thought she was going to belly up. It really bothered me, and I just wanted to return her, but I couldn't get her to sit up. Eventually she did, and I got some really quick pictures and then just got her back. So the pictures weren't the best, but what a common carp!

Sadly, loads of people got wind of these few fish I caught from the dock. It got fished so hard with so much pressure, and someone has now stolen that fish, which is very sad, and that's why I tended to keep most of my fishing underground until now, and that's why I have shared some of my captures in Big Carp magazine. Happy times as always, and I hope you enjoyed them. Until my new adventures...



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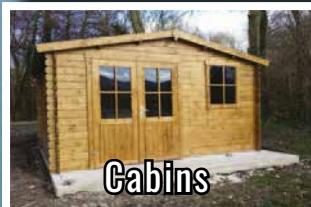
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JAMES BROMLEY

MY WINTER



I had a good summer last year on my local syndicate, The Wharf in Cardiff. I banked plenty of fish but was very unlucky with the sizes. I was consistently catching, but the biggest fish I landed was a 27lb common. The fish in the Wharf are stunning and not easy to catch, so I was very happy with my results, but it was also frustrating, as I spent a lot of time watching the big girls who are not shy of showing themselves...

but hooking one is a challenge. I was planning on fishing The Wharf through the winter but ended up deciding to purchase a winter ticket on Sandhurst Lake. It's a water that I have always wanted to visit, and it's known to fish well through the colder months, so I was very excited for the winter ahead. I had a short day session on a day ticket water in Swansea the week before my first trip down to Yateley and managed to bag one of the biggest in the lake, a 38lb common. This was my first 30 of the year, and I hoped this was the start of things to come.

The plan was testing Bait-Tech's new boilie range, Triple-N, which smelled and looked the part. It was easy to see that it's a bait that the fish can digest easily, but I wanted to see how the fish responded to it, and Sandhurst was the perfect place to put it to the test.



At the start of November, I chose to do a five-night session on my first trip to try and learn as much about the lake as possible and to give me the best chance of figuring out where the fish liked to spend their time. I had done a bit of research on the lake, but wanted to go and try working things out myself, as we all know each year is different, and carp can be unpredictable at the best of times. A lot of the information I was getting was to fish the deeper areas of the lake, as this is where the fish like to hold up.

After a lap of the stunning venue, I stopped in a peg that was a known good area in winter with access to the deeper depression out in the centre of the lake. My first night was quiet with a decent size tench being the only action. I spent the morning scanning the water trying to find something to go on, and finally I saw a show in front of the peg next door. This was an unfancied peg, which spends a lot of time vacant, according to the bailiffs. I wasted no time in getting in there and having a little feel around just to check a rig could be presented. I noticed there was a shallow bar with a depth of about 4-5ft directly where the fish showed. Around half an hour after placing a rig on it, my first Sandhurst fish was in the net – a lovely 27lb mirror. I then chose to fish all three rods on the spot and give them a bit of bait, as the temp was still mild. By the end of the session, I had banked nine fish, the biggest being 34lb with four of them being over 30lb.

A week and half later I headed back down, still buzzing about my session the week before. I was amazed that I could slip straight back into the same peg, and I was confident of a bite. I repeated the exact process that was doing the job for me the week before, and I was up nice and early waiting for

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the rod to go. That morning I had two 30lb-plus fish, and just as I thought the feeding spell had ended, my left rod melted off, and I was attached to something that I just couldn't stop. It headed straight into a weedbed to the left of the bar and locked up.

Fearing the worst, I called the bailiff for the boat and rested the rod back on the rests. After ten minutes, and with the bailiff on his way round with the boat, it started to strip line once again. After a hard battle it was in the net, a 40lb 12oz Yateley common. It was an amazing feeling, and probably the best morning's fishing I have had.

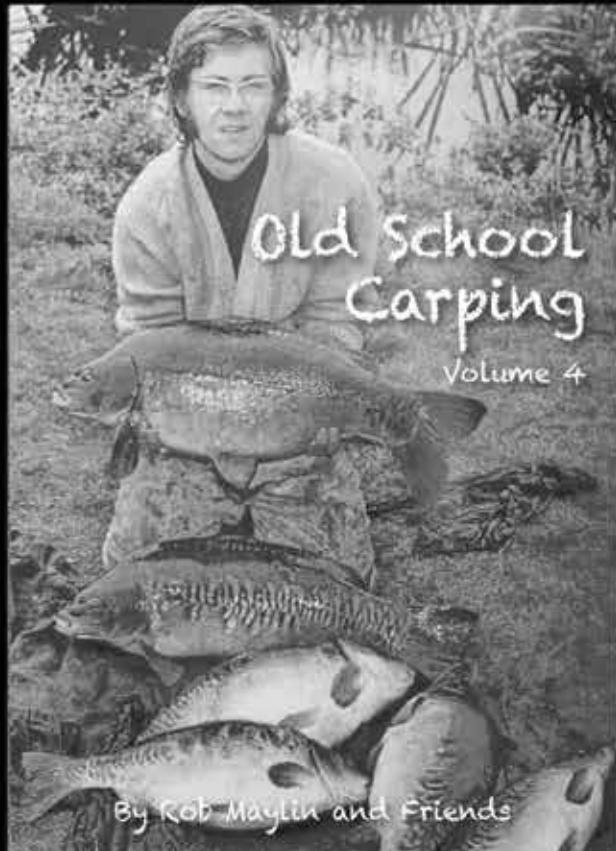
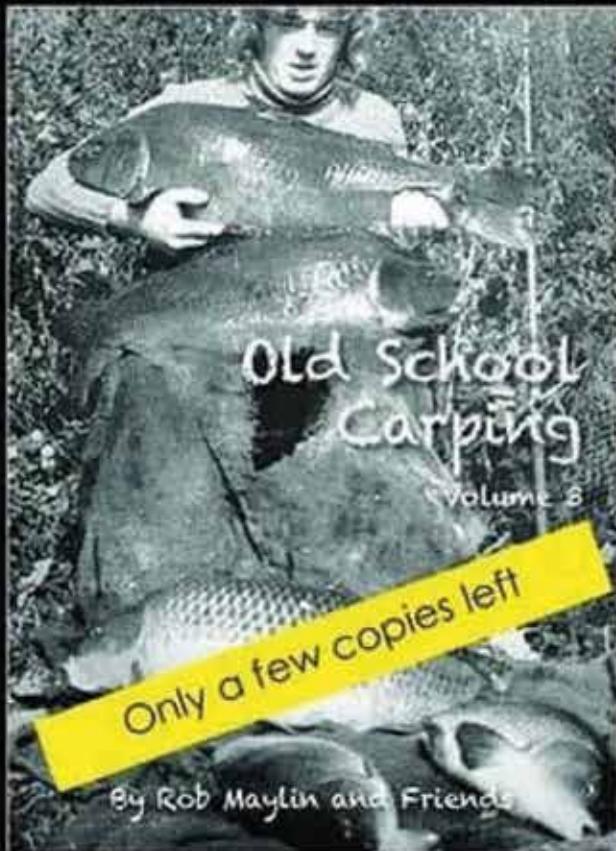
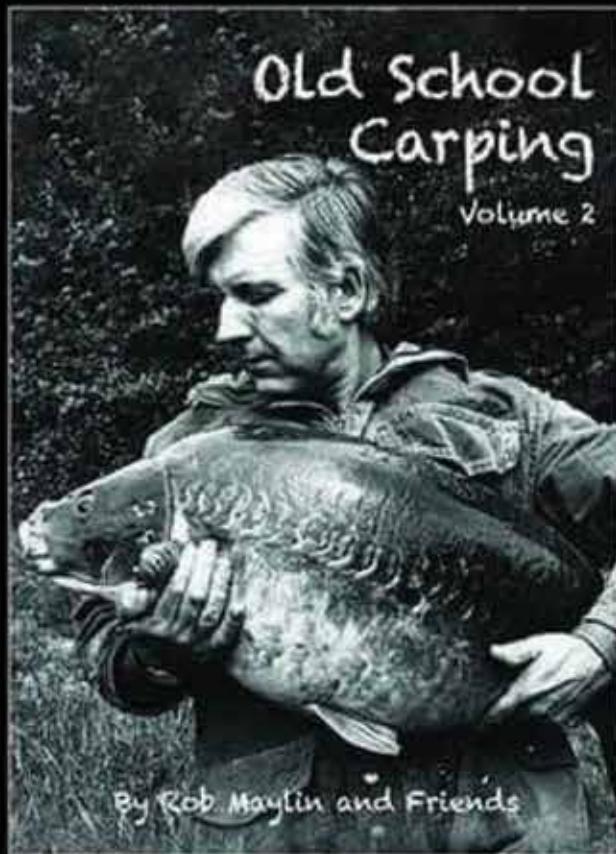
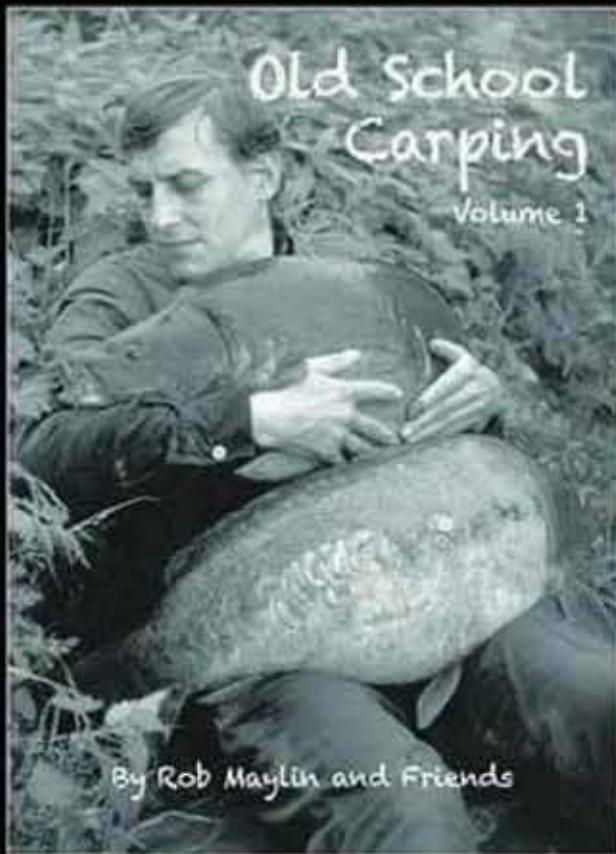
As expected, the weeks following this, the peg started to get popular, and getting in there was difficult. I continued to work the swim, and I also found other similar spots in other pegs at this end of the lake. I was consistently getting bites each time I went down and regularly bagging fish over the 30lb mark. The one morning that stood out was the last morning of a three-night stint on which I had picked up a few small fish the previous nights. The temperature was slowly dropping each night, and by the third night it was down to -7. With the Lake starting to freeze at half six in the morning, I had two beeps on the right rod, and I was in. it felt a good weight but came in without a fight, and the fish easily slipped into the net. As I lifted the net I couldn't believe my luck! I had my main target, and one of the most wanted day ticket carp in the country, Nige's Fish, at a very good weight of 42lb 8oz. I ended my time on Sandhurst mid-February and had banked two 40lb-plus fish, nine 30s and plenty of stunning Sandhurst 20s.

To tackle this venue, my rig choice was my version of the stiff hinge rig where I attach the stiff section to a semi-stiff coated

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braid using an Albright knot. I fished this on a helicopter setup using the Korda Helisafes to drop the lead. This setup worked great for me with amazing hookholds and not one fish lost. I fished these using the Triple-N coloured pop-ups over a bed of whole and chopped Triple-N boilies with the Bait-tech Scopex corn and Bait-tech Supersede Hemp. I soaked all this in the Nutty glug. My confidence in the bait grew week by week, and I was amazed by how much of the bait these fish were going through considering the water temperature... and this year is the first winter I have not used maggot at all and the results were staggering.

After an amazing campaign up at Yateley, it was time to get back to the Wharf. With my confidence high, I stuck to what was working for me, and the only thing I changed was my rig, which I changed to the Ronnie rig due to the amazing hookholds



JAMES BROMLEY



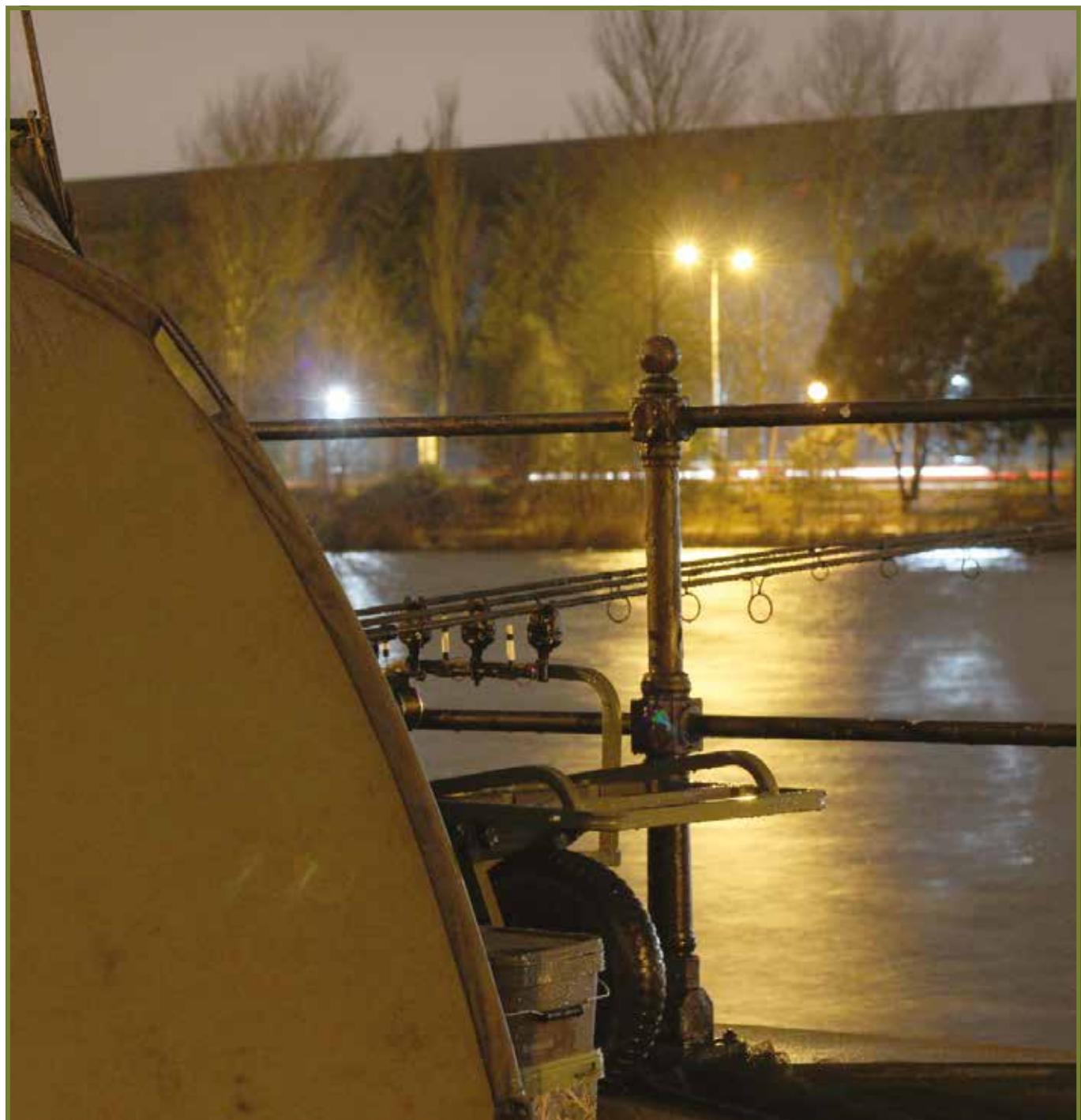


I'd been seeing. The Wharf is difficult at the best of times, and I hadn't heard of many bites through the winter, so I knew I had my work cut out.

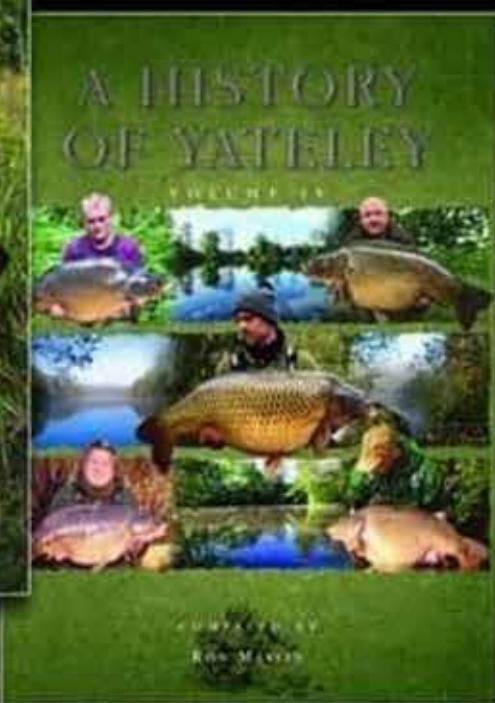
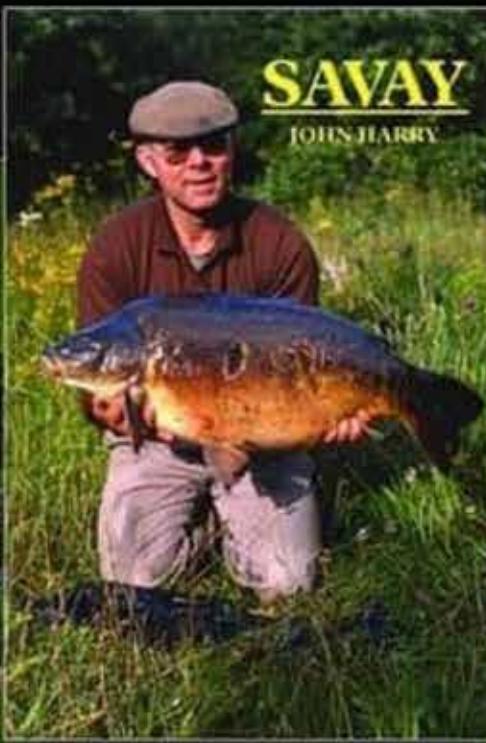
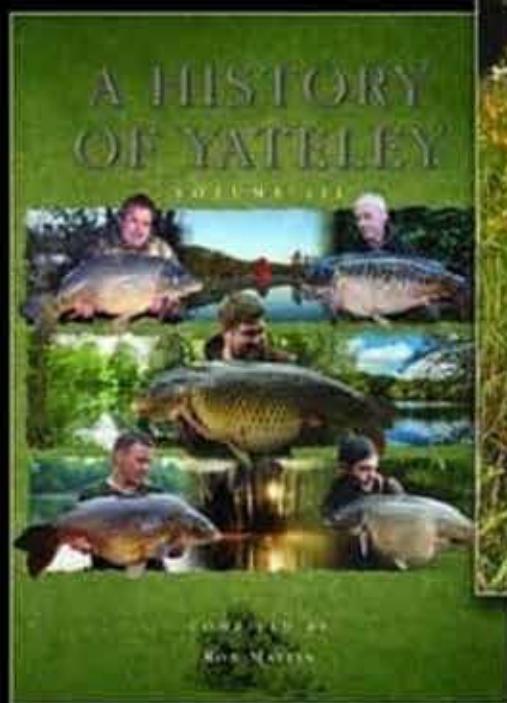
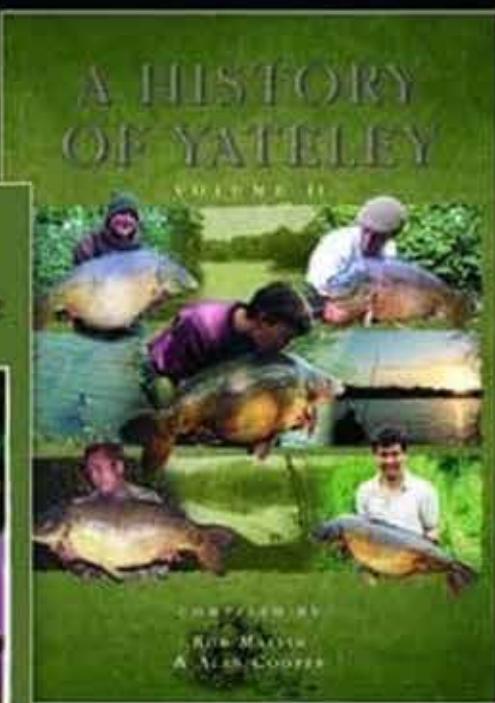
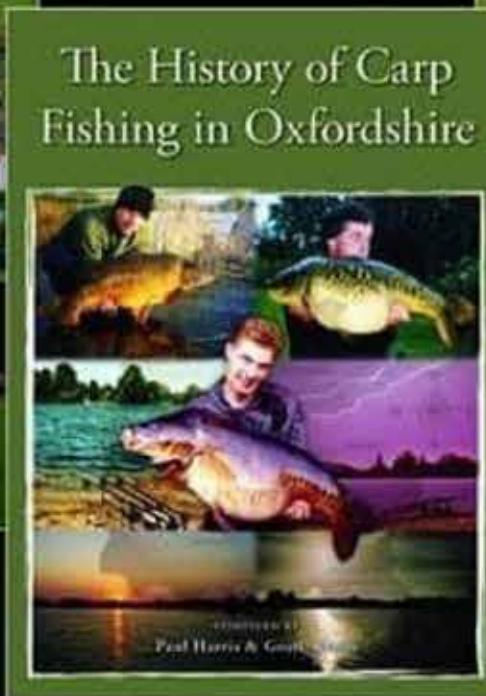
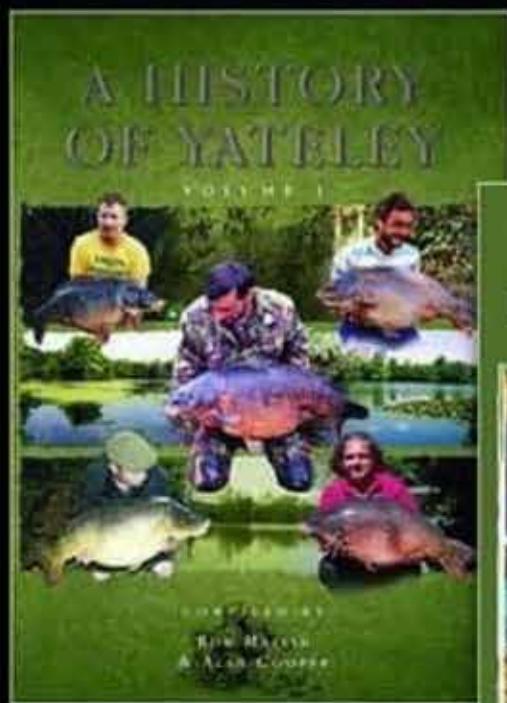
On my first session back, amazingly I spotted some fish down one end of the 30-acre dock, and this was all I needed. I baited with a kilo of my usual mix, and the next morning I had a stunning mid double common, and it was nice to get off the mark straight away. The following couple of weeks handed me a few overnight blanks without seeing a single sign of fish, and I remembered how challenging this water can be. Sticking to my routine, I headed down after work for a short overnight session. While walking around, I noticed a bit of fizzing in a particular area. This being the only sign I had seen in weeks, I quickly loaded the barrow and headed round. The average

JAMES BROMLEY

depth down this end of the lake is around 12ft, and I found a shallower plateau around 7ft and baited with my usual mix of corn, hemp and boilie. I fished two rods over this and one in the margins. Just before I went to sleep I noticed small slicks coming up over my spot, and at two in the morning I had a small stockie around 8lb. I quickly got the rod back out and got some sleep.



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At 6.30 in the morning I was woken to a screaming run and after a hard battle I landed a fish known as Pawprint, which is a lovely scaly warrior which weighted 36lb 13oz. Rather than top up bait and risk spooking the swim, I decided to sit on my hands, and a few hours later I had one of the Wharf's stunning mid double commons. The rod went back out, and a storm moved in. The conditions where terrible, and as I was sat on my bedchair holding on to my storm poles thinking the bivvy was going to take off, I had a savage back drop. Out in the storm, the fish was stripping line, and the power was unbelievable. 50 yards down the bank, I was starting to gain on the fish, and out in the middle, the fish rolled, and I immediately knew it was the biggest fish in the lake. A few more minutes passed, and I finally netted the beast. It's was a 46lb mirror known as Eben Haezer, which is the biggest living





fish in Wales.

My winter this year has been amazing and one I will never forget. I put my success down to determination in being out on the bank every week no matter what the weather and working as hard as I can to put the odds in my favour. This is vital, as my time on the bank is limited due to my full time job and young family at home. Also important is confidence in my bait. The Triple-N boilie has worked amazingly for me through the hardest time of the year. The pulling power of the bait is impressive, and the evidence is there, as many of the fish I caught have been excreting the bait on the mat, which shows just how easy the bait is for the carp to digest. Going into spring my confidence is at its highest after a total this winter of three 40lb-plus fish with ten 30lb-plus fish and many stunning backup fish all in just four months.



Dear Santa, PLEASE No more socks this Christmas!

Wish list:

Seasonal Tactics and Techniques - Autumn/Winter

The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

The Darker Side of Carp Fishing

Old School Carping Volume 4

History of Yateley Volume 3

Under the Radar Volume 2

In Pursuit of the Largest

Further off Beaten Track

Advanced Terminal Rigs

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BASINGSTOKE BEAUTY

On the 16th June, I decided to put all my efforts into the canal fishing as a new challenge. My first move was to bait up a couple of spots using Dynamite Crave boilies with pellet and keeping my eye on them. After a week baiting up, I managed to get a few fish feeding on the area, so I decided to get the rods out and managed to catch four fish, a couple of low

doubles, two mid twenties and endless bream. Therefore, I decided to change my approach on baiting up, not using pellets at all, and that definitely made a difference.

On my following visit, I decided to get 48 hours on the spot, and I'm glad I did. I managed to land 12 fish, with six of them being over 20lb and scaly. The day after, I was talking to a couple of good friends, Jake Lund and Daniel Smith, and they told me there was a fish in that stretch that rarely visit the bank called Cracker, a mid 30, so I couldn't wait to go back.

On Friday evening, I got all the gear together and off I went. I got the rods out, and within 15 minutes I was into a low double, but that was it. It was a quiet night, so on first light, I changed my tactics, putting out 3kg of Dynamite White Chocolate boilies, and it didn't take long before I landed a mid twenty mirror. I got the rod back out adding another kilo over the top, and an hour later, I had a hook pull. There was no time to feel sorry for myself, so I started everything from fresh - a new blowback rig with a 20mm White Chocolate boilie and got it out there as quick as I could.

A couple of my mates turned up, so I put the kettle on, and the rod was off again. It didn't feel like a good fish and I told my mates I thought it was a tench, but ten yards from the bank this fish rolled and I knew in the back of my mind that it was decent. After a long 5 minutes it was in the net. I looked inside, and there she was. I couldn't believe it! I quickly called Dan and Jake, described the fish, and they confirmed it was Cracker at a whopping 38lb 8oz! I was made up!





COTSWOLD MONSTERS

I had blanked over several sessions earlier in the summer, and then the fish spawned, so I left the lake alone. In early August, I decided on an area that I would bait on a regular basis and started baiting about twice a week without putting any lines in the water. In late August, I fished the spots for the first time and had a couple up to 22lbs. I carried on baiting the spots, and the following week, I had a couple more and numerous tench, so I knew the fish liked the bait and were visiting regularly. By mid-September, I did my third session and blanked the first 24 hours, but at 10am on the second morning, two hours before I had to leave, one of the rods absolutely exploded into life. I fish with quite tight clutches, but this take had the reel spinning, and when I picked up the rod, I knew this fish was somewhat different.

It fought really hard, and after its initial run, it kited to my right towards a bay. I waded out as far as I could to try to stop it going into the bay to my right, and luckily it stopped just as I was thinking I would lose it. It then slowly moved left into the water in front of me, and I then thought I was starting to win. The fish then decided to move left, but by now it was tiring,

and I saw it near the surface for the first time. After a few more lunges and heavy pulls against the clutch, I had it in the net.

I called a friend to come and do the photos. He didn't take long to find me and did the fish justice with some great pics. I got in the lake to do some return shots, and the fish, which we weighed at 46lb 6oz, swam off strongly. I am still baiting the spots with mixed particle, tigers, Cell boilies in various sizes and response pellets. There are a couple more biggies in this lake that I would dearly like to see in my net, so the hunt continues.

Secret Diary Sepember 2018: Following on from my 46lb'er a few weeks ago, I've kept baiting the spots on the pit twice a week. I arrived for a two-night session this week and had a 22 lb mirror at midnight on the first night. Then just before first light, I had another take, and after quite a battle, netted what was obviously another of the lake's originals. It was 44lb.

Secret Diary October 2018: After the 44, I left the lake on the Wednesday on a high. I returned on the Sunday to put more bait on the spots. I gave the three spots a good dose of Cell boilies, response pellets, tigers and a bit of hemp. Hopefully this would keep them interested for a few days until I could return. That was assuming the crays, tufties and tench left some.

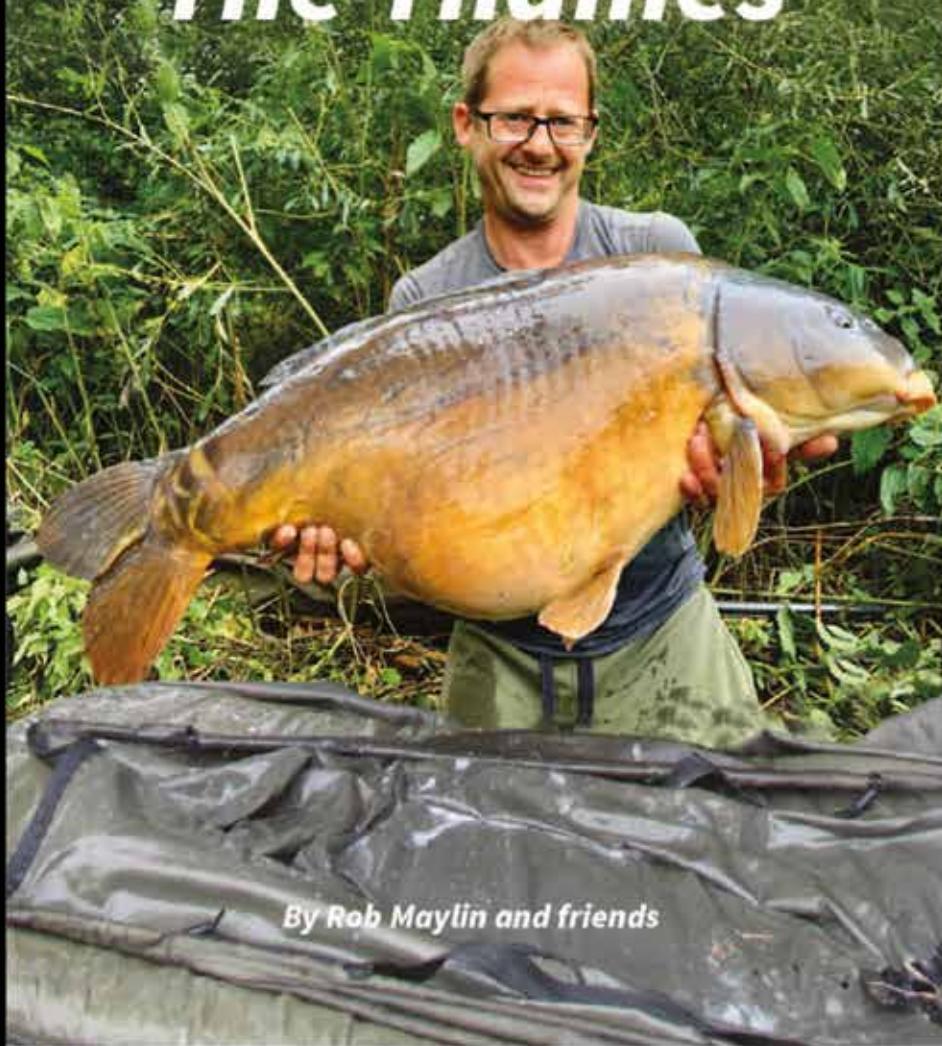
I got back on the Monday just before dark, put a bit more bait out, and got the rigs on the spots. The first night, a tench broke the silence, but apart from that, I never saw or heard anything. On the second night, I had one at just under 22lb so they were still visiting.

The following Sunday, I was back, and again, I gave it some bait. The Monday routine followed, and the three rods were out over the bait just before dark. After a couple of hours, a tench was in the net, but then all was quiet for the rest of the

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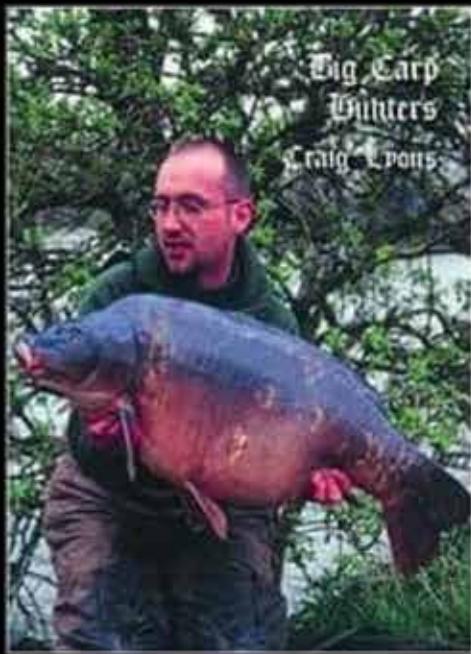
night. The second night arrived, and I heard a carp crash out to my left, but not far away, I thought.

Just before midnight, the right hand rod was away, and straight away, I knew it was a good fish. It stayed deep and slowly moved left and refused to turn. I waded out to get a better angle and stopped it reaching some branches in the water by a few inches. It slowly came round in front of me, and although close to netting, it wouldn't give in. After some minutes, I eventually netted an obviously large carp.

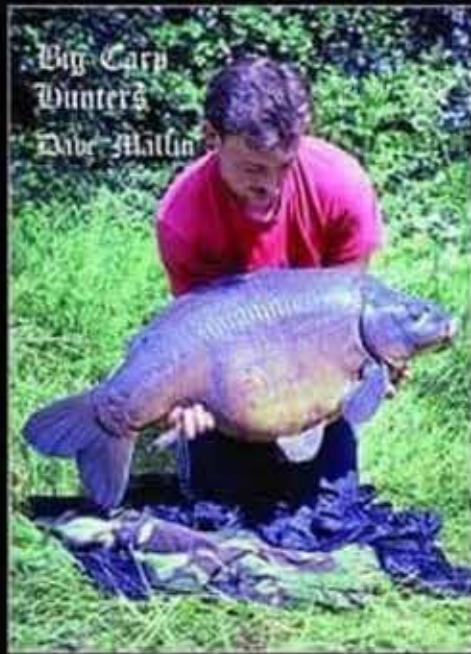
I was amazed at the length of the fish, and it weighed 47lb. So that was three forties in just over a month! What an autumn! Who knows what other uncaught monsters this lake holds? Keep reading Big Carp.



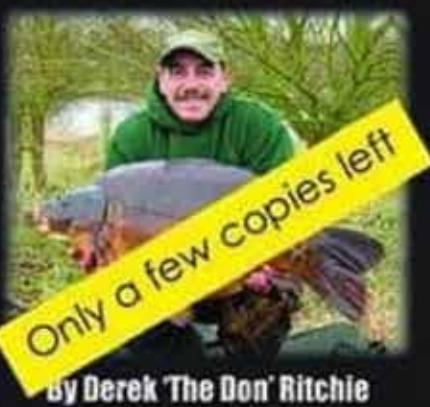
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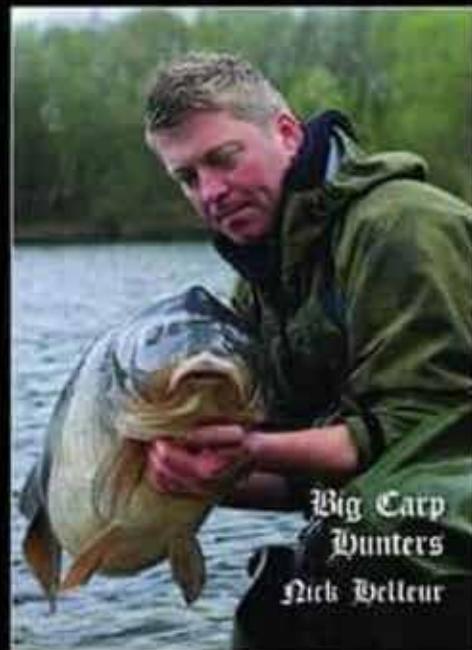


By Derek 'The Don' Ritchie

THE DARKER SIDE OF CARP FISHING



LEE BROOKS



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KING OF THE THAMES

In October 2018, Nick Helleur smashed the Thames record with a stunning linear weighing 50lb 14oz. This is the first time this particular fish has been caught at over 50lb, and almost certainly the only 50 that the Thames has ever produced. As with almost every big river carp in the country, this fish has escaped at some point from a still water close to the river system at a time of flood. It is almost certain this fish once lived in Dinton Pastures, although as yet no one has produced 100% positive photo evidence on this. However, the strain of carp is identical to that stocked by Simon at Dinton.

This fish is not a new capture by any means, and its rise to 50lb is well documented with many captures going back

to when this carp was 30lb-plus, some of which are shown here. Congratulations came flooding in from all over the UK, but some anglers who were also targeting the fish were not so pleased, as they feared Nick would publicise this highly sought after prize to please his sponsors and cause a flood of anglers descending on the Thames seeking glory. Only time will tell, but we at Big Carp could not be more pleased for Nick, as targeting any known big fish for a sustained two-year campaign is hard work and prizes are well deserved.

47-year-old Nick caught the fish from his own trailer boat on the middle Thames after a two-year campaign on the river, and we understand he is still fishing this stretch. It is the same fish as the old official Thames carp record of 48lb 7oz caught in 2017 by Steve Shenfield and at 45lb by Katch Bullett sometime before.

Here's what Sticky Baits, one of Nick's sponsors had to say: "Nick Helleur broke the Thames carp record this morning, banking this colossal 50lb 12oz mirror, the culmination of an intense campaign that even a broken ankle couldn't interrupt! He's been targeting the mighty Thames for the last two years, spending the majority of his time since the start of this season on a stretch of the middle river, in search of what many consider to be the most desirable and rarely caught carp that the famous river holds. As storm Callum crashed through the Thames Valley, Nick was locked in battle with the king of the river after it fell to his Krill/Signature Squid snowman hookbait. He was visibly moved to bank what he described as, "The best carp in the country" and record the first fifty that the Thames has ever produced."

Nick said: "I'm fully aware my life is different to most other



anglers; it's like Groundhog Day. I nearly always wake up on the bank, head off to a café for a coffee and maybe some breakfast and then go on to a different water. If that isn't right, I head off for another venue. I've always had an insatiable thirst for catching carp, but I get bored easily and move around a lot. I've done more fishing than most people with a full-time job could do in ten lifetimes. I've been after this fish for the past two years, and I'd say it's the best carp in the country. I baited up a lot, as there are just so many bream in there, putting in ridiculous amounts. Tactics were fishing a snowman rig with a glugged Sticky Baits Krill bottom bait and a Signature Squid pop-up over lots of peanuts and Krill boilies. I also fished a bit differently, not using bite alarms, but sea fishing-style with bells added to the rod tips. It means I can fish tight lines and get instant indication, as I don't want to wind in a bream the next morning that has been hooked all night."

With his boat on a trailer, each trip to the spot from the access slipway involved going through two locks as part of a two-hour journey. Nick said: «I anchored up away from the bank on Thursday evening and caught five or six bream within moments of each other before the action ceased. About 10pm, after I'd had a glass of wine, I listened to the radio, having a lovely time. My dog was with me, I had the candles on, and I heard a big slosh and the all the coots went wild. Not long after that, I must have fallen asleep. It was in the early hours when I had the take. If I'm honest, had I lost it, I would have said it was an upper-20 common, as it was very fast, like a tuna.

The fight was a complete nightmare; it was a farce. It pulled so hard that it pulled the boat off its rear anchor on the

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marginal shelf. It was pulling the boat around as I was playing it, as the rear anchor had lost its footing. The weed has just started to break up, and I had to put the rod down and pull handfuls of rotting streamer weed off the line. I must have done that half a dozen times, but sometimes your name's on a fish, and my name was on this one. It was an absolute beast of a fight that lasted 40 minutes or more. At first I thought it was a common before glimpsing its linear scaling as it neared the net in thick mist. I was actually sick; I retched and pulled a proper whitey. When I realised what it was, my heart was racing. You've got to remember how big it is. A 30lb river carp is a huge fish, but 50-pounder is just something else entirely. I was absolutely beside myself with stress. That night I swear I aged ten years. It's a huge responsibility to look after that fish. It's the rarest thing you will ever see; it's a living dinosaur. I had been fishing the area for three months and was planning to target this spot later in the autumn, but the capture of two 20s during an earlier session brought forward my plans. I baited very heavily with peanuts flavoured with half a kilo of "the hottest chilli powder available" per bucket and lots of salt, plus glugged Sticky Krill boilies. I baited for it; I stuck to one aim, and I thought, 'I will feed them to an area', and that's effectively what I did. I was trying to build a spot. Nobody else was fishing there, and with the head of bream, you seriously couldn't have put enough bait in."

Thinking Anglers, another of Nick's sponsors had this to say: "On Friday morning, Nick Helleur rocked the angling world by banking a 50lb mirror from the River Thames. Not only was it the biggest carp the famous river has ever produced, it has to be undoubtedly one of the best-looking fish to swim the UK.

Having targeted the Thames for a couple of years, Nick was only too aware of the challenges that the river holds and the demands that it places on the angler and his kit. So, he stuck to his guns, fishing large snowman hookbaits over big beds of boilies and peanuts on simple rigs constructed from strong and reliable tackle and opting for one of our new test hooks in a size 5. It didn't let him down despite the colossal mirror testing everything to the limit during a brutal battle in and out of the weed."

As more and more carp anglers fish the Thames, its secrets are slowly being uncovered to the carp angling world. Some would say there are no secrets left, but our sources are convinced there is still at least one huge fish that has been seen in a different stretch in the Reading area that will smash the 50lb barrier when landed. We would not be surprised if this incredible waterway has other surprises what with its sheer size compared to any other carp venue in the UK.

Even though Nick knew the location of the beast from previous captures, let's not underestimate the amount of hard work and dedication Nick put into his campaign over this two-year period. Nick said the next day: "Like all these things, it's still sinking in, if I'm honest. I feel I've been rewarded for keeping the faith in this style of fishing. I'm just really happy."





ANGLERS: STAY SAFE FROM CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING



Carbon monoxide (CO) is a silent killer - It's invisible, odourless, and deadly.

COMMON SOURCES AT THE BANK:

- Portable gas heaters
- BBQs and camping stoves
- Petrol generators
- Gas lanterns used inside bivvies or tents



NEVER DO THIS:

- ✖ Use fuel-burning equipment inside your bivvy
- ✖ Sleep with a BBQ or heater still warm inside your shelter
- ✖ Block air vents or close yourself in tight spaces

ALWAYS DO THIS:

- ✓ Use heaters and stoves outside, in open air
- ✓ Ensure your bivvy is well-ventilated
- ✓ Carry a portable CO alarm
- ✓ Learn the signs of CO poisoning

KNOW THE SYMPTOMS:

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Confusion
- Collapse or loss of consciousness

If you feel unwell, get into fresh air immediately and call 999.

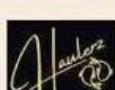
"It won't happen to me..." Too many anglers last thought.

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