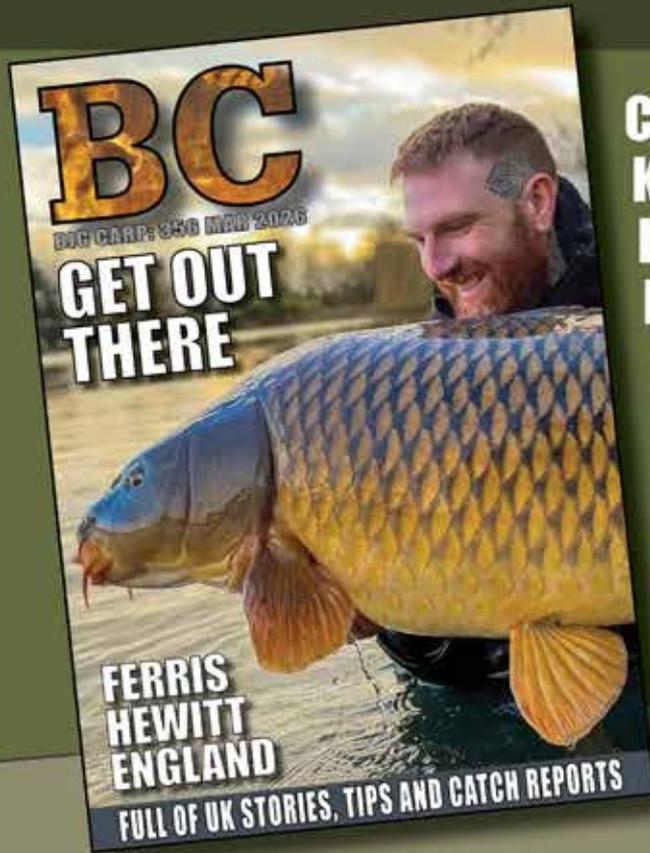
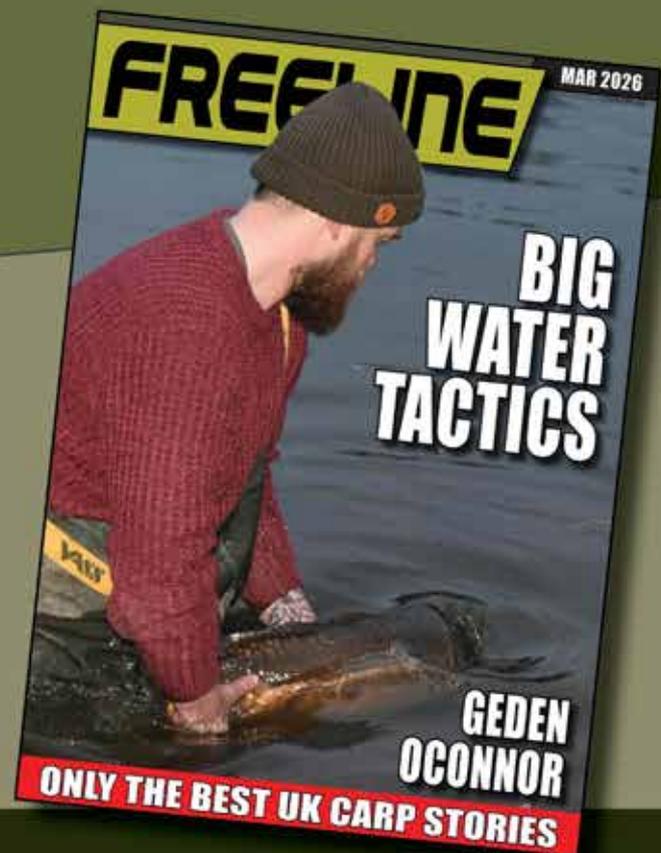


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KEV HEWITT - AN AWESOME BRACE
LEE ENGLAND - DAY SESSION SUCCESS
KIERAN HAWKINS - THE KRAKEN



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TOP 10 DAY TICKET CARP WATERS

1	BLUEBELL LAKES
2	LINEAR FISHERIES
3	SANDHURST
4	FARLOWS LAKE
5	COKING FARM
6	NORTON DISNEY
7	OAK LAKES FISHERY
8	BERNERS HALL
9	CEFN MABLY
10	CROMWELL

TOP 10 FRENCH HOLIDAY VENUES

1	IKTUS
2	ABBAY LAKES
3	CRETE LAKES
4	BRITTANY FOREST
5	GIGANTICA
6	RAINBOW
7	THE AQUARIUM
8	DREAM LAKES
9	FISHABIL
10	RIBIERE

TOP 10 BAIT COMPANIES

1	MAINLINE BAITS
2	STICKY BAITS
3	DYNAMITE BAITS
4	CC MOORE
5	TARGET BAITS
6	NUTRABAITS
7	DNA BAITS
8	URBAN BAITS
9	DAVE MALLIN BAITS
10	GOODZ CARP BAITS



TOP 10 END TACKLE COMPANIES

1	ESP
2	KORDA
3	FOX
4	THINKING ANGLERS
5	GARDNER
6	TRAKKER
7	BANK TACKLE
8	NASH TACKLE
9	CARP ONLINE
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TOP 10 CARP FISHING BRANDS

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

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 ICONIC CARP LAKES

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

BC

BIG CARP: 356 MAR 2026

GET OUT THERE

FERRIS
HEWITT
ENGLAND

FULL OF UK STORIES, TIPS AND CATCH REPORTS



Aqua Liliium Clothing

SPRING COLLECTION



For a while it has seemed all we would be advertising due to the weather is how good Aqua Liliium's wet weather gear is, and once back from Brands Hatch the normal after show stock take was done.

We had a clear winner this time out, and it was The Game Changer Poncho mostly selling out in the first day which for a small family run brand was amazing. Staging a show is a major risk for a small company, as an unsuccessful event can result in a significant loss of annual profits. We Need not have worried thanks to you guys we had a record-breaking show with loads of repeat customers as well as new customers telling us we were easily the best at show.

Aqua Liliium Clothing has now been trading for around 5 years and the best feeling in the world is walking the vast queue outside the venue and spotting loads of people wearing our clothing young and old. It really does make me emotional just sitting here as I write this piece, knowing that people really believe in what you are trying to achieve. The fan base we have is incredible and people really do appreciate the work that goes into Aqua Liliium.

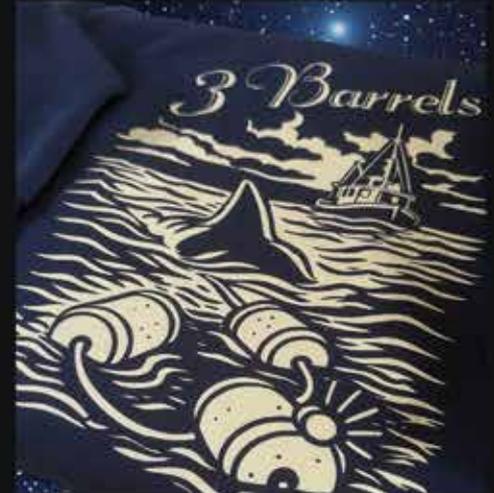
Something to be proud of is the fact Steven and myself have never taken a penny out of the brand, instead we have re-invested and since 2021 we have helped over seventy charities up and down our great land. This is what the brand is about not money; it is



1 OF 1



THANK YOU
TO EVERYBODY
WHO CAME TO
THE
BRANDS HATCH
SHOW



about creating memories and the best feeling by a country mile is when a young angler picks our brand. It is so easy for a young up and coming angler to want to wear the same as Dovey or Spooner which I completely understand, it is like football you have your heroes name on the back of your shirt. so, when they turn around and pick Aqua Liliium Clothing out from a crowd that is the buzz.

As you can tell by now, this is not just another advertisement. More, an extended thank you to everybody that has helped

us grow over the last 5 years and on a personal note a big thankyou to my brother Steven and family for all their support, Aqua Liliium Clothing would not be the same without you.

Our next show is the Doncaster Carp Show on the 21st and the 22nd of March so if you can make it, please get involved. In the meantime, if you are out doing it, please be careful the banks are dangerous at the moment.

Hope you catch a monster!

All the best

Aqua Liliium Clothing



Website: www.aqualiliumclothing.com

Email: aqualiliumclothing@hotmail.com

Tel: 07854629130

You can also reach us through or Facebook or instagram pages



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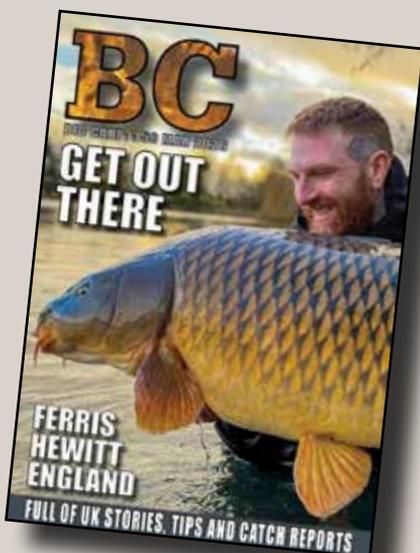
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March 2026
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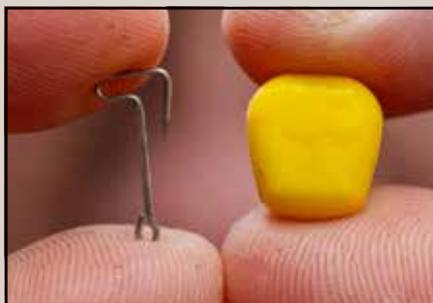
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Publications 2026



Front Cover:
Kieran Hawkins cradles
the Kraken.



Rain, rain and more rain. It seemed as though it would never stop. Then finally, about a week ago, it did and the temperatures shot up to 15 degrees in places - IN FEBRUARY!! The season has definitely started and I know my syndicate has done more fish this February than any other - albeit to zigs. If you get the chance get out there because there are early bites to be had. What targets have you set yourself this year? Are you targeting a new water? Have you taken on a new challenge? If so, we have plenty of advice from some of the best anglers in the business. Maybe one of the stories will fire you up to get the rods out, brave a bit of early season unsettled weather and get your year's tally under way. I know I'm itching to get out and once this mag is put to bed I'm heading straight to my syndicate lake.

CONTENTS**8. SHOCKLEADER****40. TAC-TEC****46. CATCH REPORTS****60. CHARLIE FERRIS****68. JAKE PARDOE****74. JONNY OLD****86. KEV HEWITT****92. KIERAN HAWKINS****98. LEE ENGLAND****106. RICH HOGG****GREAT AD DEALS**

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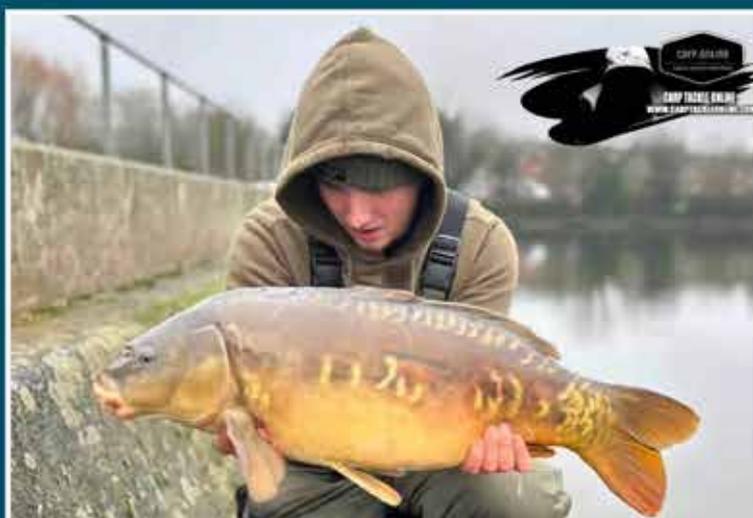
See us on Facebook



Team member James Johnson recently had 3 fish, on size 6 Curved Ronnie's, and this 27lb fish which was caught on a size 6 Ronnie Crank.

Jarred Howard fished Drayton Reservoir, using size 4 Scorpion Wide Gape hooks and our CTO Pro hooklink.

Team member Paul Gill had his Christmas at Nuddock Wood. Paul was using out Mantis Long Crank hooks (Available Spring 2026) tied in a Ronnie style rig. Paul caught the bigger carp of the two at 27lb 3oz and then the 23lb 15oz fell on Christmas day.



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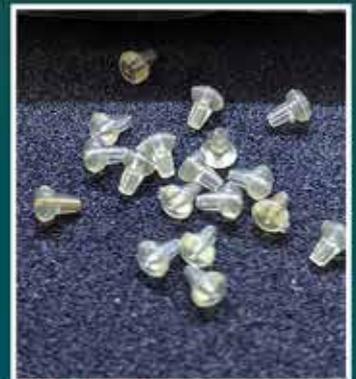
Tungsten Putty



Shrink Tube



Hair Stops



Hook Beads



Scorpion Ronnie Rigs



Composite Leadclip



Choddy Crank Hook



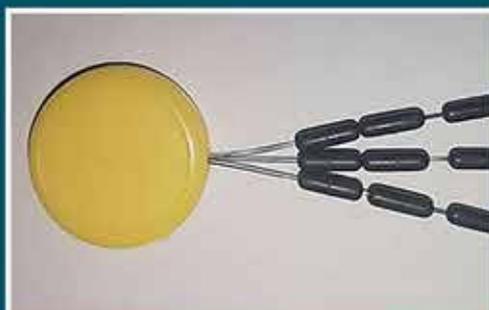
Aligners



Tungsten Aligners



Swivel Deal



Tungsten Hooklink Sinkers



Chod Filament



Swivels



Scorpion Chod Hook



Scorpion Crank Hook



Scorpion Snag Hook

BADEN HALL UPDATE



We've been busy behind the scenes again! As part of our 2026 fishery plans, we netted Middle Pool on Monday to monitor the carp stock and thin out the bream and silvers. Nearly 800lb was moved across



to Doughnut Pool for the match lads. The good news? The carp are looking spot on. Some absolute crackers in the nets before being returned safely. Middle is set to be a proper runs water this season! And don't forget... catch the Koi and you'll bag yourself a FREE 48-hour session! <https://www.badenhallfishery.com/>



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WITH CONFIRMED DONATIONS FROM THE FOLLOWING!



SUFFOLK
WATER PARK



DANSON PARK NEWS UPDATE



A friendly reminder for those fishing at Danson Park Lake. We've received a number of reports recently, so here's a quick reminder of the fishing rules to help everyone enjoy the lake responsibly:

Fishing is only allowed in the designated area during daylight hours. Night fishing is not

permitted at any time of year. Bait boats and sling shots are not allowed on or near the lake. Please take home all equipment — especially fishing lines, which can harm wildlife

Following these rules helps keep the lake enjoyable for everyone. Don't forget, the closed season begins 16 March



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CHILSTON NEW DAY TICKET STOCKING





BLUEBELL'S NEW OPENING HOURS



From Wednesday 1st of April our Summer Opening hours will be back and have now changed:

- Day Tickets Available: 7am until 7pm
 - Tackle Shop Open: 7am until 7pm Seven days a week
- Our current winter opening hours remain 8am until 6pm for ticket purchases and our tackle shop up until and including 31st March 2026. This is different from previous years so if you are planning on arriving in the evening, gates will close at 7pm from Wednesday 1st April.



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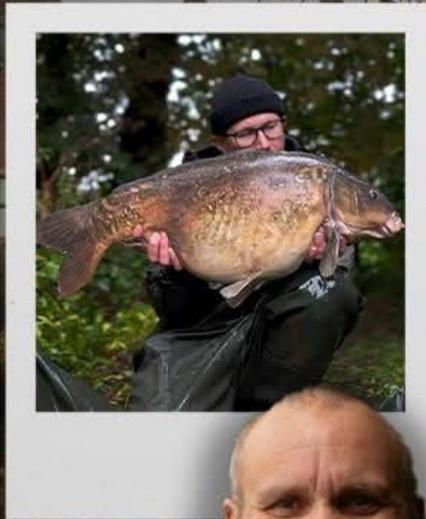
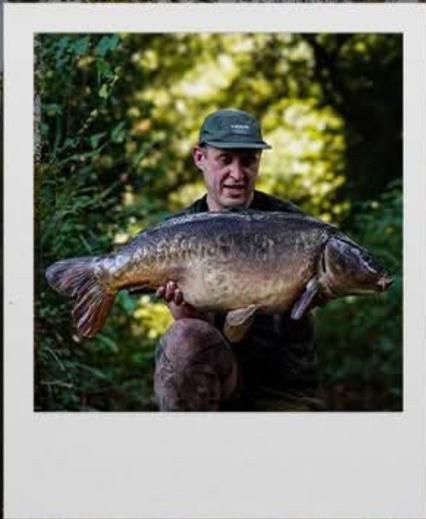
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LYMM ANGLING WAITING LISTS



Invites begin on 1st February and here's how it will work:

Invites will be sent in batches of 250, strictly in the order people joined the waiting list

Each batch will have 48 hours to sign up and complete payment before the next batch is invited

This will continue until we reach our season membership target, at which point

membership will close

Important to know:

If you don't manage to purchase within your 48-hour window, you haven't lost your chance. You can still buy a membership for as long as memberships remain open — however, demand is high, so we strongly recommend signing up as soon as your invite arrives to avoid disappointment.



CROWSHEATH 2026 PRICES

EFFECTIVE FROM APRIL 1ST 2026

SPECIMEN LAKE

12hrs **£20**

24hrs **£35**

CROWSNEST

12hrs **£20**

24hrs **£40**

CARP CANAL & PLEASURE LAKE

12hrs **£10**

24hrs **£20**

CROWSHEATH FISHERY

MEMBERSHIP PRICES

- Midweek Annual (Specimen, Canal, Pleasure) - **£350**
- Midweek Annual (Crowsnest) - **£350**
- Midweek Annual (All 4 Lakes) - **£450**

Midweek annual memberships cover Sundays 7pm - Fridays 7pm.
No bank holidays. 12 months from the day you pay.

To get booked on or for more info
give us a call on **07402 298218**.

To get booked on or for more info

give us a call on 07402 298218

CROWSHEATH



SOCIAL



2026

HOODY INCLUDED!

WORTH £49.99

21st Oct - 24th Oct

£160 Per angler

72 hours fishing

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- Approx 2000 fish to 74 lb , inc 50 x 50 lb's, 24 x 60 lb's , 2 x 70 lb+
- The entire venue is paved. All swims are accessible by car.
- The site containing various buildings and structures.
- The property is connected to mains water and three-phase electricity.
- All of the 30 swims have an electric hookup.
- A restaurant, bar with full alcohol license and fully professional equipped kitchen. Secure storage areas ideal for a workshop, storing tackle and bait, additional fridge and freezer space. Next to it a spacious tackle shop.
- The shower block occupy a separate building, freshly painted, a recently installed two new 300L boilers and toilets facilities. Two other toilets structures other locations on the site.
- A garage – 1 telescopic Caterpillar+ one plateau van + one van Ford courier.
- There are 6 cabins in composite material set around different lakes.

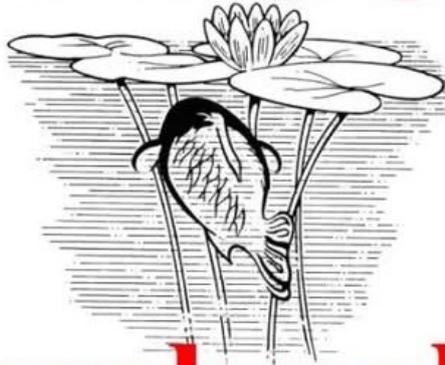
The stock alone is worth in excess of 1.000.000 euros.

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Newland Angling Club



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From State Tackle, Witney.
Please bring your old 2025 card

Membership Fees 2026/2027

Seniors = £85.00

Juniors = £10.00

O.A.P. = £40.00

Lakes Night Fishing Supplement

Adults = £85.00 Juniors = £20.00

One Passport size photo needed for Night Supplement.

**New memberships available from
Wednesday 1st April 2026**

OCTOPUS BAITTS TEAM PLACES



We are now actively looking to expand the Octopus Baits Team.

It is about dedicated anglers, consistent results, and representing a bait brand built on quality ingredients, proven performance, and attention to detail.

We're looking for anglers who take pride in how they fish, what they use, and how they conduct themselves on the bank.

What we're looking for:

Carp anglers who fish all seasons. A genuine belief in high-quality bait. Professional bankside conduct. Clean, considered catch photography. Honest feedback and long-term commitment. Just anglers who value quality and fish with intent.

What we offer:

Team-level bait support and preferential pricing.

Early access to new developments.

Input into future bait work. Backing from a growing, premium UK bait brand.

A focused team environment.

Day ticket and syndicate anglers considered.

Applications via the website.

RIP JAY MUNGO CATER



It's with great sadness i write this devastating status , early this morning the Fishing industry lost a very dear friend to ALL Jay Mungo Cater , , i can't express the sadness we all feel , Jay is a true legend of a man an went above & Beyond in helping ACA reach such amazing heights and helping so so many families& children along the way ,, The big fella is now in the arms of his amazing father Roger & mother Christine ,, my heart really really goes out to all his Family & Friends and team RidgeMonkey . You'll be sorely missed my friend

SEMTEX LAKE PAIRS MATCH



CDAAs are delighted to announce a 24-hour pairs match at one of our standout venues Semtex Lake, Brynmawr.

This match is open to all members, and is especially aimed at those who may not yet have had the opportunity to fish Semtex. You do not require a night syndicate membership to enter this competition. We're excited to showcase the incredible transformation the lake has undergone, thanks to the monumental efforts of our club volunteers and members.

The match will take place over Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th of April. Prime time with carp being at their top weights before spawning, this isn't an opportunity to be missed.

Entries are limited to a maximum of 9 pairs, with places allocated strictly on a first come, first served basis to keep things fair for all.

Booking will be available via Clubmate from Friday 24th March. Further information regarding rules, requirements, prizes, and other useful details please message the club if you require any further details.

This promises to be a fantastic weekend of great fishing, plenty of banter, and socialising in a truly stunning location — definitely one not to be missed!

PAVYOTTS MILLS GETS NEW STOCK

We've introduced a fresh batch of quality fish into the maze lake to keep sport high and rods bending. The new arrivals are settling in well and already showing across several areas of the water.

This stocking is part of our ongoing commitment to maintaining healthy fish stocks, great sport, and an enjoyable experience for all anglers visiting the lake.

The new fish range between 30lb to 40lb

Please ring the office for your 2026 bookings:

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Check Out the 2 Days of



After three very long days, we're pleased to confirm that the reed removal project at Shoebury has now been completed. The large reed mass and two smaller reed beds have been fully removed, and we've also reduced the number of lily pads across the lake to further improve water quality and access. This work wouldn't have been possible without the fantastic support of the Environment Agency, who funded a large proportion of the project through fishing licence fees – thank you! A huge shout-out as well to Digger Boats, who were once again absolutely brilliant throughout the works. Thank you! These works mark an incredible milestone for the fishery, increasing open water and accessibility for both wind and anglers, reducing the oxygen demand on the lake, and improving habitat for many of our native species.



A massive thank you to Digger Boats you did an amazing job on our lake 🍷

Anyone reading this, these guys are 10/10 very professional and didn't stop for 2 days solid.

Estimated amount of debris recovered 60tons, they did a fantastic job and I would highly recommend 🍷



Shoebury
Chesham Community Angling Club



Leamington Angling got in touch with us to create more water and bank space for the fishery. The reed removal operation utilising our specialised machinery made a drastic improvement to the water quality and open water to fish. Could your venue benefit from similar works?

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FREE Fishing Tuition Day provided, along with expert guidance, making this a perfect opportunity to learn to fish in a relaxed and beautiful setting. Book your place here: <https://swimbooker.com/event/f2fa7659-1754-2026-4198-a22e-8b4f29b691ba>

We're delighted to be hosting this a free fishing tuition day in partnership with Sussex & Surrey Angling Tuition at Summers Ponds Fishery & Campsite. Date: 6th June 2026 Who: Ideal for beginners and anyone looking to build confidence Cost: Completely free (advance booking required) All equipment is essential. See you there

Facebook link: <https://fb.me/e/6YY8UjS6D> Spaces are limited and booking is required

JOIN JH BAITTS



We're now looking to expand the JH Baits Team for the 2026 season.

This isn't about follower counts or forced posts — it's about real anglers, real results, and representing a bait brand that's built on quality, consistency, and proven performance.

What we're looking for: Passionate carp anglers who

fish regularly. Anglers who genuinely believe in using quality bait. A positive attitude and good conduct on the bank. Willingness to represent JH Baits honestly and professionally. Catch reports, photos, and occasional feedback on products

What you'll get:

Team-only bait support & discounts. Early access to new products. Direct input into bait development. Backing from a growing UK bait brand. A proper team environment — no ego, no nonsense.

All styles of angling considered: Day ticket or syndicate anglers.

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CHRIS PEARSON RIP BY DAVE LANE



I can't believe I am here, Eye, the biggest in the land at again. Saying goodbye to that time but, shortly before, another of my closest friends, he had been running across CP, a true legend in every the out of bounds woods at sense of the word. Sonning, chasing Storm Dog

I have deliberately picked with a big stick for straying this old and battered picture up to my bivvy for a cuddle

and a biscuit, again.

I was rolling around laughing and Storm thought it was all a big game.

Every day with CP was an adventure, I have a million stories of him, a character so much larger than life that only those lucky enough to have known him could ever, even start to understand.

CP, for all his shenanigans and dodgy dealings, had the most amazing moral code. Family and close friends were his life and he took no prisoners outside this circle; you were either a "Good old Boy" or a "Bad Bastard" there were no grey areas.

He had an entire language of his own, punctuated by words he had made up or mis-pronounced and the classic 'Drismal' has now become a standard description

of a dull wet day for nearly everyone I know.

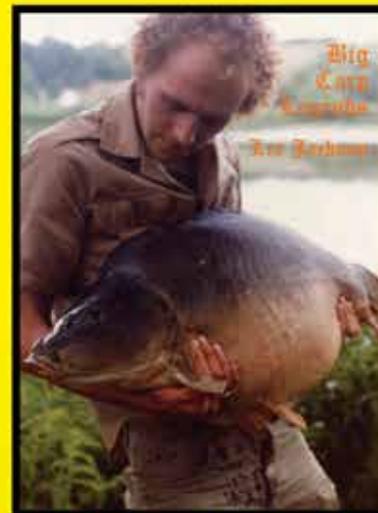
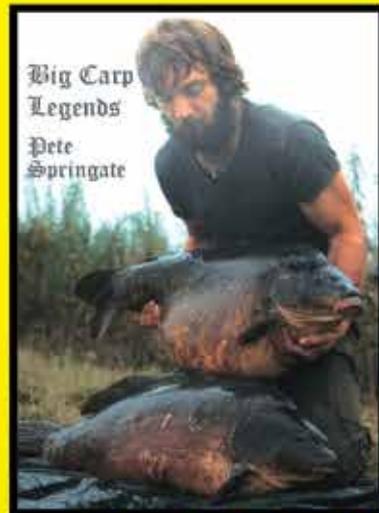
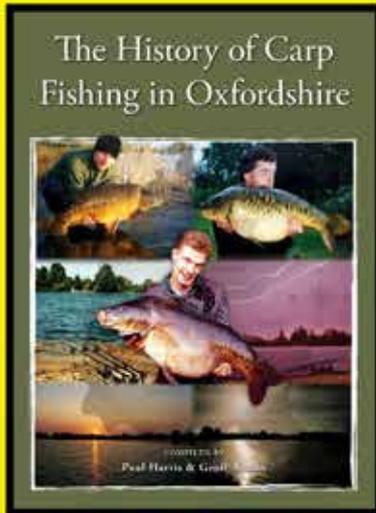
We first met in a grass car park next to Horton about 30 years ago, while queuing for the start of the season the following morning, by midnight we were firm friends and thirty years later we were like brothers.

He called me 'Raver' from day one, and I will always hear that voice in my head "kettle on Raver" or "You know the flavour Raver" if we were in agreement on one of the many things we planned, plotted or schemed.

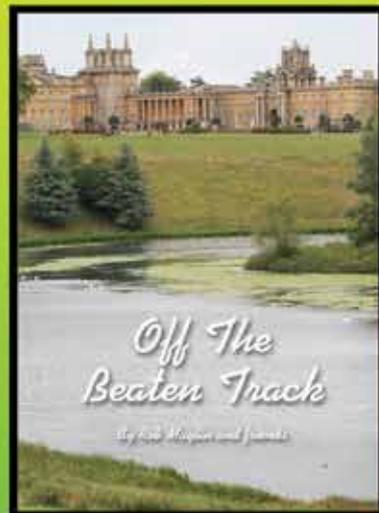
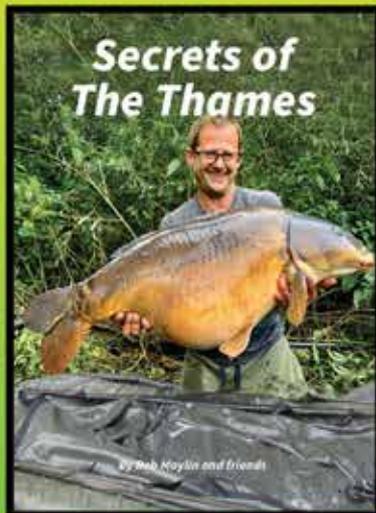
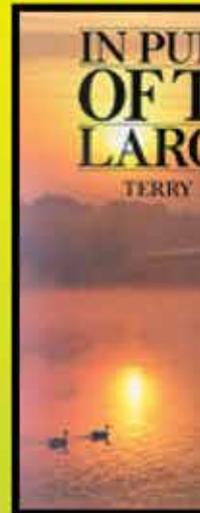
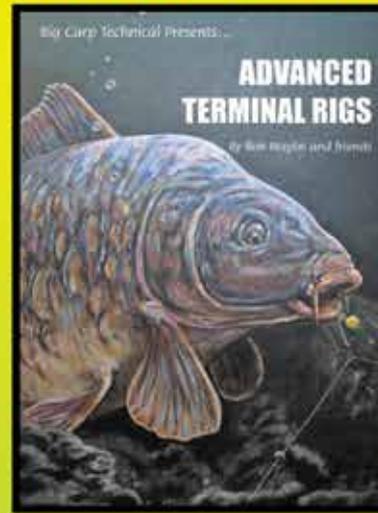
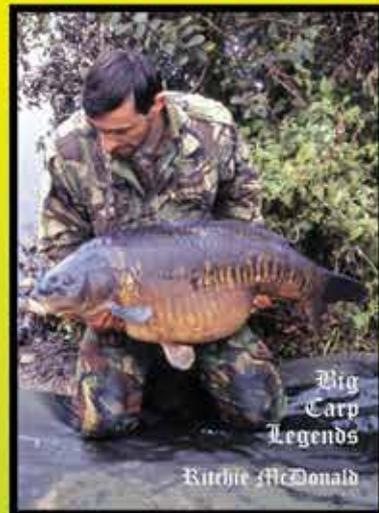
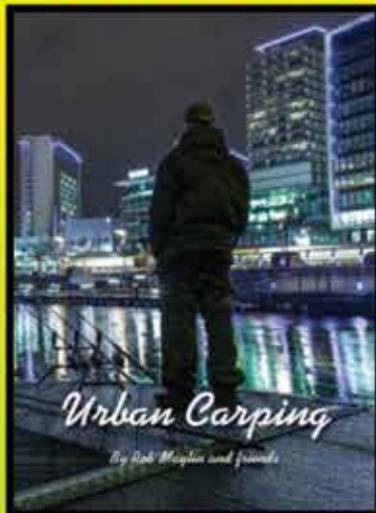
He was, quite literally, one of a kind and, also, one of an ever-decreasing breed of good men that know right from wrong and choose whichever one is best on the day.

We will miss him dearly.

SPRING INT

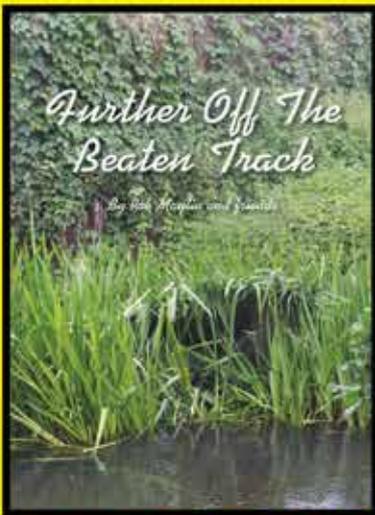
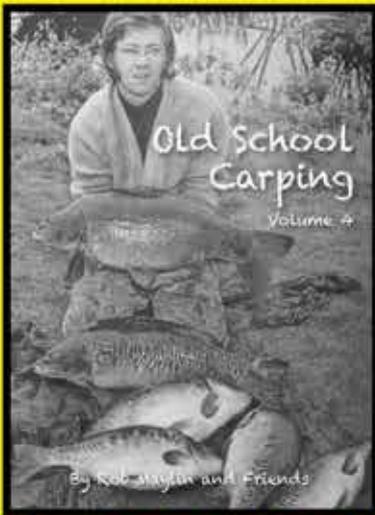
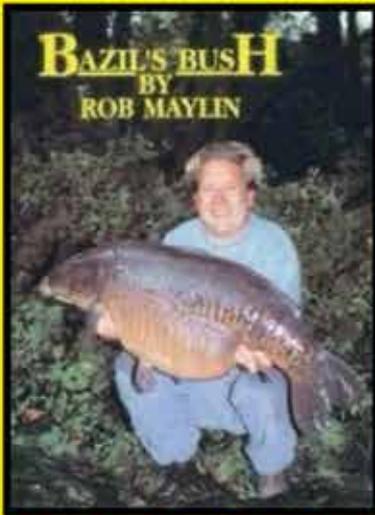


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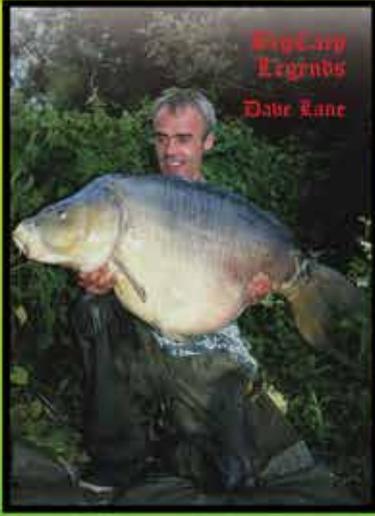
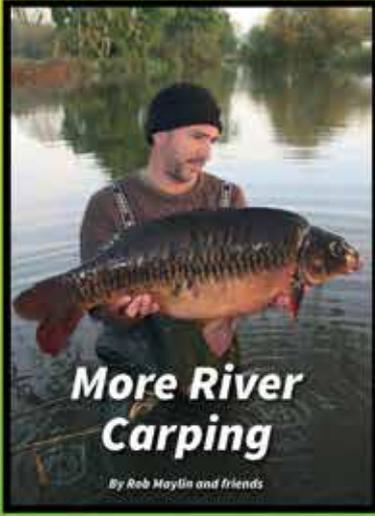
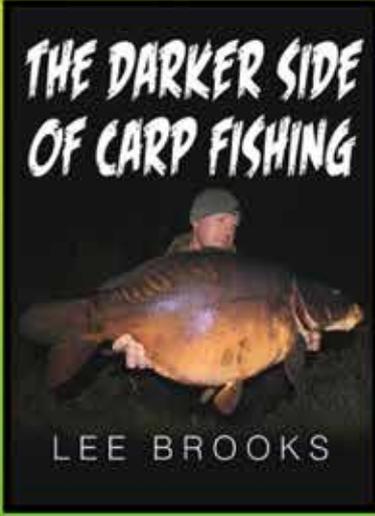
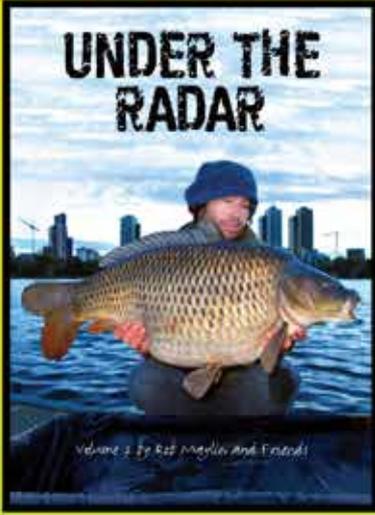
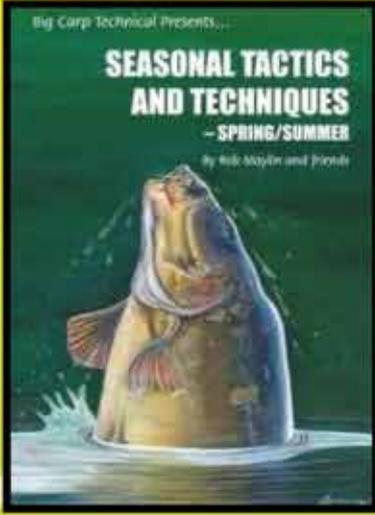
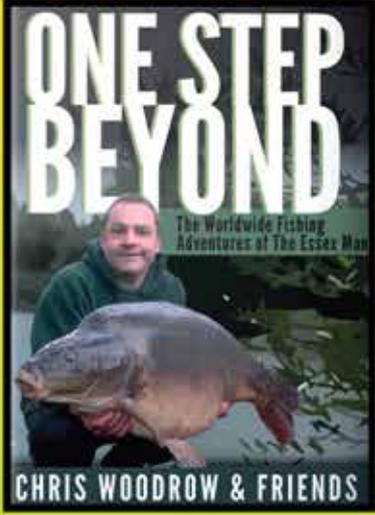


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The ultra popular Quickdraw Brolly in warmer times.. Roll on spring! ESP Quickdraw Brolly — Key Specs & Info. If you're after a proper mobile carp shelter, the ESP Quickdraw is designed for short sessions, stalking and overnights where speed and low bulk matter.

Material & Build

- 210D dark olive fabric
- 5,000mm waterproof rating
- Light-proof inner laminate (cooler & less glare inside)
- 8.5mm fibreglass ribs with space-saving locking hub

What's included

- Moszzy drape front (toggle fit – no zips to jam)
- Mini detachable groundsheet
- 4 storm poles (2 short, 2 long)
- Peg set & carry bag

Features anglers care about

- Quick setup & pack away — ideal for mobile fishing
- Fits most bedchairs and rod holdalls
- Adjustable storm sides (3

pegging points) for weather or uneven banks

- Good visibility of the water while sat inside
 - Moszzy mesh for summer nights without fully closing the shelter
- A really practical “grab and go” brolly — quicker than a bivvy but still proper protection from rain, wind and insects.

Available Sizes

- 52” version
- 58” version (more headroom & bedchair space)

Dimensions

- 52” – 220cm (W) x 178cm (D) x 100–120cm (H)
- 58” – 250cm (W) x 185cm (D) x 110–130cm (H)

Pack-down length

- 52” – 132cm
- 58” – 147cm

Weight (full system inc Moszzy mesh, pegs, bag, 4 poles, etc)

- 52” – approx 5.7kg
- 58” – approx 6kg

NITE MX10 STORM WATCH



Another new edition to our But look closer. The MX10 best-selling MX10 Series has Storm features green and arrived. Stainless steel hour orange tritium illumination, and minute hands catch a with a striking orange tritium subtle sheen at the twist of second hand that adds just your wrist, while clean light the right point of functional grey numerals and a sleek difference. Choose your setup: rugged gloss white second hand keep rubber, classic webbing, or a the dial crisp and effortlessly legible. The unmistakable matching brushed stainless marks of a great field watch. steel bracelet.



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RIDGEMONKEY BOILIE CRUSHER



If you've not seen the Advanced Boilie Crusher, where have you been?

When it comes to carp angling, bait prep is everything - and the Advanced Boilie Crusher is a serious edge. Whether you're crushing boilies to bulk out a spod mix or loading solid PVA bags, this tool gives you complete control over your mixes



Perfect for creating a consistent crumb, it helps release attraction fast and keeps carp feeding longer over your spot. No more smashing bait by hand - just clean, efficient and repeatable results every time you prep. Built tough for life on the bank, the Advanced Boilie Crusher is easy to use, easy to clean, and packs away neatly inside

its own bag. It's ideal for long sessions, overnights, or quick trips when you want consistency in your bait application.

If you're serious about carp fishing and want to sharpen your approach, this is one bit of kit you'll use session after session. Once it's in your armoury, you'll never leave home without it.

BERNERS BONANZA



I wanted to start this years fishing somewhere new, so around Christmas time me & Jordan booked The Res @ Berners Hall.

This trip didn't disappoint, we see one show on the walk round, I didn't actually get a rod out until around 3 on the first day after finding a spot against the weed.

I had a bite on my only rod out pretty much straight away. The day light hours kept me busy pretty much all the way through, getting through little over 8 kilo of Key Bait Solutions The spice boilie crumb & a gallon of red maggots.

I managed 5 doubles with 3 different 19lb 12's, 6 x 20's to 29lb, 4 x 30's to 35.10 capped off by a fish of 40.04 which kicked off the 2nd day nicely.. It was a great trip with my son managing a couple of 20's as well.

LIN GOES 51

Danno Moors
fished Coking
Farm and banked
the big lin at 51lb
4oz



COKING CLONKER



Jack Stickley with
Alpha at 44lb 10oz

CATCH REPORTS

Jordan, Jonny
Wynne with
Moonscale at
a massive 46lb
5oz!!

OVER THE MOON



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Dean Cuss with
Bert at 45lb 9oz, plus
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a 32lb 8oz common...





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SERIOUS HAULING



Serious Exclusive Action on The Res! Lewis Bunting and the lads had the lake to themselves at the start of February and made full use of the opportunity, putting together a proper session with multiple fish on the bank, topped by one at 46lb 8oz!



PAUL'S PB

Paul Merrin
with his new PB
of 44lb



JUST THE TICKET



Dan Foakes with a superb 40lb 6oz mirror he landed during a 36 hour trip to a local day ticket venue.



DAY TICKET AND MEMBERS WATER SITUATED IN MIDDLETON, MANCHESTER

Bottom Lodge Memberships - now available. There is no waiting list. First come first served basis. Stocked with 35 carp up to 30lb and pike to 22lb. Better suited to experienced anglers.

Top Lodge Memberships - now available from Absolute Angling Centre in Middleton (0161 284 0183). A good mixed coarse water with a 100 carp to 25 lb and pike to 25 lb.

OFF THE MARK

Sy Turner got his year off to a great start banking The Lemon at 39lb 4oz



Jay Curry with a superb 44lb 2oz common known as Crinkle Tail.

SPICEY TREAT



MANOR MAGIC FOR MURRELL



Dan Murrell fished a quick session on Manor Farm landing this awesome 45lb mirror.

CATCH REPORTS

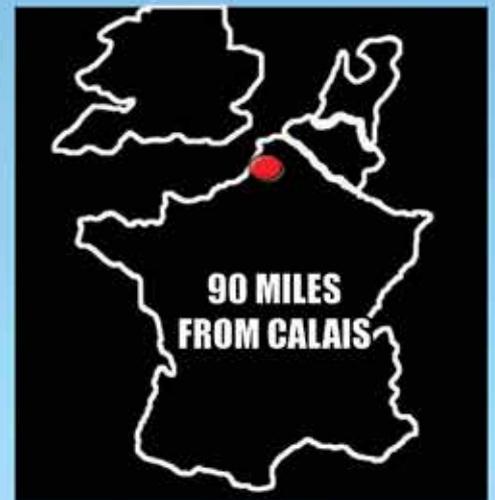
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Ian Didcote with a 48lb mirror!

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



43 lb 10 oz NEW PIPE LAKE RECORD and new PB for Richard "Buddha" Draycott. Great catch. Well in Buddha, smashing it yet again.



Graham starts the year with a 25 lb stunner



25 lbs



23 lbs lovely colours



Dean and his boy smashing it this weekend with a 36 lb 2 oz and a 17 lb 4 oz. Also, Dean, 26 lb 4 oz, Pipe lake fishing very well after the new carp stock was put in last month

32 lbs - Pipe lake member John lands this absolute beauty

Oak Lakes Fisheries



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



Winter fishing pays dividends



18 lbs



Low 20 on an overnighter



Stunning fish Nice one Floyd



Lee England had a great day on Pipe Lake - 8 carp in one day topped off with a 35 lb 4 oz stunner and included one of the new stock that recently went in the lake. Lee was trying out new Atomic Tackle so a good day for him and Atomic.



36 lb carp for John Newman fishing Pipe lake - this one is called "Two Face" by the members



CHARLIE FERRIS

THE FINAL CHAPTER

After another good hit of bait on the Sunday afternoon I couldn't wait to get back on Thursday after work. Unfortunately, the following trip resulted in a blank but hearing an absolute unit show on the Saturday night around 1:00am the buzz to get back was real, I haven't heard a carp show like that for a while. It couldn't have been far away from the spot as it sounded so close. Another good hit of bait consisting of home prepared chopped tigers and Cell crumb on the Sunday, we were ready to go again the following Thursday. I managed to get everything sorted, both rods perfect on the spot just before dark. I stayed up till 1am and after hearing one show, I went to sleep confident.

In the early hours of the morning, the right-hand rod was away. After a very short

battle from the bank I managed to slip the fish over the net cord and in o the Springbow. It looked a decent mirror - What I wasn't aware of was what was sat in my landing net. It was Kev's. I couldn't believe it. It looked massive.

All the lads came round and we weighed her in at 53.14, a giant of a mirror. A very special morning with great company. In proper Stoneacres fashion, we headed to the pub to celebrate in style - Thanks for all the lads that helped, you know who you are -Long live the big carp buzz'.

Charlie went in with his trusted multi-combi rigs, formed with size 6 Wide Gape X's on 25lb Slip D Braided multi sections, albreighted to 25lb Boom on QC Lead Clips. 20lb IQ2 leaders pinned the last few feet, keeping things virtually invisible to a Sub Braid mainline for ultimate accuracy and direct contact in the weedy conditions.



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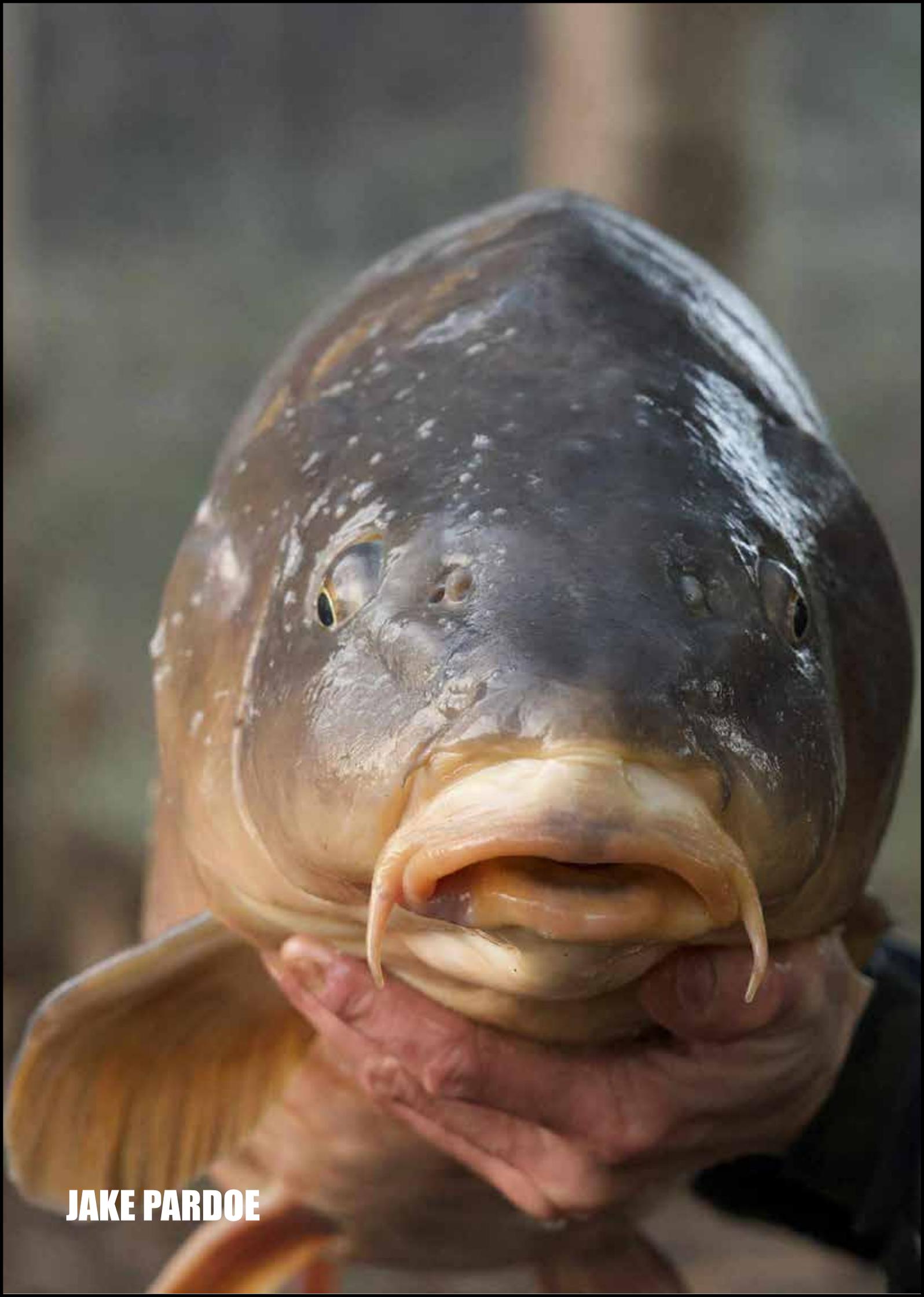
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JAKE PARDOE

JANUARY SESSIONS

The first fish was called Muntjac, at her biggest weight of 39lb 8oz a new personal best for myself ... 2 personal bests from the same fish in just over 6 months, caught in the summer at 37, Betalin & Plum Wafers having been catching me loads!

That winning hookbait fished over some Blitz Multi-Mix & Mini Combo did the trick! At Whelford Pools Fishery.

I then went to Andy's lakes in Herefordshire on Thursday for the day where I landed another personal best and the only grass carp in the lake.

First visit to Andy's Lake in around 15 years and it couldn't have gone better.

Landed another personal best – the only grass carp in the lake, weighing 12lb 6oz.

Caught on my go-to PVA bag, packed with hinders Mini Combo Pellets and Hinders

Blitz Range Bag Mix, paired with a Hinders Betalin & Plum wafter. Finished off with a 3oz inline pear from Trident Leads.

First time fishing Barley Pool and I've landed a proper one – 30lb 2oz. Fell to a solid PVA bag with Hinders Multi Mix & Mini Combo pellet, finished with a Betalin and Almond wafter.

Rig was a 4-inch hooklength with a size 6 short-shank hook, fished on a 3oz Trident Leads inline pear

First time fishing Barley Pool, and what a way to open the account. I managed to land a proper one weighing 30lb 2oz, which I'm told is one of only a handful of 30s in the lake,



making it even more special.

I spent time finding a clean area and opted for a solid PVA bag approach, keeping everything tight and tidy to maximise confidence on a water I was still learning. The bag was packed with Hinders Multi Mix, combined with Hinders Mini Combo pellets, giving off plenty of attraction without overfeeding. To finish it off, I added a Betalin & Almond wafter, which balanced

perfectly and sat just right over the mix.

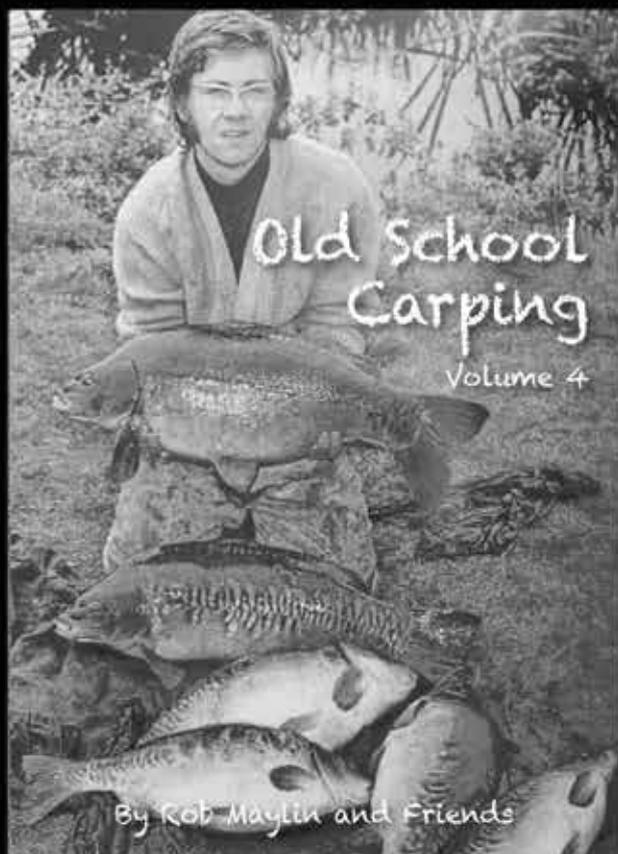
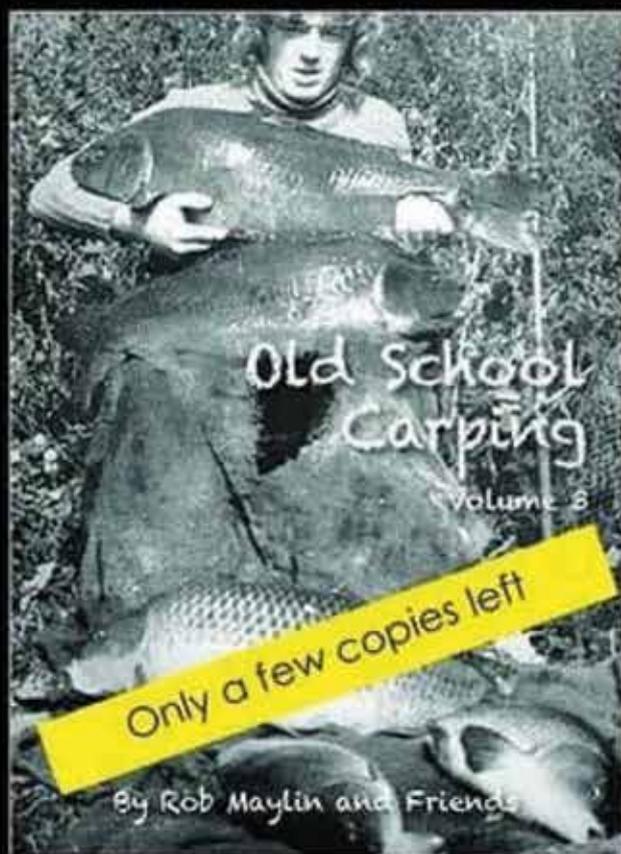
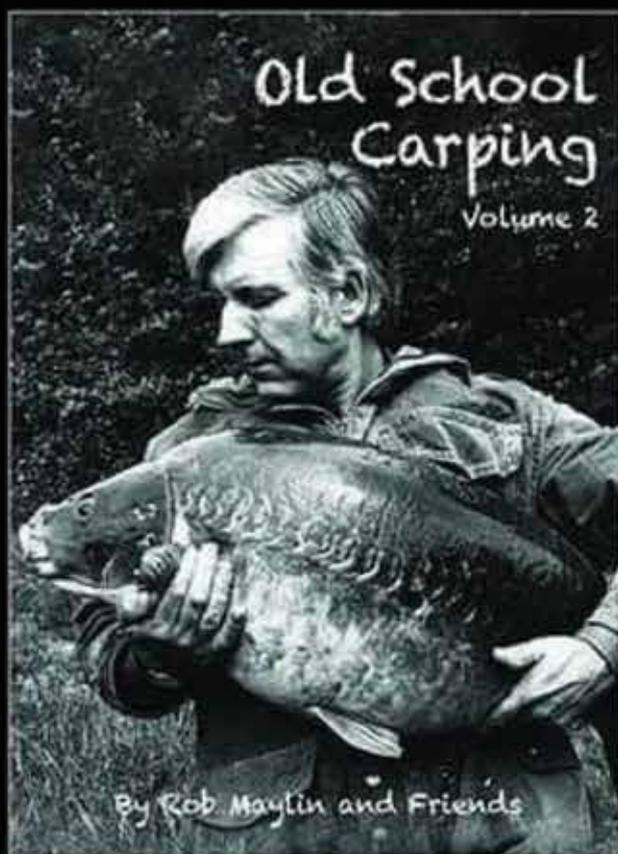
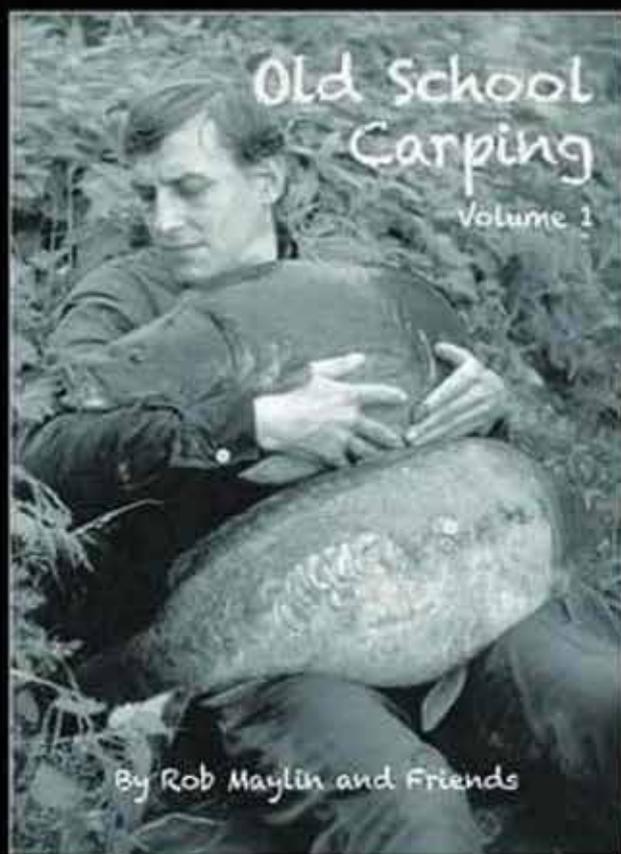
The rig was kept simple but effective: a 4-inch hooklength paired with a size 6 short-shank hook, ideal for fishing solid bags and ensuring quick, aggressive hookholds. This was fished on a 3oz Trident Leads inline pear, pinned down nicely and helped everything reset cleanly on the drop.

The take was positive, and from the moment





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JONNY OLD

EXCLUSIVE

MILTON MAGIC

It's been a hectic time recently, moving house and starting a new job meant I hadn't had the rods out in a while. But with a small window opening up, I squeezed in a 24-hour session down at Milton, hoping to just get a bend in the rods. What

followed turned into one of those unforgettable red letter sessions.

I arrived at the lake in driving rain and blustery wind. Straight away, I noticed a number of fish showing in one particular area. Not wanting to spook them, I kept things

quiet and simply flicked a few spinner rigs tipped with Cell pop-ups into the zone. Over each rod, I baited with around a kilo of Cell boilies. I had soaked the boilies the night before with cell smart liquid for extra attraction.

It didn't take long as one of the rods ripped off and I was into a lovely mid-20s mirror. From that point on, the action kept coming. As evening set in, I landed a brace of mirrors going 31lb and 35lb. During

the night, I unfortunately lost one, but managed a mid-double stocky to keep the spirits up.

At first light, I was greeted by fizzing spots and fish topping directly over my baited areas. After the first cup of tea, the action resumed with a stunning low-20 mirror. The bites kept coming, though I suffered two savage losses in the pads.

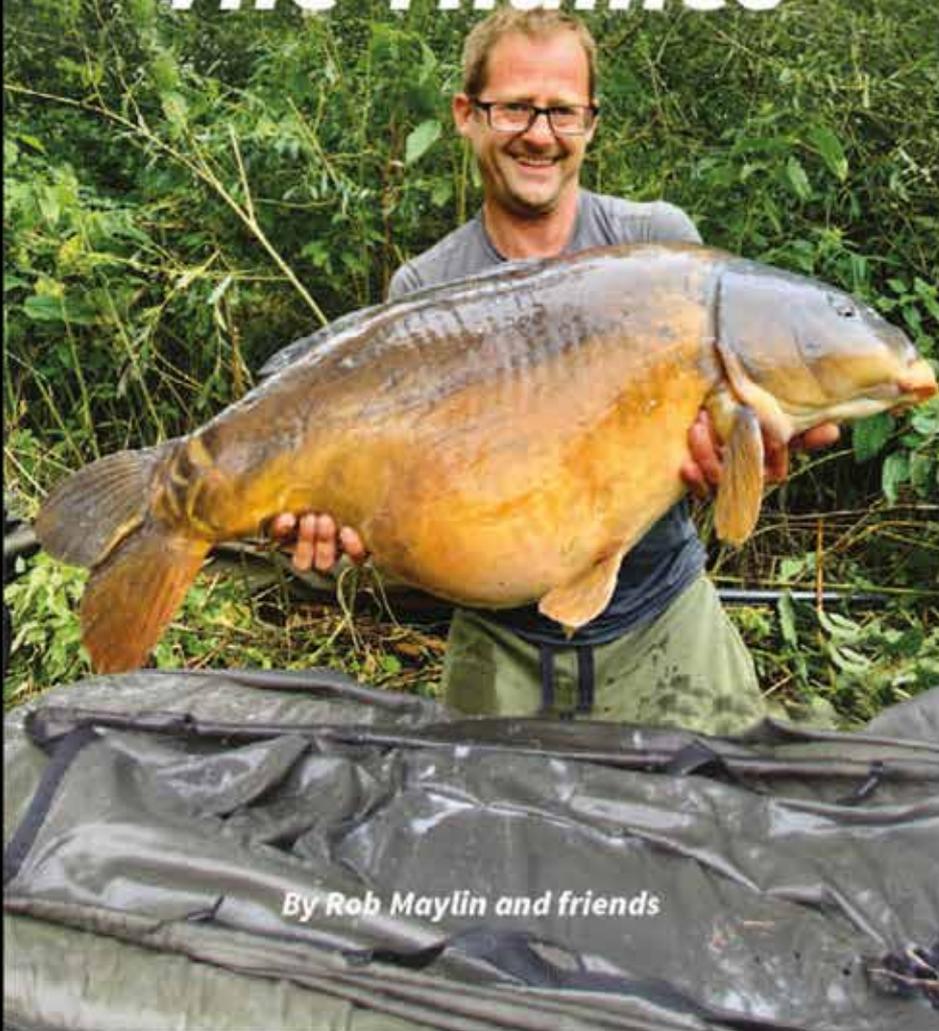
As I was packing up mid-morning, one of the rods



SECRETS OF THE THAMES

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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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tore off again, this take was different. The fish stripped line deep into the pads and I knew I had to play it softly to avoid another hook pull. I managed to ease it through a big set of pads, only for it to get wedged in a small clump 20 yards out. That's when I saw it.

It was The Widow and one of the lake's biggest commons and a carp I've wanted to catch for years. With steady

pressure, the 18lb Kontour mainline did its job and cut through the pads. Finally, she slipped into the net. She went 38lb 8oz, a new PB common and the highlight of a truly memorable session.

In total, I had 11 bites and landed 8 fish, going through 10kg of boilies in just 21 hours of fishing. Steady baiting and quiet angling with minimal disturbance were key to keeping the bites coming.



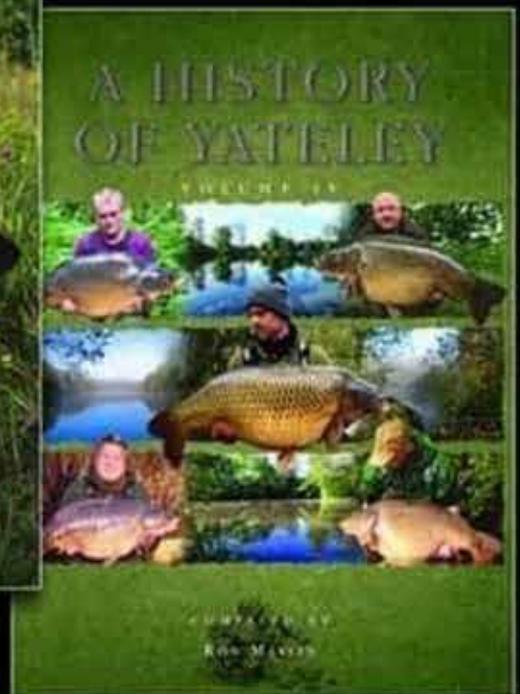
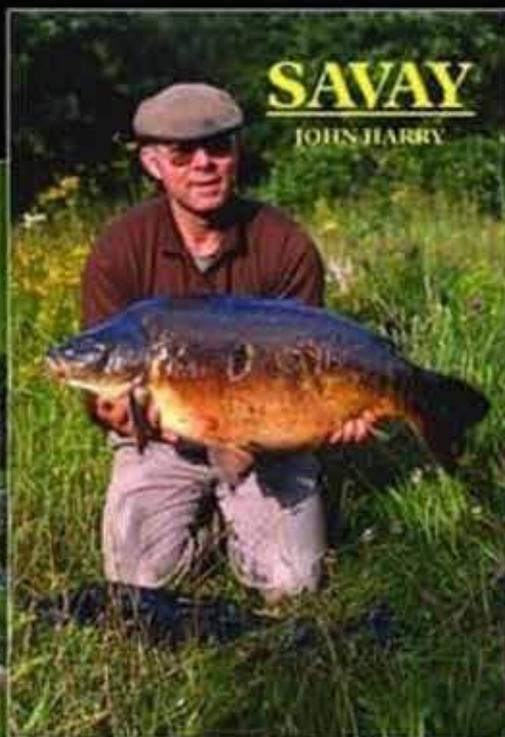
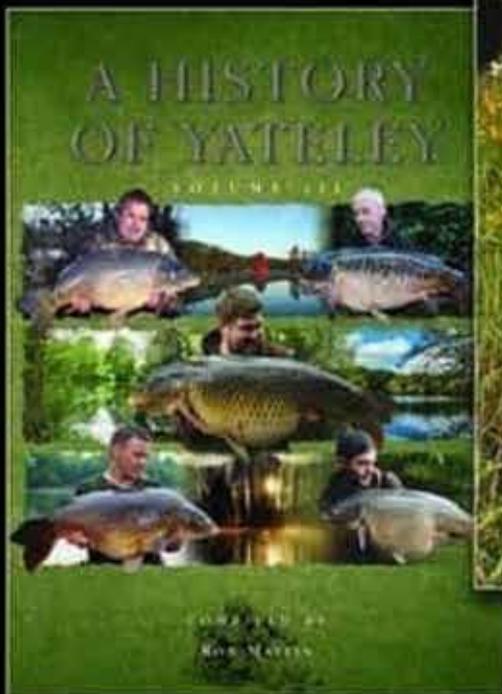
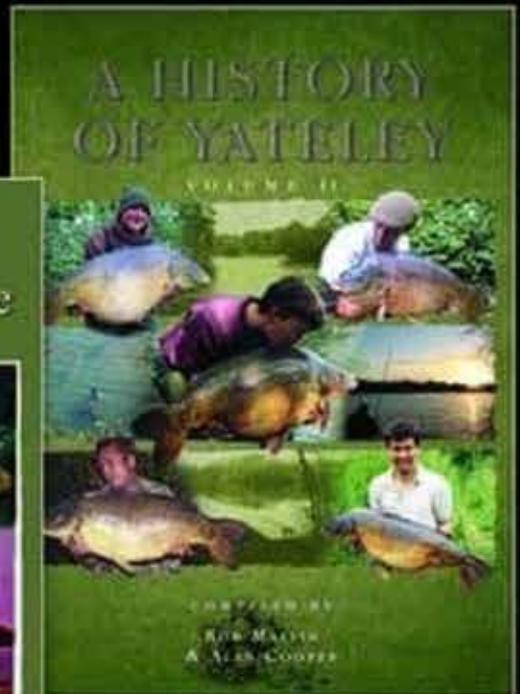
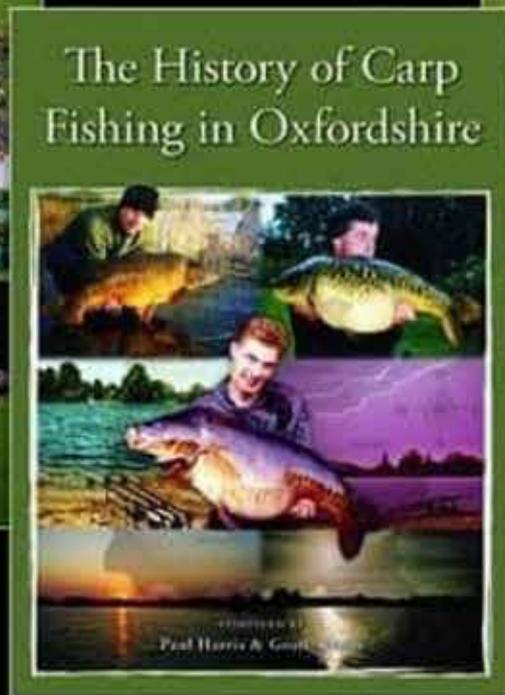
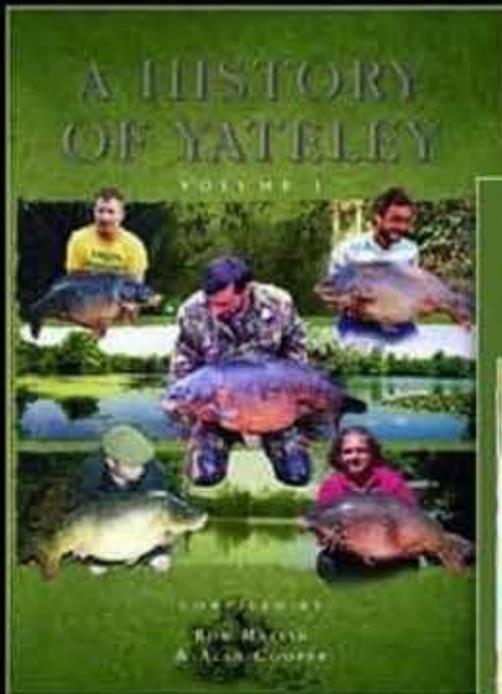






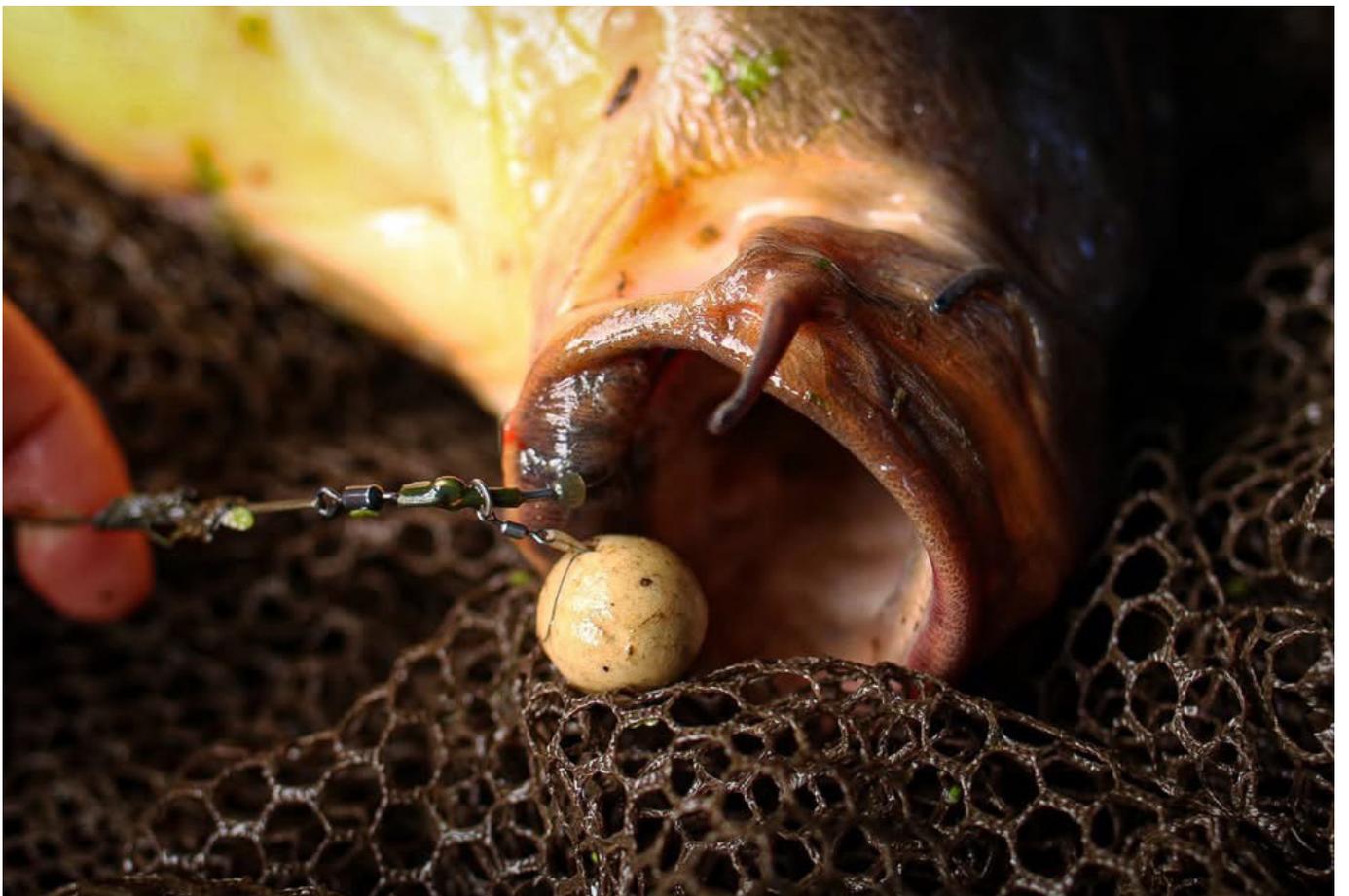


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KEV HEWITT

BRACE YOURSELF

I arrived at Llyn Ca-Ty-Nant fishery in Wales with 3 nights at my disposal. I was buzzing for this trip, it was my first time back since early May. The first 2 nights passed without so much as a liner, on the second morning I finally had a take from one of the smallest fish in the lake, a mid 20 scaley mirror.

Through the night I had been hearing fish at the other end of the lake, so I packed up first thing in the morning and moved swims. I had seen one show the previous day in the margins so that's where I placed my first rig. The area was weedy

so I attached a Gardner weed rake to the end of my Twistlock landing net handle and raked a clear spot before lowering a 12mm Yellow Northern special pop up and a small scattering of boilies and pellet over the top.

There was an area of open water where I had seen a number of shows at first light, so I managed to find a small clear spot on top of a shallow hump right where they had been showing. I put a couple of kilos of bait on this spot.

The day and night passed uneventfully but at first light on the final morning of my trip, the

margin rod ripped off and I was into what felt like a good fish. I was soon looking at a monster common carp in the bottom of my net. Steve the owner came round straight away and identified it as the biggest common in the lake, one called 'The Christmas common' and she pulled the scales round to 46Lb on the nose.

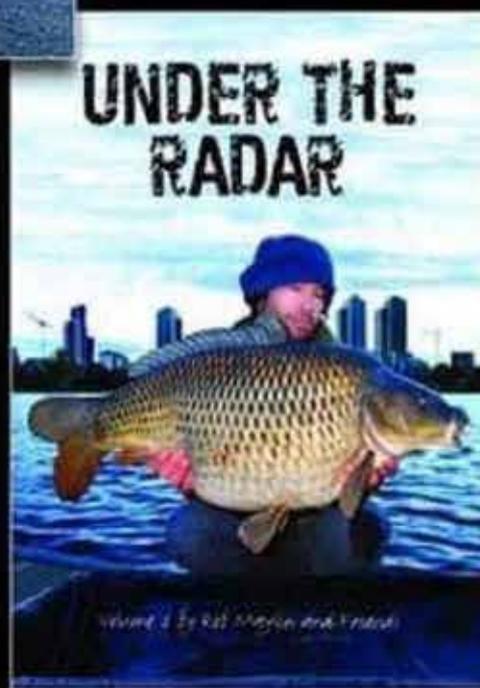
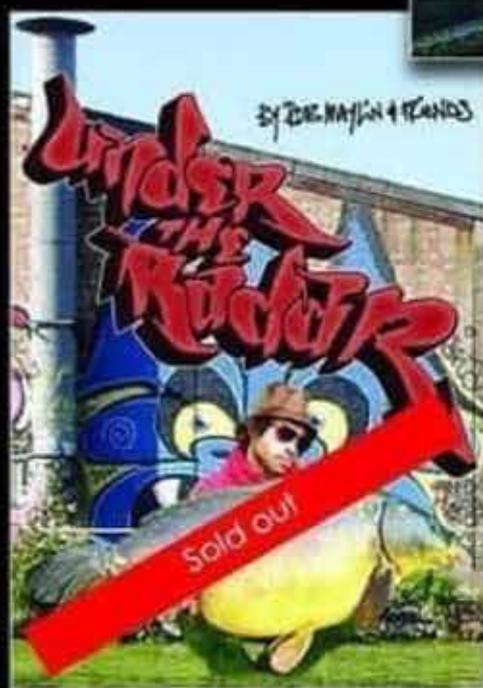
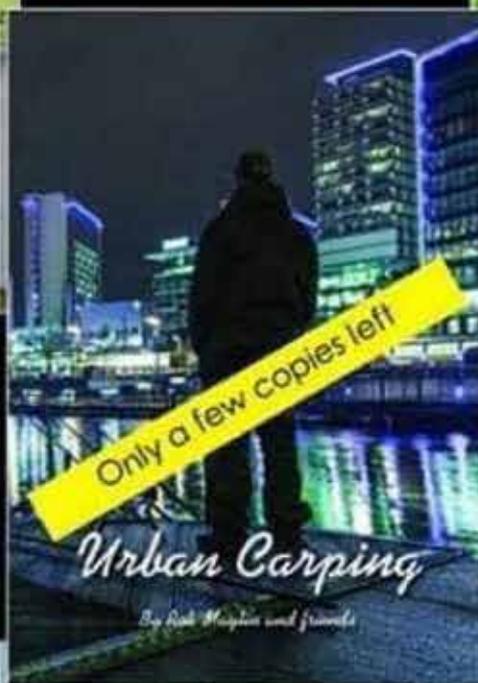
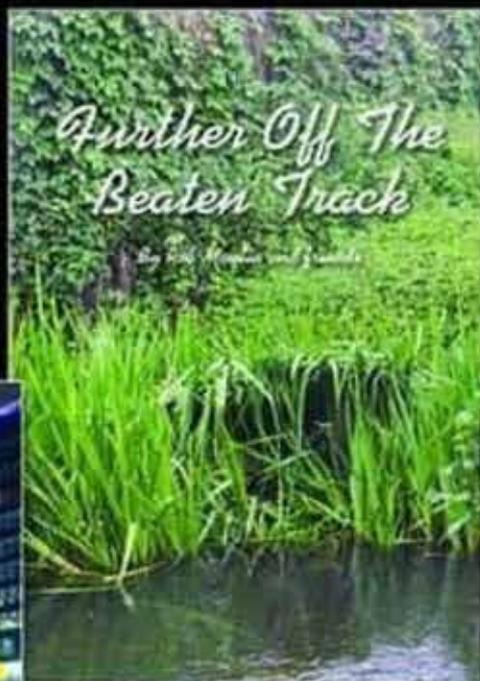
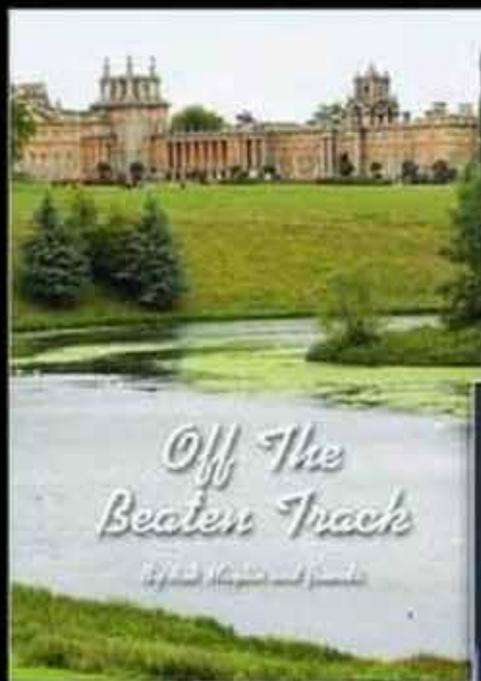
A few hours later I saw one show over the open water spot and less than five minutes later I received a steady take. Again, it felt like a very good fish. This

was confirmed as it rolled over the cord and my most wanted carp was led in the bottom of my net. It was one called 'The Carving' and it pulled the scales round to 48Lb 1oz. I was at total disbelief! I had really felt like I was struggling this trip but one thing that I always tell myself is that you're only a bite or two away from having the session of a lifetime. There is such a fine line between blanking or having a very special fish on this venue which contains 35 fish total.



OFF THE BEATEN TRACK SERIES

For lovers of the unknown, unnamed and uncaught



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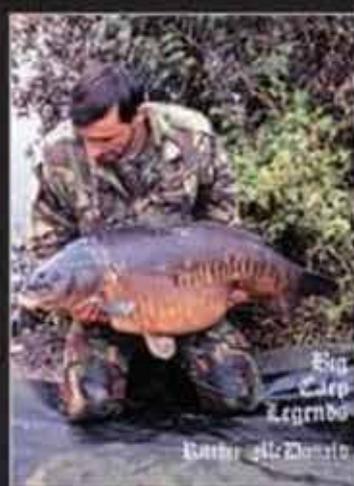
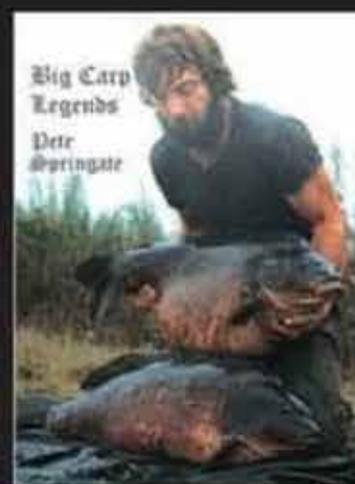
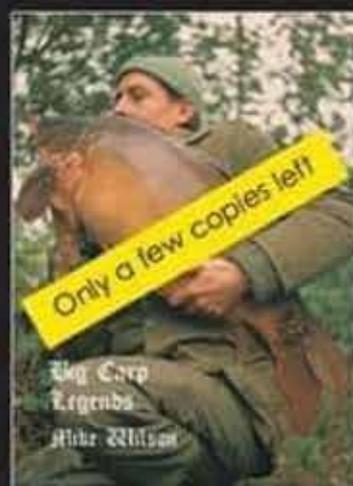
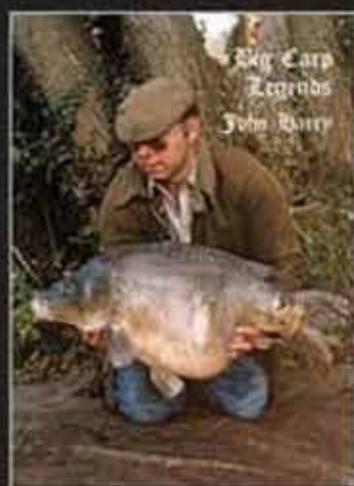
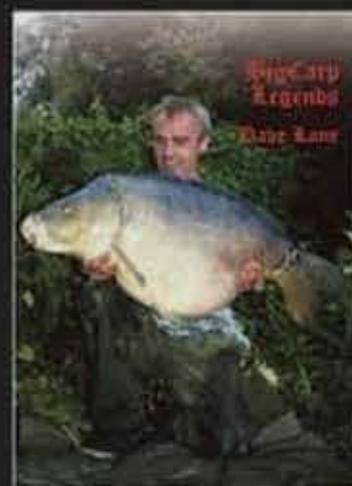
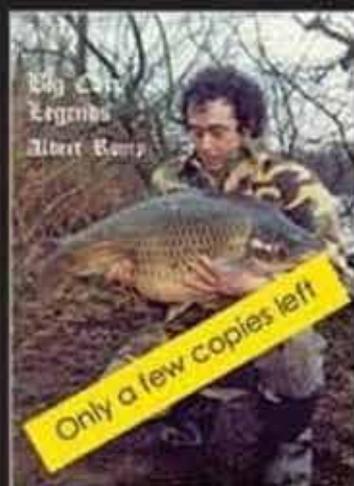
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KIERON HAWKINS

SOME DAYS CHANGE EVERYTHING

There are certain mornings that I hadn't booked on — a stay with you bit of a gamble — but after forever. The kind a lot of previous success on where something just feels Monument 2 earlier in the right before a rod is even cast. year, I'd made my mind up Pulling into the RH Fisheries that it was time to step onto Monument Complex just Monument 1. I wanted to test before the 7am gate opening myself against the lake's big

residents. The fish everyone talks about. The ones that live in your head long before you ever see them.

After a chat with Harry in the bait shop about what swims were available and what had been happening on the lake, I decided on Swim 4. The weather was grim — cold, wet and typically February — but I already knew how I wanted to approach it.

My tactics were simple and built around confidence. A lead clip arrangement,

Ridgemonkey hooklink, and a size 6 Ridgemonkey Medium Curve hook. Hookbait was my trusted RHBaits Tutti-Frutti wafter, tipped with six red maggots and fished alongside a small PVA mesh bag of maggots. Nothing complicated — just a reliable winter approach presented well.

With the rods clipped up and on the money, I settled into the session. After a few quiet hours, the first bite came. A steady take that resulted in a beautiful 28lb



mirror slipping over the net cord. In the rain she was unhooked safely in the net, the rod quickly repositioned on the spot before getting some photos done. Getting off the mark early settled the nerves and confirmed the approach was right.

A few hours later the right-hand rod was away again. This one felt heavier, plodding deep before eventually revealing itself as a stunning 33lb mirror. Two bites. Two quality fish. On Monument 1. In February. I was already more than happy.

But as anglers, we're never quite satisfied.

The rain continued and I retreated to the bivvy to cook some food and warm up. Bite time felt like it had passed. I started tying up fresh rigs, thinking ahead to the night and possibly a morning opportunity.

Then the right-hand rod pulled up tight. There was no screaming run — just solid,

immovable weight. From the first few seconds I knew this fish was different. It didn't take line. It simply held its ground, deep and heavy in front of me. Every movement felt slow and powerful.

Gradually she began to come my way. Under the rod tip quicker than I expected, I initially assumed it was another good 30. But when I tried to lift her in the water, she wouldn't rise. She just circled in front of me, heavy and deliberate. That's when the thought crept in. Could this be one of the 40s?

My knees were shaking. Time felt like it had slowed down. The fight seemed to go on forever, the fish kiting and holding deep before eventually rising slightly. Then she rolled. In that split second, I realised exactly what I was attached to. It was the biggest fish in the lake.

The rest of the fight felt like a blur. Somehow, after what

seemed like an eternity, she finally slid over the net cord. I stood there staring into the mesh, barely able to process what was lying there.

I rang Harry straight away. Within minutes, Rob and Harry Hales were bankside with the mat and sling. Everything was soaked down properly, the scales zeroed. The moment came. The needle spun around and settled at 63lb 8oz. I genuinely didn't know what to say. I was in complete shock. Standing in the water holding her for the photos felt surreal. She was immaculate — not a mark on her. An incredible carp in perfect condition.

After a final look, a quiet thank you, and a kiss on her flank, I watched her glide back into the cold blue water.

For a long time afterwards, I just stood there trying to make sense of it all. Once everyone had left, I found myself pacing the bank on the phone to my dad, probably talking

nonsense and not making much sense at all. Back in the bivvy, I sat staring at the photos and videos, letting it slowly sink in.

Eventually instinct took over and, of course, the rods went back out before dark. I didn't expect much after all the commotion.

Sleep was almost impossible. I was still replaying the capture in my head when, sometime in the night, a screaming take jolted me awake. I flew out of the bivvy, half asleep, and managed to guide another heavy mirror into the net — 38lb to finish the session.

Four carp. 28lb. 33lb. 38lb. And the lake's biggest at 63lb 8oz. A session I will never forget.

Massive thanks to Rob and Harry Hales for allowing me to fish such a special venue and for providing the confidence in the bait that made it all possible. Some days change everything. This was one of them.





LEE ENGLAND

THE CLUB LAKE

A house move at the end of 2024 meant I was no longer a sensible distance from my syndicate and with a baby on the way it wasn't practical being so far away. Luckily for me I happened to move 5 minutes away from Oak Lake fisheries who happened to have a small members club lake on with a few 40s to go at.

Running Atomic Tackle has meant my time for personal fishing has been very limited. You wouldn't think running

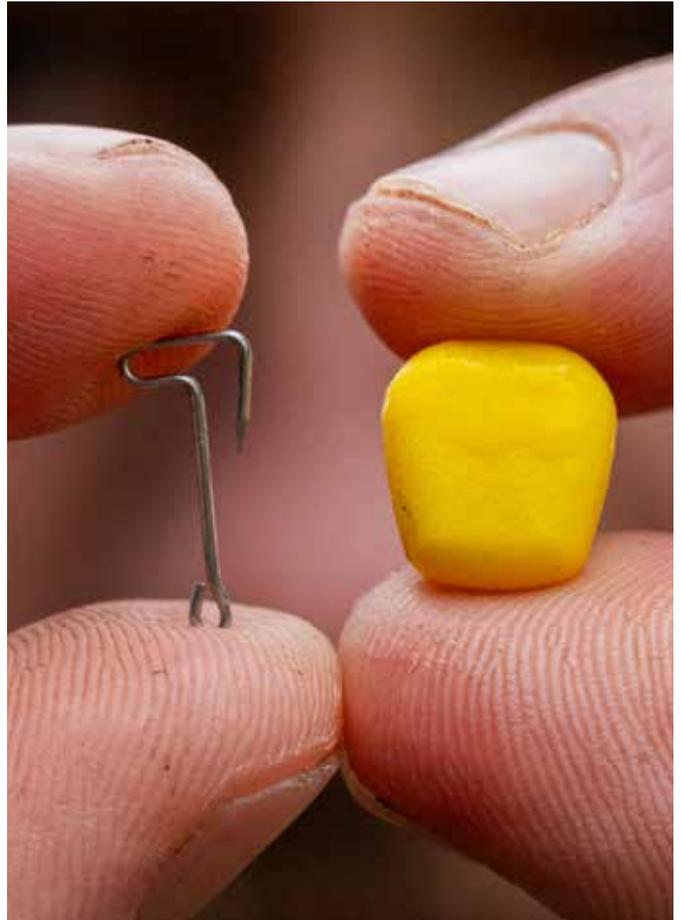
a tackle company meant less fishing but to be brutally honest. Most of the time you are on shoot with jobs todo. Every spare hour of the day is pumped into work, and your own fishing does suffer. However, being so close I do manage the odd weekday overnighter between work.

I started late August with the odd Tuesday night setting up around 6pm and leaving by 7am. A few sessions passed with no joy but low and behold, the moment the cameras came

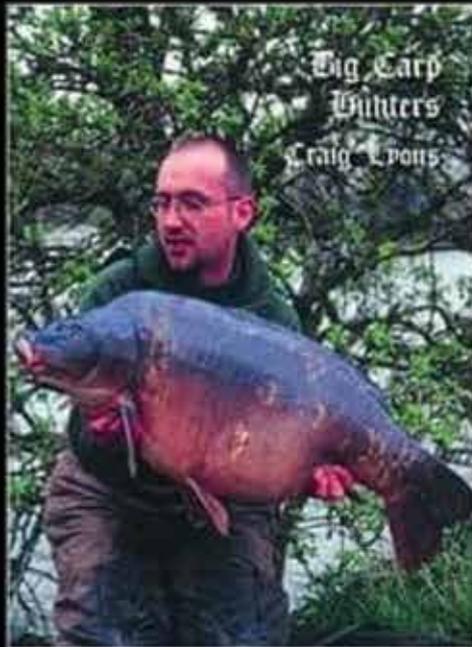
down for a product release it all came good. It was my first two-night session, and I opted for the opposite end id been concentrating on in a swim called 'house of commons'. The name rung true with me landing two commons, a mid-double and low 20 on shoot the first morning of the 48 hour stint.

Pre Tiedz shoot in the bag I only managed a further 2 over nighters before winter properly set in, show prep began and work took back over. Festive brake out the way it was straight into it come the 1st of Jan with a new product set for launch at the end of January. The Bait Spikez have been a winter edge we have been working on since late 2023. An amalgamation of the maggot ring & old match hook into corn method.

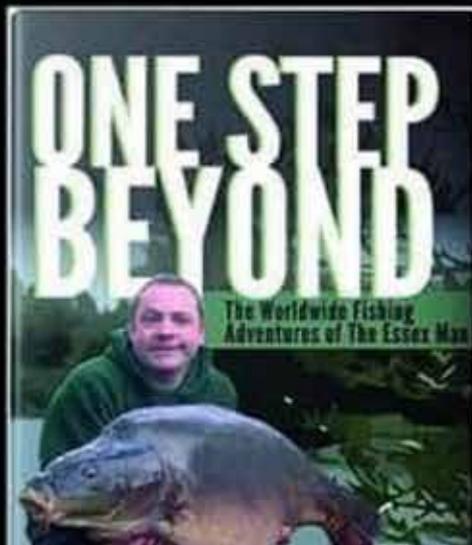
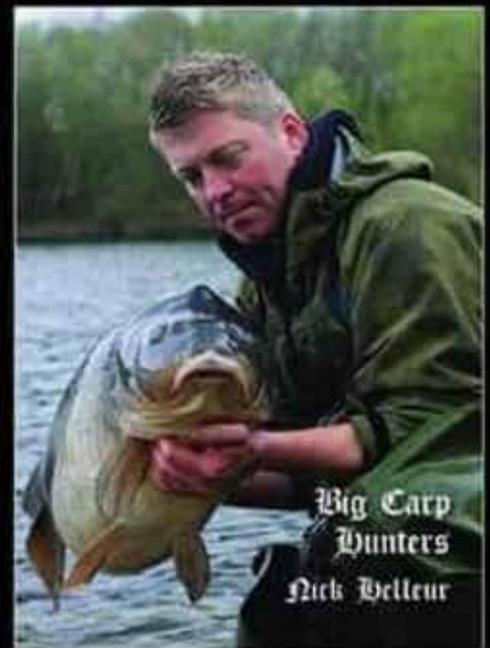
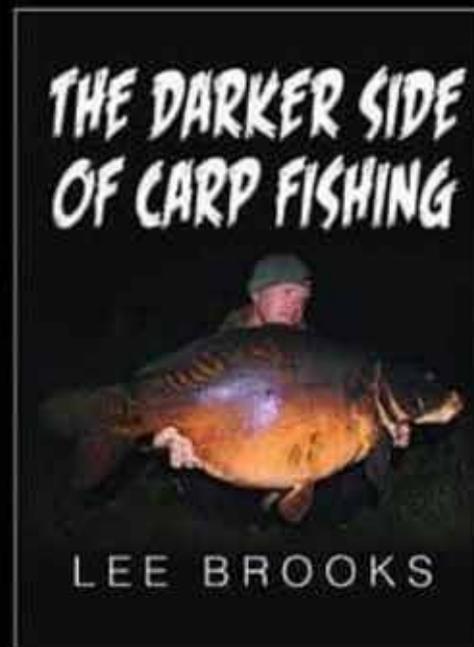
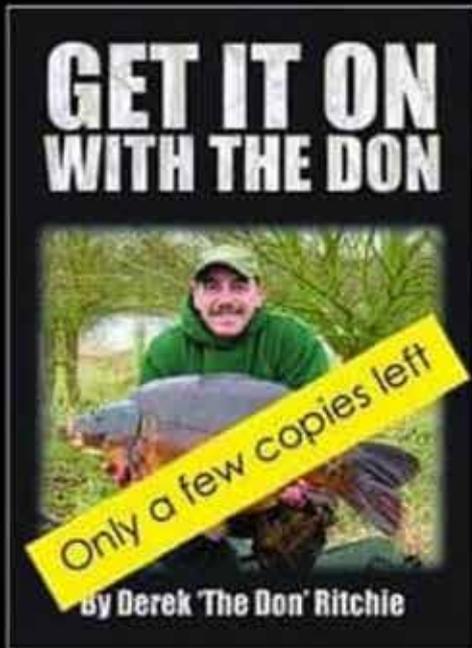
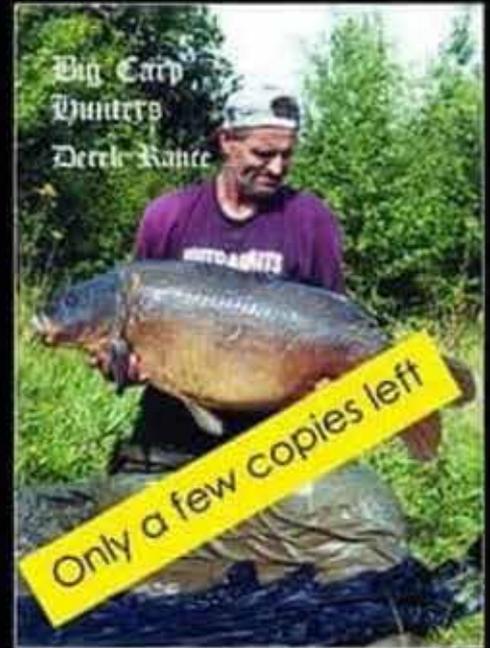
This time tailored for carp fishing encompassing speed, ease and compatibility for use on multiple rig presentations.



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with a unique tale to tell*



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Making the spikez ultra safe was also forefront of the development and after a long test period we have nailed it.

Shoot time come round and I needed a venue for a day session to get the media shot for release. Having been let down on a venue id earmarked due to low water levels I decided id settle for the convenience of the club lake.

I got down early doors

around 6.30am and at the end of January it was dark and still very cold. I set about walking round and noticed a few anglers up one end near the house of commons so wanted to get as far away as I could given the fact id have a camera man with me and didn't want to disturb them. I settled for the island swim just as the rain was beginning to ease.



Loaded the barrow and got the kit into the swim. Bivvy up and kettle on it took me a couple of minutes to prepare 3 rods as the Bait Spikez really are a thing of beauty.

With a quick slide I'm hooking 10 maggots on each spike, twist and pulling the corn up and we are ready to go.

I had 3 rods out by the time the camera man arrived. Within

an hour the first rod was away. Only a small common to which there are quite a few of in the lake but on a cold wet January day session it made for good content. After a quick snap of the hookhold the fish was released and before I could even get a lead clipped on the left hander was away.

This time it was different, the 10 foot Excalibur Xt bent double, the fish held deep coming off the island marginal shelf and i couldn't seem to bring her up through the 10 foot of water I had in the gully. She hugged the left margin as I coaxed her in front of the swim. Again, not being able to get her off the bottom I still didn't know what I was attached to. After she hit the silt and the bottom erupted in front of me, I caught a glimpse of what looked like a nice common.

A couple moments later she took that gulp and was being slid over the net. Holding up

the spreader block it was clear to see she was one of the larger fish and later confirmed to be the long common by one of the on site bailiffs. On the scales she tipped the needle round to 35.4lb but that didn't matter.

For a freezing winters day session on a content shoot she was very much welcome. Massive pecks and a huge tail. It made the early start all the more worth it. Putting even more evidence on the table too of just how good these Bait Spikez where.

I finished up the day with a further 6 bites from 2 different spots putting the tally to 8 fish in a 7 hour day session and was home for dinner.

What a result. The Bait Spikez are available now from all Atomic Tackle retailers & direct on the website. If you're fishing with naturals either maggots or worms I highly recommend getting yourself a pack.





RICH HOGG

CANAL SESSIONS

For the past decade I have been targeting the elusive carp of the west midland canal system. Now for the first time my results, the highs, the lows and some incredible looking carp will be serialised monthly in Big Carp. My story continues here from last

month's Big Carp.....

7th May 2016

It's been a tricky few weeks with freezing nights and below average day time temps (until recently). I've been targeting 1 or 2 areas I've never fished before but unfortunately without any success, places I know nothing about and

hold carp. Time to move back onto familiar water for a while now...

24th May 2016

Wow what a difficult few weeks I've made it for myself! Anyway, that's all in the past now thanks to this little chap showing up this morning. A quick couple of hours back on the Staffs Worcs, starting to think i should have put in a few more sessions here before now! A few handfuls of 'Big Red' monster crab and black

current around a snowman hookbait doing the biz. No monster that's for sure but after a slow patch I'd say it's one of the best small fish I've caught.

16th June 2016

Wishing everyone a great start to the river season!!! Me - I'll be somewhere along the tow path for the time being, putting more time and effort into wading through the bream in search of canal carp and hoping my luck changes soon. Pic is of my short morning





27th June 2016

Maaaaan does it feel good to have a bend in the rod again! I've definitely had my fair share of bad luck over the last month, bouncing out of fish and a couple of hook pulls along the way too, but after a swift change in rig (thanks to advice from another fellow canal carper) I'm back into this little stunner, tempted out from between the boats on the far bank by pineapple nutz. Annoys me a bit to think

about what I may have missed out on but oh well that's all part of it and what keeps us going back! Can't wait to get back on them!!!

29th June 2016

Chuffed to slip the net under this mint little common this morning on a short pre-work session, such a healthy plump fish and fin perfect! really doesn't matter how big they are sometimes!!!

2nd July 2016

What a difference a week



BIG CARP

fine arts

WATERCOLOUR CARP PAINTINGS

The Legendary Big Carp Series



'Heather The Leather' – The jewel of the Blackwater Valley. She is THE Yateley Car Park Lake legend; a fish that shaped and changed the lives of some of the greatest carp anglers this country has ever known. Pete Springate, Robin Dix, Ritchie MacDonald, Jock White, Terry Pethybridge, Nigel Sharpe, Terry Hearn... the list goes on of anglers who devoted weeks, months and years of their lives in pursuit of the queen of the lake. She has gone now; gone to that great carp lake in the sky, but here, thanks to one of the county's most talented young artists, she has been brought back to life for all to wonder at her beauty... I am proud to bring you No. 2 in the Big Carp Legendary Fish series – Heather – God save the Queen!

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can make! Absolute rocket of a canal common taking off at 100mph from under the rod tip! single bottom bait on the hair with a couple of pineapple nutz boilies close by!!!

4th July 2016

Little warrior from this morning! I was only out for about 15 minutes before the left-hand rod broke the silence! After weeding me up for what felt like forever, she came in easy enough and did most of the fighting on the

bank.

14th July 2016

Got the rods out by around half 1 this morning. After wading through bream i managed to nick this one just as it was getting light. Another pristine canal common with a mouth like a hoover!!!

30th July 2016

As Friday night was coming to an end for most 'normal' people, mine was just starting and i made my way to the canal at around midnight to



do a few hours behind the rods. A couple of hours in and 3 'bream-like' beeps later and i was into what turned out to be a right scrapper! Happy days!

16th August 2016

Biggest of 2-character commons from this morning, both savage takes from under the rod tip smashing the silence to bits! I spotted the fish the day before and

dropped onto them on a quick morning sesh before work! Also grabbed a bonus tench so yeah definitely the best way to start the day!!!

17th August 2016

Check out the colour of this one! The 2nd of yesterday's pair, and what a little stunner! perfection!!!

29th August 2016

The best of a triple take from this morning! Well, as close to





a triple take as I'm ever likely to have with a 2 rod set up ;-) Nothing through the early hours but at first light, some1 flicked a switch and they came to life and I banked 3 inside 15 minutes!!! Nothing to write home about but a great bit of



pre-work action.

30th August 2016

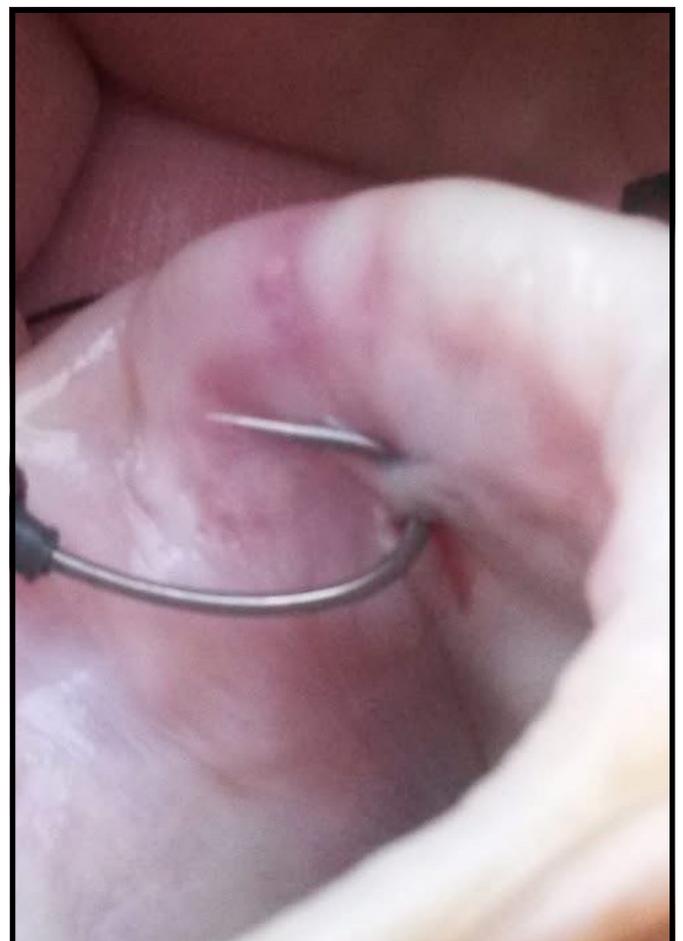
Sometimes your lucks just not in and nothing goes your way... and other times there's this...

30th August 2016

The other 2 little buses that arrived together yesterday...

1st September 2016

A beautiful start to the day and a lovely hard fighting common from this morning's quick couple of hours. A handful of freebies around the



BIG CARP

fine arts

WATERCOLOUR CARP PAINTINGS

The Legendary Big Carp Series



This is the first in a series of watercolour paintings capturing England's fantastic carp history. 'The Legendary Big Carp series' has been especially commissioned to celebrate a massive milestone in Big Carp magazine's history – the 200th issue! Basil, that famous Yateley North Lake legend, seen here in her natural habitat, is the first in a set of numbered and signed prints – absolutely breathtaking and scale perfect. The A3 prints are very modestly priced at only £25 and are available now on the Big Carp website www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk. Visit the site, go to the shop and select the 'Fine Art' section. There is also more information on the rest of the series, which will be available at one to two-month intervals, but I can tell you that the Black Mirror, the Burghfield Common, Heather, Jumbo, Jack, Mary, Clarissa, the Bishop, the Royal Forty, the Fat Lady, Mary's Mate etc are already on the list and we are up for any more favourites – just let us know – Rob Maylin

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hookbait, tight to the boats on the far bank always gets em... if they're in the area! Rod took off just before the sun hit the water and killed any more chances but I'm happy and we're stepping into my favourite time of year now too!!!

3rd September 2016

Thank you staffs worcs for a great couple of hours! The 1st boats just gone through so I'm

off home for a sausage bacon and egg sarny before the rain sets in, tight lines if you're out! I will continue my story in next month's Big Carp, see you then



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:

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- 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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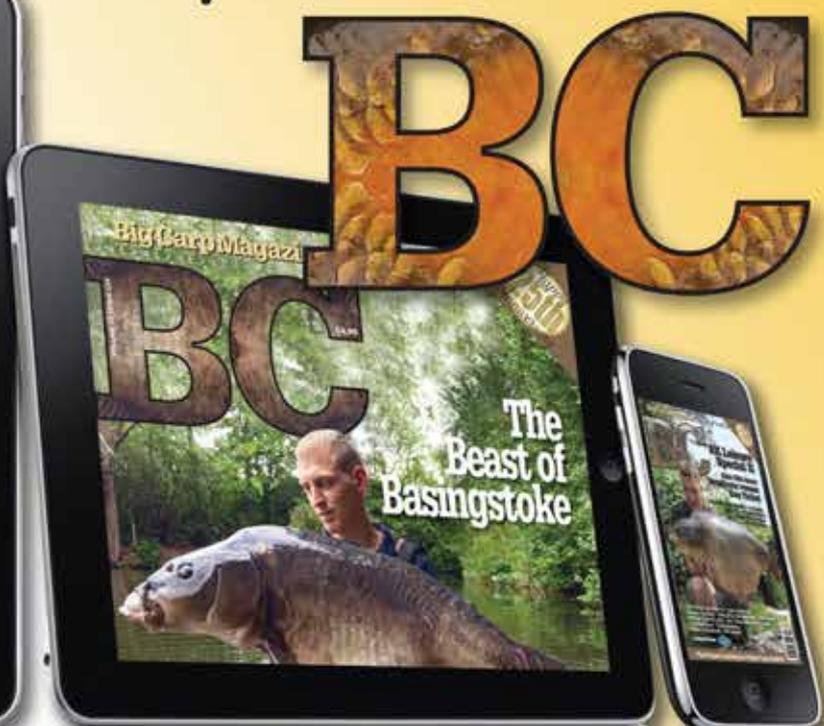
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Aqua Liliium Clothing

SPRING COLLECTION



For a while it has seemed all we would be advertising due to the weather is how good Aqua Liliium's wet weather gear is, and once back from Brands Hatch the normal after show stock take was done.

We had a clear winner this time out, and it was The Game Changer Poncho mostly selling out in the first day which for a small family run brand was amazing. Staging a show is a major risk for a small company, as an unsuccessful event can result in a significant loss of annual profits. We Need not have worried thanks to you guys we had a record-breaking show with loads of repeat customers as well as new customers telling us we were easily the best at show.

Aqua Liliium Clothing has now been trading for around 5 years and the best feeling in the world is walking the vast queue outside the venue and spotting loads of people wearing our clothing young and old. It really does make me emotional just sitting here as I write this piece, knowing that people really believe in what you are trying to achieve. The fan base we have is incredible and people really do appreciate the work that goes into Aqua Liliium.

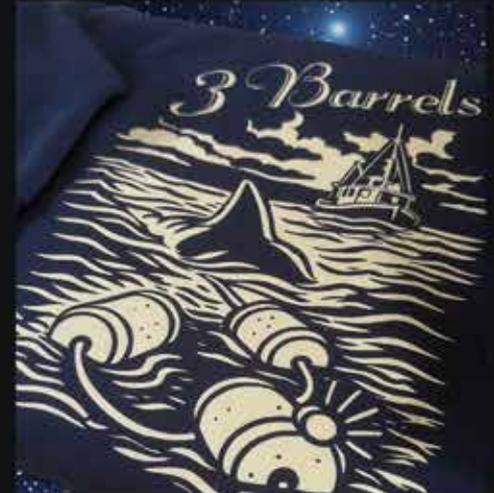
Something to be proud of is the fact Steven and myself have never taken a penny out of the brand, instead we have re-invested and since 2021 we have helped over seventy charities up and down our great land. This is what the brand is about not money; it is



1 OF 1



THANK YOU
TO EVERYBODY
WHO CAME TO
THE
BRANDS HATCH
SHOW



about creating memories and the best feeling by a country mile is when a young angler picks our brand. It is so easy for a young up and coming angler to want to wear the same as Dovey or Spooner which I completely understand, it is like football you have your heroes name on the back of your shirt. so, when they turn around and pick Aqua Liliium Clothing out from a crowd that is the buzz.

As you can tell by now, this is not just another advertisement. More, an extended thank you to everybody that has helped

us grow over the last 5 years and on a personal note a big thankyou to my brother Steven and family for all their support, Aqua Liliium Clothing would not be the same without you.

Our next show is the Doncaster Carp Show on the 21st and the 22nd of March so if you can make it, please get involved. In the meantime, if you are out doing it, please be careful the banks are dangerous at the moment.

Hope you catch a monster!

All the best

Aqua Liliium Clothing



Website: www.aqualiliumclothing.com

Email: aqualiliumclothing@hotmail.com

Tel: 07854629130

You can also reach us through or Facebook or instagram pages



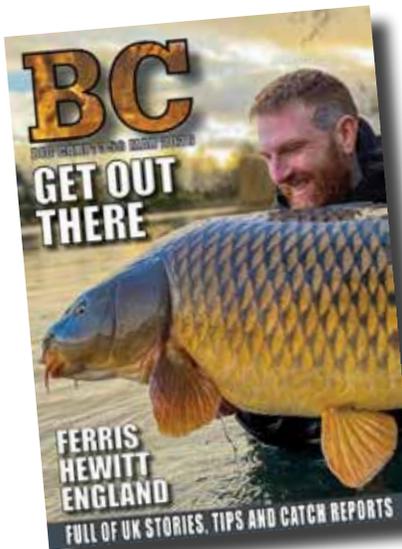
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co.uk

Design & Production
James Harrison

Also available this
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356.



Front Cover:
Si llewellyn retuning a
big mirror



Another successful Anglers Against Litter event was carried out on with the Trust and River Lea Anglers Club partnering up to remove as much litter as possible from one of the stretches of the Lea Navigation. A great turnout from club members and other members from the local community who managed to remove 25 sacks of litter from between Chalk bridge & Ponders End Lock. 99% of the litter collected was non-angling related. A huge thank you to everyone who turned up and to Canal & River Trust Angling, who removed the litter on the day. We also presented 2 young “litter heroes” with a limited edition #Shimano cap which made their day!

8. CARP CHAT

30. CARP SCENE

38. ASH GEDEN

62. BARRY OCONNOR

84. CARL GOULSBRA

92. SI LLEWELLYN



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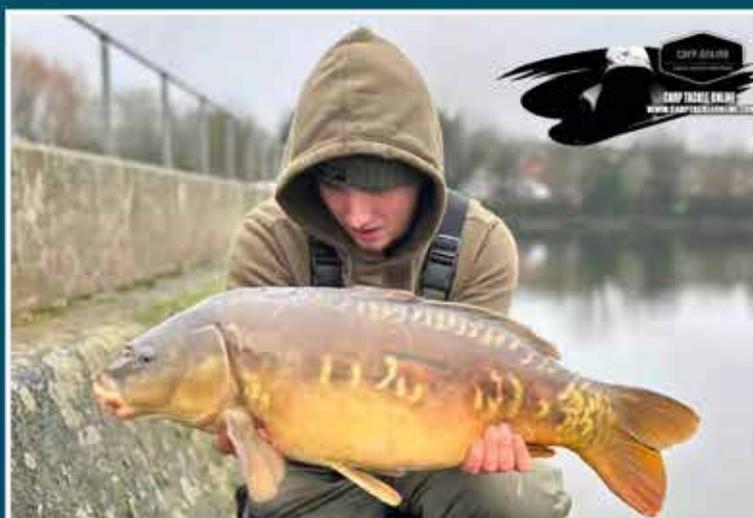
See us on Facebook



Team member James Johnson recently had 3 fish, on size 6 Curved Ronnie's, and this 27lb fish which was caught on a size 6 Ronnie Crank.

Jarred Howard fished Drayton Reservoir. using size 4 Scorpion Wide Gape hooks and our CTO Pro hooklink.

Team member Paul Gill had his Christmas at Nuddock Wood. Paul was using out Mantis Long Crank hooks (Available Spring 2026) tied in a Ronnie style rig. Paul caught the bigger carp of the two at 27lb 3oz and then the 23lb 15oz fell on Christmas day.



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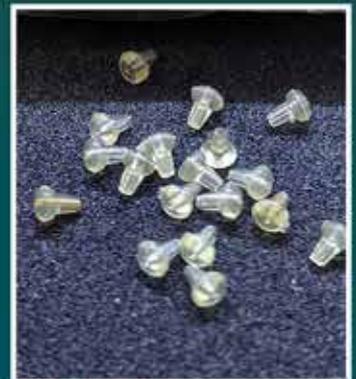
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Scorpion Ronnie Rigs



Composite Leadclip



Choddy Crank Hook



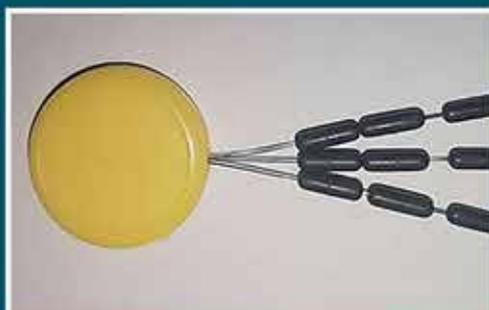
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Scorpion Crank Hook



Scorpion Snag Hook

CARP BATTLE DATES OUT NOW - £20K IN PRIZES TO WIN

For the first time ever, we're running the Carp Battle Pairs Tournament - an all-out, two-angler team competition where strategy, skill and stamina collide.

The prize? A whopping £10,000 in cash for the champions, and a total prize fund worth £20K up for grabs!

DATES & FISHERIES - QUALIFIERS:

Q1: 24-26 Apr 2026 - Linear Fisheries Brasenose 2 (16 pairs)

SOLD OUT

Q2: 2-4 Oct 2026 - Linear Fisheries Oxlease Lake (20 pairs)

2 SPOTS REMAINING

Q3: 13-15 Nov 2026 - Berners Hall Fishery The Res (16 pairs)

PLENTY OF AVAILABILITY

Q4: 23-25 Apr 2027 - Linear Fisheries St Johns Lake (18 pairs)

PLENTY OF AVAILABILITY

GRAND FINAL :

10-13 Sep 2027 - Sandhurst Lake (12 pairs)

CASH PRIZES:

1st Place - £10,000 CASH

2nd Place - £2,000 CASH

3rd Place - £1,000 CASH

Plus:

Free Entry to Grand Finale.

Tournament Biggest Fish Award worth £1,000 in sponsor prizes.

Qualifier Trophies: At each qualifier, three pairs who secure a place in the Grand Finale will receive exclusive trophies as lasting keepsakes of their achievement.

Grand Finale Trophies: magnificent trophies worth £2,000 will be awarded to 1st, 2nd, 3rd place, and for the Tournament's Biggest Fish.

TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE

A total of 12 pairs will advance to the Grand Finale (GF).

Q1 - 3 GF spots

Q2 - 3 GF spots

Q3 - 3 GF spots

Q4 - 3 GF spots

Each qualifier will be divided into sections.

The best ONE pair per section will advance to the GF.

QUALIFIERS ENTRY FEE: £550 per pair.

You can secure your spot with a £200 deposit - the balance is due no later than 3 weeks before your qualifier.

Spaces are limited.

Full rules and ticket details in the comments.

Fish hard. Win big. The battle is on

FISH HARD. WIN BIG.

THE BATTLE IS ON! THE BATTLE IS ON! THE BATTLE IS ON!

DATES & FISHERIES

- **Q1:** 24-26 Apr 2026 - Linear
Fisheries: "Brasenose 2"
• Limited to: 16 pairs
- **Q2:** 2-4 Oct 2026 - Linear
Fisheries: "Oxlease Lake"
• Limited to 20 pairs
- **Q3:** 13-15 Nov 2026
Berners Hall Fishery
"The Res"
• Limited to 16 pairs
- **Q4:** 23-25 Apr 2027 - Linear
Fisheries: "St Johns Lake"
• Limited to 18 pairs
- **GF:** 10-13 Sep 2027
Sandhurst Lake
• Limited to 12 pairs



PAIRS TOURNAMENT 2026/2027

**£13K
CASH
PRIZE**

CASH PRIZES

- 1st Place - £10,000 - CASH
- 2nd Place - £2,000 - CASH
- 3rd Place - £1,000 - CASH
- Tournament Biggest Fish - Prizes from sponsors worth £1,000

PRIZES

- FREE GRAND FINAL FOR QUALIFIED PAIRS
- TROPHIES IN FINAL WORTH £2,000
- TOTAL PRIZE FUND: £20,000

INFO

- ENTRY FEE: £550 per pair
- Cash payout applies only if the event is fully sold out.

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at



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A stylized illustration of a carp fish, rendered in shades of grey and green, positioned centrally within the 'o' of the 'goodz' text.

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CATCH SOME LEGENDS**

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TED HAPPY AND HEALTHY



Fans of Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing were delighted as Bob Mortimer shared a touching update on Ted, the much-loved dog who has become a fan favourite. Now 15 years old, Ted is “knocking on a bit” but remains happy, healthy, and very much part of Bob’s life.

Ted continues to join Bob and Paul Whitehouse on their riverside adventures, sometimes strolling alongside them and, for longer walks, riding comfortably in a pram — ensuring he never misses the serene countryside moments that have charmed viewers over the years.

The update reassures fans that Ted remains one of the show’s most heartwarming highlights, bringing humour, companionship, and quiet joy to every episode. His enduring presence is a reminder of the simple pleasures and loyal friendships that make the series so beloved.

ADDICTIV™ BAIT'S CHALLENGE

FROM OCTOBER 24 TO OCTOBER 31, 2026

Entry fee: €1000 per team of 1, 2 or 3 people

Entry: £865 per team of 1, 2 or 3 People

2 rounds of 68 hours, including
1 rest night and 1 meal provided



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Registrations & information:
contact@addictivbaits.com

PRIZES

🥇 1st place: €6,000

🥈 2nd place: €3,500

🥉 3rd place: €2,000

🐟 Biggest fish: €500

🐟 Smallest fish: €250

🐟 Biggest catfish: €250

+ Many other prizes to be won



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TACKLING MINDS IS EXPANDING. CAN YOU HELP VOLUNTEER?

“Fishing with Tackling Minds relaxes my mind and makes me feel at one with nature, whilst allowing me to feel a real sense of achievement when I catch a few fish.”

Jagan



We're currently looking for volunteers to join the Tackling Minds team across Greater Manchester and Lancashire. Find out more <https://www.tacklingminds.org/job-vacancy/volunteer-angling-coach/> Not all heroes wear capes! At Tackling Minds, we are committed to supporting individuals with mental health challenges through the scientifically proven benefits of fishing. But behind every session, every smile, and every success story, there's a team of incredible volunteers driving this mission forward. Their dedication, even in challenging weather conditions, is a testament to their commitment. Rain, hail, shine, or snow, they show up, ready to make a difference. We wouldn't be where we are today without them.

Due to increased demand for our services, Tackling Minds is looking for volunteer anglers who share our passion for passing on the benefits of fishing. Our Volunteers: Make a Real Difference to Peoples' Lives Give Back to the Community Gain New Skills Feel Really Valued & Appreciated Meet New People Enjoy being a part of our Team For those who meet our criteria, Tackling Minds will fully fund your Angling Coaching courses, which include a recognised coaching qualification, First Aid Certificate, Safeguarding Training, and a DBS check. If you're interested in becoming a volunteer, please fill out our short online application form <https://www.tacklingminds.org/job-vacancy/volunteer-angling-coach/> Once completed, we'll be in touch to invite you to one of our volunteer open days, where you can meet the team, see the life-changing work we do, ask any questions, and discuss your onboarding process to join your very first session. We can't wait to welcome you to the team! Tight Lines for Healthy Minds

BLUEBELL WEBSITE UPDATED



Welcome to Bluebell Lakes

Based in Peterborough, Bluebell lakes is one of the most prestigious carp waters in the UK.

All of our 5 Mature Carp fishing lakes provide the specimen carp angler with a large choice of swims to catch big carp ranging from 10lb to mid 50lbs.

Have you seen our website?

Head over to our website for rules, lake info and everything you need to know about a trip to Bluebell Lakes.

Last year we revamped our website with a fresh new look.

Head over for the latest info and news

www.bluebell-lakes.co.uk



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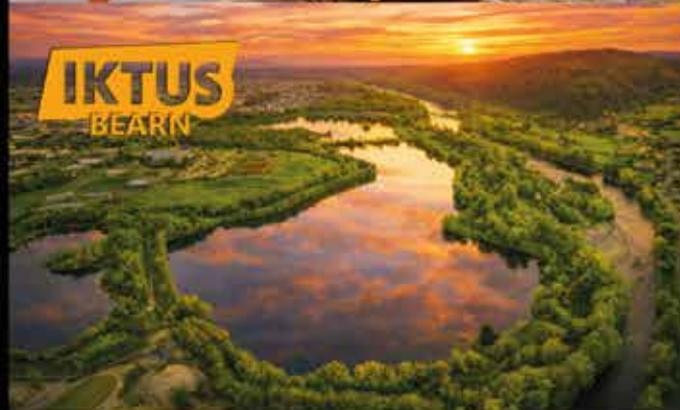
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ROBBIE BRIERS JOINS THE ESP TEAM

Recently voted Carp Angler of the Year by @cypography followers, Robbie @robbriers needs little introduction regarding his standing in big carp circles.

Based in Greater Manchester, with a demanding full-time job, Robbie still finds time to put maximum effort into tough campaigns on tricky, high pressured venues miles from home.

He has amassed a tally of hugely impressive carp from a number of different venues and has recently been focusing on a demanding day only lake with some incredible captures.

We're delighted to welcome Robbie to the ESP team and look forward to showcasing a few of his captures in 2026! Which just leaves us to say, Happy New Year and tight lines for '26!

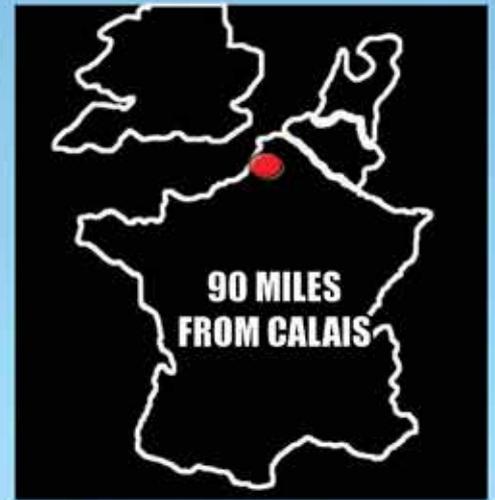


CHILTERN RODS NOW BUILDING SOUTH COAST RODS



We are please announce that we have recently been approached by South Coast Rods, who have asked us if we would offer a custom build option for their products. We agreed this would be a great idea and look forward to offering our customers an additional range of high-quality carp blanks that can be built to any specifications you require. We can offer various options regarding the handle, guides, reel seat and whippings etc so drop us a line and I'm sure we can build the rods of your dreams .

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MIKE STARKEY RIP BY MARK WALSINGHAM



Very sad to hear of the death of Mike Starkey this morning. I knew Mike was s a friend, a man of great integrity and principle and a fine angler....

I knew Mike through his membership of the Ashmead Syndicate but he will be very well known to many through his fishing on Ashlea, Redmire, Frensham and elsewhere, as well as his contributions to carp angling groups like the CAA and Carp Society. Mike made a huge contribution behind the scenes to the production of many great angling books, as well as writing in his own right..

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTICE



Venue: The Lodge, Horseshoe Lake, Burford Road, Lechlade, Gloucestershire, GL7 3QQ

Date: Sunday 15th February 2026 – 1.30pm

Agenda:

1. Welcome from the Chair
2. Review of the Past 12 Months
3. Approval of the Minutes of the AGM held on 16 February 2025
4. Adoption of the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 May 2025
5. Approval for Annual Accounts to be prepared by an independent chartered accountant, at a maximum fee set by the Directors
6. Election of Directors and Officers (where applicable: see notes below)

Closure of meeting

Any Other Business

An informal Q&A session will follow the formal AGM, providing members with an opportunity to ask questions or raise discussion items.

NOTES

- The Annual General Meeting will be conducted in accordance with the company's Memorandum and Articles of Association, available on the Society website or from the Head Office of Horseshoe Lake.
- A valid membership card is required for entry, and for submitting any proxy or voting forms.
- Questions relating to the accounts must be submitted in writing to the Company Secretary no later than 21 days prior to the AGM (Sunday, 25 January 2025).
- Director nominations (where vacancies exist) must also be submitted in writing in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles, no later than 21 days before the AGM date (see note below).

Director	Term Ending	Re-standing
ANDREW ELLIS	2026	Yes

Questions and nominations should be sent in writing to:

The Secretary, The Carp Society, Horseshoe Lake, Burford Road, Lechlade, Glas, GL7 3QQ
or emailed to sales@thecarpsociety.com, quoting your current membership number.

Current directors: 9

1 director's 3 year-term is due to expire this year; an election will take place by vote.

The director whose term up for renewal is Andrew Ellis

Where applicable, elections will be held at the AGM for any positions for which valid applications are received.

Director nominations (in accordance with the Memorandum & Articles) must be submitted to the Society in writing no later than 21 days before the AGM date (Sunday, 25 January 2025).

After this time a full list of a full list of candidates and the voting/proxy forms will be made available 14 days prior to the meeting along with voting/proxy forms

SHAUN McNUTT RIP



It is with profound sadness that we announce the sudden passing of our previous owner, Shaun McNutt.

Shaun was the second and longest owner of TopCats. He took over in May 2009 and in his 10 1/2 year's here, Shaun was instrumental in developing the resort into the world-renowned fishing destination it is has become today. For his vision and dedication, we are truly grateful.

His unexpected death occurred recently in Hua Hin ,shortly after he spent a week doing what he loved most, fishing.

Our thoughts and deepest condolences go out to Pim, Tadpole, and the rest of his family and friends during this extremely

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Shoebury Reed Removal Project – Complete!



Check Out the 2 Days of



After three very long days, we're pleased to confirm that the reed removal project at Shoebury has now been completed. The large reed mass and two smaller reed beds have been fully removed, and we've also reduced the number of lily pads across the lake to further improve water quality and access. This work wouldn't have been possible without the fantastic support of the Environment Agency, who funded a large proportion of the project through fishing licence fees – thank you! A huge shout-out as well to Digger Boats, who were once again absolutely brilliant throughout the works. Thank you! These works mark an incredible milestone for the fishery, increasing open water and accessibility for both wind and anglers, reducing the oxygen demand on the lake, and improving habitat for many of our native species.



A massive thank you to Digger Boats you did an amazing job on our lake 🙌

Anyone reading this, these guys are 10/10 very professional and didn't stop for 2 days solid.

Estimated amount of debris recovered 60tons, they did a fantastic job and I would highly recommend 🙌



Shoebury
Chesham Community Angling Club



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Leamington Angling got in touch with us for more water and bank space for the fishery. The reed removal operation utilising our specialised machinery made a drastic improvement to the water quality and open water to fish. Could your venue benefit from similar works?

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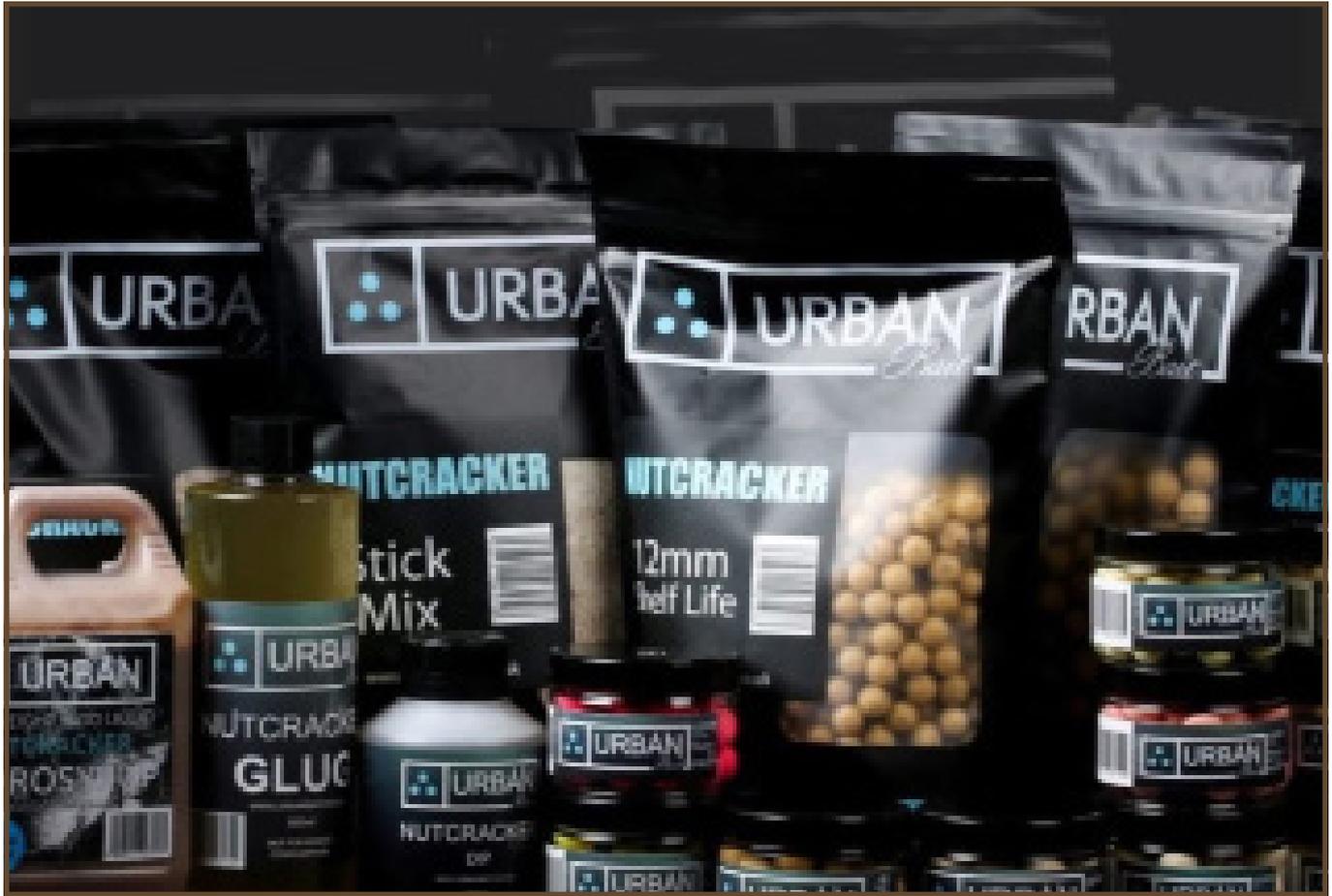


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NITE WATCHES MX10 JUNGLE



Rob says, “Nite Watches have always been popular with carp anglers and Nite has been an integral part of Big Carp Magazine for many years. The MX 10 has always been regarded as the original field watch, but I am guessing not many carp anglers know its origins. I will let Nite explain.” “Originally commissioned for military use, the MX10 earned



its stripes with the UK Special Forces and secured NATO certification. Evolving from this lineage, our latest MX10 series is meticulously engineered to conquer the toughest environments. From treacherous waters to relentless winds and icy climates, it embodies unwavering confidence, ready to thrive in every challenge”.

Rob adds, “In January Nite very kindly offered Big Carp and Free Line readers a massive £85 discount, an offer they have just extended to include February as it has been so successful. I could not resist and ordered one for myself immediately. The watch has not left my wrist since it arrived. It’s superb and will accompany me on all my fishing adventures from this point on, both here and abroad. It really is the ultimate carp fishing watch. Especially with its Tritium illumination. Perfect for all my night time carp fishing.”

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DYNAMITE

WAVE

CHASING THAMES DREAMS part 2

It had been 19 days since the capture of the 42lb 10oz mirror from my original baited spot that I had put the main focus into at the start of my Thames campaign this year, and although I had fished a further three sessions for another two bites landed after that, really, deep down I knew the area was coming to an end, and I was more than happy with the rewards already received. Also in many ways, I couldn't wait to get away from

the stretch, give it a break and get on some other groups of carp elsewhere. Doing your homework on this daunting river is key; I had been doing plenty of that as standard, and I was double keen in making up for my late start to this season by investing a lot of extra hours during the very early mornings before work and during the middle of the night spent just walking the river banks quietly whilst watching and listening to the water. In the daylight hours, I like to actively search them out as much as I can, as visual sightings give me more of an idea of what I'm actually fishing for in the stretch at the time, but over the last couple of years, I have included night recces a lot more, as during the hours of darkness, they can still be located just as easily at times; you've only got to hear one give itself away!

It was whilst I was out on one of these early hours of the morning walks a couple of weeks prior to catching my first Thames 40 from the other area that I stopped in an area of the river where I wanted to watch the water where it bottle necks a bit. I could hear the geese squabble and thrash around for bank space on a small beachy area in the half light on the other side of the river, and I had just turned to walk off, thinking to myself that I'm not going to hear or see anything here with that noisy lot causing a commotion. It was at that moment I heard a different kind of thrash of water coming from a lot closer in. I quickly turned round to see the water disturbed about 30 yards out, and I stood there watching the water for a few more minutes before there was another thrash as a silhouette broke the surface a couple of yards to the left.

I ended up watching the area like a hawk for over two hours, right up until it was fully light, and I counted over 12 shows

from at least two or three different carp and had mentally logged a couple different zones they seemed to be favoring where I could see them fizzing up the most. They were definitely feeding on something down there. With time now getting on and the river starting to become busy as the new day stirred, I quickly deposited the couple of kilos of Complex-T boilie I had on me with a catapult, a mixture of 12mm, 15mm, 18mm and 20mm baits that had been heavily glugged for a couple of weeks in both a rehydration liquid and Sweet Tiger Liquid too for extra pulling power and attraction. Ideally I didn't want to be putting any particles and pellets out in any other areas, as I was investing it all into my original spot I was campaigning at the time, so I chose to approach this newfound area a bit differently and spread the bait across the river instead of baiting a tight area. There would be no leading around and fishing highly accurately for certain drops. I already knew it was pretty weedy and uneven ground down there, and as long as I got a good drop, my rigs would be presented, just nice and simple, and by applying just boilie and a few Chili Tigers with a catapult or spoon, baiting up only took a few minutes each time. I continued to visit and watch the area for half hour or so each time before baiting up with a couple of kilo of mixed boilie and tigers every three days over the next four weeks, conditioning the new area whilst finishing up on my other baited area on the other stretch. It was 12th September, and I was on my way to hit the area where they were giving themselves away.

I arrived about an hour before it was due to get dark and had only just started getting the gear off the barrow when the first one poked its head out half way across the river. "I'll be having

you in a bit," I mumbled to myself as I went about getting the rods out of the sleeves and my home sorted. I was in no rush despite a racing heart and that anxious feeling that had been building up. I took my time in setting up nice and quietly with the kettle on and getting my fresh rigs sorted and Complex-T fluoro pop-ups finely balanced. I felt a nervous wreck by the time I was ready to get into the water to line up for my first cast just as the light was fading. It was obvious it was going to kick off with what I had been witnessing. Getting the drops I was happy with was very frustrating, with the left rod being a marginal area I had chosen at about ten yards' range. I took literally 15 casts around the rugged, weed covered marginal shelf until I finally got a solid crack down in about 5ft of water.

The middle rod was just as much aggro but was the one that I paid most attention to, since the area that I had seen the most shows and feeding activity at about 30 yards' range over previous weeks, and when I finally got the clean drop that felt the one in about 9ft of water between two large weed beds out there, I really did feel quite excited, as I was really happy with that rod. Thankfully the right hand rod went out a bit smoother, taking only three casts to land in a nice silty area in about 7ft of water at about 45 yards' range. I was cursing myself a bit due the amount of disturbance I had just caused in getting the rods out. I really should have leaded around in the area a lot more during bait up trips prior to the session, but I had always left the leading rod in the motor to stop the temptation of becoming too picky about what I was landing on out there. I wanted to target this area differently from the start and didn't want to be creating a tight feeding spot, as the shows and feeding activity I had seen had been all the way

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across that section of river. The rods were finally out anyway, followed by three pouches of mixed-size boilie over each rod. It was pitch black by now, and I was starved so went about getting some dinner on and settled in for the night and ready for action.

I dozed off early that night and remember waking up confused a couple of hours later around 12:30pm to the LED on my receiver flashing. Upon checking the rods, the LED had just stopped flashing on the marginal left hand rod and the line was out the clip with the bobbin hanging by its chain still attached to a now limp line. I sat there for a few seconds, slowly tightening up to the rig, feeling for any movement with my fingertips as I couldn't get my head around what had happened. Surely if that was a pickup then it would have

been an absolute one-toner with how close in that rod was cast? I reeled the rig in and inspected it, and all was perfectly fine, not even any weed had built up on the lead core or rig components, but the top bead had popped off the silicone. I had been done! You what? After checking the line for damage and rechecking and resetting the pop-up rig, it went straight back out on the same spot first cast followed by another three pouches of heavily glugged Complex-T boilie and sat back drinking tea and coffee whilst looking out over the rods.

As the mist started to roll in, an eerie atmosphere started to build in strength, and the liners started. It was just after 3am when the middle rod took off. I had been perched on the edge



of the bed chair just waiting for it. I had sort of half expected the left hand rod to be the one that would go first with the earlier occurrence and recent liners, but either way, I was into my first one from the spot, and after a really good scrap, I soon had a lovely scaly hammer in the net that looked to be a low 20. I had seen this fish in the margins a few times with a ghostie, and it was definitely one of the more active ones that I had been watching show in the area since starting the baiting campaign. I unhooked it in the water, secured the fish in a retainer and quickly attached a fresh rig and pop-up to that rod. I got it back out there, to my surprise first time between the weed beds, and it landed absolutely lovely, followed by another three pouches of glugged boilie. It would be getting light in a couple of hours, the fish was safe and there was still the chance of another as the liners instantly started again on the rod I had just recast. I thought I would make the most of it, take it all in and waited for what was to come with great anticipation. The atmosphere was electric; it felt like one of those proper big fish nights we have all experienced at some point.

The next take came at around 4am. The left hand rod just buckled on the set up, and as I picked up the rod, a powerful fish roared off from the margin and out into the middle of the river, thrashing at the surface as it rolled on the line whilst shaking its head violently in an attempt to free itself. It really didn't appreciate being hooked and was seriously throwing itself about as we rucked it out. A short while later, it was getting close to netting distance, and I flicked on the head torch to see where we were. I glimpsed the big ghostie common I had been seeing with the mirror I already had retained, and after

a couple more fast paced charges up and down the marginal shelf, I managed to bundle it into the net. The rig had taken hold so well there was no way it was getting away with it that time! To get a bite from the Thames is a right result, as it is any day, but despite having fished the river seriously for the carp for over ten years now, braces really haven't happened that often for me, so I was absolutely made up for the effort I had put into the area. It really makes it all worthwhile when a plan comes together that could have gone either way. After making sure the ghostie was safely recovering and secured temporarily in the landing net after unhooking it in the water, I went about getting a fresh rig and pop-up sorted and got the rod back out on the marginal area followed by another three pouches of bait spread around it. It would be light in about an hour now, and as the morning song chorus started as dawn came round, that feeling of something very special about to happen just completely overwhelmed my senses.





It was just before 5am when the EOS let out a short series of bleeps as the line pinged from the clip and the rod tip started to arch over on the middle rod. I was on it before it had a chance to even take any line, and upon picking up the rod, I connected with some seriously heavy resistance. Out in the gloomy half light through the mist and drizzle, I could see there was a huge swirl over the area followed by the deepest, echoing roll of water you could imagine, which left the hairs on the back of my neck standing on end. For a moment there I was, flat-rodded as the fish lunged and charged off left downstream from where I had hooked it, only taking a few yards of line, but with such power, my heart started to race.



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I quickly managed to gain control, and as if life was going in slow motion, I carefully led the unseen beast the 30 yards back towards me with the fish literally just wallowing at the surface all the way in, only making a couple more attempts to turn and waddle off, I knew this was a serious fish.

What I was to see next will stay with me forever. After its last attempt to turn and waddle off once more, a linear of just massive proportions broke the surface, coughing water as it lazily threw its head from side to side, completely beaten. The bloody length of it! I tell you, it was great fun trying to shuffle the Lin into the net with a near-30lb ghostie common already occupying it, which by this stage was now eager to get

out, but after a couple of attempts at getting them both in the right position so that the ghostie couldn't escape, and when it wasn't looking, I sank the net, quickly scooped, and she was mine.

After carefully unhooking the Lin in the net, I jammed the net pole into a tuft of reeds in the margin to secure the net in a position so they were safely recovering and couldn't get out over the net cord. I quickly got that middle rod back out on the spot again with a fresh rig and pop-up I had ready to go. Another three pouches of Complex-T followed behind it before taking a couple of minutes to have a smoke and reflect back and try take in what had actually just happened here. All I knew was not so long ago I had no carp in my net, and the next thing, I had over 90lbs of Thames carp in three hours to get the weighing equipment and self-take system sorted for.

By the time I had got sorted, wet the cradle and sling and got the scales zeroed with water supply and carp care treatment at the ready, it was now light enough, and the mist had burnt off just that little bit needed to not steam the lens up. I set up the camera tripod and took a couple of test takes to get everything in the right position so that I was happy with the shots, and one by one, I set about dealing with my hard earned prizes in order of capture. First up was the one I had seen showing most over the last few days, a proper scaly hammer going 23lb 12oz. Just having this gem alone, I would have been well happy any day! Next up was the ghostie common, which I had seen mooching about in the margins with the mirror a few days previously. He spun the needle round to 28lb 12oz... go on, mate!

With both of them treated for damage, dealt with and safely

released back into the depths of the Old Father, I fetched the cradle from up the bank and carefully secured the ultimate prize I have ever had the honor of catching from this amazing river of dreams, safe and ready for the short walk up the bank to where the camera was. She was a PB alright; I didn't even have to get the scales out to know that, but by using the net pole and spreader block as a weighing crook for absolute accuracy, for the record, the needle settled on 44lb 14oz, the cream of the crop and the absolute pinnacle of my Thames carping. She was such a majestic creature, so well behaved on the bank, and after checking the fish over for damage with some treatment applied to where the rig had done its job, I cradled her in my arms and clicked away with the remote. This is why I fish the Thames! This is what it's all about! With shots and film quickly completed, I thanked her for the memories and wished her farewell as she waddled off over the marginal shelf and down into those magical depths... never to be seen again? I wondered...

It was one of those days that never seemed to start. The sky was moody and visibility was hazy, and in my trancelike state, I felt lost in that little bubble, completely blown away and quite frankly in shock. I didn't know what to do with myself, but I didn't care really. I felt high as a kite, and I just sat there dazed on the bed chair staring out over the rods sucking in the accolade as I came to terms with the realisation of what I had just achieved. By now the phone was absolutely pinging, having let a handful of close mates know the news and dropped Dynamite Baits HQ a message. Word was getting round and traveling like wildfire. It was now around 13:30, the rods were still out there prime and had remained silent

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since the morning's action.

Some weed had built up on the line of the right hand rod fished at around 45 yards' range, which was something that would normally really bug me and would normally have been removed straight away, but as I sat there staring at the line bowing in the current, it started pulling up tight, and the EOS signaled a couple of bleeps as the rod compressed on the setup... Here we go again! I picked up the rod and tightened up to something that was savagely throwing its head about, and after a moment of no give or take, it just took off upriver. It was going absolutely ballistic; the fight was so fast paced, and I just remember huge plumes of bubbles and sediment

coming up off the bottom as this wild creature properly threw its weight about, charging around down in the depths, twisting and turning on the line with strands of ribbon weed floating up to the surface all in front of me as the line sliced through and I slowly teased it back in.

It surfaced around 15 yards out, and I could instantly see it was another one of the river's gems, possibly another PB, but if not then it had to be close! After a couple more minutes getting properly beaten up as it charged off up and down the margin a couple more times, I finally had it under control, and at the first opportunity of netting, I took it. Number four of the session! Have it! This proper scaly, wild, river beast spun the needle round to 35lb 10oz, not as big as it looked, but that was irrelevant. This was the cherry on top and rounded up a not even once in a lifetime's session fishing the Thames but a truly rare event. Things like this just don't happen here – 130lb of carp from the River Thames in a session including a new personal best – just let that sink in! It still hasn't.

I had topped up the area before leaving and was back two days later to hopefully see what other surprises may be waiting out there for me, but it wasn't to be, as just like that, they had vanished. I fished three separate blank sessions over the next week whilst sticking to my baiting ratio, but there was absolutely no sign of them in the area, so I decided to get back on the hunt for a couple of days, fishing a couple of other different interesting areas on the stretch, and it was in one of these areas that I was able to locate a group of six carp one morning on the 25th September, 13 days on from the capture of the lin. There were at least three 20s, one good 30 and a couple that looked to be well over 40lb, from what I could see

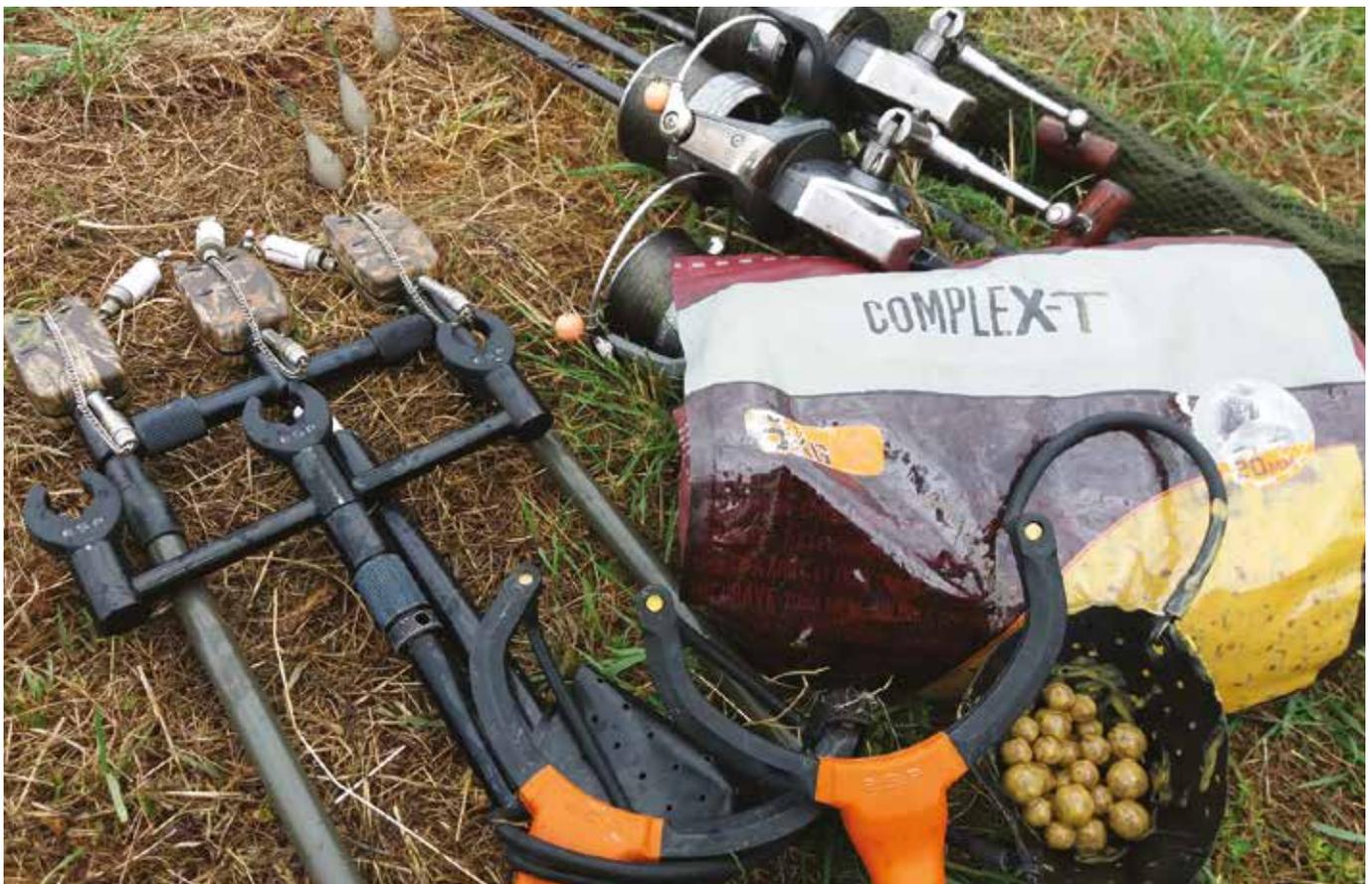


of the dark shapes moving down there. The bottom is just out sight in that area of margin they were patrolling, and I could just make out the cleaner areas amongst the bottom as they ghosted about, clearly feeding down there.

I was only set up about 50 yards away downstream, and it was strange how I had already fished the night in the area and had seen or heard absolutely nothing. If it weren't for the fact that I'd gone for a mooch along the margin that morning at that particular time, I would have been none the wiser, and they could have quite easily gone unnoticed. I sprinted the short distance back to the rods, cranked all three of them in and literally cut the stiff hinge pop-up rig off one of the rods. Using a length of 20lb Amnesia and a size 4 chod pattern hook, I tied up the most simple bottom bait rig, the quickest thing I could tie, and equipped it with a 20mm Complex-T boilie

straight from the bag. I grabbed the net and crept back into the area.

They were still down there, but had moved slightly down from the spot and were disappearing now and then under a raft of weed that had built up around an overhanging bush. Upon seeing the opportunity when there was nothing in the area I had planned to lower the rig in on, I back-wound the rig quickly onto the spot and laid the rod down on the concrete deck. Instantly the squad reacted, and they made their way out from under the weed raft, bee-lining straight towards my single hookbait with the two biggest ones down there out of the group taking the lead, almost racing towards 20mm of Complex-T goodness. The rig had been down there no more than 60 seconds by this stage when I could tell by the body language of the smaller one of the two obvious 40lb-plus carp



down there that it had made its mistake. I looked up at the rod tip to see it pluck and nod twice, and it then just started sliding along the deck.

I snatched the rod and stood up to instantly see the linear roll on its side and surface, lazily throwing its head about from side to side, again coughing water. I felt absolutely gutted in ways to watch all five others bolt off the spot, and the fact that I had hooked the Lin again and there was a completely different and possibly even bigger, unknown one down there, I couldn't help but feel slightly unlucky, but you can't always choose them, and what an awesome way to recapture such a special creature. It was a real opportunist bit of stalking, and I don't think I would change things even if I could – some things aren't meant to be and what is to be, will be.

I did return the next morning with the one rod to try my luck, but after just half an hour of being there, it was obvious they had done the off like they do, and it was back to reality of hunting those highly nomadic and mysterious Thames carp.

They say when your luck's in, your luck's in, and just as quickly these carp can turn up, they vanish from your highly primed, baited and well sourced out spots, including the known areas from past and present where they like to hang out. Your luck goes just as easily, and it really has been the case of back to tracking them down. They really have done the disappearing trick now, and since the recapture of the Lin, my last bite from the Thames was on the 25th October on a work overnighter on another section of river I had also been putting a bit of time into, a common of around 15lb, but they are all welcome.

Maybe there will be a part three before the close season; you never know what might turn up on the Thames.



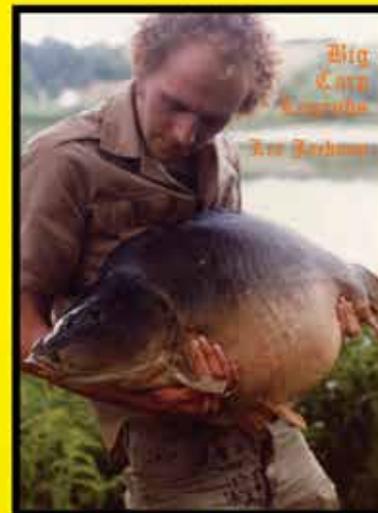
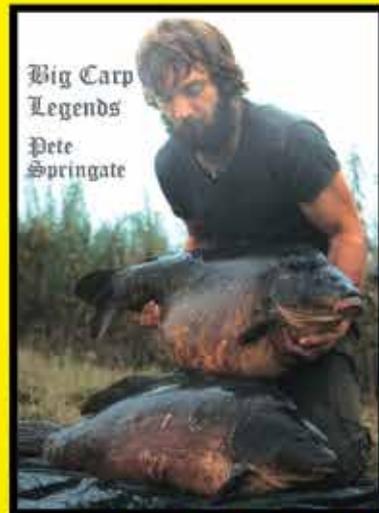
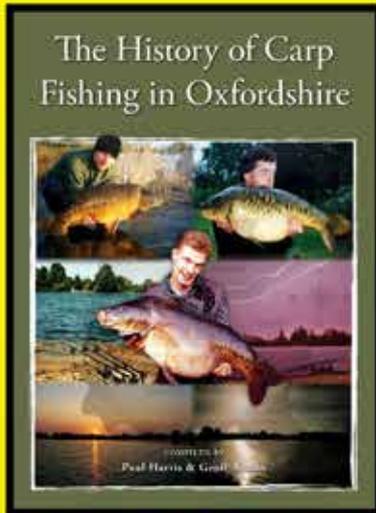
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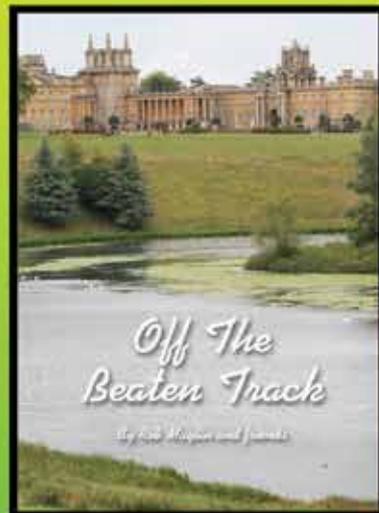
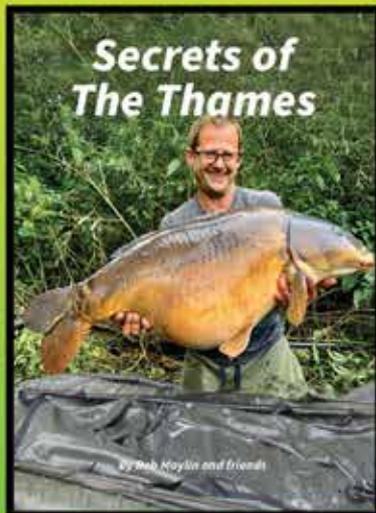
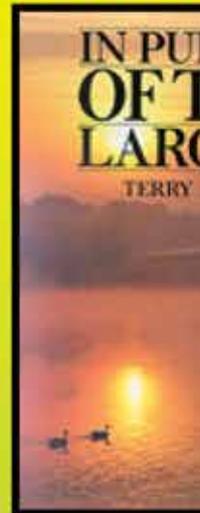
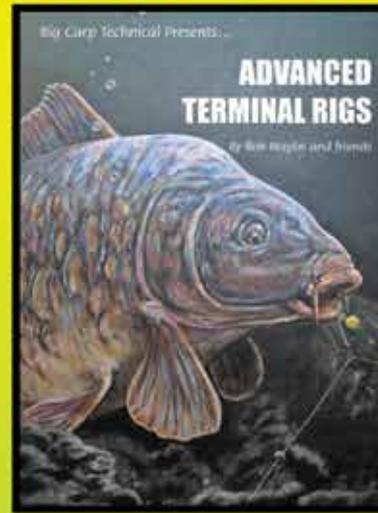
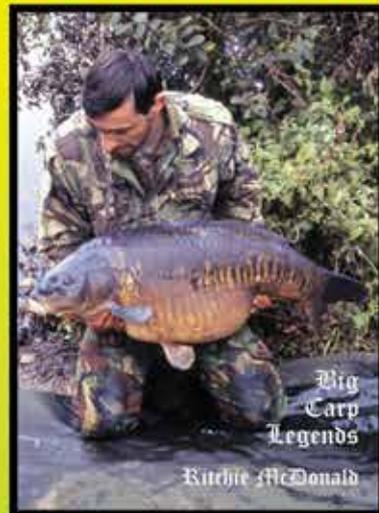
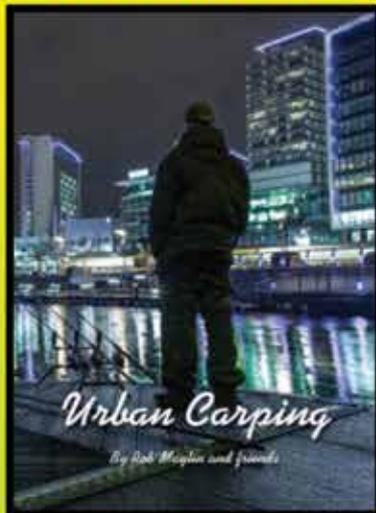
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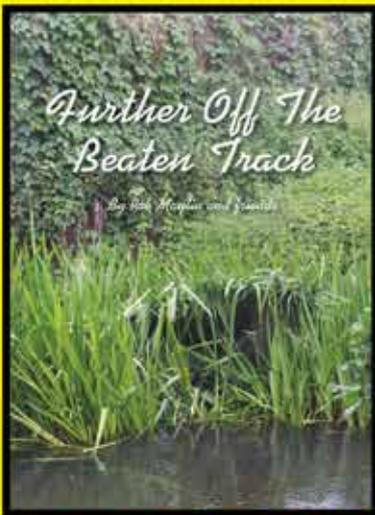
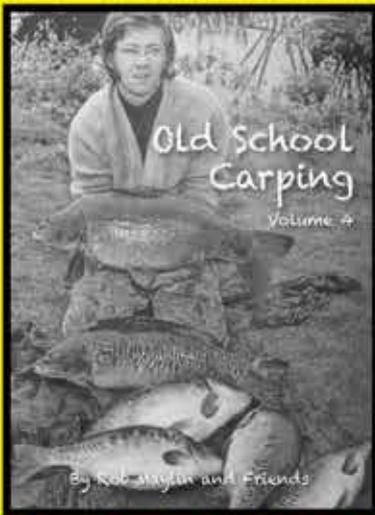
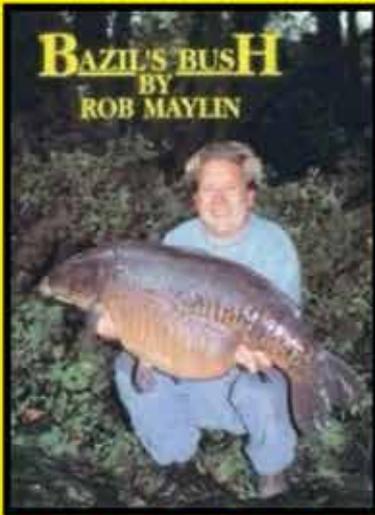


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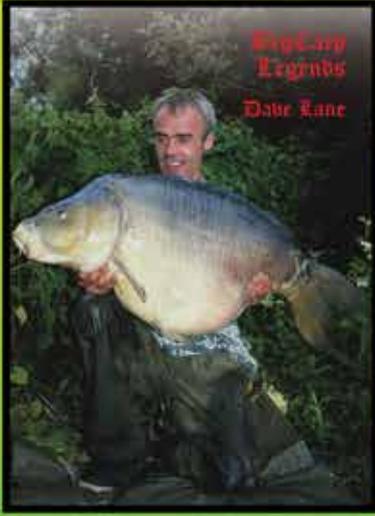
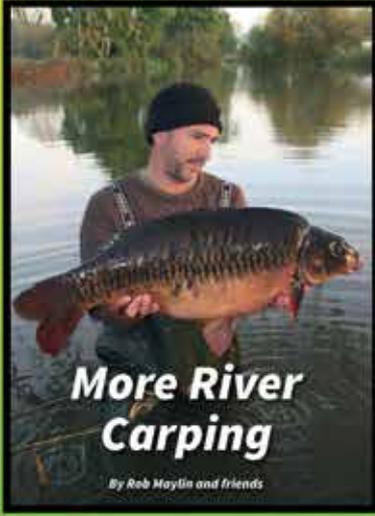
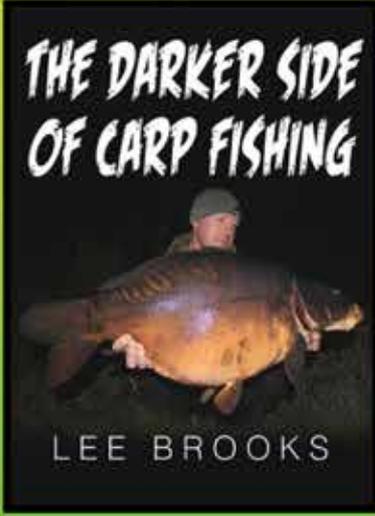
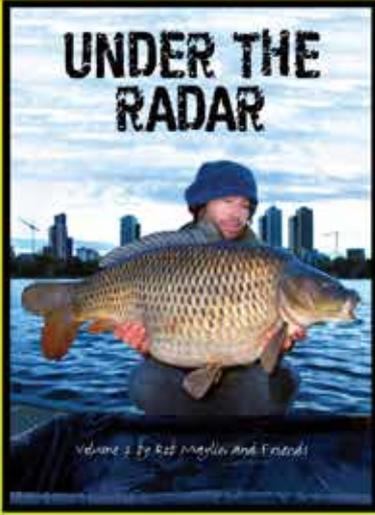
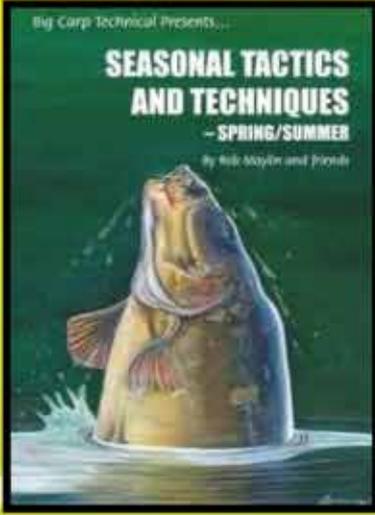
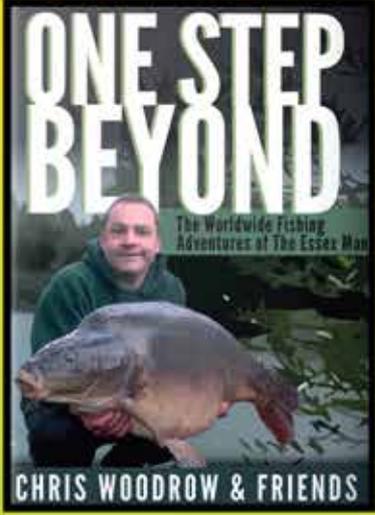


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A DATE WITH CHRISTINE

It's a well-known fact that Lake Pepper on Cottington Lakes Fishery near Deal in Kent holds some very large and stunning carp, boasting numerous carp over forty pounds and even one at fifty pounds-plus. But what about Cottington's second specimen lake – Lake Christine? What does she hold? What secrets does she hide? In November 2017, we were invited to help net Christine, as part of an ongoing fishery management

BARRY OCONNOR



project, to remove the silver fish that were in abundance and were surprised at what came out. Although principally to remove the silver fish, inevitably a few carp got caught up in the net. To our amazement thirteen of them were over thirty pounds. To say it was an eye opener was an understatement. We drive past Christine every time we go to fish Pepper. We've had no more than a few of sessions on Christine in all the years we've been fishing at Cottingham. These were mostly social sessions where the fishing wasn't the principal reason for being there. This was all about to change though.

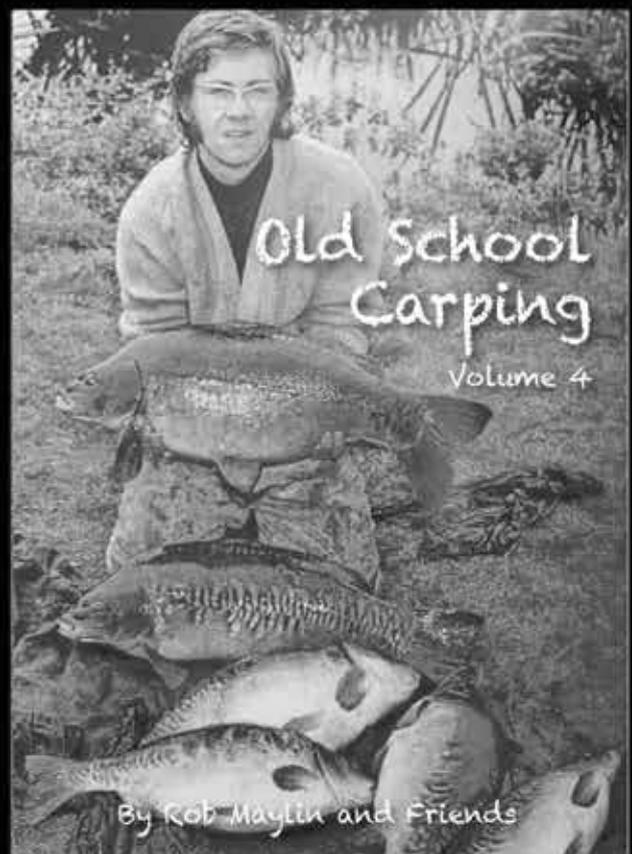
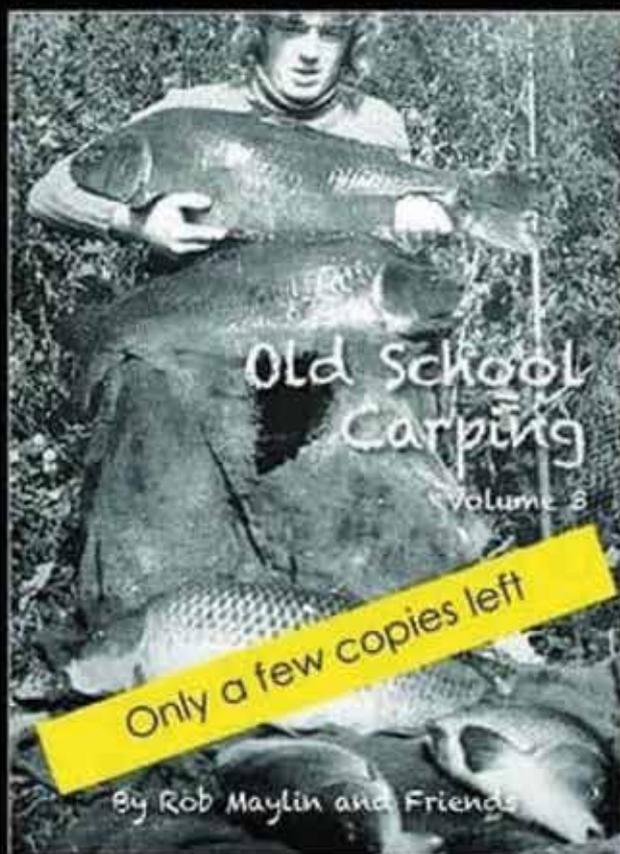
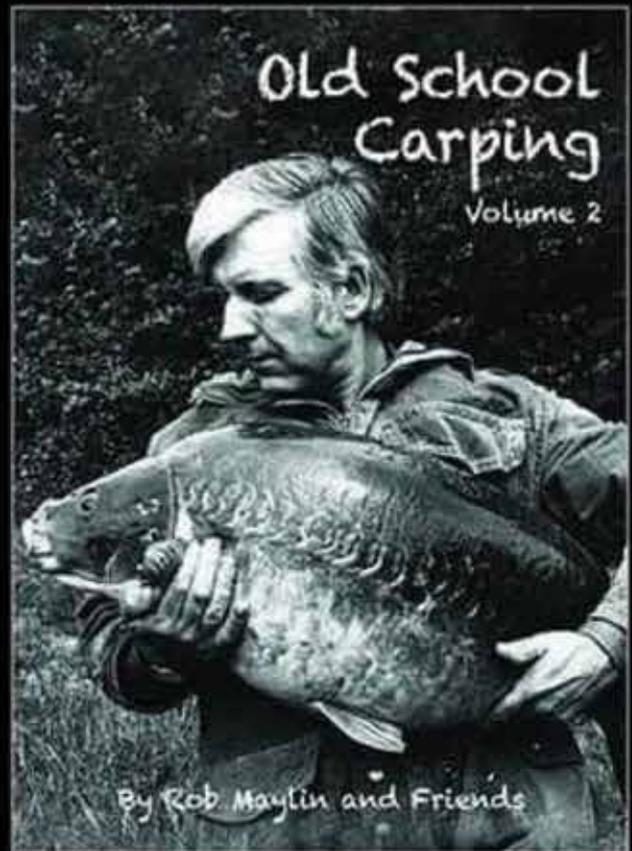
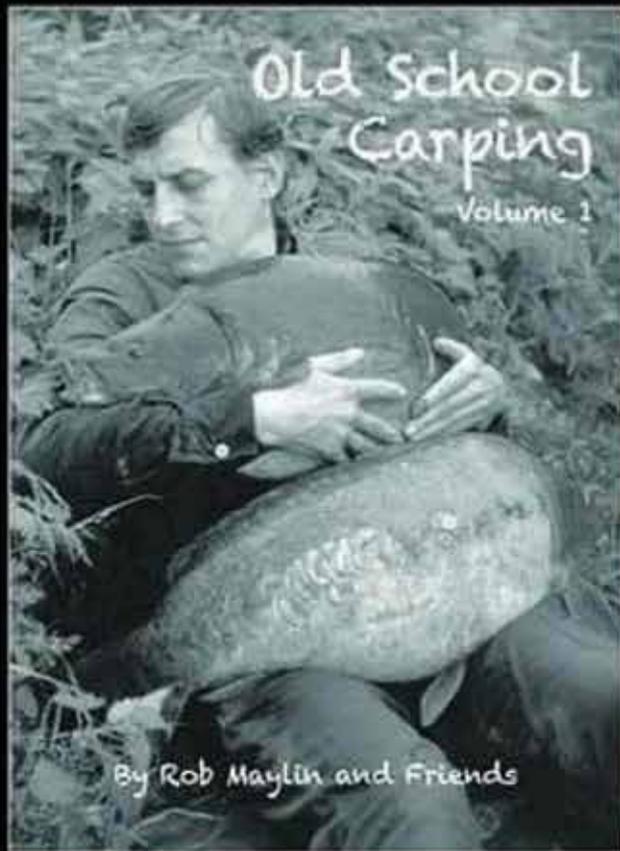
Having spoken to Gary and Darren, the owners of Cottingham Lakes Fishery, they kindly agreed to let us fish it exclusively. There were two reasons for this: One was obviously to see if and what we could catch. The other reason was that we've been thinking of how we could expand our Elite Carp Masters competition next year and wanted to explore the possibility of incorporating Christine as well as Pepper. Anyway, a date was set for our session, and the lake was ours for seventy-two hours. We invited two anglers to join us on this session. One was Paul (Mango) Manderson who is a bailiff at Cottingham and also a very good friend of ours. Mango is a good all-round angler, and he helps us run the Elite Competition too. The other angler who would be joining us was Scottt Geezer Grant. Scottt is also a very good friend and top carp angler who we have fished with before. All four of us were excited at the prospect of having a serious go on Christine.

The date was set for the beginning of May, which soon came around. Ben couldn't make the first day because of work commitments, but the rest of us were there nice and early. We couldn't get on the lake until around midday, so we went

round to see the anglers that were on there. Between them only one carp had been out, which didn't sound too promising. By eleven o'clock the anglers had gone, so we moved our gear into our chosen swims. Christine is a very different lake to Pepper; it's smaller, surrounded by trees and has a more exclusive feel about it. This is partly because there are ten swims on Christine but only six can be used at any one time, which allows each angler some water to go at. We'd selected swims so that all the lake was covered. It's also two rods maximum for each angler. Christine is a beautiful lake of about three and half acres and holds a good head of mirrors and commons. The biggest mirror goes 38lb 6oz and the biggest common goes 39lbs. It has two islands, which help to separate the swims so anglers don't cast over each other. The islands have overhanging bushes,



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which are areas that hold carp. The reed-lined margins are also worth investigating as are the snaggy areas. There are also several bays that look promising. Part of the lake has an area of open water where carp show themselves on a regular basis. The water depths vary between two feet to five feet in places.

I went into a swim that gave me open water, an island and reedy margins to fish to. Scottt went on the road bank and had snags and both islands as his targets. Mango was in the far end swim with an island and the margins. Ben would be going in the centre of the lake and could cast between the islands, open water and the margins. All four of us had plenty of places to set our traps. For bait, Ben, Mango and I would be using A2 Baits 10mm, 12mm and 14mm boilies. We'd

bought with us Banoffee, Creamy Toffee, the new Tutti Fruity and Fruity Fish. We also had A2 wafers and pop-ups with us and some Banoffee mixed pellets. We'd also brought with us some buckets of Hooked on Baits particles including their Spodmix and Hemp/Chilly/Maize. These particles last for ages if they're not opened. When opened they still last for about three months. Hooked on Baits particles are also PVA friendly, which is a plus if like us you attach a bag to the hook on every cast. We had quite a selection of bait with us to try. Not having seriously fished Christine before, it was going to be trial an error with the baits. Scottt was using his own bait. End tackle would be our ever faithful size 6 Deception D-X Curve hooks





tied to a short sheath type hooklink. Tubing was included to our end tackle as per the rules on Christine.

I decided to fish both rods in open water. The marker showed I had just over four feet of water in front of me, and it was mainly silt on the bottom. I put each rod either side of the marker. One had a 12mm Creamy Toffee on it the other a 12mm Banoffee. I put out eight Spombs of mix containing Hooked on Baits Spodmix particle mix and their Hemp/Chilly/Maize mix. I also added Banoffee mixed pellets, Creamy Toffee and Banoffee boilies to the mix. I find the Spomb quicker and easier to use than a spod. The mix had been soaking in Salmon Oil and Bloodworm Liquid for a few hours before being used. We find this gives the mix added attraction and the flavours and oil leach out for a long, long time. The session was only

forty-five minutes in when out of the blue I had a belting run that had the alarm screaming. It was on the rod baited with a Creamy toffee boilie. As I was playing it, you could see the swirls in the water as it twisted and turned to try and evade capture. Eventually I got the better of it, and into the net it went. It was a lump of a common - a definite thirty. On the scales it settled at 34lb 8oz. What a start. Photos done and out went the rod on the spot again and a few more Spombs of mix.

About an hour later my other rod baited with a Banoffee boilie was away, and another battle commenced. This one was on a mission as it pulled and tugged to avoid the net. The bend in my Free Spirit two and a half pound test curve rod was telling me this wasn't a small carp. As it rolled, I could see it was another good fish. The battle was won and the carp was

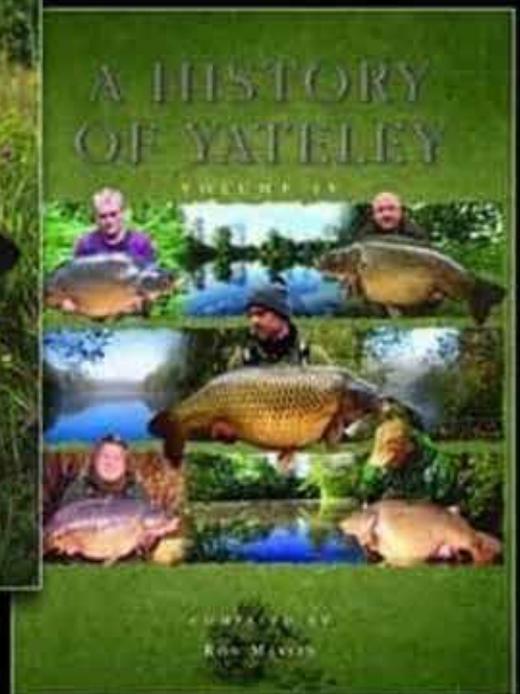
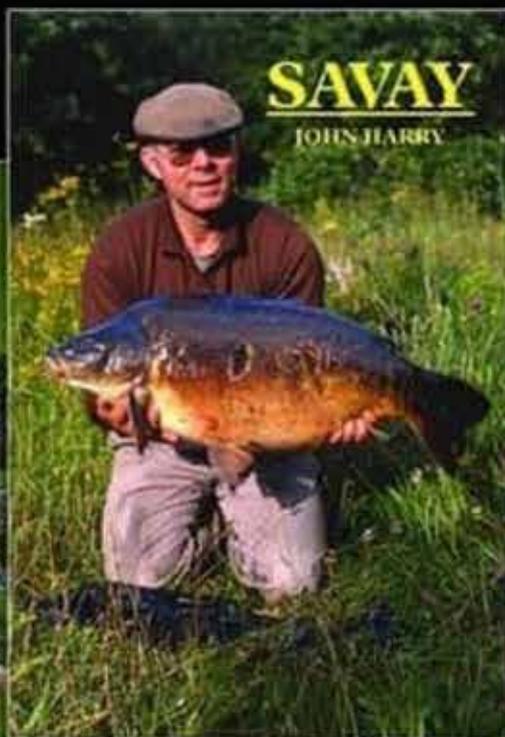
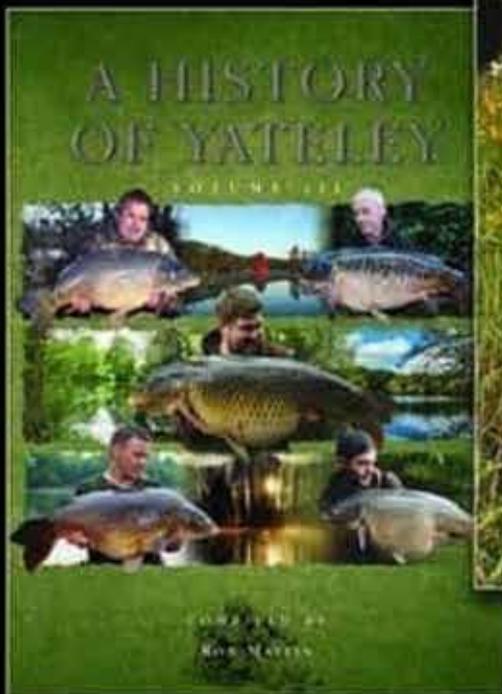
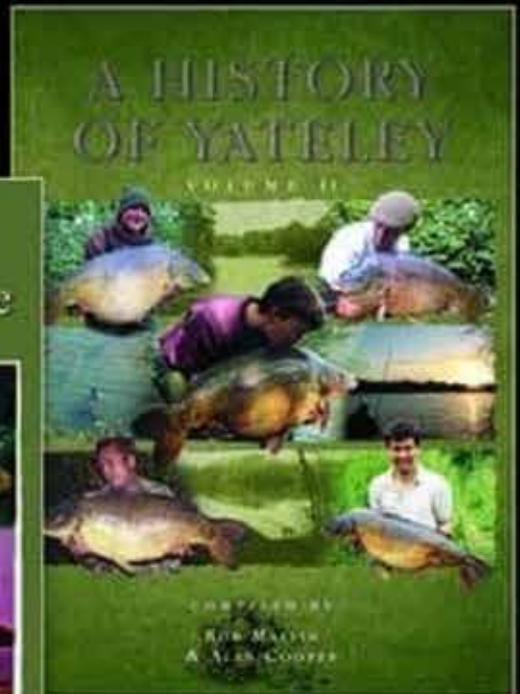
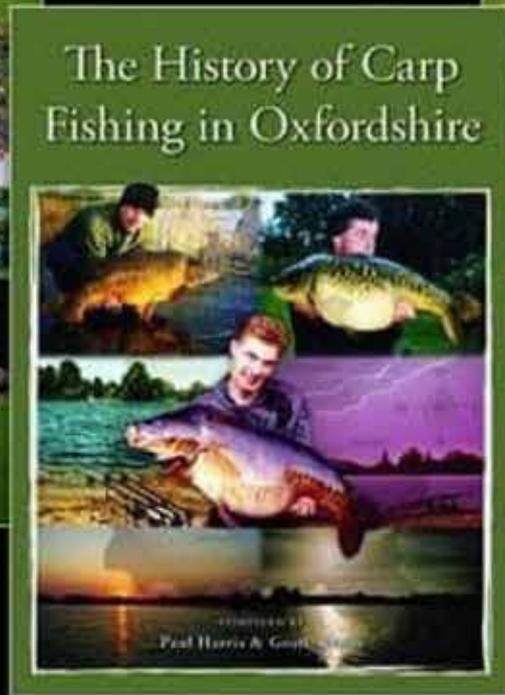
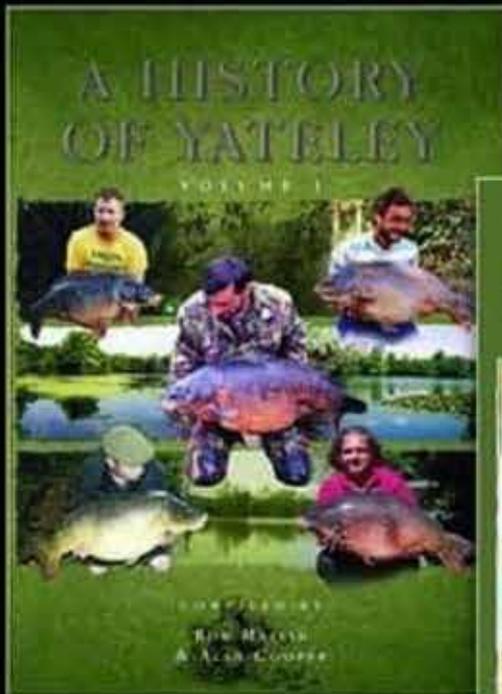




now in the net. I was looking at a huge big scaly mirror in the bottom of my net. Scottt helped me to weigh it, and it went 38lb 10oz. This is now the lake record mirror for Christine. Two big carp in just under two hours – could it get any better? Ben wasn't due to arrive until tomorrow, so I just had to phone him with the good news.

Scott in the meantime had caught a couple as well, most notably a 29lb common. Mango had joined in too with a 23lb 8oz mirror from the island. The next day Ben arrived eager to get started. We all helped him with his gear, which was set up in no time at all. Ben put one rod in open water and the other between the two islands. Both were baited with Creamy Toffee

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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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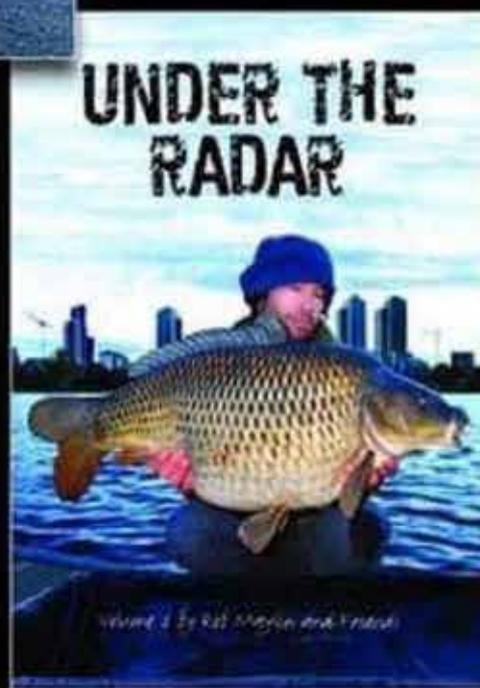
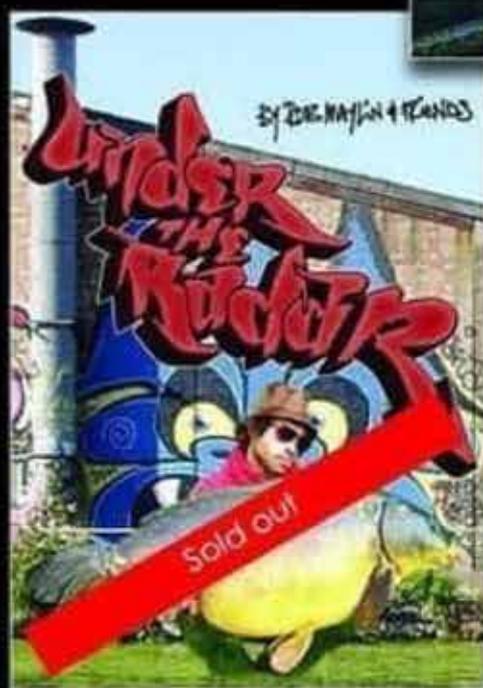
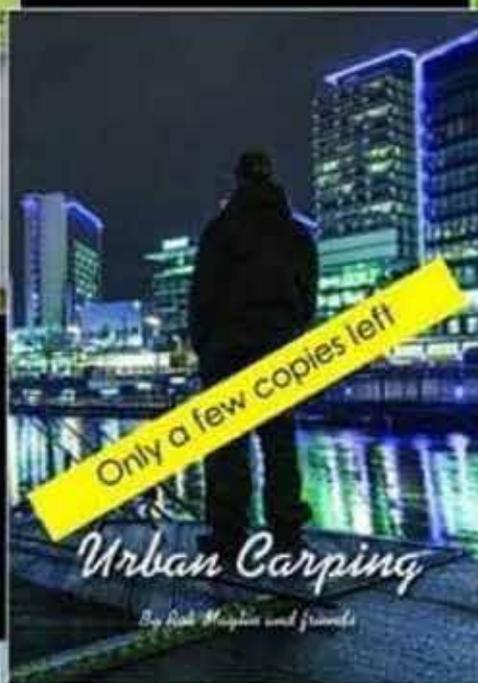
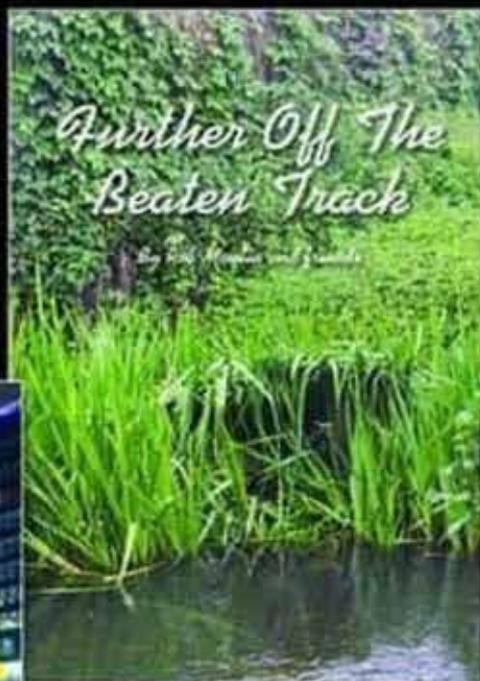
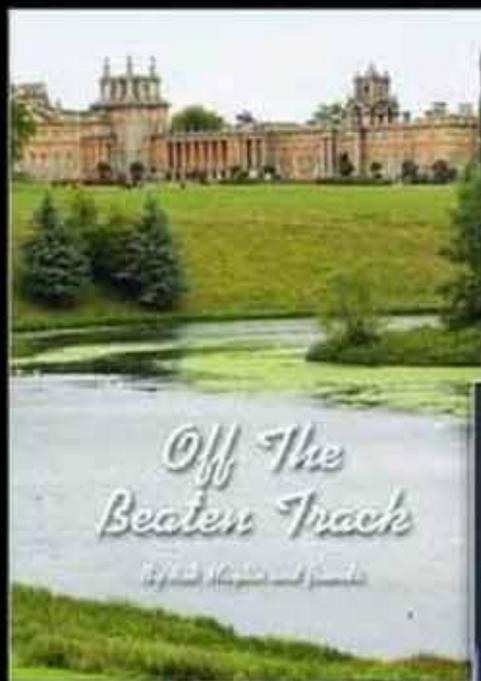
boilies. His setup was much the same as mine. Why change something that works ok? Ben and I are not ones for chopping and changing. We prefer to rely on rigs that have served us well in the past. It wasn't long before Ben had a twenty on the bank. It was a beautiful mirror that weighed in at 22lb 6oz. Later that evening, Ben had another twenty at 25lb 8oz. By now, Ben had made his mark on Christine and was pleased with the two twenties he'd caught. The night passed by but not without incident. Scottt landed a 20lb 2oz mirror and an 18lb mirror. Not to be outdone, I chipped in with 21lb common and a 19lb 10oz mirror. Ben and Mango added to the total with a double each.

Next morning the sun was up early and so were we. We were hoping the carp would show, and they didn't disappoint us - not all showing in one place but in certain areas around the lake. We'd all caught, but it was still a confidence booster to see the carp showing around the lake. I was the first to catch on that morning, and it was a fine common of 29lb 2oz. The session was going well. I could see Scottt was playing another one, so I reeled in and went round to net it for him. He was having a right row with it but gradually got it to the net. As it neared the net we could see it was a good common. When it was in the net we had a look at it, and boy it was a lump. We duly weighed it and the scales stopped at 35lb 8oz. Wow, what a carp. Scott was well pleased with it.

Later that day, I had a screamer on my right hand rod. As I picked the rod up, the line was cutting through the water very fast towards the bank on my right. Because the water is shallow, the carp was making a bow wave across the water. Ben had seen the run and was on his way round to me. He arrived

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just in time to net it. As it went in the net, we could see it was a stunner. On the bank we could see it was a beautiful fully scaled mirror. It was awesome. The scales recorded 30lb 2oz. Ben took the photos. We decided to do some water shots, which all went well until Ben finished with the camera, which was round his neck. He was now taking some shots with his phone, and as he bent down to get the angle right, the camera was dunked in the water. Panic set in, and Ben threw the camera to Scott who quickly removed the battery and the SD card. We dried it out, but it still wouldn't work. Luckily I always carry a spare camera with me. Ben was so apologetic about it.

Two thirties between Scott and me within a few hours – what

a session. During the afternoon, Scott was busy with another run. Ben went round to help. It was another thirty, this time a mirror at 31lb 4oz. Ben, bless him, was running around here, there and everywhere to help out and take photos. There was still more action to come when a shout went out that Scott was in again. Sure enough, I could see him doing battle with another carp. Who went to help him? You guessed it – poor old Ben. The net enveloped the carp and the battle was over. Ben shouted out that it was a good one. It was weighed, photographed and gently returned to the water none the worse for its ordeal. It was a common and weighed 30lb 14oz. That evening we had a BBQ and a beer, and it was very relaxing sitting and chatting about the carp we'd caught. If nothing else it gave Ben a bit of a rest.

On the last day, Gary, one of the owners, came to see how we were getting on. He was in Ben's swim when one of Ben's alarms went off. He invited Gary to pick up the rod and take up the challenge of man versus carp. Gary did this with much enthusiasm, and played the carp like a professional. After a few minutes, he guided it to the waiting net. Ben hoisted it out and got it onto the mat. It went into the weigh sling and on to the scales, which stopped at 21lb 3oz. The photo shows Gary was happy with his capture. Not long after Gary left, Ben was in again. I could see Ben leaning into a carp that was giving him the right runaround. The huge swirls it was making suggested it was a big carp. Eventually the powering runs and swirls stopped, and it came to the net. Mango did the honours with the net for Ben. The shout of "Yes!" from Ben could only mean one thing – it was a lump, and it certainly was. It was a huge common that weighed 35lb 14oz.

BARRY OCONNOR





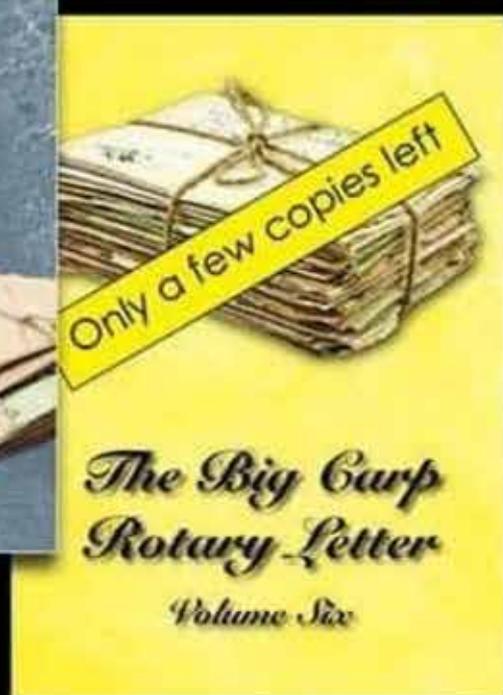
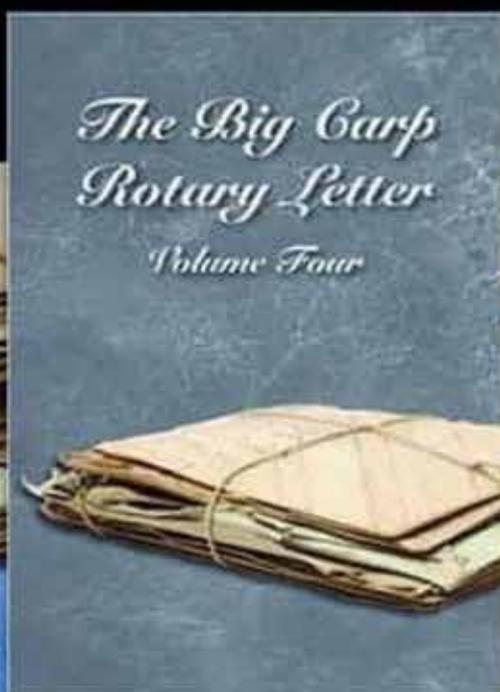
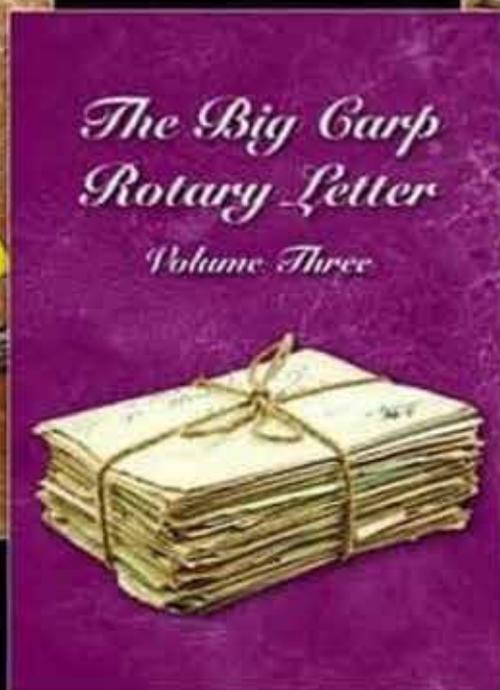
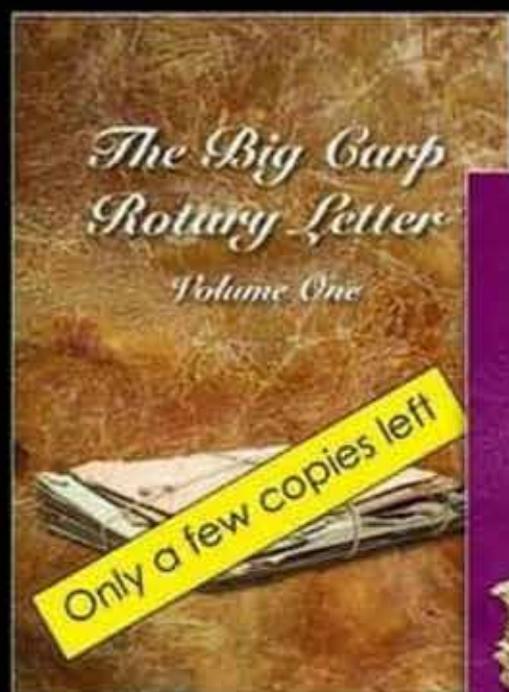


By the time the session was over, we'd had forty-seven carp between us. This broke down to 7 x 30s, 17 x 20s, 19 x doubles and 4 x singles. We were all very happy with this tally – a very successful session by anyone's standards. We're going back for another session, which will be part two of this article. We can't wait. Oh by the way, when I got the camera home, I thoroughly dried it out, and would you believe it? The camera worked. I was pleased about that.

If you would like to fish on Christine or Pepper, booking is essential. Currently, availability can be checked via the fisheries website, www.cottingtonlakes.co.uk which includes a booking diary. If there are any dates that suit, bookings can be made through AKC, the onsite tackle shop. The shop number is 01304380691.

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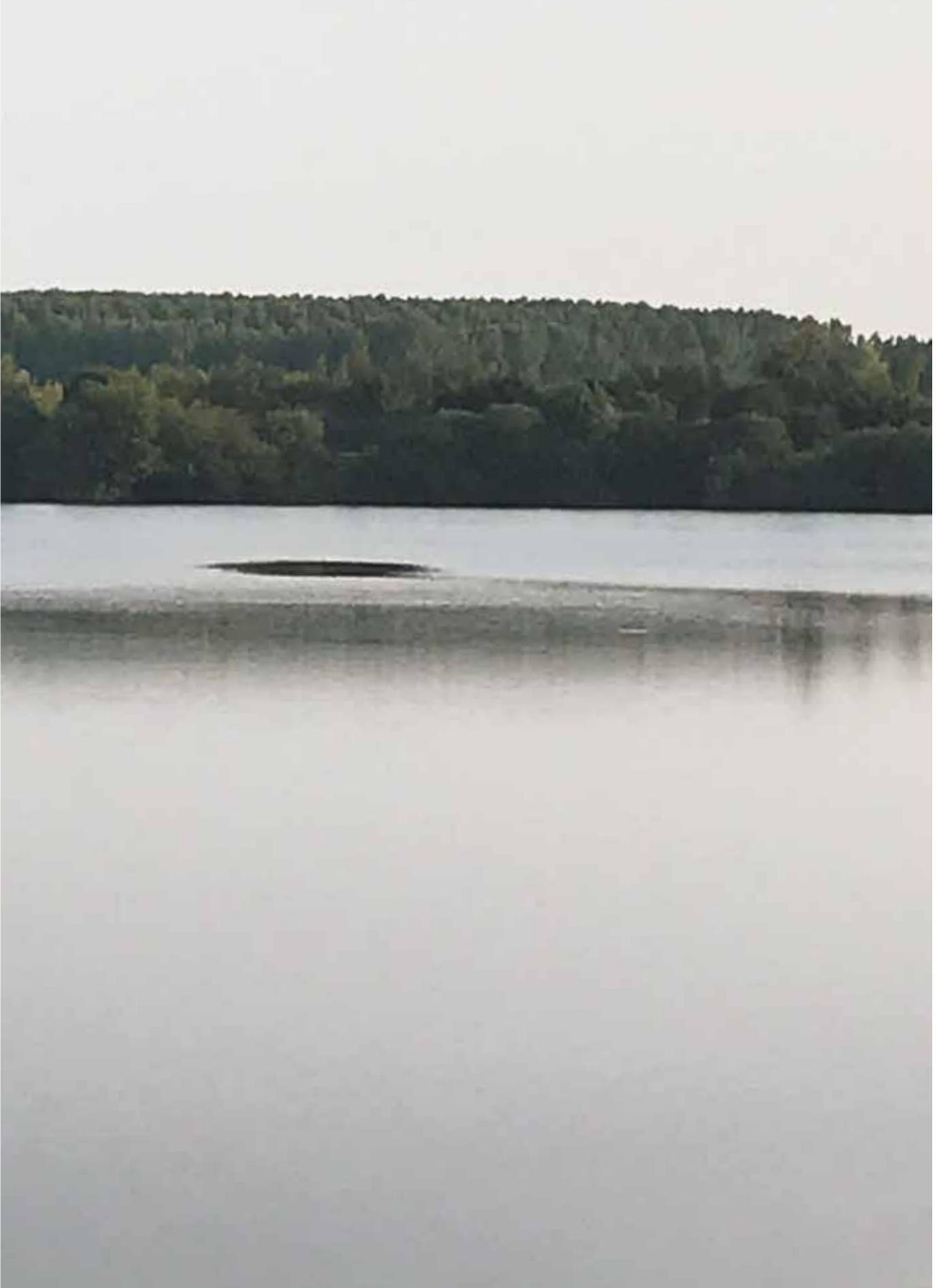


LINCOLNSHIRE'S FINEST

Over the last ten weeks, I've been fishing a near 200-acre pit in Lincolnshire, biking the lake every night and prebaiting most night with Mainline Link. I've managed over 70 bites and 60 fish during this ten-week spell, which has been some of the best carp fishing I have ever experienced, and from a pit that can be very tricky at times. Catching the fish they called the Big Fully Scaled topped off this period, as it was one stunning carp, along with mirrors and commons over 30lb. Location and bait seem to really be the thing on this lake, and every time I have located fish, I have caught. I feel fishing this lake has been a big learning curve in my angling, as I have never fished anything this size. Over the ten-week period, I have used in excess of 150kg of the new Mainline Link and caught from eight

CARL GOULSBRA





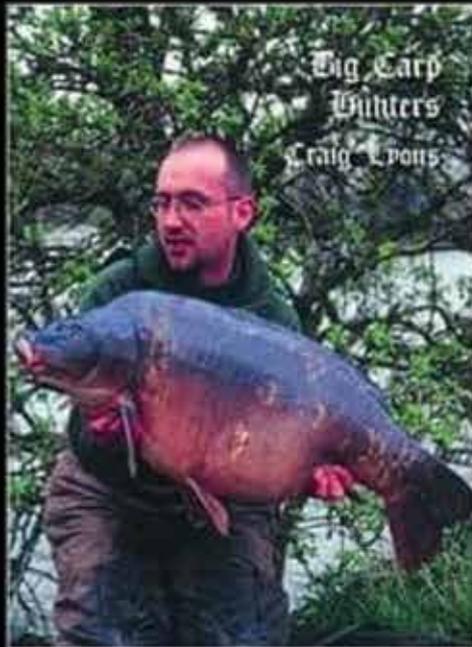
CARL GOULSBRA

different areas of the lake, some of these areas being over a mile apart. I have attached a photo of my favourite area, one that did me 30 fish in a three-week period. I was prebaiting with 20kg each week for the three weeks.

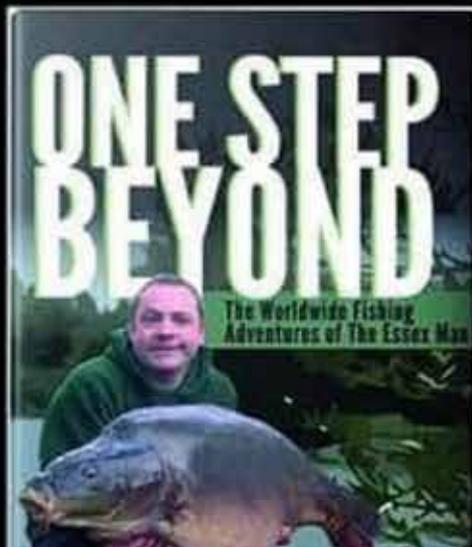
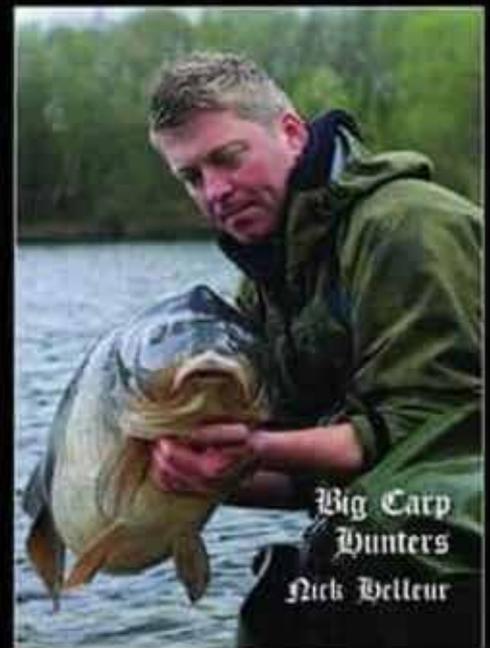
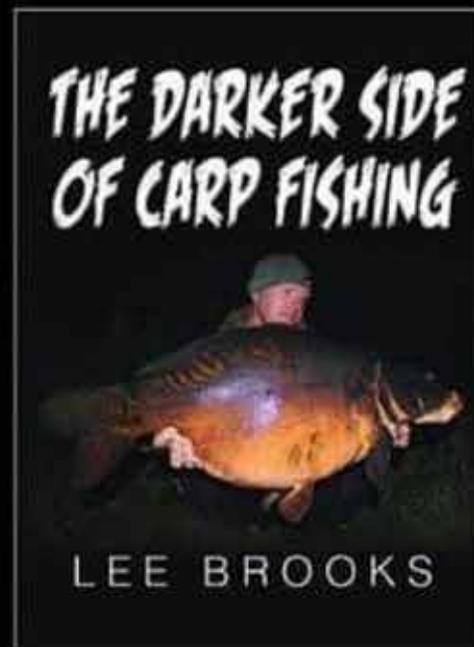
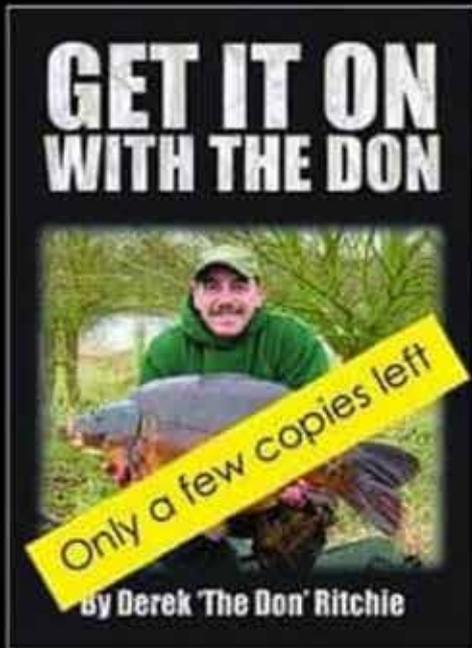
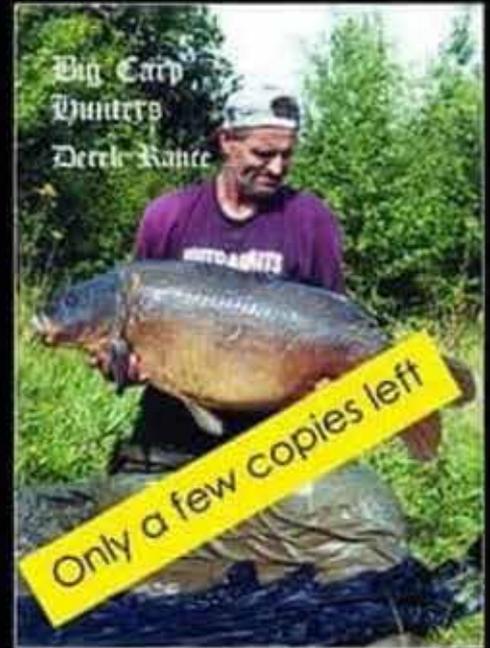
You would always know when the fish were on your bait, as more often than not, you would get two or three bites at the same time. I have only done overnights on the lake mainly between work due to having a young family. The stiff hinge rig seems to work really well, as the lake holds silt weed all over the bottom. I also believe the pop-up can often single out the better fish, as there's no doubt in my mind these fish travel in big numbers after seeing a group of 40 swim under my rod tips! It's true what my dad told me that if you do your homework i.e., biking round daily and baiting regularly, the fishing would be a lot easier. It has been a big edge living only



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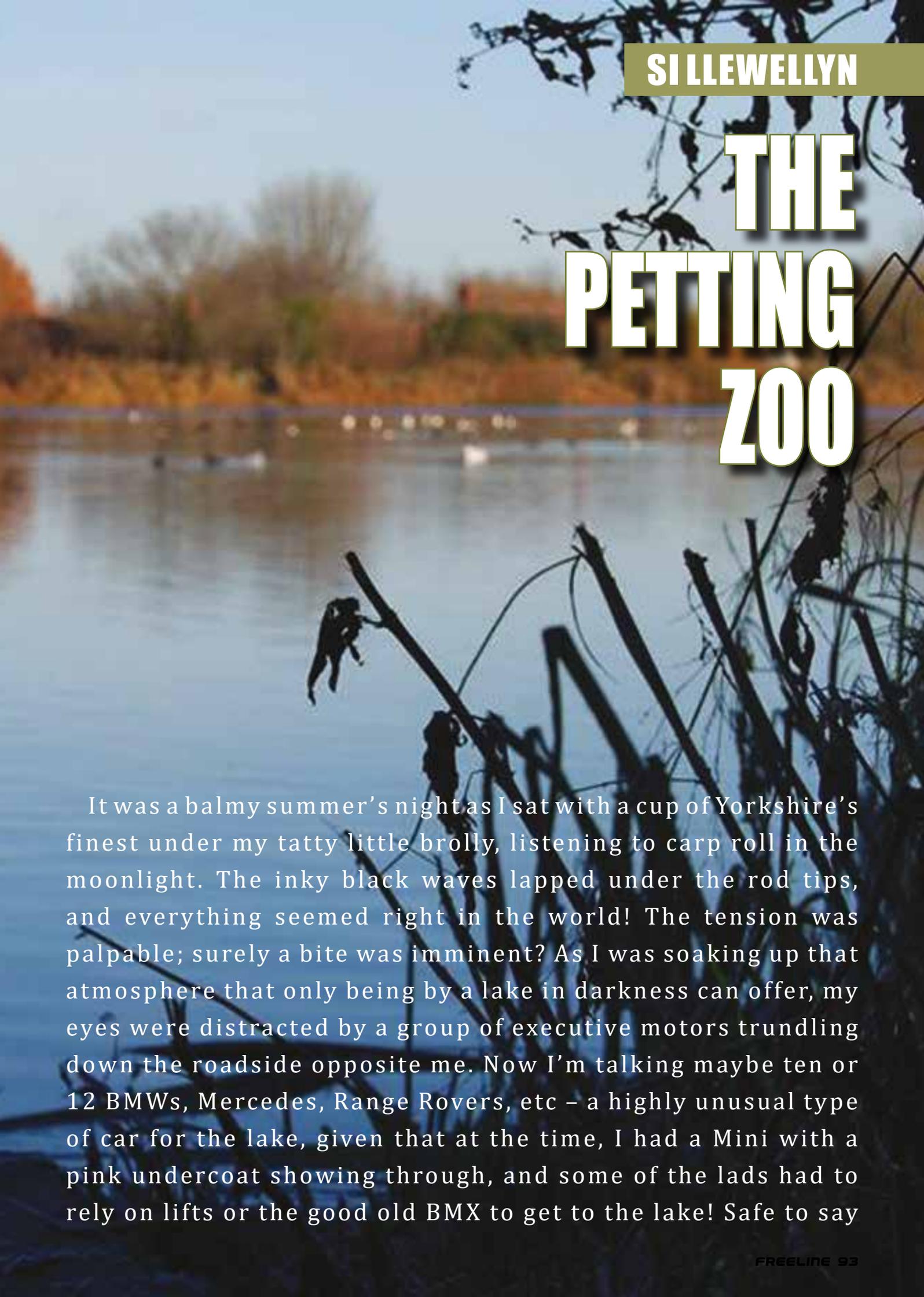


five minutes from the lake. Below are a few photos of a slick coming off my spot moments before the buzzer went and also a photo showing how quick the bites can be with two in the net and one in the sling.

This is my seventh different 40-plus from Lincolnshire caught using Mainline Link boilies just 3m from the bank. After spending three hours watching the carp swimming I decided to flick a few chops in. The carp wasn't on its own, and the smaller fish were soon on the bait, and within a matter of minutes they had eaten it and starting to venture off. This was the cue to lower the hook bait in on my 9ft stalking rod. I lowered the bait, put ten 15mm chops in, and within ten minutes this fish came in and took my pink Salty Squid wafter straight away. This was a pleasing capture, as this is one of two fish that have been missing for a long time! It's probably the longest mirror carp I have ever caught!





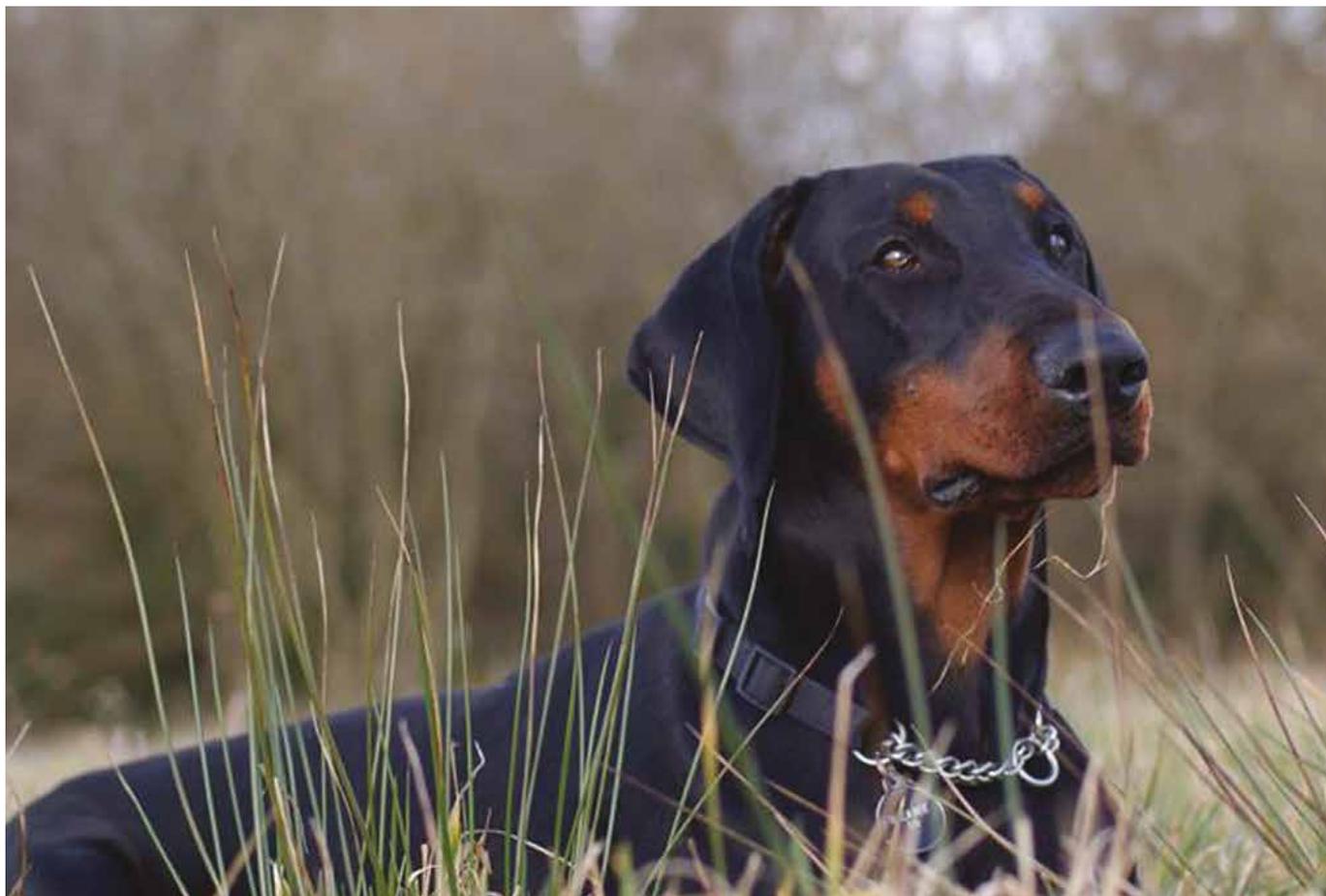


SI LLEWELLYN

THE PETTING ZOO

It was a balmy summer's night as I sat with a cup of Yorkshire's finest under my tatty little broolly, listening to carp roll in the moonlight. The inky black waves lapped under the rod tips, and everything seemed right in the world! The tension was palpable; surely a bite was imminent? As I was soaking up that atmosphere that only being by a lake in darkness can offer, my eyes were distracted by a group of executive motors trundling down the roadside opposite me. Now I'm talking maybe ten or 12 BMWs, Mercedes, Range Rovers, etc – a highly unusual type of car for the lake, given that at the time, I had a Mini with a pink undercoat showing through, and some of the lads had to rely on lifts or the good old BMX to get to the lake! Safe to say

SI LLEWELLYN



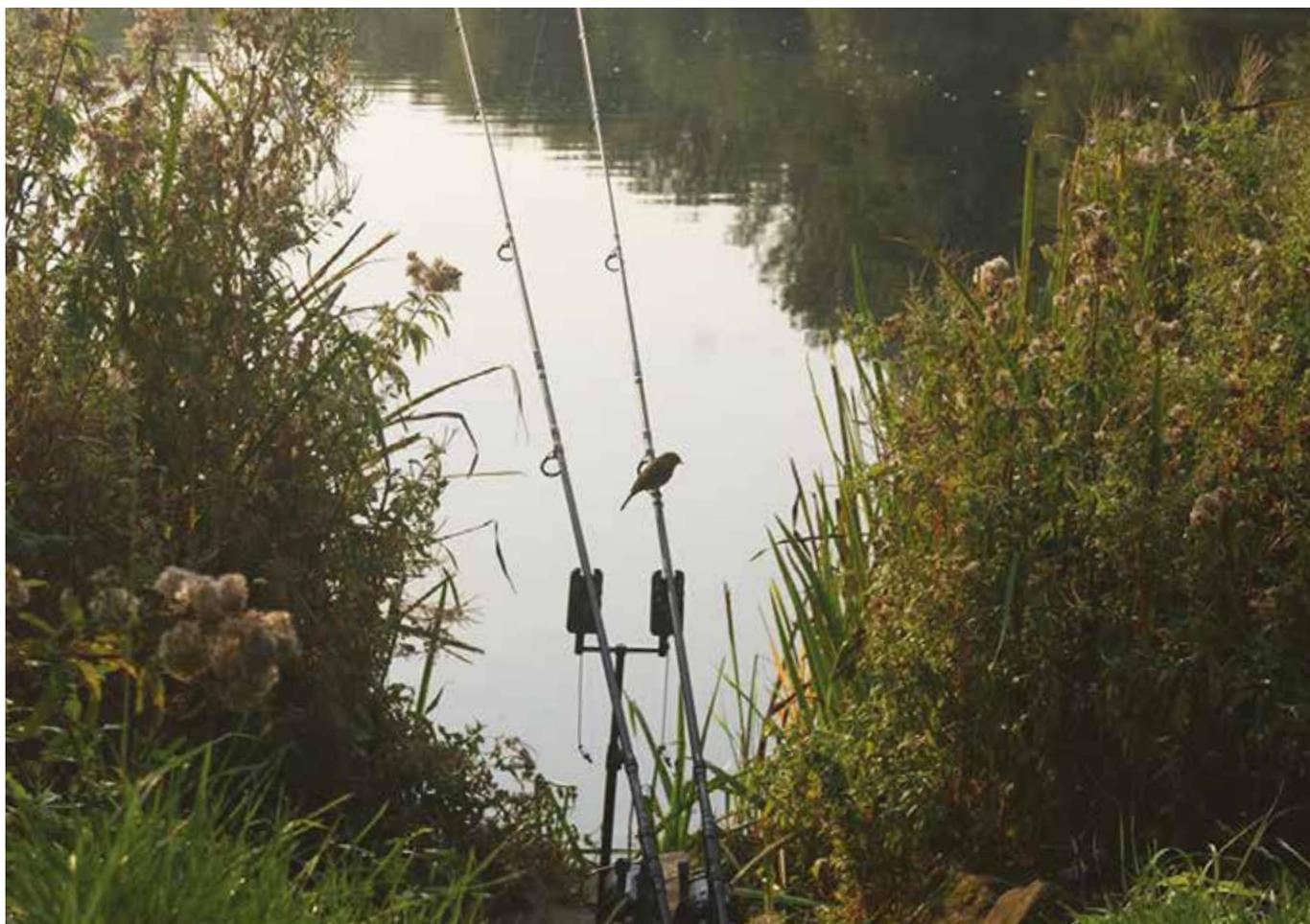
he new arrivals had my attention. I could just about make out what was unfolding as that side of the lake is illuminated by streetlights. Around 20 lumps emerged from the procession of cars, shouting obscenities in what I believed to be Polish or some other Eastern European language! For the next half an hour, I watched these loons knock seven bells out of each other in what looked like a scene from Football Factory! I was convinced Danny Dyer was going to pop up at any moment, shouting, 'YOU MUGGY LITTLE C...'. Anyway, at the end of this clandestine battle, they simply shook bloodied hands, jumped back in the motors and drove back up the bumpy track that led away from the lake!

On any other lake, this would be unusual to say the least, but this was no ordinary lake; this was the Club Lake or the Petting Zoo as it became known. That little doozy is just a snippet of what happened during my year or so there. The angling and the events that I will expose over the next few pages occurred between late summer 2016 and November 2017. So, without further ado, let's set the scene and take you back to my first encounter with this special pit and the realisation that nothing that good can last forever.

It was a halcyon summer Sunday afternoon, and after a proper Sunday roast at my parents' house, my little Jack Russel, Nigel, was being his usual boisterous self, and I was desperate to get out and have a look at a few carp lakes in the local vicinity. My first port of call was a very local club lake, a mere three miles up the road that came with a fearsome reputation. So, my little furry companion and I jumped in the old Mini and bumped along the pothole-ridden track to what was soon to become my little bolt-hole. Even though surrounded by a housing estate,

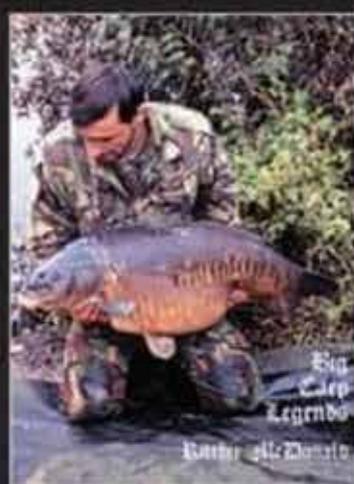
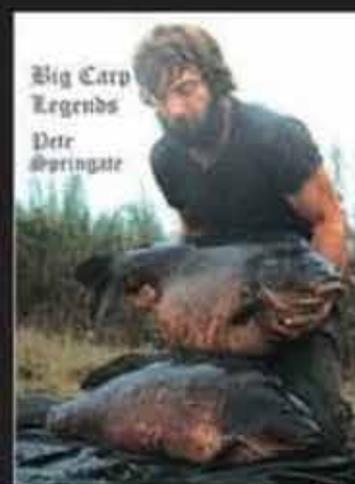
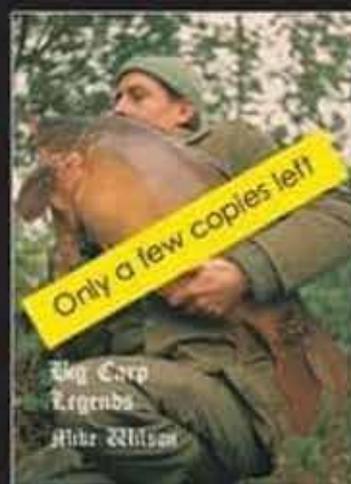
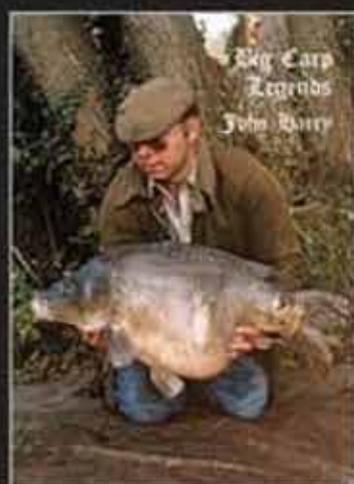
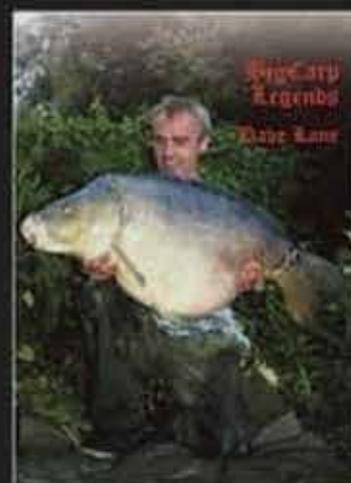
a pub and a busy dual carriageway down one side of the lake, as soon as I caught a glimpse of this weed choked panacea through my open car window, I was hooked!

With my Polaroids placed on my eager eyes and Nigel safely clipped on to his lead, we made our way round the 14 acres of weedy, snaggy, gin clear depths that lay before us. On first view across the lake, I could see three bivvies popped up among the reed-strewn banks. At the first of those green mushrooms I came across, I was confronted by a proper miserable git! 'How's it goin' mate?' I said in a quiet cheery voice. 'Fine! Make sure that dog don't piss up my bivvy!' he sneered. I said, 'Don't worry, mate. He's well trained and so am I,' trying to make a joke to break the ice... No such luck there! 'Much happening, mush?' Trying to find common ground once more...



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‘Not a lot! You thinking of doing some fishing on here, are ya?’
‘Yes, pal. I’m looking for a new challenge; I really like the look of this place.’ ‘Haa! Good luck, this place is too much for most people! Good anglers only manage five to ten bites a season. Ya better off trying one of the other pits over the road, mate!’
And with that cheery bit of advice, I bid him a fond farewell and continued my walk with Nigel who sneered as we paced up the path! Hope you don’t choke on your tin of Stagg, tosser, I thought to myself. Strangely enough I never saw that wretched cretin on the bank again – thank heavens for small mercies.

I could see another broolly pitched about 300 yards up the path, so I decided to see if this chap was as toxic as the last. Please don’t let it be one of those places!! As I popped my head into the swim, I began to start my introductions only to

come to the realisation that the camo-laden geezer under the brolly was none other than an old mate, Gaz! I knew Gaz from a syndicate I fished years ago. Now when I tell you Gaz was a lad, I mean he was a lad – an old school angler who loved a laugh and a joke and a can of Stella or ten! After the usual handshakes and ‘How are ya jockeys?’ We fired up the Coleman for a brew and began our carpy little catch up.

As we sat huddled under the canvas sipping away, my old mate began to unfurl some details and history of the lake and its quarry, as he had fished it a lot as teenager. The lake was rumoured to hold around 30 known carp, the mirrors were jet black and scaly, the commons resembled something from





Redmire and both ran close to the 40lb bracket, as well as the obligatory monster that people had seen but never caught and was just too big to put a weight on. I lapped up every bit of information Gaz was passing on to me, and the juices were well and truly flowing by now! After two or three hours of pisstaking and catching up, I slurped the last bit of my eighth cup of tea, vowing to return to the lake as soon as humanly possible and hopefully bump in to my old friend for another chain-smoking and tea drinking session. I did a few things that Sunday evening when I got home:

1. Purchased a club ticket for the princely sum of £25!
2. Got all the gear prepped and ready to go.

3. Drove the missus to the point of distraction with talk of carp!

4. Did a poo (thinking about fishing tends to make me do that!).

5. Booked four days off work the following week.

So that was that... just a few days at work and then I would start my first session of many in this new inspiring campaign. The next couple of days at work couldn't go fast enough, and I don't think I managed any work. Nothing new there then, I hear my mates saying. Finally, Wednesday morning rolled round, and to my annoyance, my alarm didn't go off at its set time of 5am; in fact, it didn't go off at all and I slept in till 11am! BUGGER! I burst out of bed, chucked some clobber on, hurriedly loaded the gear, and as I did so, I couldn't help noticing it was absolutely sweltering and soon had to jettison



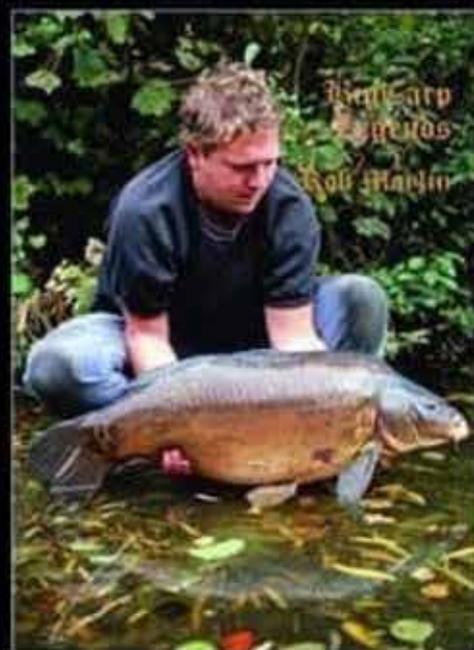
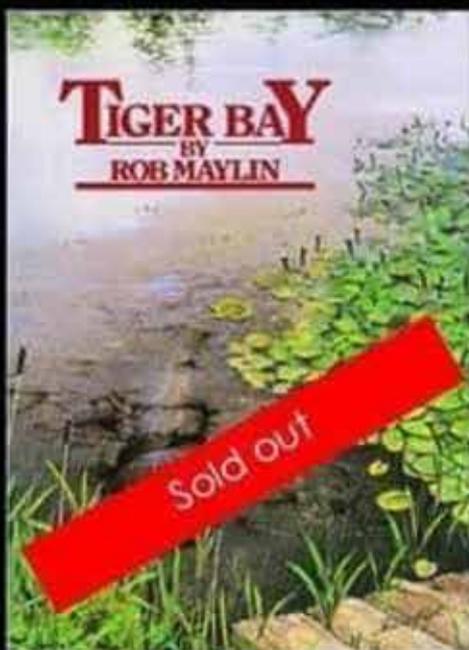
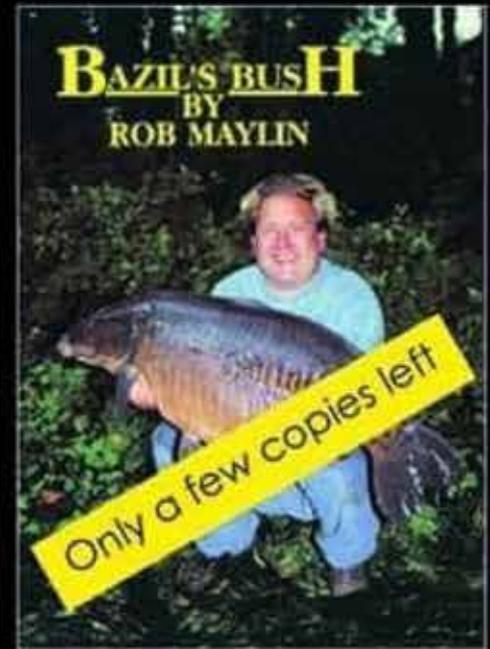
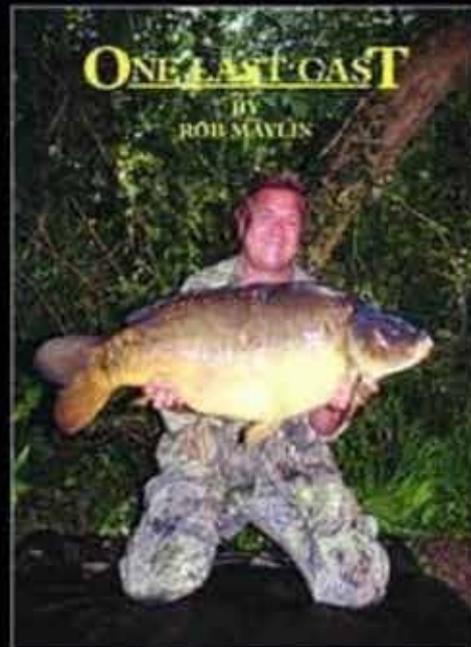
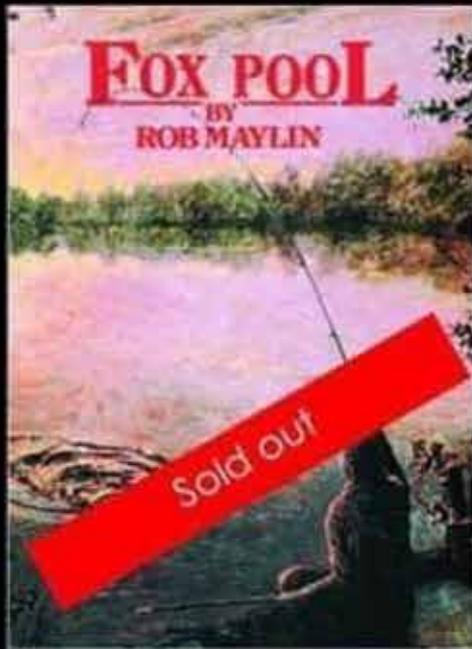


my beloved chunky wool jumper. Thoughts of crusty old backs glistening in the sun, cruising around the shallows began to fill my addled brain. I was soon hurtling to the lake, breaking every speed limit on the way (only joking, officer!). To my amazement, the lake was completely empty... YESS! I had the whole joint to myself, and now all I had to do was find 'em!

Polaroids and a small jiffy bag of hemp in hand, I headed

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SI LLEWELLYN



straight to the first shallow, snaggy bay by the car park. I nervously peered over the fence, standing on the first wooden beam, elevating me to gain a better view of the tap-clear water. I could not believe what my eyes were channelling into my brain! Carp soup! First there was a good common of around the upper 20 mark, tearing the silty bottom to shreds, accompanied by a few mirrors of around the same size. 20 yards to the left, there was a huge linear angrily charging up and down the margin. At one point, she turned sideways, made eye contact with me, stared deep in to my soul and powered off in to the main body of the lake. She knew my intentions and knew it was time to go – clever girl. I counted around 20 fish in that bay; surely it couldn't be this easy? My first trip angling on this notorious pit and I'd found most of its stock in the first nook I'd cared to investigate... As the great B.B advises: 'Cultivate your luck.'

I was soon wheezing my way up to the corner of the fish-filled bay, the barrow laden with all the gear I'd need for my four-day stint on my newly discovered Shangri La. As I entered the tight swim as stealthily as I could, another good fish boshed out no more than fifteen yards from the bank – it was going off! Nervous wreck does not quite cover how I was feeling at this stage; I was physically shaking as I tried to get the rigs baited and check the sharpness of the hooks. Ouch! Yeah they were sharp enough alright.

The first rod was shipped together, and a simple braided bottom bait rig was flicked onto the clear area I'd seen the fish tearing up not half an hour ago. Deciding to keep disturbance to a minimum due to the close proximity of the activity, two rods would suffice for time being, so a pop-up was placed on a



weedier spot further out in the mouth of the bay on the second carbon wand. A handful of crumbed-up boilie over both areas, and I was on the dancefloor. After ten minutes sorting all my kit out, my broolly was finally ensconced among the bushes at the back of the swim, and with the summer sun beating down

on me as I took in the atmosphere, there was only one thing for it – kettle on, lad!

The fish continued to show themselves over the next couple of hours as I watched them with a brew or two before I noticed a van approaching up the track. It turned out to be none other than Gaz – happy days. He came over and sat with me for a while. I informed him that the fish were in the area and they looked well up for it, so he decided to pitch up a couple of swims down the bank. After setting up he was soon strolling into my swim with a nice cold can of Stella for my consumption. I was happy to oblige, for medicinal purposes of course (cough, cough!). Life couldn't have been sweeter at that moment for me – a good friend, a cold beer and carp for company. To add to this enjoyment, my old man decided to turn up and drain my tea supplies accompanied by another furry chum of mine, our elderly but lively Doberman, Cleo. Cleo was my mum and dad's dog really, but she used to love coming to the lake with me, and I'd have taken her more if not for old age and bad legs (the dog's, not mine, I should add).

Whilst we were all sat there in the sun quietly chatting, a ticking noise began to interrupt our merriment. It took a second before the penny dropped... 'That's my rod!' The bottom bait that I'd placed on the clear area to the right of the bay was fizzing off. I was in, but the alarm had failed to register the bite! 'F***** Delkims!' I muttered under my breath, but it mattered not a jot; I was into a carp! After a spirited battle, which involved the fish taking out my other rod, we soon had the little blighter in the net. What could it be? My mind began to race! Was it the big Lin I'd seen earlier? Was it the mythical monster I'd heard tales of? No... no, it wasn't! It turned out

the local town and under the influence of alcohol was adamant she wanted to come to the lake to meet him! So, she did just that, and about an hour later, this rather stout young lady turned up via taxi with makeup layered on and heels high. I was taken aback by the whole thing; the strangest bit being she turned up with a protein shaker full of gin! How? Why? Did she go out in town with this monstrous goblet or did she pop home and pick it up on her way? I was quite relieved when Gaz ushered her off to his bivvy, protein shaker in hand!

Foolishly, I thought that was the end of it, as I was left to my own devices so I could carry on watching the water, but alas it was not. Not fifteen minutes had passed before I heard 'Oooooow! Ahhhhhhhh! Yesssss!' coming from the direction of my friend's swim. Clearly, they were going heels to Jesus or should I say high heels to Jesus, in a one-man bivvy by a club lake in the middle of a housing estate! Her mother must be so proud. Some of the noises that emanated from that canvas shelter during the hours of darkness that night made me fear for my life! Safe to say I didn't obtain a great night's sleep, and at around 6am whilst I was making my first coffee of the day to give me some much-needed energy, I witnessed my first walk of shame around a carp lake. My god how we giggled about that little illicit bunk-up over bacon and eggs that morning.

On the fishing front, not much happened over the next couple of days in that intimate bay, and between the small mirror I'd managed and the mating calls through the first night, the fish had done the off. Plus, the weather took a slight turn for the worst, becoming cold and drizzly... Autumn was on its way. On the final morning of my trip, I'd seen a few fish show out in to the deeper water of the lake and decided to move up into the

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WATERCOLOUR CARP PAINTINGS

The Legendary Big Carp Series

Burghfield Common

The sixth in our series of Legendary Carp paintings is none other than that awesome creature, the Burghfield Common.

Only discovered in recent years, Nigel Sharp rocked the carp angling world when he finally landed the beast after a five-year campaign, during which time he had only seen this leviathan on a handful of occasions.

Regarded by many as the original myth, there was much speculation about its existence at all, until it was finally landed at an incredible weight of 50lbs.

Quite how it had evaded capture for so many years is still a mystery, but due to the vast size of this huge gravel pit, it simply became the needle in the haystack.

Once its existence was verified by that first capture, an army of the country's top carp anglers have invaded Burghfield's banks and some feared its mystery would be lost forever.

But no, this incredible beast has still proven to be virtually uncatchable with only a very few captures in the past half a dozen years.

Undeniably a legend, this beautiful animal well and truly deserves its place in the Big Carp Hall Of Fame. Coming soon – the Royal Forty...

Strictly Limited to only 100 signed and numbered by the artist.



The A3 prints are very modestly priced at only £25 and are available now on the Big Carp website www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk. Visit the site, go to the shop and select the 'Fine Art' section. There is also more information on the rest of the series, which will be available at one to two-month intervals, but I can tell you that the Black Mirror, the Burghfield Common, Heather, Jumbo, Jack, Mary, Clarissa, the Bishop, the Royal Forty, the Fat Lady, Mary's Mate etc are already on the list and we are up for any more favourites – just let us know – Rob Maylin

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open water in front of the bank that backed on to the housing estate. The rods were soon dispatched to the area where I'd seen the shows, and I got settled in with a brew at around 8am listening to Talksport on the radio discussing how shit United are. The time dragged if I'm honest with you, and I began to give up hope and started thinking of getting home to my ever-suffering girlfriend for some love and warmth. Looking at the time on my phone, I realised it was 11.04am, and with that, I started loading the barrow with the less essential items.

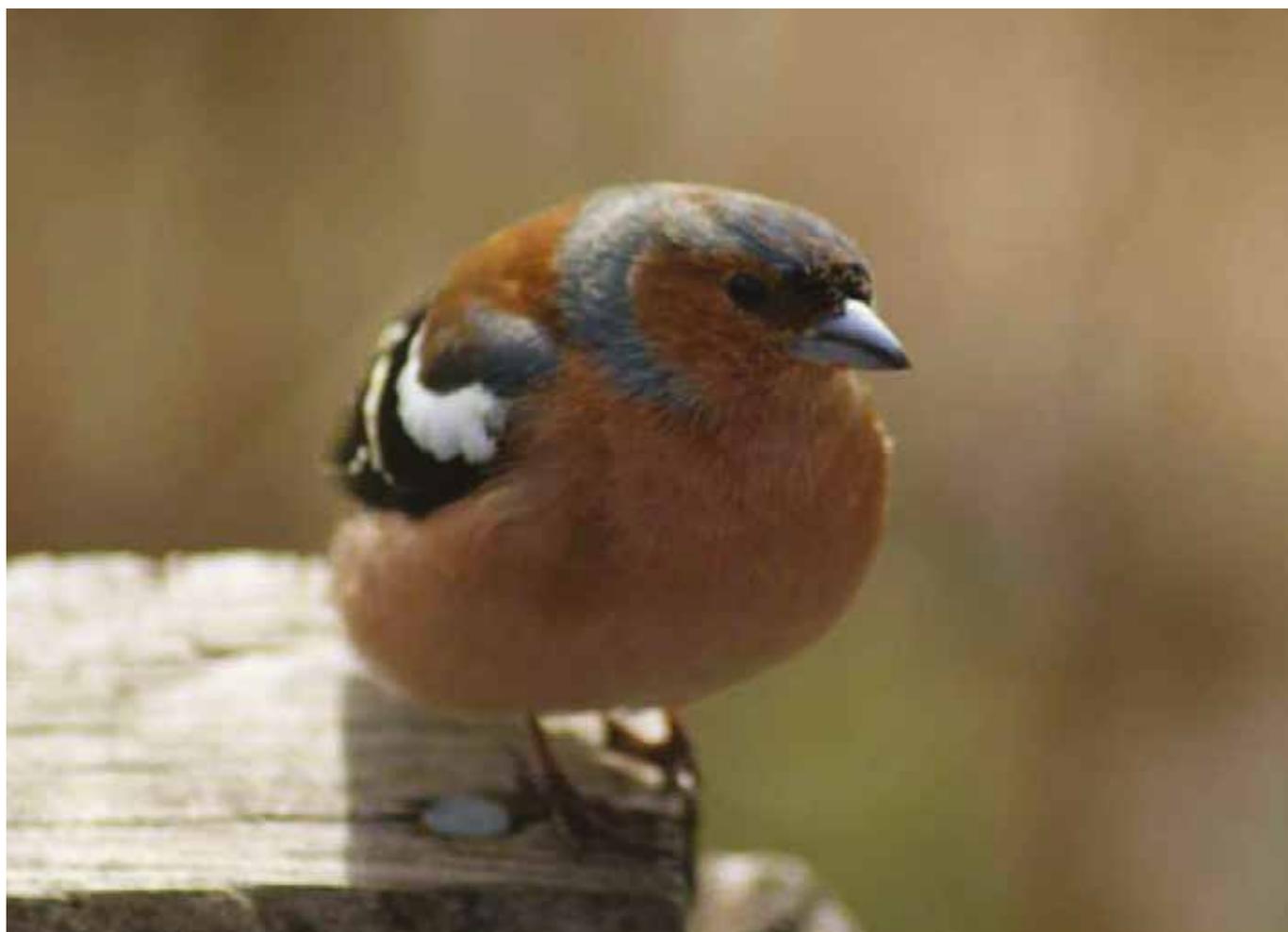
Then out of the blue, I heard the Delkim burst in to life



(oh, they've decided to work now). Talk about last knockings. Lifting into the take, the Hearn Classic took on a satisfying curve, and from the off it felt a good fish. I led the slow, heavy weight to the net like a dog on a lead, and in it went... over in less than a few minutes. I peered into the net to see my prize, and what a prize it was – deep in frame and dark in colour with a smattering of scales along its flank – safe to say it was a proper one. After securing the net, I went over and let Gaz know the good news, so he came over and helped me prep the mat and camera ready for the photoshoot. Upon placing the carp on the mat, we had no other option but to stand in awe of

what was laid out before us. Onyx black across the shoulders, autumnal orange along its belly and in pristine condition, she was a proper lump! I hoisted her deep frame up as the DSLR clicked away and then slipped the old girl back in to her subsurface kingdom. Needless to say I was buzzing! What a way to end my first session. After packing away all my gear, stinking of carp, I shook Gaz's hand and said goodbye before floating home riding the carper's high.

As summer turned to autumn and autumn turned to winter, I managed to squeeze a few more sessions in before the end of that year, which rewarded me with a couple of small but pretty commons and of course some liver punishing socials with Gaz and a few of the other lads putting the time in pursuing those special leviathans. As we neared the festive season, I decided





not to put myself through a punishing winter campaign. From what I'd been told, the lake had no winter form. So instead, I decided to throw myself into work and stack up as much overtime as I could ready for spring and devote my efforts to a full season's assault on this demanding pit.

After the usual festive celebrations with friends and family, spring seemed to roll round pretty quickly, and the back end of February saw some mild conditions come our way. It didn't take much to get me and Nigel out for a walk round the lake, and this little window really had us chomping at the bit. I should also mention at this point that my other canine companion,



Cleo the Doberman, took a turn for the worst on the health front around this time and unfortunately time caught up with her as she passed away. The last time I went around to my parents' house to see her, she could clearly see my fishing gear in the hallway, and she tried desperately to get out the door, pining to come with me, but her back legs were just too weak to carry her as she fell into my unhooking mat. My dad told me that was the first time she had gotten out of her bed for two days. Rest in peace, old girl... I hope you are up on that big lake in the sky chasing squirrels to your hearts content.

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WATERCOLOUR CARP PAINTINGS

The Legendary Big Carp Series



Here she is at last! Regarded by many as the 'ultimate' big carp, the stunning Black Mirror, captured here beneath the Colnemere snags. The Black Mirror joins Basil and Heather in our 'legendary carp hall of fame', soon to be joined by other famous carp that have shaped our big carp heritage, starred alongside the UK's most famous carp anglers and made us all gasp at their beauty and give those who have dedicated their lives in pursuit of them, the utmost respect. One of my favourite carp of all time – strong, dark and so very difficult to put on the mat. Once again an absolute masterpiece, the one and only Black Mirror is available now as a small number of signed and numbered prints (100). Anyone interested in this or any of the others take a look at the website.

At the very modest price of £25, this is a collection not to be missed.

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I can assure you there wasn't a dry eye in the house, but life goes on, and with spring knocking at the door, Nigel and I had fish to find.

On our first trek of the lake, I looked out over the rather bleak sheet of water, expecting to see little in the way of activity, when after fifteen minutes, I saw a good fish crash 80 or 90 yards out in open water! It just goes to show what you can find if you take the time to watch the water. During the walk, I counted four shows, one of which was a real beast... It was on!



The usual wheels were soon put into motion when I got home – sharpening hooks, ordering bait, cleaning out tackle bags and time off work booked. Well, I'd earned it after a winter of overtime. So, the deal was done, and the first week of March signalled the start of a full-blooded, full season onslaught. I was prepared to do everything in my power to put those big girls in my photo album.

The first few sessions that March didn't quite go to plan. In all honesty, I blanked my arse off! Then on my last trip of that

month, the weather and the carp gods smiled upon me. It was a midweek evening, and I was squeezing in an overnighter. You know what it's like at that time of year having to pack up in the cold, dark hours of the morning just so you can get back to the dreaded work and receive bits of paper to live. I'd had a bit of a touch and managed to get off work early, so a few hours of daylight allowed me to get about the lake and hunt my quarry. As I say, the carp gods were indeed smiling on me this time and put on a show for me that had to be seen to be believed. One after another they breached the calm surface, throwing themselves towards the drab sky time and time again!

I hurriedly got the gear into the nearest swim facing them and bodged together three septic looking choddies, hands trembling once more (don't you just love that buzz!). A few pub chucks and a scattering of boilies later, I was once more ensconced in a little hidey-hole backing onto the dual carriageway side of the lake. The noise was endless and more irritating than a whinging Liverpool fan. Just as it was beginning to get dark, my tea drinking routine was rudely interrupted by the shrill tone of my right-hand Neville (Yess, I finally binned the Delkims!). I won't bore you with the details of me playing the fish, as I'm sure you have heard it all before, but it was pretty much standard procedure. I can tell you though, that beautiful carp lying in the folds of my net was nothing short of breathtaking, quite clearly standard for this place, and Mother Nature really does know how to craft beauty. The crowds of passersby and dog walkers began to mount up in my swim as Gaz was once more on hand to do the honours with the camera as he snapped away at another dark half linear, her scales glistening at the bursts of light from the flash. It was over all too soon, as she



swam back bristling with indignation. After all the blanks over the firsts few weeks, I was finally off the mark on what was to become a memorable season.

Unfortunately, due to limited space, I can't cover all my captures, trials and tribulations that unfolded that year. I could quite happily write page after page detailing it all, but rules is rules, so a story for another time, maybe? Hopefully the images accompanying this piece can tell the story far

better than I could. One of the things I'd like to say at this point though is that I met so many great friends old and new down there, some really good anglers that taught me so much, not just about fishing but life in general. Many BBQs and late night chats were had with a great group of lads... you know who you are, and thanks for the memories. For all its faults and failures, this watery little lagoon really was special. It had its own unique atmosphere, and it represented everything to me that carp fishing should be.

I remember during that summer that a longtime friend of mine, Nath, decided to get back into his fishing and accompanied me on many occasions. Nath had served in the forces in Afghanistan, and after coming out had had real problems with PTSD, and I know he was going through some really dark times. Just getting out in the wilderness away from the madness helped him to such a degree, and to see the difference in him when he was angling did my heart good. He even managed to top it all by catching two very elusive lumps in a week (jammy little git). Good angling, mate, and I will always cherish the moments I spent with you giggling away under the broolly that summer. What a special sport we all have, and we need to cherish it. Before I finish this jamboree of nonsense though, I will detail one special capture. If I can cast your mind back to the start of this little tale and something about eastern Europeans scrapping on the car park...

After all the hullabaloo of the fighting Polish, a good friend, Chris, popped into my swim to see how I was doing, carrying his usual lightweight setup that didn't even include a bedchair or barrow. 'How's it going, mate?' he said in his south coast accent. We had a good old laugh with a can of cider over the

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Mary and Mary's Mate, the icons of the great Wraysbury complex... The British Record in the arms of Terry Hearn and the brace which Sir Pete posed so wonderfully with on the back of his legends book are but two of the many captures which have earned these two awesome creatures their place in the Big Carp magazine legends hall of fame.

The A3 prints are very modestly priced at only £25 and are available now on the Big Carp website www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk. Visit the site, go to the shop and select the 'Fine Art' section. There is also more information on the rest of the series, which will be available at one to two-month intervals, but I can tell you that the Black Mirror, the Burghfield Common, Heather, Jumbo, Jack, Mary, Clarissa, the Bishop, the Royal Forty, the Fat Lady, Mary's Mate etc are already on the list and we are up for any more favourites – just let us know – Rob Maylin

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events that I'd just seen unfold. Chris necked the last of his cold drink and bid me a farewell, as it was the early hours of the morning and he needed to get set up ASAP. As he left, we both agreed to do the honours if either of us were lucky during the hours of darkness. My eyes were getting heavy by now, and it was time to give in and get reacquainted with my sleeping bag. I was just drifting off when I was interrupted by a short burst from the Neville. The dreaded bream was my initial thought, so grudgingly, I peeped out of the side of my bag to see the bobbin wedged tight up to the buzzer and the line departed from its clip. I really was not enthralled at the idea of unhooking a snotty at this ungodly hour as I slowly put my trainers on and ambled to the rods, but upon lifting into the offending rod, I felt a huge dead weight that I couldn't shift – whatever it was it was weeded up! Steady pressure was applied for a good twenty seconds when I felt a thud, then another and then another... I was steadily winching it back towards me. This process was repeated a few times before a huge green ball of Canadian bobbed up in the inky black margin. Bearing in mind at this point I still thought it was a bream, I was pleased to see a few scales amongst the mess of weed as it went over the net cord. Happy days... must be a little mirror that put up little resistance due to his eyes being covered, I thought. I seemed to spend forever pulling away fronds of weed from my net until I came to realise the 'little mirror' was about three feet long! I removed more foliage and flicked on my head torch to be greeted by row after row of huge scales embedded in its long dark flanks. Instantly I recognised what lay before me... It was none other than the big linear I had seen the previous summer! I sent up the shout



and pumped my fist in triumph. Chris had obviously heard my ramblings, as he rang me a second or two later... 'What's going on, mush? You had one?' I explained the situation, and he assured me he'd be round in two minutes. I left the fish securely in the folds of the net while I calmed myself down and got all the usual bits and pieces sorted. Things had to be spot-on for my encounter with what in my humble opinion is the best carp in the Midlands. Once on the sea of soaked mats, I treated that beautiful creature as if it were one of my children, gently removing my little hook and treating the hold. Then it was time for the paparazzi session, as flash after flash, the camera clicked away. Chris must have taken a hundred shots that night, and what job he did as well. For night shots, he did himself proud. Cheers, mate... not bad for a Southampton

fan! After she was safely returned, it seemed to be over all too soon. Nothing left but photos and the memories, and what fond memories I have, but as I said earlier, nothing that good can last forever.

At this point, you are probably wondering why the lake was referred to as 'The Petting Zoo'. Well, as of November 2017, the club that ran the pit, in their infinite wisdom, decided to pollute this special place with nearly three hundred wrong'uns! As I sit here writing this in mid-April 2018, I'm hearing reports of the old originals going belly up due to disease and poor treatment of the water and the fish! You see when you put the wrong type of fish in a fishery, you attract the wrong type of angler! Bearing in mind that during my adventure I only came across eight or nine lads putting in any serious time, all capable anglers looking after the lake and its inhabitants. Now the place is jam-packed day in, day out by the new breed of 'urban carper'. I'm sure you know the type - everything Korda, a bifta constantly on the go the size of a Cornetto and a brand-new set of 3ft Scopes! The local newspaper has been down to report on the activities of these cretins, from excessive litter to swans mangled in cut off lines! The day the music died.

So, what does the future of carp angling hold for us all? Well, I have found solace in an untouched 20-acre estate lake in deepest, darkest Shropshire - a sight for sore eyes, I can assure you. And to all the traditionalists out there I say, keep the flag flying high, there's always a new wrinkle in something old, and if I bump into you on the bank some day, you know the procedure... Get that kettle on, lad! Stay lucky.

"You can't beat death, but you can beat death in life." - Charles Bukowski.



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'Heather The Leather' – The jewel of the Blackwater Valley. She is THE Yateley Car Park Lake legend; a fish that shaped and changed the lives of some of the greatest carp anglers this country has ever known. Pete Springate, Robin Dix, Ritchie MacDonald, Jock White, Terry Pethybridge, Nigel Sharpe, Terry Hearn... the list goes on of anglers who devoted weeks, months and years of their lives in pursuit of the queen of the lake. She has gone now; gone to that great carp lake in the sky, but here, thanks to one of the county's most talented young artists, she has been brought back to life for all to wonder at her beauty... I am proud to bring you No. 2 in the Big Carp Legendary Fish series – Heather – God save the Queen!

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- 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

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

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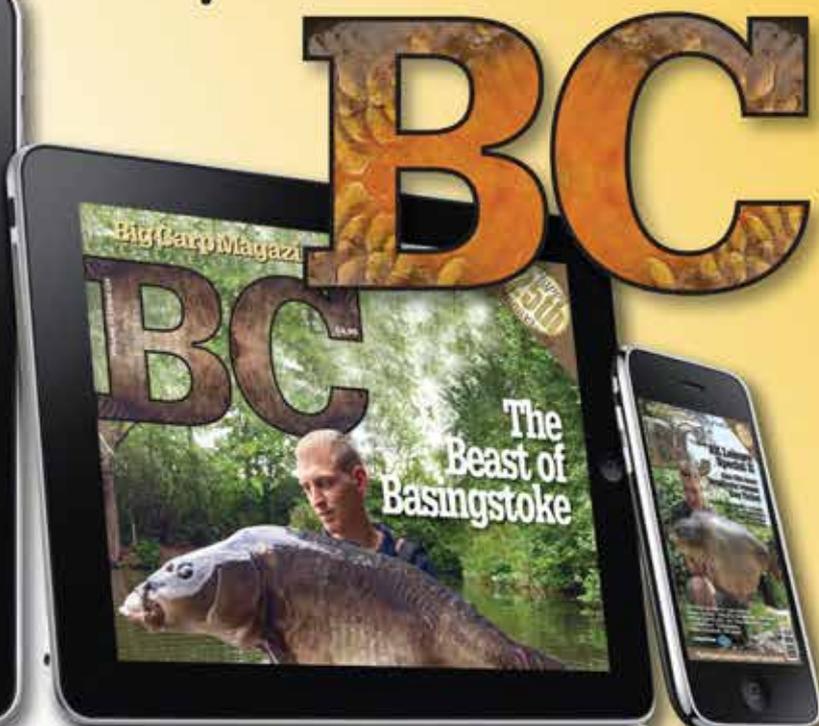
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