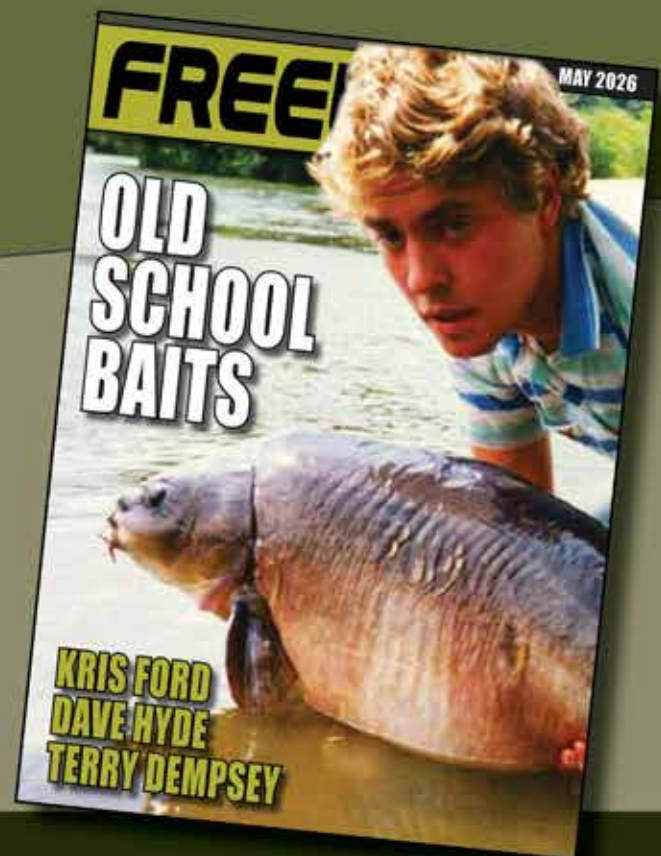


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- | | |
|----|-------------------|
| 1 | BLUEBELL LAKES |
| 2 | LINEAR FISHERIES |
| 3 | SANDHURST |
| 4 | FARLOWS LAKE |
| 5 | COKING FARM |
| 6 | NORTON DISNEY |
| 7 | OAK LAKES FISHERY |
| 8 | BERNERS HALL |
| 9 | CEFN MABLY |
| 10 | CROMWELL |

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 |
| 10 | AVID |

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 |

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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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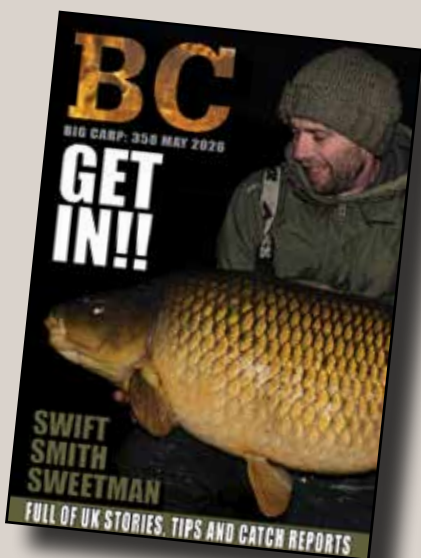
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BIG CARP 358:
May 2026

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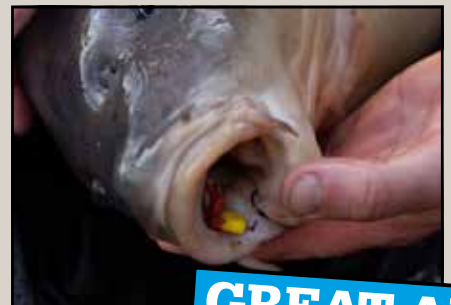
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Publications 2026



Front Cover:
Gareth Smith with the
Waterside Common



It's not often we get juniors writing for us which is strange when so many want to be a sponsored angler. Take a leaf out of Ameila Rose's book and put pen to paper. It's easily the quickest way to get noticed by the industry. I'll be brutally honest, no company will be interested in you unless you have 1000s of followers. Writing in Big Carp puts you in front of the industry and 40,000 other anglers. If you're stringing good sessions together and regularly catching 30lb+ carp then you really should be exposing yourself by writing some features and getting busy with your photography skills. It's also a great way to help build your other socials, especially YouTube. So, if you want to get sponsored - make that first big step and write about your fishing successes here.

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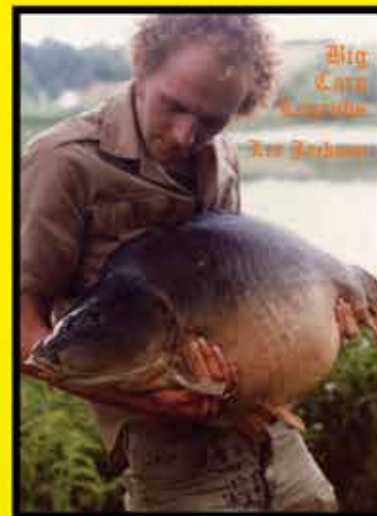
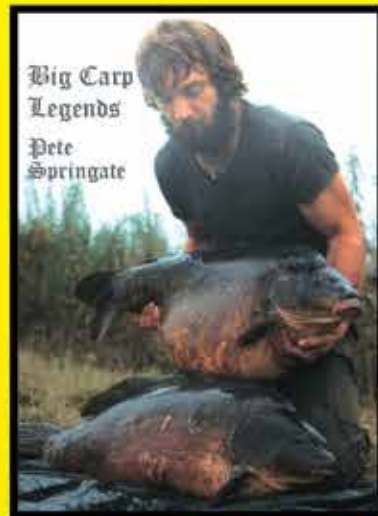
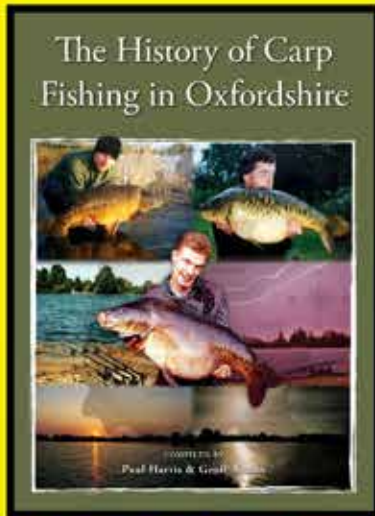
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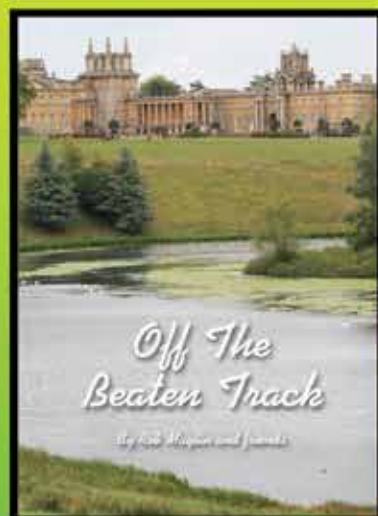
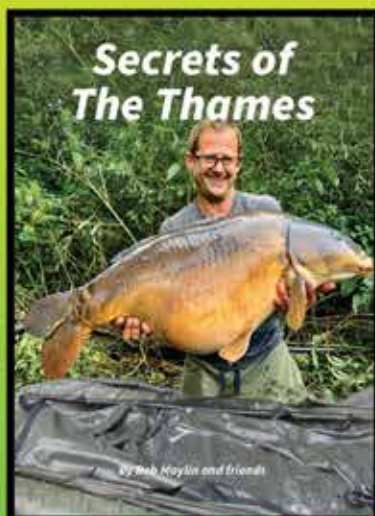
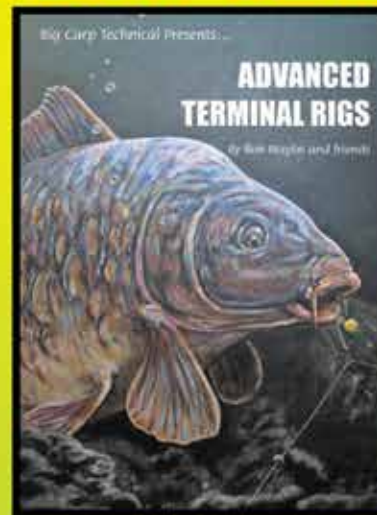
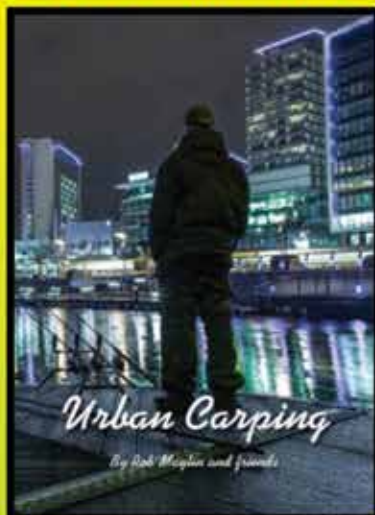
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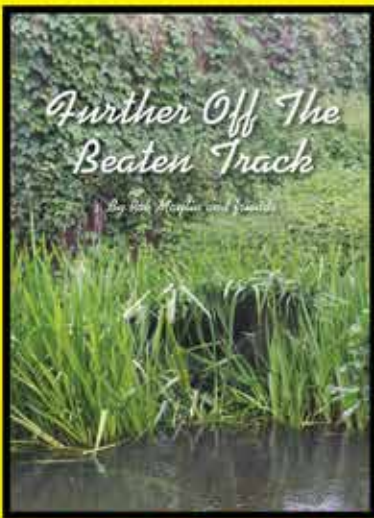
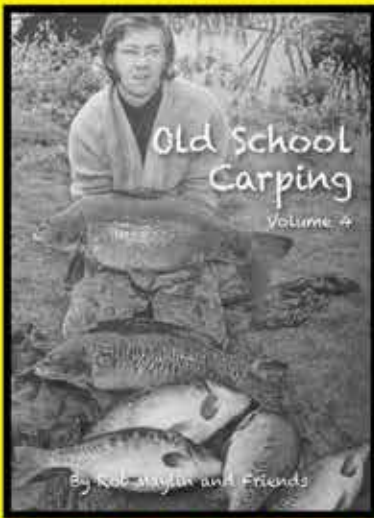
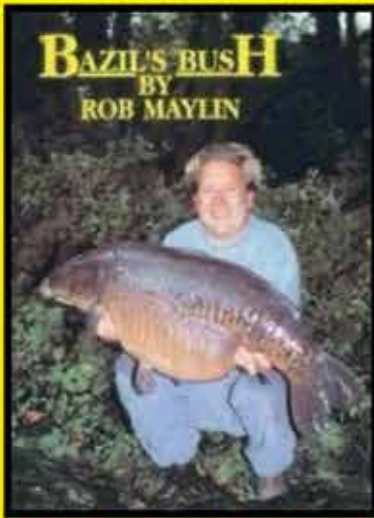


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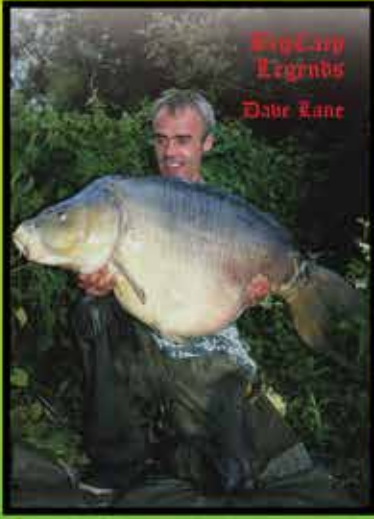
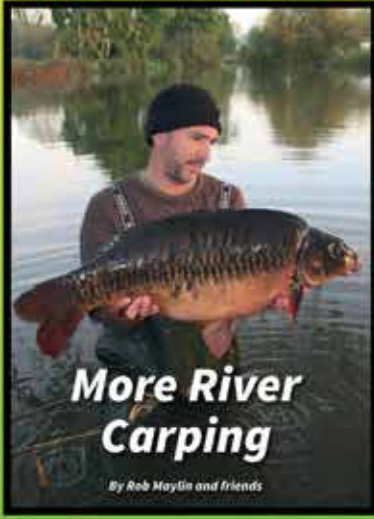
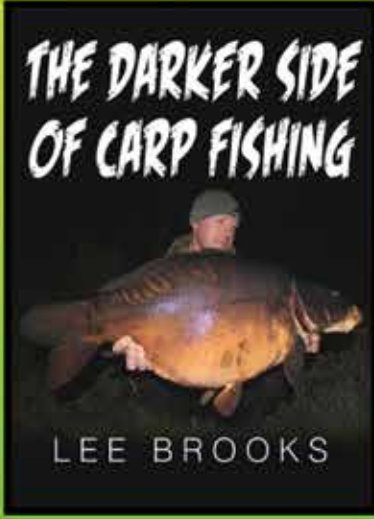
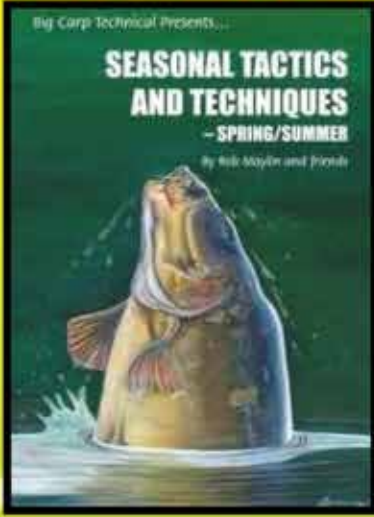
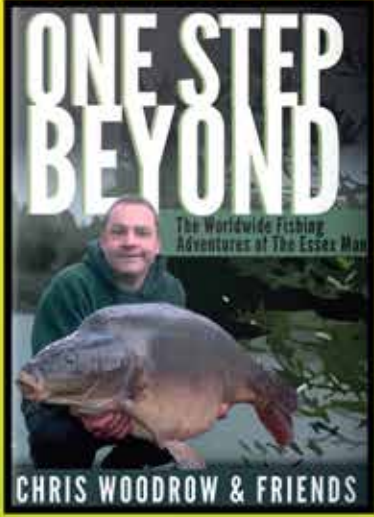


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Set in the beautiful Devon countryside, away from all stresses and troubles is the forgotten complex, 'Shangri La'

Opening in 2027, joining the 13 existing Anglers Paradise lakes. The site is currently undergoing a huge makeover, and is part of our ongoing project to care for our fish more responsibly.

Top lake/Silver Rose - Winter Pike and predator Lake

Middle/Intermediate Catfish Lake - Catfish to 50lb

Bottom/Valhalla (Specimen Catfish Lake) - Catfish to over 100lb

URBAN BAIT'S TEAM PLACES



Promo Team Members Wanted

We are looking to add a small number of team members

Well here is the chance to be part of one of longest serving bait companies in the game, renowned for producing bait that's caught some of the biggest carp in the country over the years & has consistently put carp on the bank since day one!

1: We are looking for anglers that have knowledge around Social Media platforms such as Facebook & Instagram.

2: Are confident in front of

Camera

3: Are out on the bank fishing Regularly

4: Are happy to be involved in giving feedback on new products before they are released to the general public.

If you feel you can help in some way & would like to join the Urban Bait Promo Team then send us a DM or WhatsApp us on 07908 163442 for more information.

20 PLACES UP FOR GRABS

PHYLLIS TUCKWELL TICKETS ON SALE



ATTENTION.....

Frimley tickets for the charity event in aid of Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice on sale now - 4th-6th September is the event date.

Pits 1 & 2 are £150 per space

Pit 3 is £300 per space

07717753166 is the number

to call at the times given to get your space.

Payment is taken by card at time of call.

Make sure you save this as spaces go quickly for the awesome event

Thank you

Les Bowers

CALLING ALL CARP TACKLE, BAIT AND CLOTHING COMPANIES



If you could help make this event even better than the last 3 years, any donation, big or small they kids will truly appreciate it. PLEASE PM ME OR COMMENT ON THE POST AND WE WILL GET IN TOUCH I am reaching out on behalf of S&R Fishery and Westmoor Farm to invite anyone to be part of a very special event we are hosting in August 2026, a four-day CHILDREN'S carp fishing experience designed to educate, inspire, and nurture the next generation of anglers. The event will host 20 children and their parents, offering

hands-on learning in carp fishing, fishery management, and watercraft, alongside structured daily competitions such as casting challenges, baiting accuracy, biggest fish, overall weight, and traditional sports-day activities to keep the experience fun and, most importantly, memorable.

If this is something you'd be interested in supporting, I'd be delighted to discuss further details. Just drop me a message Thank you very much!

Lee and the team

S&R Fishery & Westmoor Farm



**2026
JUNIOR CARP
CAMP**

SAT 25th - TUE 28th JULY 2026

The Carp Society Junior Carp Camp is a four-day event taking place at our renowned Horseshoe Lake in Lechalde.

This event is open to juniors aged 12 to 16 who are eager to learn or enhance their fishing skills, so all levels of experience are welcome!

Limited places, the fee of only **£95** covers tuition, fishing, main meals, and goody bags from our event sponsors.



For more information about this event, please visit our website
www.thecarpsociety.com
email info@thecarpsociety.com or call 01367 253959



The Carp Society Junior Carp Camp 2026 – Limited Spaces Available!

We've got a rare opportunity for young anglers aged 12–16!

A small number of places have become available for this year's Carp Society Junior Carp Camp – and they won't hang around for long.

Junior Carp Camp 2026

Dates: Saturday 25 July – Tuesday 28 July 2026

Ages: 12–16 years old (at the

time of the event)

- An unforgettable angling experience

Cost: Just £95 for the full event

Call: 01367 253969 If a space is available when you call, we'll take:

- The junior's name and date of birth

- A parent/guardian email address (for registration)

- Payment to secure the place

Places are extremely limited – once they're gone, they're gone!



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EDDIE LUCIA RIP BY MATHEW HART



I met Eddie at Wingham Syndicate around 12 years ago, and from that very first day we just clicked. It turned into a genuine friendship, spending countless days and nights on the bank together fishing numerous lakes laughing, and making memories I'll never forget.

Eddie was one of the kindest, most selfless people you could ever meet a true diamond. He

would do anything for anyone without a second thought, and that's a rare thing these days. He had a heart of gold and brought so much warmth and laughter wherever he went.

I can't believe I won't see him again. I'm going to miss him so much.

My thoughts are with his family at this tough time.

Rest easy, mate. Gone far too soon

MCQUILLANS HOME STAY AND FISHING



McQuillan's Home Stay and Fishing Thailand, located in Chom Bueng, Ratchaburi (near Bangkok), offers guided monster freshwater fishing and accommodation. Run by Shane McQuillan, the venue features multiple lakes with species like arapaima, Mekong catfish, redbtail catfish, and gar. Book your Monster fishing Trip in Thailand ...what you catch in England will forever be seen as BAIT!

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GILLHAM'S RECORD MONSTER CARP



Here is the new Gillhams Lake Record Siamese Carp being held aloft by lucky angler, Shaun Hanney and being assisted by guides Pat and Bell.

The fish weighed 206lb, was landed from Sala 6 in the early afternoon and was witnessed by a number of guests, our guides and management team.

The fish took 15 minutes to land after a spirited fight and was

hooked at 16.5 wraps range, with a rig presented on the 'causeway' area of the lake. This leviathan was taken on the reliable solid PVA bag tactics along with the Gillhams House Pellets. Hookbait was a pink Sticky Baits Buchu-Berry Dumbbell Wafer.

We believe this to be the biggest ever carp caught on rod and line, weighed and witnessed, anywhere in the world!



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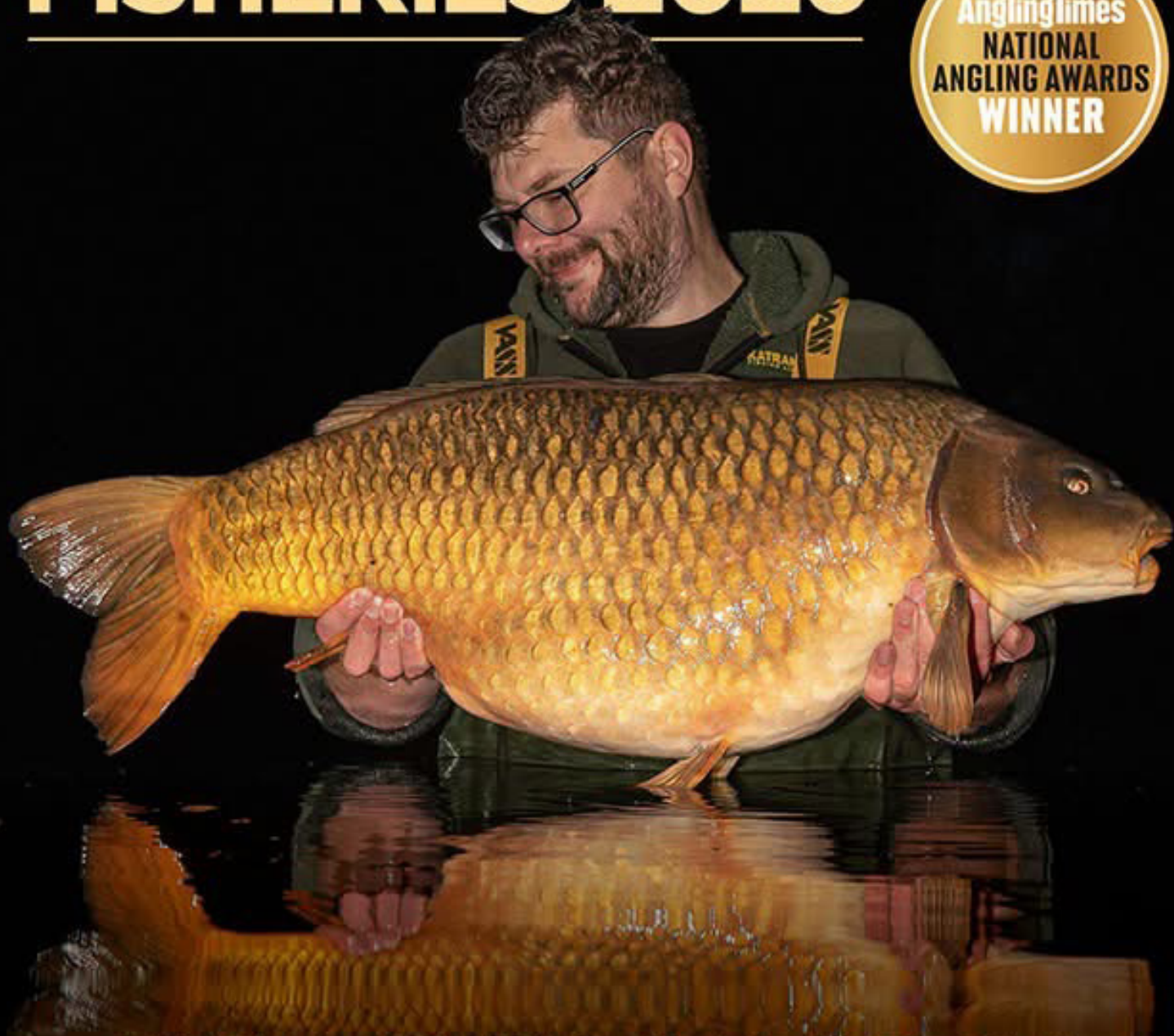
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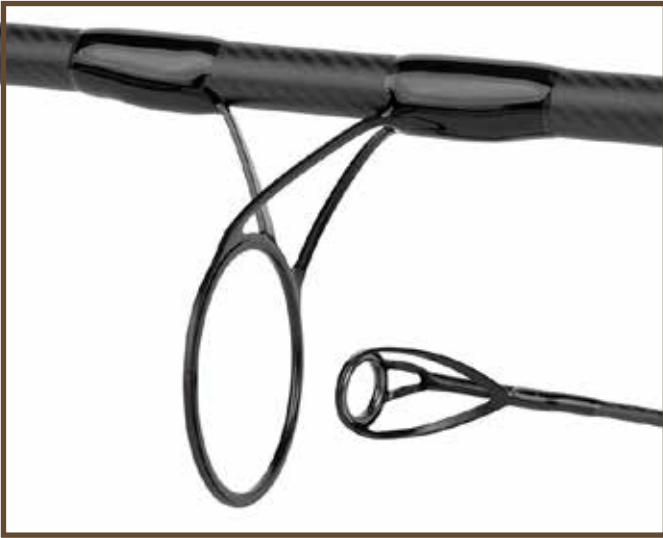
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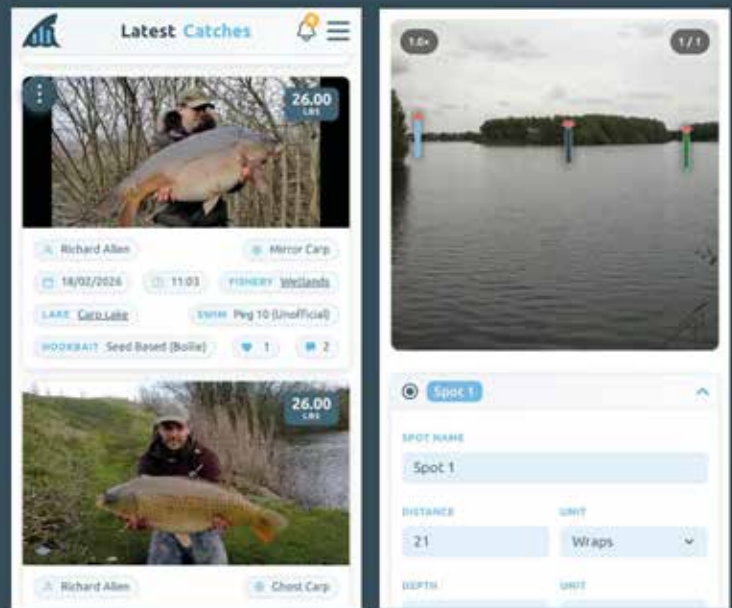
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Oak Lakes Fisheries



www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk

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



39 lb the carp called "Mickey" caught by Pipe lake member Pinky nice angling mate



One of the new mirrors at 18lb 4oz. Nice one Gary the bailiff



25 lb 3 oz nice catch



Excellent start a 28lb mirror carp.

Oak Lakes Fisheries



www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk

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



Pipe Lake member Stuart had "Jensens Sister" today at 34 lb 1 oz Absolute stunner



20 lb and then 2nd time in same session the 16 lb on Pipe lake. Then finished off with another pretty 16lber

Oak Lakes Fisheries



www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk

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



Pipe lake member Dean landed "Two Face" at 35 lb 11 oz - came off a spot that had 6 kilo of bait



Scott & daughters caught 3 carp including this pretty mirror



Pipe Lake bailiff Gary with a cracking mirror of 35lb 10oz



Nice carp catch for Levi on Pipe lake 19 lb 6 oz

Oak Lakes Fisheries



www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk

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



Paul Green kindly sent us these photos of his catches this week - 12 lb 14 lb 28 lb 18 lb 24 lb 12 oz 13 lb 14 lb and last but not least 34 lb 1 oz Cracking session!!

CALI BIG GIRL



Mr brother, Scott, moved to America a couple of years ago and started doing some pioneering carping on some of the massive reservoirs out there. Chasing the unknown and just seeing what came along.

He fished a few different places and strung a few captures together before settling on a 3000-acre reservoir in California. Choosing a spot an hour and a half's walk away and applying some British tactics he started to do well.

But I don't think even he expected to land a fish like this at an incredible 64lb 4oz!!! A fish that smashes the California State record and we think the North American record for a rod and line caught carp. There are reports of bigger but they were shot with a bow and therefore I don't think can be compared to this.

ORCHID BIGGUN



Ben Oakes return to Orchid Lakes was a special one, banking the lakes biggest 'Big El' at 47lbs+

5 SCALES BANKED



Mike Deakin with 5 Scales at 44.08 for Kingsmead

CATCH REPORTS

The main prize of Oz's winter labours.

WIZARD OF OZ



LONG DRIVE PAYS OFF



She went 46lb on the nose and fish known as "Drop Down" not been caught in just over 2 years!!! At a new top weight and for the second week on the spin a new PB Mirror for me!!



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NOT SO GRUMPY



Scott Annan
with Grumpy at
55LB 1OZ!

MANOR MONSTER



Matt Hanna fished the incredible Manor Farm for 48h landing "The Algerian" at 49lb 8oz!!!

CLUSTER BOMBING



Keith Newton with Cluster at 47

THE ORIGINAL BRITISH TRITIUM WATCH COMPANY



NITE

WATCHES

NITE MAVERICK
ENDURANCE ATHLETE
GARETH DE LA TORRE

WEARS THE HAWK



★ Trustpilot

Reviews 5,768 • Excellent



PROVEN THROUGH PASSION

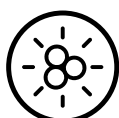
For the past year, Gareth De La Torre, Endurance Athlete, Author & Charity Fundraiser has tested his HAWK watch on some of the UK's toughest endurance events, running, rucking, climbing. He'll be participating in this years TCS London Marathon, raising funds for the Royal Marines Charity, wearing military boots and carrying 40lbs!

Has his HAWK let him down?... NO

Nite watches are continuously put to the test by our Mavericks and come with a 5 Year Warranty, Swiss movements, super bright tritium illumination and most importantly a build quality that is designed to be used and abused by those who live for the outdoors.



SWISS-MADE
MOVEMENT



TRITIUM
ILLUMINATION



SAPPHIRE
CRYSTAL



5 YEAR
WARRANTY

NITEWATCHES.COM

BUCKLE UP



Stuart Buckland, - 46lb 12oz

BEAKER'S NO MUPPET



Jonny Beaker, 40 plus stunner

ATTENNNNNN-SION



Martyn Wicks with the Sergeant at 42.04 from Long Lake.

GRENVILLES BRACE



Just look at these two cracking fish for Matty Gee from Grenville lake, 44lb and the fat scaley 40.12





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COKING FARM HAULING



45Lb 50z

Arthur Stubborn with his Meadow lake Haul including 47lb 6oz common and 45lb 5oz mirror backed up with a 39lb 4oz over Easter.

CATCH REPORTS



47lb 6oz



39lb 4oz

OSCAR WINNER

Three bites that trip, topped by a new pb at 56lb for Oscar Thornton

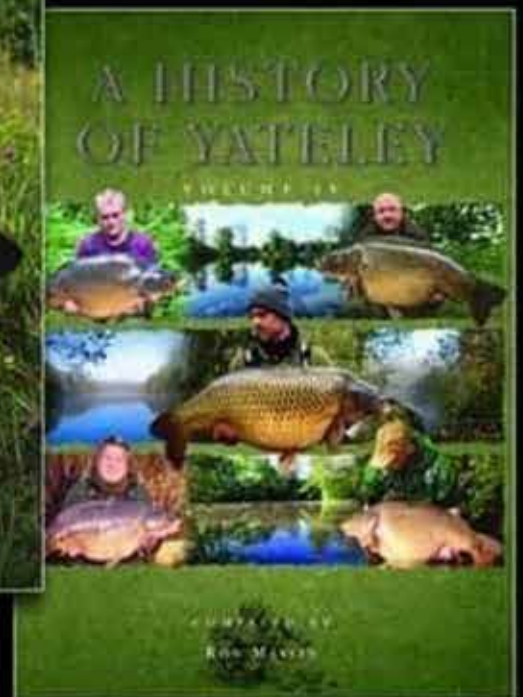
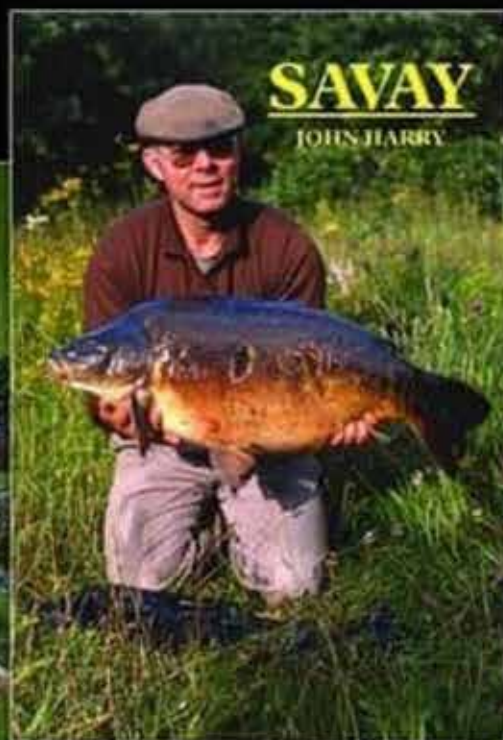
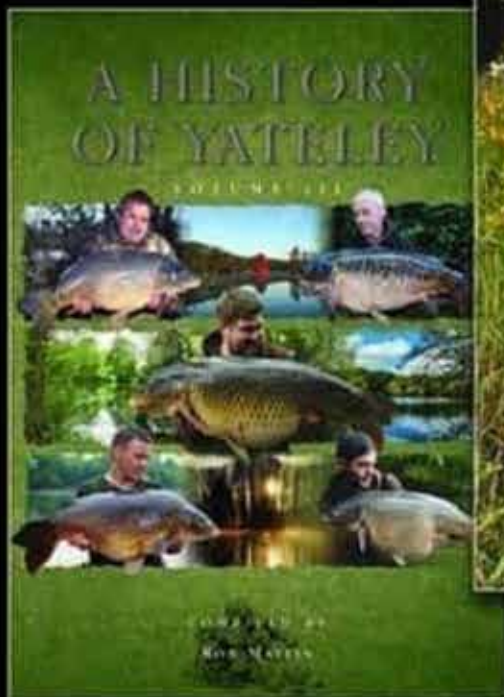
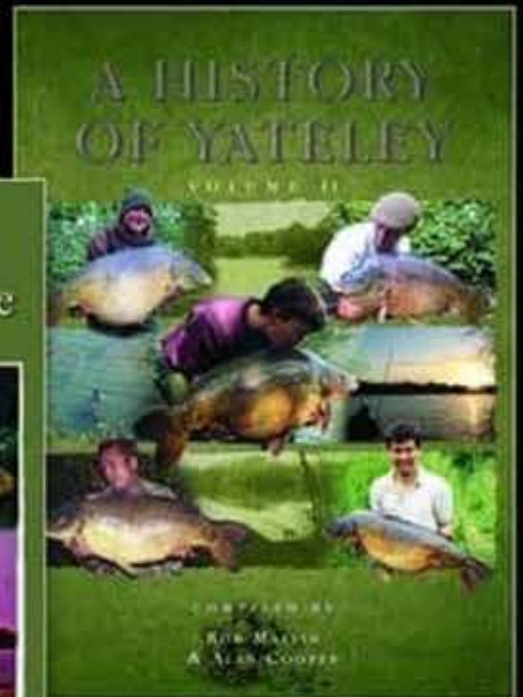
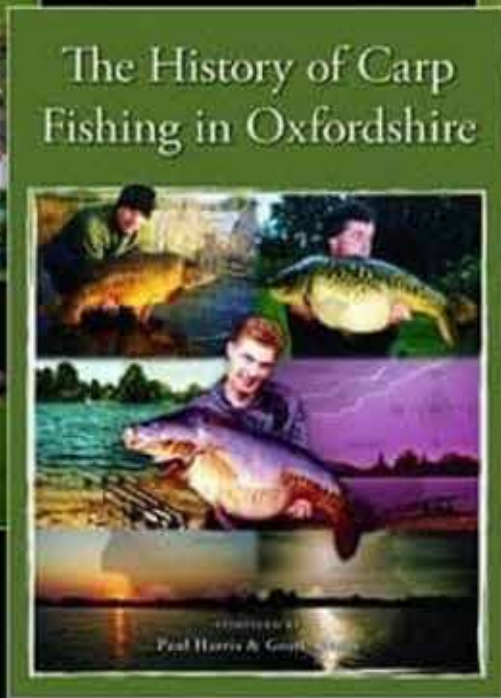
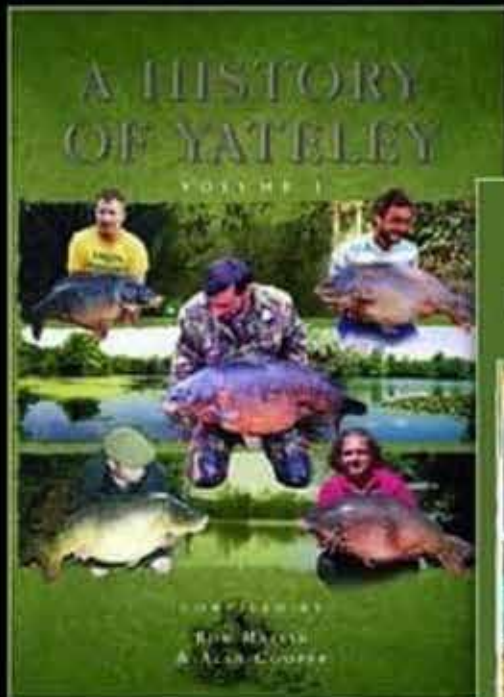


BIG IT UP

Kevin Biggs said "Well what can I say the Spring is being very kind to me"



THE HISTORY SERIES



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LUCKY LUCY

42lb 8oz the black one for Mr Lucy.



MORE LUCKY LUCY

Jacko Lucy lands one of his targets , 41lb 4oz common



BIRCH BEAUTY

Lee Birch said "The big common 64lb 2oz what a complex old mill is"



BLACK MAGIC

Micky Bee with 46lb 8oz of Nottinghamshire blackness. Caught from a very deep, gin clear gravel pit.



CATCH REPORTS

Miles Gibson was Buzzing to with Longreach's "Starburst" at 51.8

SMILES FOR MILES

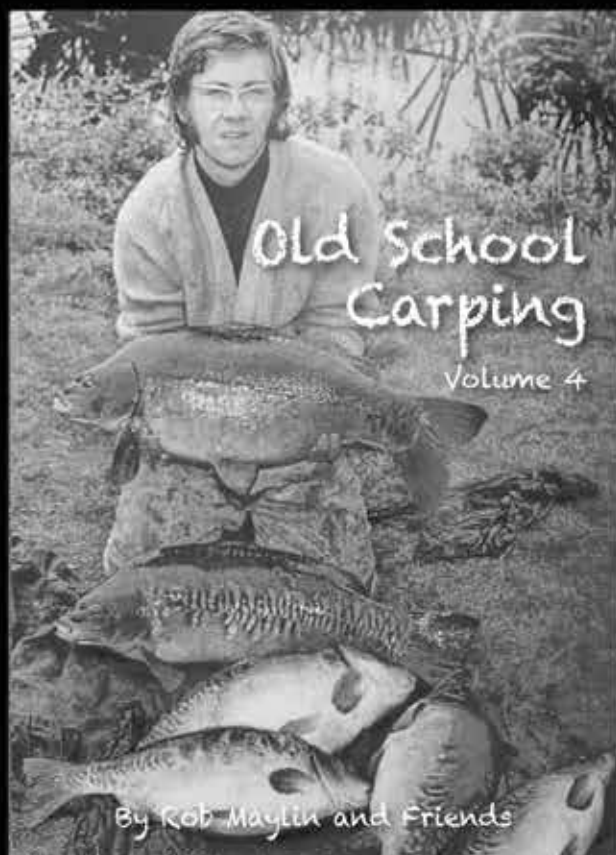
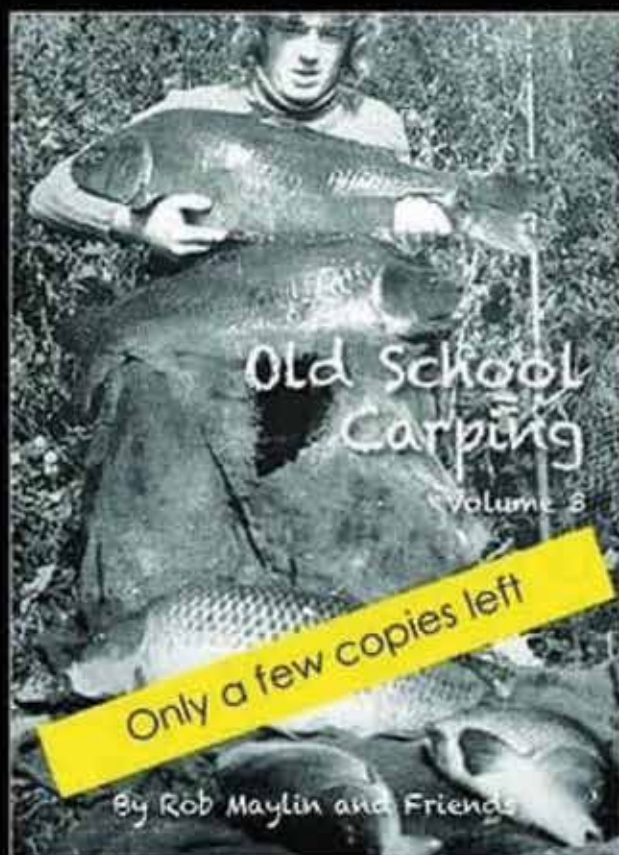
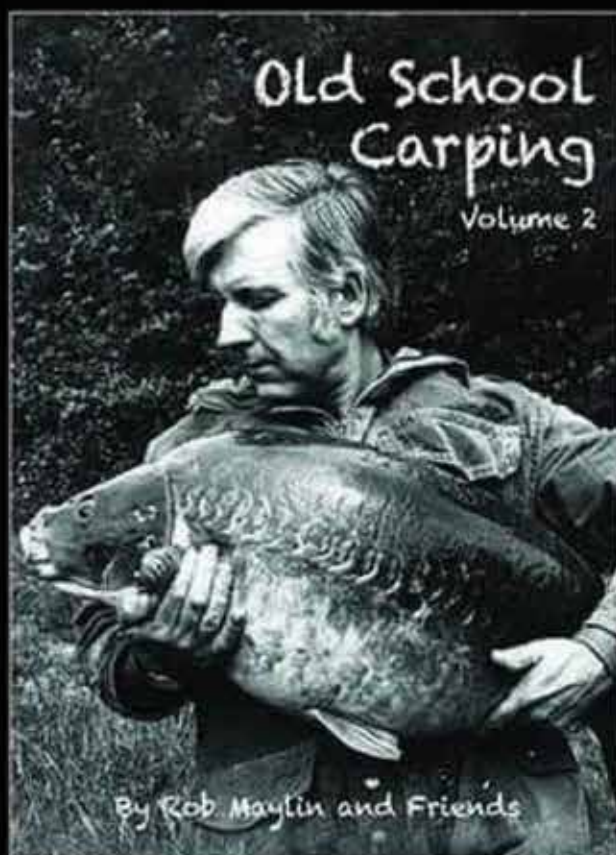
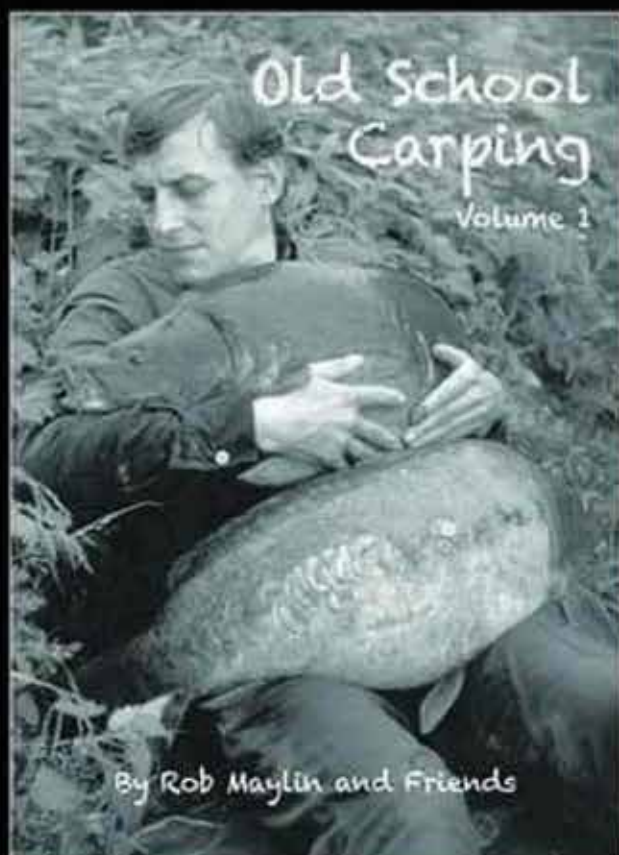


MISSING MIRROR



Keith Fender said "me and two mates had 100 acres to ourselves, a fish that was feared dead by many, a fish that's only seen the bank 5 times ever and a fish that hadn't been out for 3 years. A new lake record and a new pb of 54lb, The Scattered Lin

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LEON'S HAUL



Leon Smith with a Fully Scaled Stunner, 46lb 8oz, known as Mean Bean, plus 22lb 7oz, 24lb 4oz, 36lb 8oz and 40lb,





COKING RECORD

Jordan Grainger has banked " Dave " at new Coking and Lake record at 53lb 3oz



BEAST IS NEW

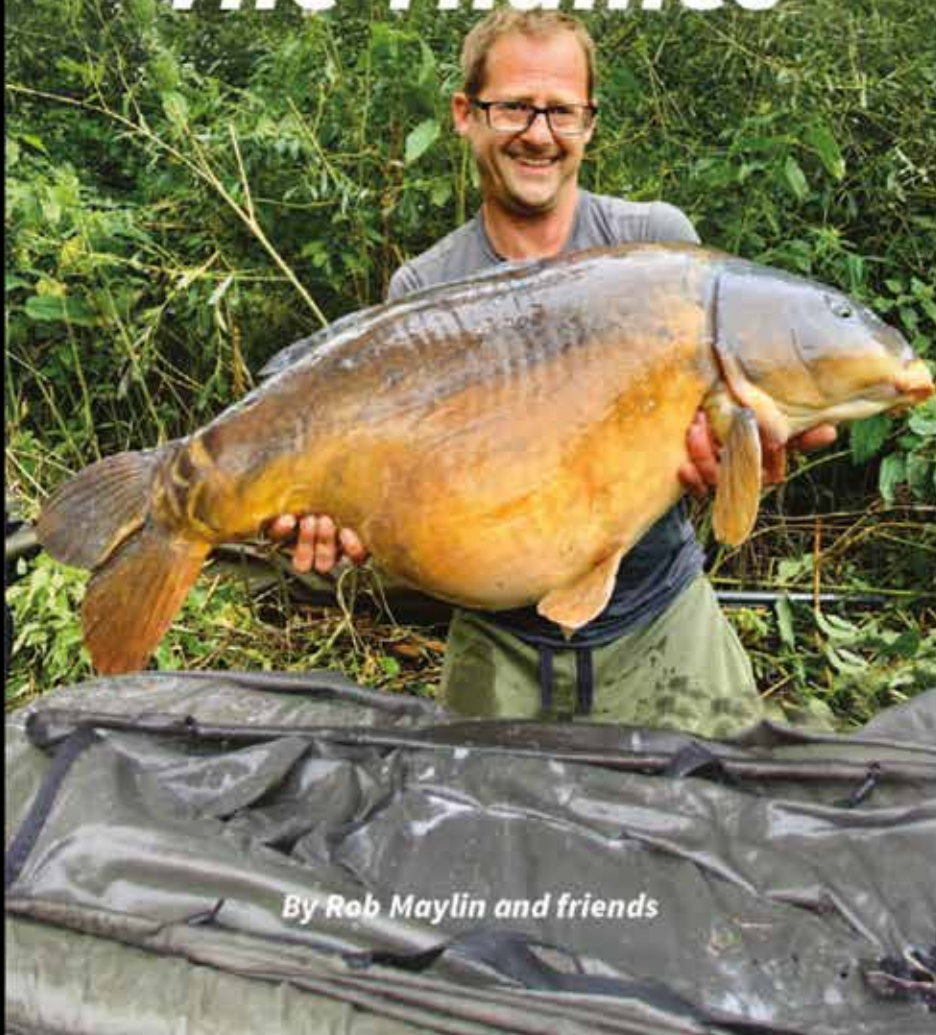
Abingdon Beast 52:12lb a new pb



SECRETS OF THE THAMES

Price
£29.95

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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AMEILA ROSE



A DREAM SESSION

Some fishing trips stay with you forever, and our recent trip to Yateley Pads Lake was definitely one of those. My dad had told me lots of stories about the lake before we went. He said it was a really famous carp lake with lots of history and some amazing fish living in it. So when we planned a 72-hour session there, I was really excited. There were five of us on the trip in total — four adults and me. I was the youngest angler there at eight years old, and I was fishing with my dad and some of our close friends, including our mate Michael. Fishing with friends always makes a trip fun, and everyone was really excited to see what Pads might give us. When we arrived, the lake looked amazing. Even though it's such a famous place, it

still feels really peaceful and special when you're standing on the bank looking out over the water. The weather over the three days was all over the place. At first we had a bit of sunshine, but it didn't last long. The rain started to roll in and later we had a big storm with winds around 40mph blowing across the lake. By the final morning it had turned really cold, and when we woke up our landing net and unhooking mat were frozen. But none of that mattered. We were fishing.

Dad and I were also really excited because we were using our new Sonik custom rods for the very first time. This session was their first proper outing, and we were keen to see how they would perform on a lake like Pads. For our bait and rigs we kept things fairly simple. We were fishing spinner rigs with Elevate Baits Sweetcorn Pillows, and we were catapulting out a spread of maple and mulberry

boilies across the spot from the far bank. Dad said this helps spread the bait around and encourages the fish to move around confidently while feeding. After getting everything set up, we settled in and started watching the water.

Then suddenly something amazing happened. My rod screamed off. The alarm was going crazy and I grabbed the rod straight away. As soon as I lifted into the fish I could feel it pulling hard. My heart was beating really fast and everyone started watching. Dad stayed close to help me, but I wanted to try and play the fish myself. The carp fought really hard and I could feel every movement through the rod. Slowly but surely the fish started getting closer to the net. Then we saw it roll. Everyone suddenly got really excited. It looked big. Dad carefully guided it over the net cord and slipped the net



underneath. We had it.

When we lifted the carp onto the mat I couldn't believe how big it looked. It was an amazing mirror carp and when we put it on the scales they settled at 30lb. I had just caught my first ever 30-pound carp.

Everyone started cheering and congratulating me. I couldn't stop smiling. Dad told me that catching a 30lb carp from Yateley Pads is something really special, especially for someone my age. I felt really proud and it's a moment I'll

remember forever. At that point I thought the trip couldn't get any better.

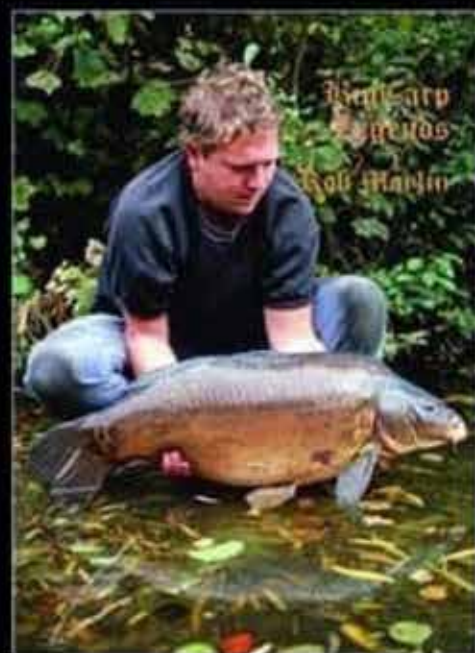
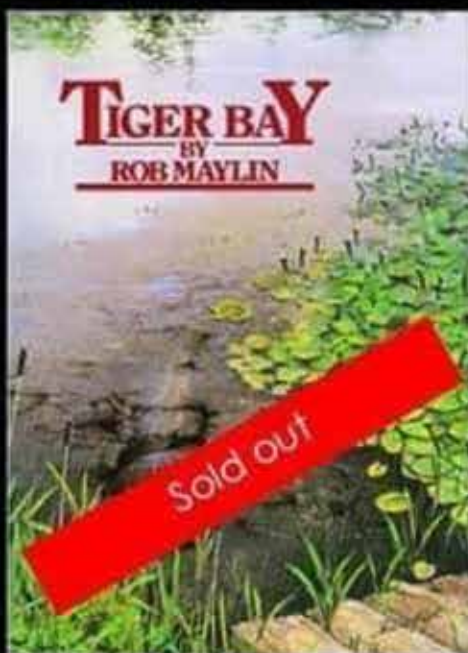
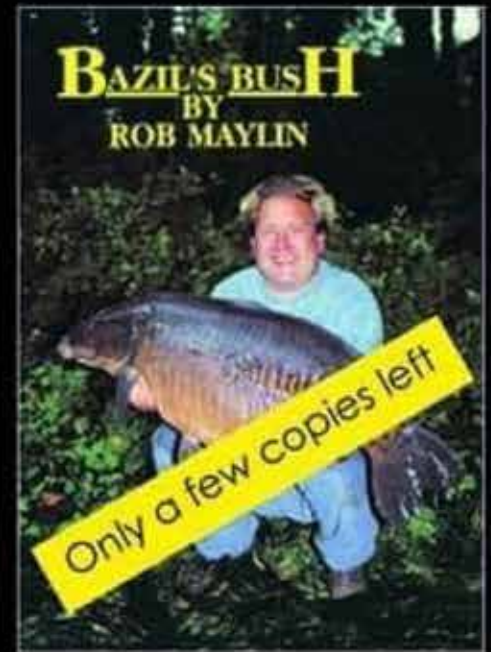
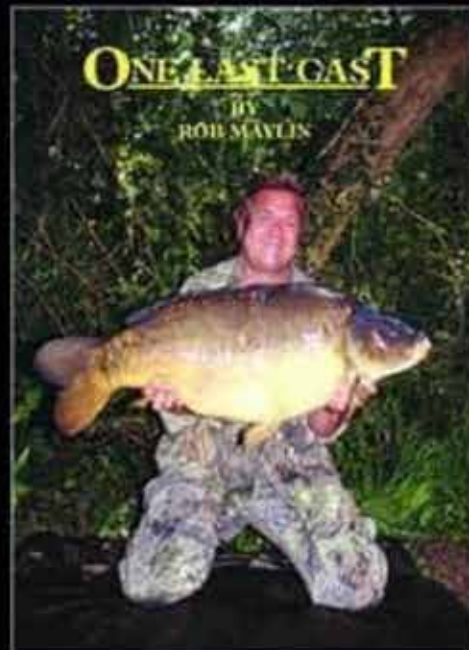
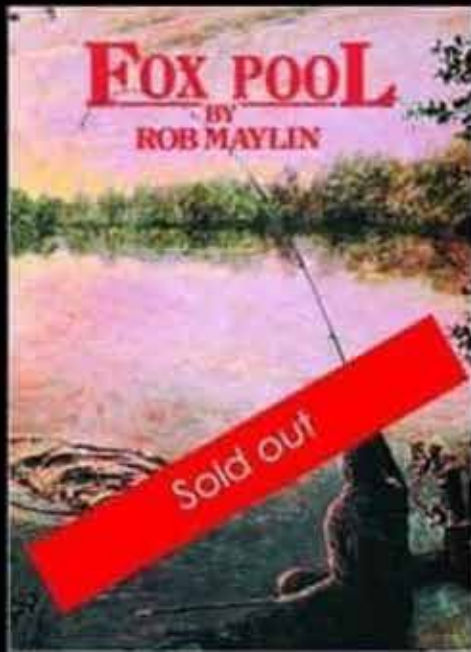
But the next day things got even more exciting. The wind was still pushing across the lake and the conditions were quite rough, but suddenly both rods went off almost at the same time. We had a double take. Everyone jumped into action trying to keep

everything under control. Two fish were being played at once and the excitement on the bank was huge. After some tense moments both fish were safely in the nets. The first carp was a stunning 20lb linear mirror, a beautiful Pads fish with perfect markings. But the second fish was something really special. When Dad lifted the fish onto the scales they settled at



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38.9lb, giving him a brand new PB. It was a huge mirror carp and one of the most beautiful fish we had ever seen. Even better than that, the fish didn't have a name yet. Dad said we was allowed to name it. After thinking about it we decided to call the fish Rose after my middle name Ameila Rose. Being able to name a fish from such a famous lake felt really special and it made the moment even more memorable. By this point everyone on the bank was buzzing. It had already been an incredible session, but there was still one more great capture to come.

Our friend Michael had been watching where we were catching fish and decided to move swims closer to us so he could get amongst the action. It turned out to be a great decision. Not long after settling into his new spot Michael's alarm screamed off and he was into a powerful fish straight away. We all watched as he

carefully played it in through the waves and wind. When the carp finally rolled in front of the net we could see it was a really special fish. Michael slipped the net under it and when it went on the scales it weighed 35.2lb, giving him a brand new PB. It was an absolutely stunning common carp, and everyone on the bank was celebrating again. But the session still had one more moment left to give us.

On the final morning, after a long night of wind and cold weather, the lake came alive again. Around 3am, Dad's alarm suddenly screamed off in the darkness. I jumped up straight away to help. It was freezing cold and our landing net had actually started to freeze from the frost, which made things even more difficult in the dark. Dad played the fish carefully while I helped guide the net in the water. When the carp finally came over the cord, we managed to scoop it up together in the





partly frozen net. It turned out to be a lovely mirror carp, and even though we were tired and cold, that moment felt really special because I got to help Dad land the fish in the middle of the night. Moments like that are what fishing trips are really about.

Looking back at the whole session, it had everything. Sunshine, rain, storms and freezing cold mornings. My first ever 30lb carp. Dad catching a new PB and naming a brand new Pads fish called Rose. Michael

landing his 35.2lb PB common. And even helping Dad land a fish in the freezing dark at 3am on the final morning. Fishing trips like this are about much more than just catching fish. They're about the memories you create, the excitement when the alarms sound, and the special moments you share with the people around you. For me, catching my first 30lb carp from Yateley Pads Lake is something I will never forget. And I already can't wait to go back.



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CUSTOMER REVIEWS

Big shoutout to the lads at Digger Boats Ltd I've been living onsite at Carthagena Fisheries for 23 years now, and we've had plenty of work done over the years... but this one tops the lot! We've been fighting a losing battle with reeds taking over the entrance to one of our bays for a few years now. Even tried getting in ourselves with dry suits and pulling them out by hand absolutely brutal work and getting nowhere fast... was starting to think we'd lose the bay completely. On top of that, the carp were loving it — hiding in the reeds and becoming a nightmare to catch we'd had other companies in before with weed boats, but if I'm honest, the results just weren't great. Got James from Digger Boats in, he came down, had a proper look and got stuck in... and what a job they've done! 3 days later and the place has been completely transformed it's something I've wanted sorted for years and it's finally done. Already this spring we've had over 22 fish out — including a few we haven't seen in years! Normally we'd only see a handful by now. Can't recommend them enough — top lads, proper job done Thanks again boys — Jerry Hammond

“

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 🙌


★★★★★

Stuart Stockton
Chesterton Community Angling Club



 Neil Ellis 🇬🇧 recommends Digger Boats. 39m · 🌐

diggerboats.com has just completed some norfolk reed removal on one of our club lakes. The diggerboats team worked their socks off and done a great job giving great value for money, going well beyond what was the basic requirement, feedback from members has been really positive with how the lake is now looking. If you are a club or commercial fishery looking for a professional fishery management/ maintenance company then give diggerboats a call, we at Colchester Piscatorial Society are already looking at more fallen tree removal work for the diggerboat team to undertake !

 Mark Turrell
Great job done, can't believe the difference, thank you guys at Digger boat 🙌 🍷

 Top fan
Stuart Stockton
Fantastic company highly recommend these guys they did a fantastic job on our lake Highly knowledgeable and didn't stop for 2 days A very professional service 🙌

The company can carry out any aquatic projects on Rivers, Canals, Lakes, Ponds and Marinas. Weed removal, dredging, water deepening, reed and rush removal, aquatic tree works and much more.

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GARETH SMITH

THE WATERSIDE COMMON

The first time I'd heard about the waterside common was down on my syndicate lake @Haache moor fishery, I was chatting with the owner Andy and he mentioned that it had come out recently and was massive, and how they all struggled on there last year, in fact I think the whole lake exclusive booking blanked. By pure chance a week later I had a message from a Leon a long-time fishing friend that they had had a person drop out and would I like to join them - perfect I thought and dates they were going I'd already booked off for a birthday session at the syndi, end of March, prime time.

The night before the trip I was busy re spooling and generally getting bits ready as my gear was in a tight mess from 20 or so nights throughout the winter, I was up early the next

day and saw my son Brodie off to school before making the journey up from Wellington in Somerset to Chesham some 3 hours away.

Dan who'd organised the trip and Leon were already there and set up down the far end of the lake and another lad had just turned up as well, he'd had a walk around and not seen much and had decided to fish the social swim in the middle of the pond.

I went for a lap of the lake but was stopped in my tracks on the first corner by the car park, I saw a fish flank and the water was chocolate compared to the rest of the lake, I sat and watched for 20 mins and thought this will do me, half the lake to myself and massive tree lined margin with nearly the entire stock in front of me. I quickly set a rod and went stalking in the corner, there were fish everywhere and thought I'd get a quick bite then set up, eventually the

fish gave me an opportunity and I lowered my 5 bits of corn on a slip d rig in an area where most of the activity had been, it must have been there for 3 hours with fish all over it including the biggun without a pick up, these fish were wised up!

In my eagerness I decided to get another rod in the zone, this was my downfall as it was only 3-4 foot deep and within 5 mins a coot had picked it up and taken me into the bush, with all that commotion the fish drifted off and I was left with my tail between my legs wondering what to do next, but on the plus side I had seen it up close and personal.

I did the night in the car park swim which was quiet but I did have an interesting phone conversation with Andy, I went along the line of, why aren't you in big carp corner, it ain't called that for no reason, he also informed me it had been out to yellow hook



baits previously.

I was up first thing watching the water brew in hand and a few fish were showing opposite me about 20 yards from the snag bush in the corner, I decided to reel and take a look , from up the tree you could

see the water coloured which again was only shallow around 4 feet deep, I then ventured into the snag bush , there's a branch you can climb out on and under it there's a lovely clean spot about 3 feet square, within minutes a couple drifted

past , then another and another , there must have a dozen or so milling around , well I couldn't resist and ran back to pack my gear away.

It was now Tuesday and 24hrs in, I was on fish , end of March, I thought they would be crawling up the line!

I didn't set up in the closest swim to the snags but one down only about yards away but it gave me more room for the other rods as I was only

fishing 1 rod near the snag bush . I was watching the route the fish would take in and out and dropped a rig with the baiting pole quite tight with a small pop up on and light sprinkle of maggots and crushed cell boilie ,another rod was placed about 15 feet from the bush on a lovely sandy area clearly visible from up the tree.

Fishing locked up on that snag tree rod meant I was constantly on edge expecting a



HOW BRIGHT IS A NITE WATCH IN THE DARK, AT DUSK & IN DAYLIGHT?

WHAT TRITIUM ACTUALLY IS

Most watch lume gives up just when you need it most. Tritium doesn't. Inside each watch are sealed glass tubes containing tritium gas and a phosphor coating. As tritium undergoes natural beta decay, its electrons excite the phosphor, producing a steady, continuous glow. No charging, no button press, no battery. It just glows, all day and all night, for up to 20 years.

Every tube we use is sourced from mb-microtec in Switzerland, the global benchmark for GTLS technology and the manufacturer trusted by military and



HAWK GREEN TRITIUM ILLUMINATION VIALS

professional services worldwide. If you want the full technical detail, our website covers it thoroughly. For now, the short version matters most: it's completely passive, self-powered, and needs nothing from you.

COMPLETE DARKNESS: WHERE TRITIUM EXCELS

Three things really matter: you can read. This is the environment tritium is built for. In genuinely dark conditions, whether that's a tent with no moonlight, a building with failed power, or operating below the surface at depth, you raise your wrist and read the time instantly. No pre-activation required.



MX10 BLUE/ORANGE TRITIUM ILLUMINATION VIALS

Green tubes are the brightest option for human low-light perception, which is why they're standard across most professional and military applications. Tritium watch brightness also varies by tube colour.

White and ice blue tubes are available across selected models and remain legible in darkness, but green consistently outperforms them in genuine low-light conditions. Our T100-rated models deliver significantly more brightness than standard tritium, providing fast, reliable orientation when ambient light is near zero. That's the rating in both the Hawk Nightfall and the Alpha Z Blackout, for exactly this reason.

When the MX10 was first supplied to UK Special Forces, the logic was simple: kit that relies on charging or batteries will eventually fail. Tritium doesn't.

TWILIGHT AND LOW-LIGHT: OR IN TOTAL DARKNESS

Most watch checks happen at dusk, in a darkened vehicle, or in a bivvy at night are the conditions tritium illumination is meant for, and it handles all of them without requiring any action by the wearer.

At dusk, in dark rooms such the cinema, night club and restaurants, or in a vehicle cab with the lights off, tritium remains clearly legible without any effort. Standard luminous paint fades within a few hours of darkness. Tritium reads the same at midnight as it does at 10pm. That's the practical difference, and it's the reason professionals who depend on accurate timekeeping choose tritium consistently over traditional lume. Our full tritium vs traditional lume breakdown article on our website covers this in more detail if you're weighing up the options.

BRIGHTNESS OVER TIME

Tritium tubes don't switch off, they decay. A question we hear often is how long does tritium watch illumination actually last in practice. Over the rated 20-year lifespan, brightness reduces gradually as the tritium decays. A ten-year-old tube will be noticeably dimmer than a new one, though still functional in genuine darkness. Worth knowing if you're considering a second-hand tritium watch.



MX10 HORIZON

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE >](#)

NITEWATCHES.COM

NITE THE ORIGINAL BRITISH TRITIUM WATCH COMPANY

bite at any moment as fish were constantly present no more than 6 feet from rig and really active . As the previous night it was uneventful and I felt the fish had moved out in the cover of darkness as they weren't to be seen in the morning. Around 11am on the Wednesday Leon fishing down the far end had a double take, I reeled in and got down there to see him land a pair of 35lbbers , a lovely mirror and a common which I think had caught him out while playing it thinking it was the biggun, photos and filming done a trotted off back to my corner with a spring in my step , these fish were catchable all be it on singles to shows.

I decided to go the other way with baiting; it was my last night potentially ever at this lake and the chance of a British record fish was swimming around in only 6 acres of water in front of me.

I redid my rods this time with around 2 pints of

maggots and crushed cell, one rod was fished with a 10mm long yellow zig foam to balance out 7 maggots and I put another in there with a yellow s2 pop up , I had to try a lure them out as they were clearly happy in there.

Around 4 pm I had an occurrence on the maggot rod, a small drop back, 2 bleeps I was straight on it and lifted into thin air, I didn't think it was take but the lead had moved and in my mind i could see my supple rig being tangled or leaf litter on the hook point, I was a bit gutted as the anticipation of the bite is unreal when there's a 60 swimming about and thought that may have been my only chance.

By this time the weather had taken a turn , 50-60 mile an hour winds , hale , sleet , sunshine we had the lot and cold with it, I redid the again with another full load of maggots in bush wacker and





dropped it onto a lovely clear area tight to the bush , it went down with firm donk I slowly tightened down to the 2oz lead and cranked the drag down on my shimano power areas , I'd been in contact with Andy again and he was grilling me about why Leon had caught and not me and what was I doing wrong etc etc I said about how he'd caught on singles and I'd gone the other way and put more bait out , put the phone down and with that I had a few bleeps on the maggot rod, again signalling a drop back , I looked at the spot , no birds , I stepped towards the rod and the line twitched , immediately i picked it up and must have wound 4/5 turns of the reel before I made contact with the fish, I was in ! At that point the old knees started knocking and I was trying to control my breathing, I was that excited and also relieved to finally trick one, I waded out the shallow margin to the drop off and the fish came straight towards under the rod



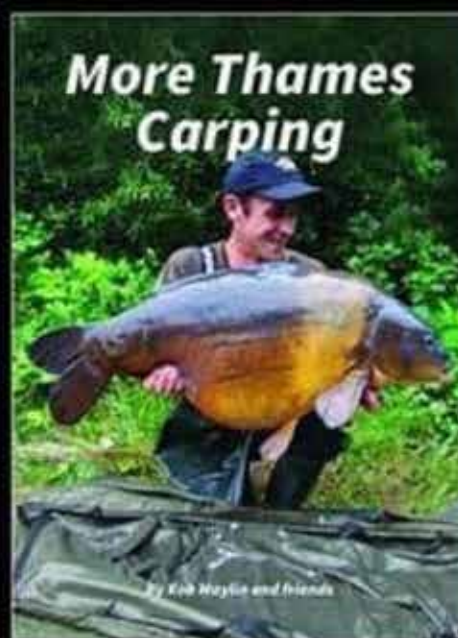
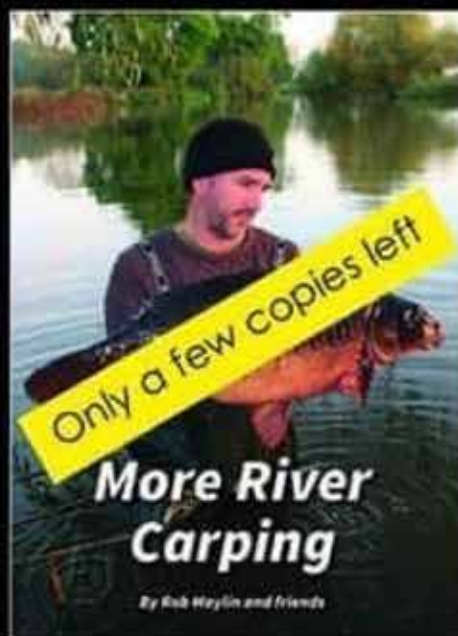
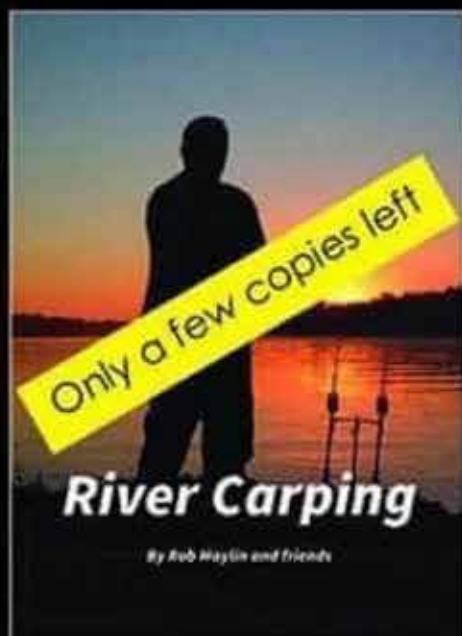
tip, I could clearly see it was a good common as it twisted and turned no more than a rod length out, I thought maybe a 40lber, it then proceeded to chug up and down the margin staying really deep, all I could do was keep constant pressure and not pull too hard, there was no way I wanted to lose this, it beat me up for 20mins but never really went more than 25 yards out, the longer I had it on the more anxious I became and all I could think was if I lose it nobody would believe it, if it comes off I'm going home! It eventually tired and I managed to net it first time; I peered into the net and let out a massive shout BIG COMMON! I thought Dan had seen me playing a fish and that he'd be straight over, I shouted again, LEON, DAN, BIG COMMON. I stood there for maybe 5 mins shaking waiting for them to arrive, nothing, shit, I've got a sixty plus in the net, my heads gone and

I'm all alone knee deep in the water, the margins are really stoney there and I couldn't get the net handle in to prop the net up, I had to quickly drop the net run to the Bivvy and grab my phone, I jumped back in and lifted the net, she just sat there luckily and didn't move. I must have sounded off my head when I made the call, Leon you gotta get up here, I've got the biggun I kept saying. First people I messaged were my family especially so my son Brodie who's a keen young angler and Andy who only 20mins rather been asking why I was blanking! This is what they saw (see monster in the net picture).

Leon came jogging up and looked in the net, you fucking got it mate! Dan came over and we just stood in awe at the size of this fish, it was massive unlike anything any of us had seen before, so wide it's ridiculous, just an absolute beast of fish! The

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bailiff was called and 20mins later with the light fading fast he arrived with the mat and scales, everything was done in the water, we carefully got her into the sling and both eased her onto the mat , once we had taken the net away it looked colossal, it took 3 of us to hold the weight crook and the needle settling on 67.8lb my head was totally gone ! I'm so glad the bailiffs are on hand at this point , although we are all experienced big fish anglers a fish of this magnitude is different as well as all the emotions, mistakes can happen, he was so calm and controlled we talked through what was going to happen and got everything prepared, with adrenaline pumping I lifted the fish with surprising ease as she behaved perfectly.

Photos done and congratulations all round I sat there, made a brew and rolled a smoke, shit what had just happened, 30 years of carp

angling I never have thought I catch anything like that , a proper English 60lb common.

I did sling the rods back out but with no conviction, I'd done it , I'd caught the waterside common , a fish I'd only heard of about 6 weeks prior and a trip I got invited on last minute , it's like the stars aligned and it was meant to be also while I was checking the rig out after I noticed my 18lb fluorocarbon main line and frayed for around 18 inches past the lead which you can clearly see in the photo .

Well, that's my story of the waterside common , I fished hard for 4 days , didn't lose focus , kept watching a learning , up and down trees , my one and only bite turned out to be a fish of a life time was that lucky ? Maybe but I worked for that bite and you can't choose which one picks it up , tight lines. I'd also like to thank Leon Sprague for the wicked shots he took.





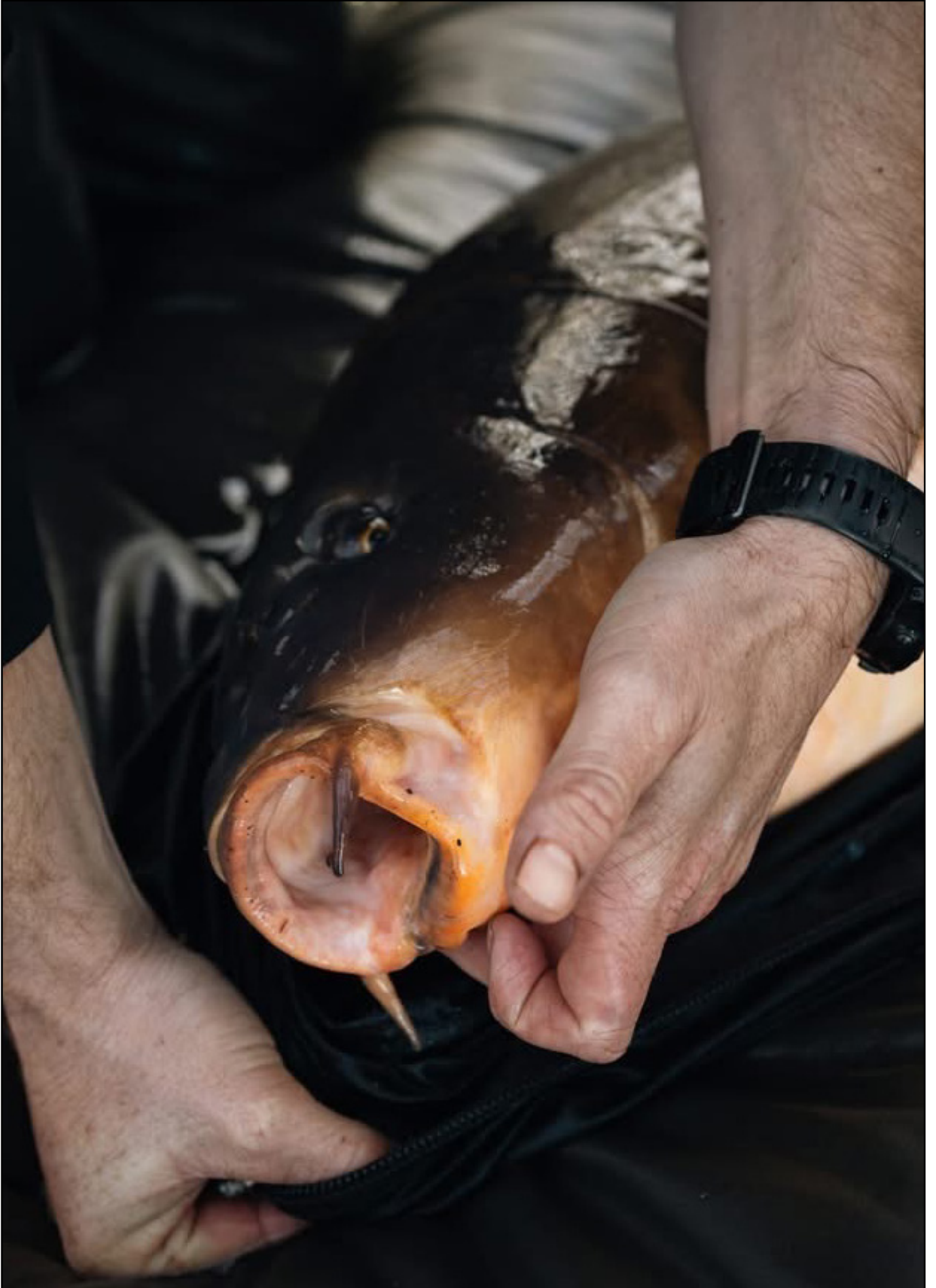
OSCAR THRENTON

EARLY SPRING HAUL

Anticipating the lake would be quiet in early spring, I decided to start my campaign early, planning four weeks of consistent angling through March – Knowing they were into their bait, I baited the area consistently during my weekend trips, using a hemp dominated mix, with additional Cell crumb and pellet, fishing hinges over the top with Cell pop ups. There was no physical evidence they were there, but the bites started coming, ending with five fish in that period to 46lb, signs they were proper having it out there. Rig wise, conventional hinges with size 4 Kamakura Wide Gape X's, 20lb MouthTrap and 25lb N-Trap soft booms to Hybrid Lead Clips and 4.5oz leads to help me get out there

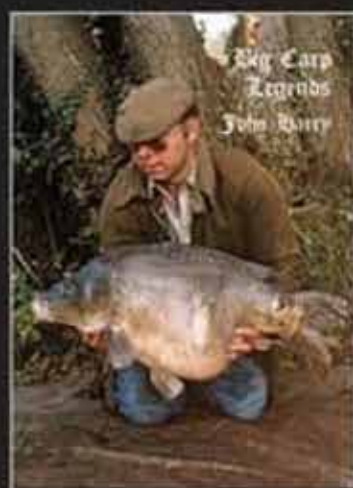
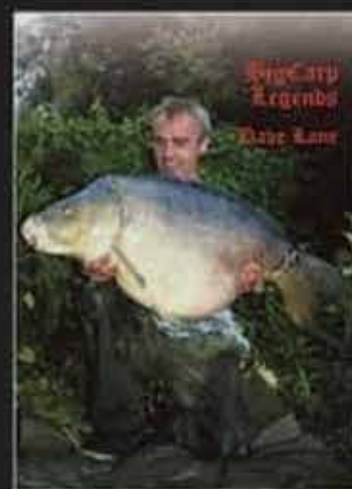






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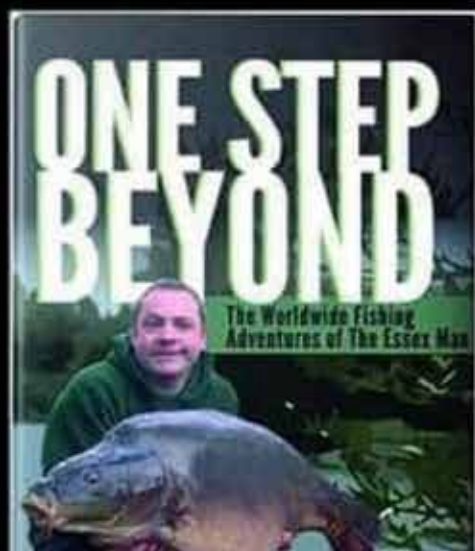
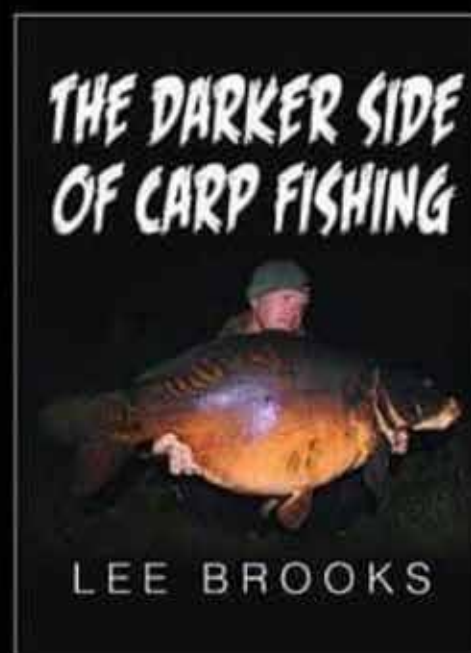
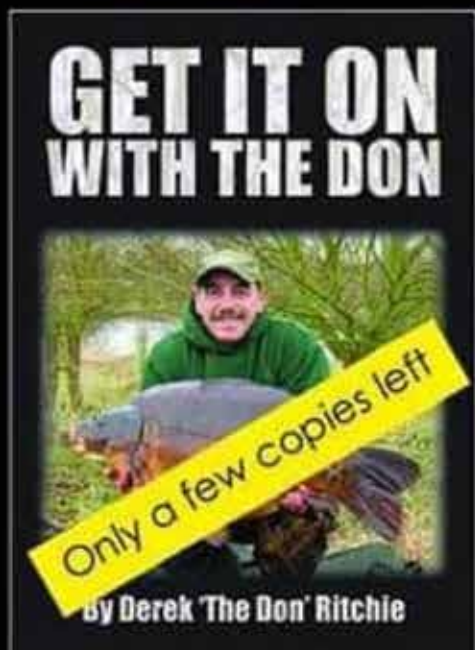
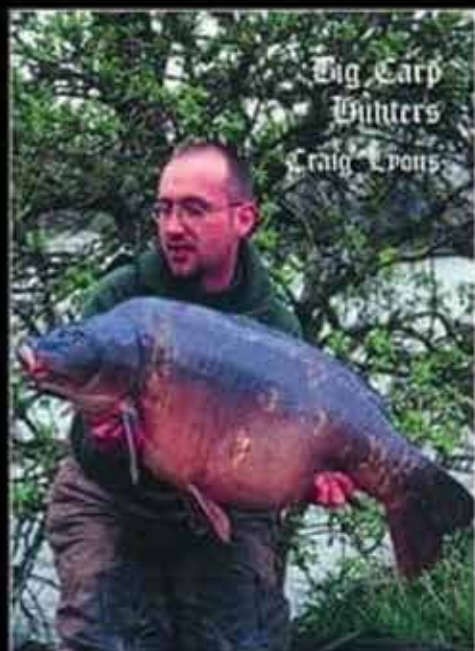






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RICH HOGG

CANAL SESSIONS PART 4

12th January 2017

The rain is slowly turning to sleet but it still chuck a bit of bait out onto a spot I've been baiting since last week. Hopefully just keep a little interest ready for my first sessions of the year in a few week's time!

3rd February 2017

I barely slept last night as this morning I was excited to be doing my first pre-work canal carp session in well over a month! Hits off perch on light gear have become a





bit of an addiction lately and getting lost along the tow path has been enjoyable but with spring not too far away, I really want to concentrate on my carp angling now. I got the rods out by around 3 am and just managed to dodge the rain. Unfortunately, it was a quiet one and the only thing saving a dry net was a chub... nice to hear the alarm though!

26th February 2017

Yees! Ha ha! I wouldn't normally get excited about a

fish like this, but as it's the first one of the year I'm over the moon ;-) It's also my first one on a pop up (believe it or not) as I favour wafers or bottom baits. Coming at around 7 this morning from the spot I've been baiting up over the last month or so, so I'm glad they're finally on it and though it's probably the least impressive fish I can expect from here, my confidence is up and I'm sure the better ones will follow... in theory at least!!!



6th March 2017

Beautiful start to the day on the canal. Work now... not so beautiful.

6th March 2017

Another first of the year for me this morning with this lovely tench and another sign that spring is on its way. Ideally it would have been a carp but I don't mind the odd tinca now and again especially when they put up a scrap like this one did. Still was a nice way to kick off Monday!

9th March 2017

Chuffed with this one from this morning. Again, another small common but a quality fish in absolutely pristine condition and makes up for the one I lost about half an hour before which I was gutted about. Another nice tench on the bank with it too so not a bad way to spend a couple of hours.

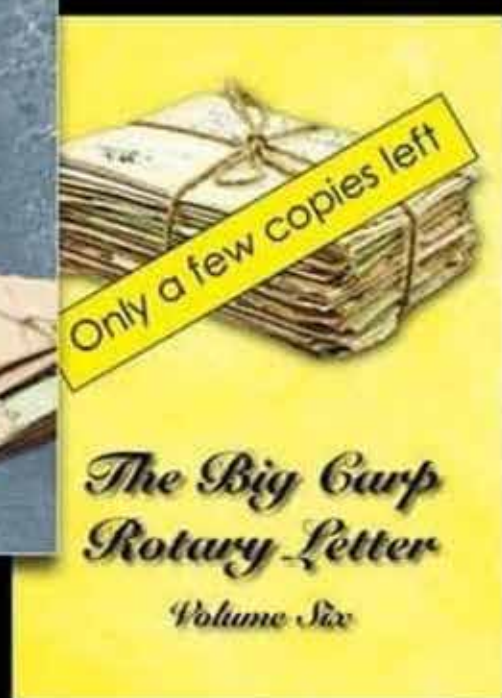
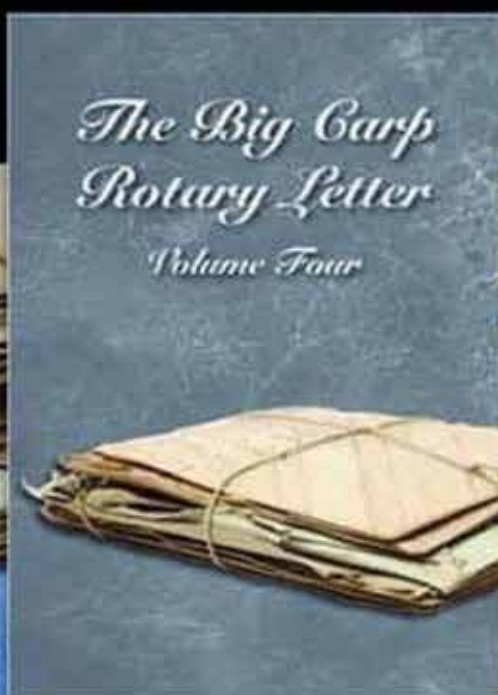
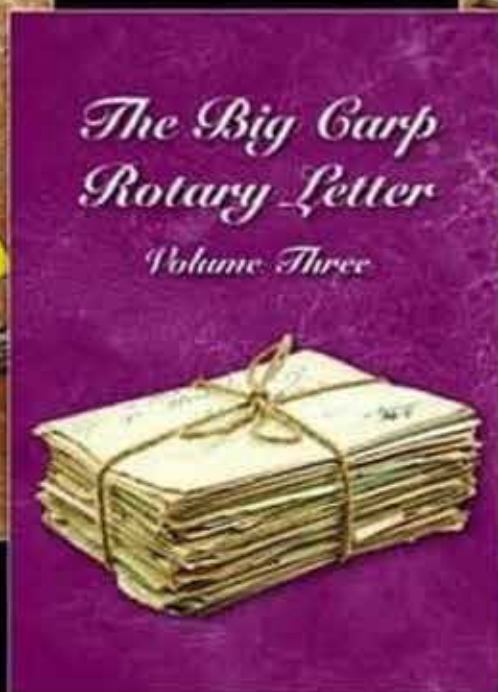
16th March 2017

Blessed with this absolute stunner from this morning! It



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was the best of 2 mirrors on the bank in as many hours. Each spot producing a fish, this being the 2nd of the session. I would have been more than happy with the one so having this chunk just 30 minutes later turned a good session into a great one!!!

17th March 2017

This is the 1st of yesterday's pair which absolutely ripped

off nearly taking the rod with it. Another nice mirror with an old wound on its tail, all adding to the character of these beautiful creatures! Not quite as impressive as the 2nd fish but a stunner all the same!!!

24th March 2017

Some of them are really camera shy! After a steam train of a run initially, this





CATCH REPORTS

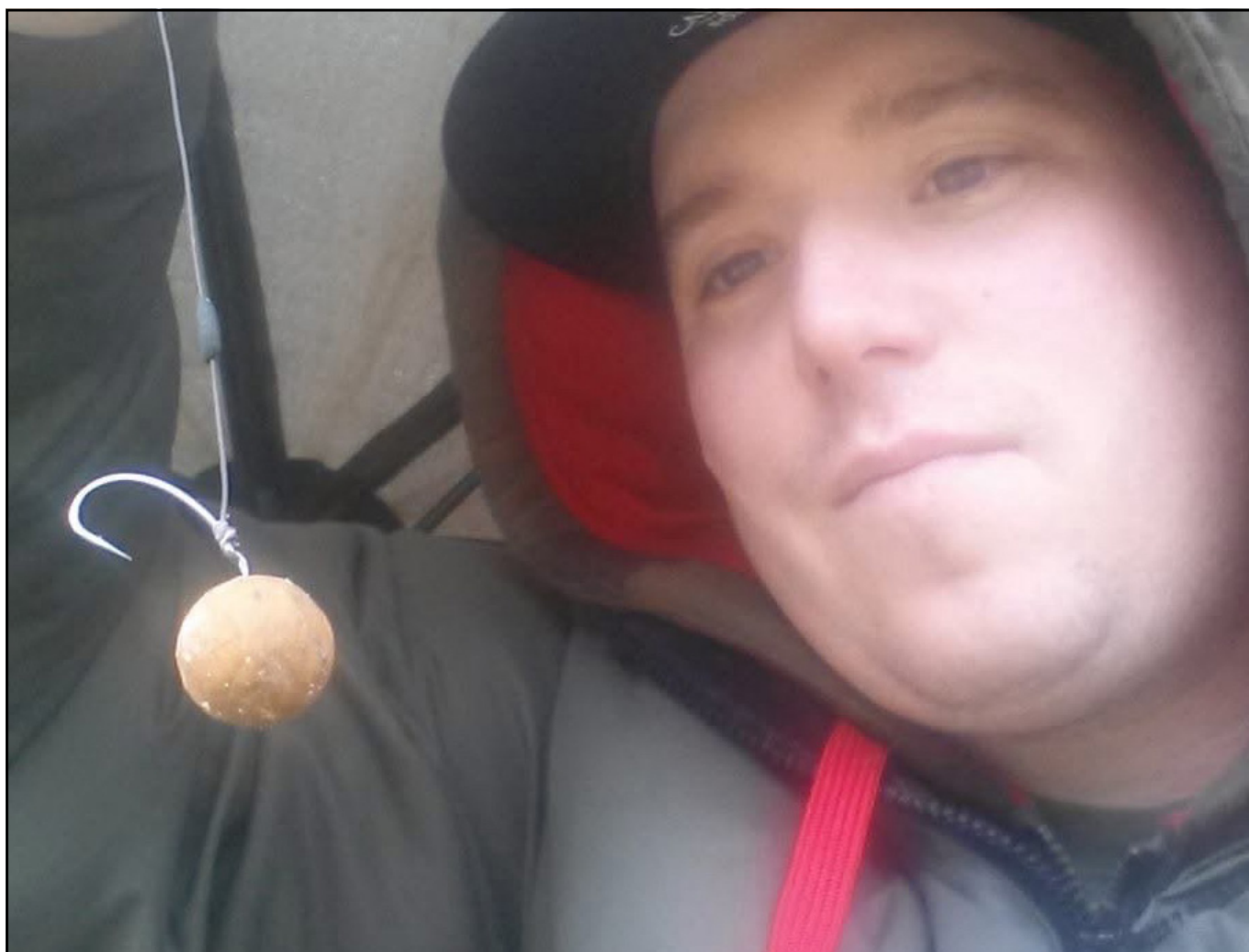
chunky fella did all its fighting on the bank. I managed to snap a half decent pic and away she went. Now go tell grandma where the baited spot is.

1st April 2017

I thought I'd take a second out from blanking to show you my all-time favourite rig that's been doing it for me. Hope you have as much luck as I've had on it.

8th April 2017

Absolutely chuffed to bits with this little chap from earlier. I was back and forward across the canal bridge casting from both sides for around 45 minutes having a right frustrating time, until it had a sudden change of heart and took my tiny piece of free-lined bread. Im sure he hasnt been in the cut for very long, almost certainly a pond fish





but il more than happily take it and being my first surface capture in around 6 years + my first koi mirror!!!

19th April 2017

It's been a quiet couple of weeks for me but I managed to put an end to the short run of blanks when I got stuck into this little stunner earlier.

A super-charged fully that really doesn't know when to give in. We have met before but it's great to see her doing well and besides, you can't chose what picks up the bait.

3rd May 2017

Taking in the morning sun, the best way to start the day!!!

**6th May 2017**

I popped out last thing yesterday to chuck a few handfuls of bait onto a spot I fancied, ready for dropping on it this morning for a few hours. A tree on the far bank was the likely looking spot and after nearly 2 hours of being set up, sure enough I was into this little old fella. I was run straight into a snag and it all went dead for a minute but fortunately came free and ended up safely in the net.

18th May 2017

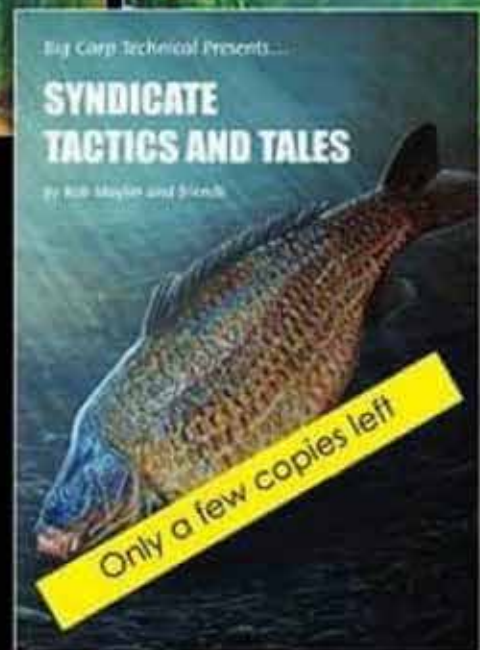
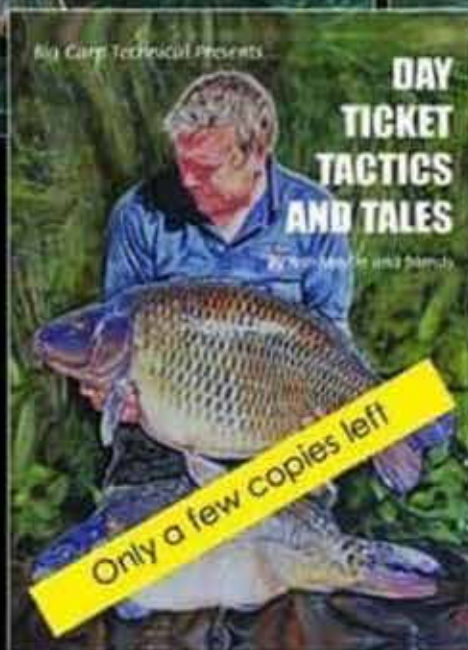
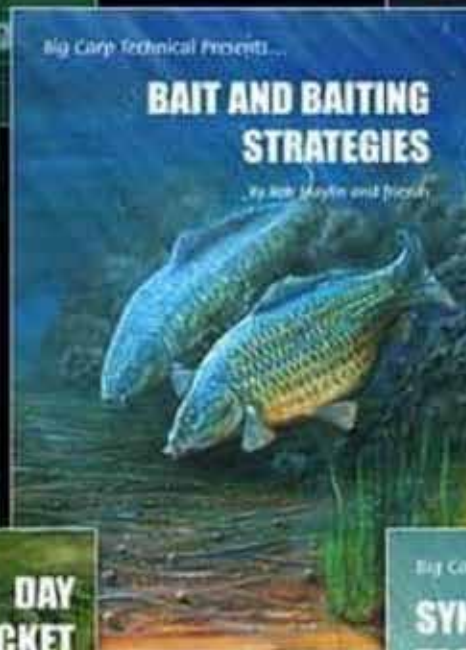
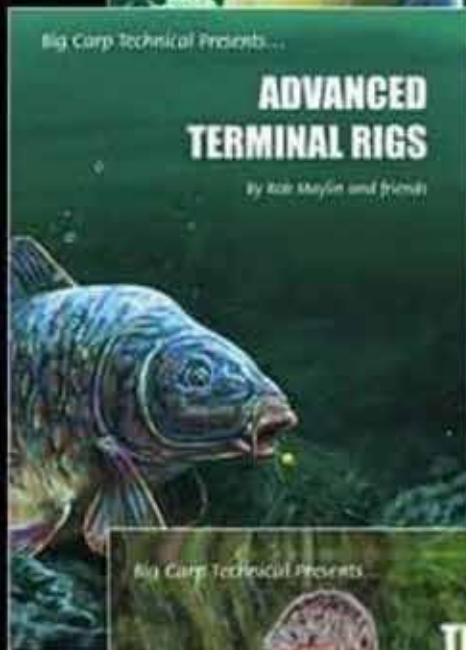
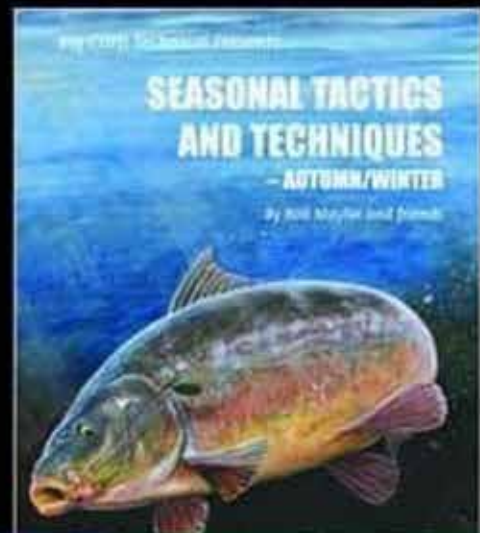
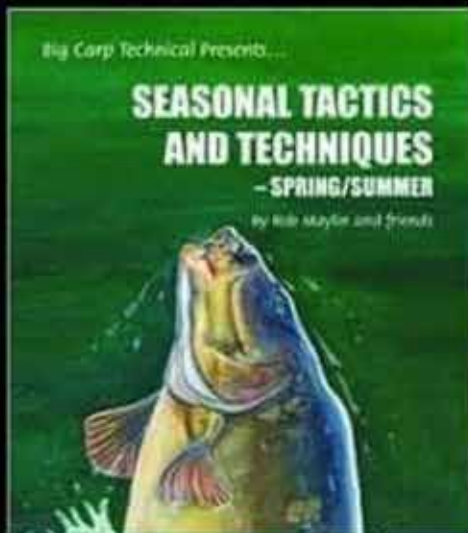
Well happy with this one from this morning. Another fighting fit canal common with a story or 2 to tell by the looks of that tail. Again, rig flicked towards the trees on the far bank with a small scattering of freebies just enough to nick a quick bite before heading off to work, best way to start the day.

28th May 2017

Lost down the canal and not a fish in sight...

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RYAN SWIFT

RECORD BREAKING SESSION

So I'm not sure where to even start!! Last week I headed over to old mill lakes in Lincoln, expecting a couple of bites if I was to get in the right area.

After arriving at the lake, a mate of mine was in a decent swim and was leaving the next morning, he had had 5 bites upto 31 so it was clear the fish was in that area.

The next morning the alarm was set and the gear was

ready to go, getting over to the swim, the main plan was to get the rods out first then set up the broolly ect. Well that never happened as for the first 2 hours I couldn't keep a rod in the water.

Having a week ahead of me I knew I needed to get this going to keep them in the area. Applying small amounts of house bait regular and fishing 13mm yellow hi attract over the top seemed to keep them snuffling about. The second

day I was again into fish early on and the madness began, landing 10 fish that day upto a mind blowing PITCHERS at 63.3, I couldn't believe you luck. From then on I was as averaging around 5-8 fish per day with again some mind blowing fish upto 61lb.

The sessione ended with 37 fish:.

Pitchers 63.03

Shoulders 61lb

Riggers 58.10

Scar 52.10

Vieney 50.09

Spliff 50.08

Paw print 46.10

2x 60s

4x 50s

3x 40s

9x 30s

The session was fished on mainline baits Yellow 13mm essential cell pop ups fished over tiny amounts of lake bait as there is a bait ban in place.

A session i will never forget







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SCOTT SWEETMAN

COLD WATER SUCCESS

With some nice mild temps on their way in, I made a plan to get down to my local winter venue, I had an area in my mind on the way to the lake, which thankfully was free when I arrived and the rest of the lake was pretty busy, after a quick walk round, it was an easy decision to drop in the zone I fancied as it has a shallow area straight in front of the swim, which hopefully the carp would have been creeping onto with the rise in temperature.

I set about finding a couple of spots with a bare lead first, then switching over to a pronged lead to make sure they were clean, maggot hookbaits were sent out on the ever faithful IQ2 D rigs, followed up with a few spods of just straight maggots.

In the early hours of the night the left-hand rod was away, quickly sorting the rod out in the dark recasting and respoding, resulting in



another bite just before first light, unfortunately I lost this due to being cut off on zebra muscles which gather on the shallow area. Again, I redid the rod, topped up with some more bait with the spod and a few hours later I was away again, after this bite I decided to put both rods onto the same spot, followed by a bit more bait. The rods sat motionless all day, until just as the sun was dipping down for the evening, one of the rods was away, I played that fish and almost as soon as I got it in the net, the second rod on the spot burst into life, which resulted with 2 carp in one net.

With the incredible action and the mega weather, I stayed on another night, which resulted in another 2x bites, one in the night and one in the morning. They were all pretty much low 20 – upper 20lb commons, but after a fairly slow winter, were more than welcome





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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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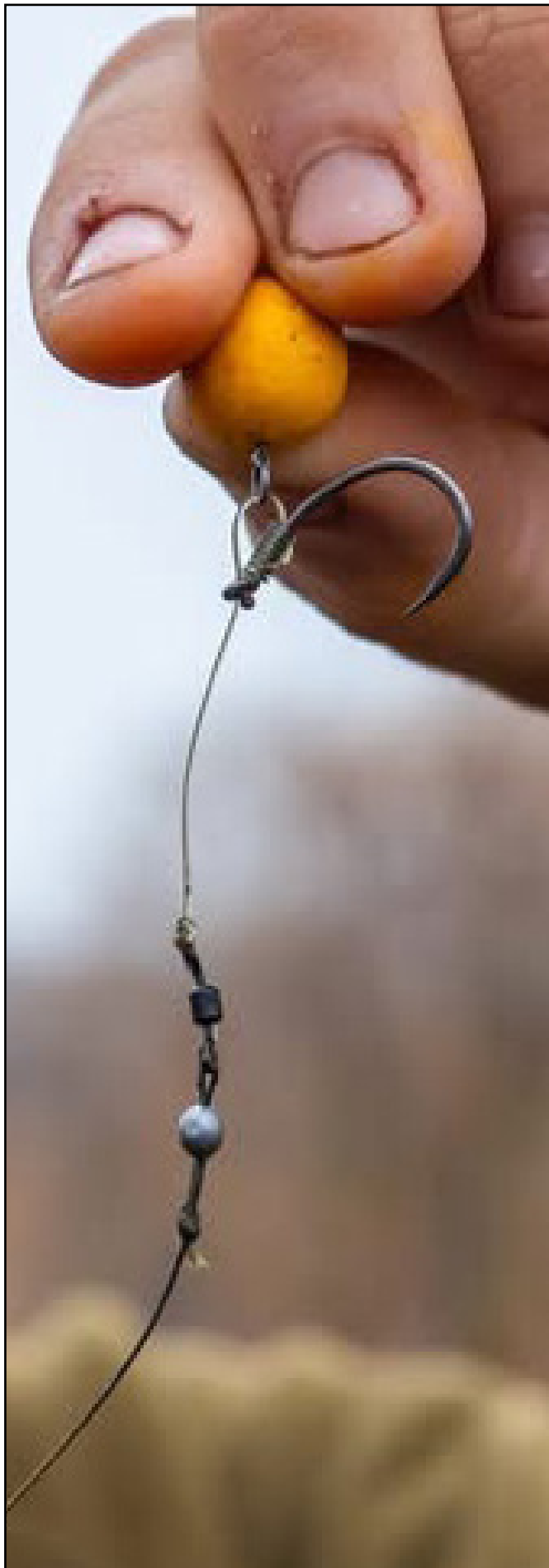


TOM MAKER

NORTH BANK VIRGIN

North Bank was a venue I hadn't fished before and knew very little about, but from the very first chuck it was clear there was plenty of low-lying silkweed across the lakebed — meaning rig choice and presentation were absolutely critical.

Using a bait boat made life easier with supple 20lb Dark Matter braided boom hinge rigs, but the key was ensuring everything was super critically balanced, allowing the hookbait to sink down ever so slowly and settle perfectly on the deck.

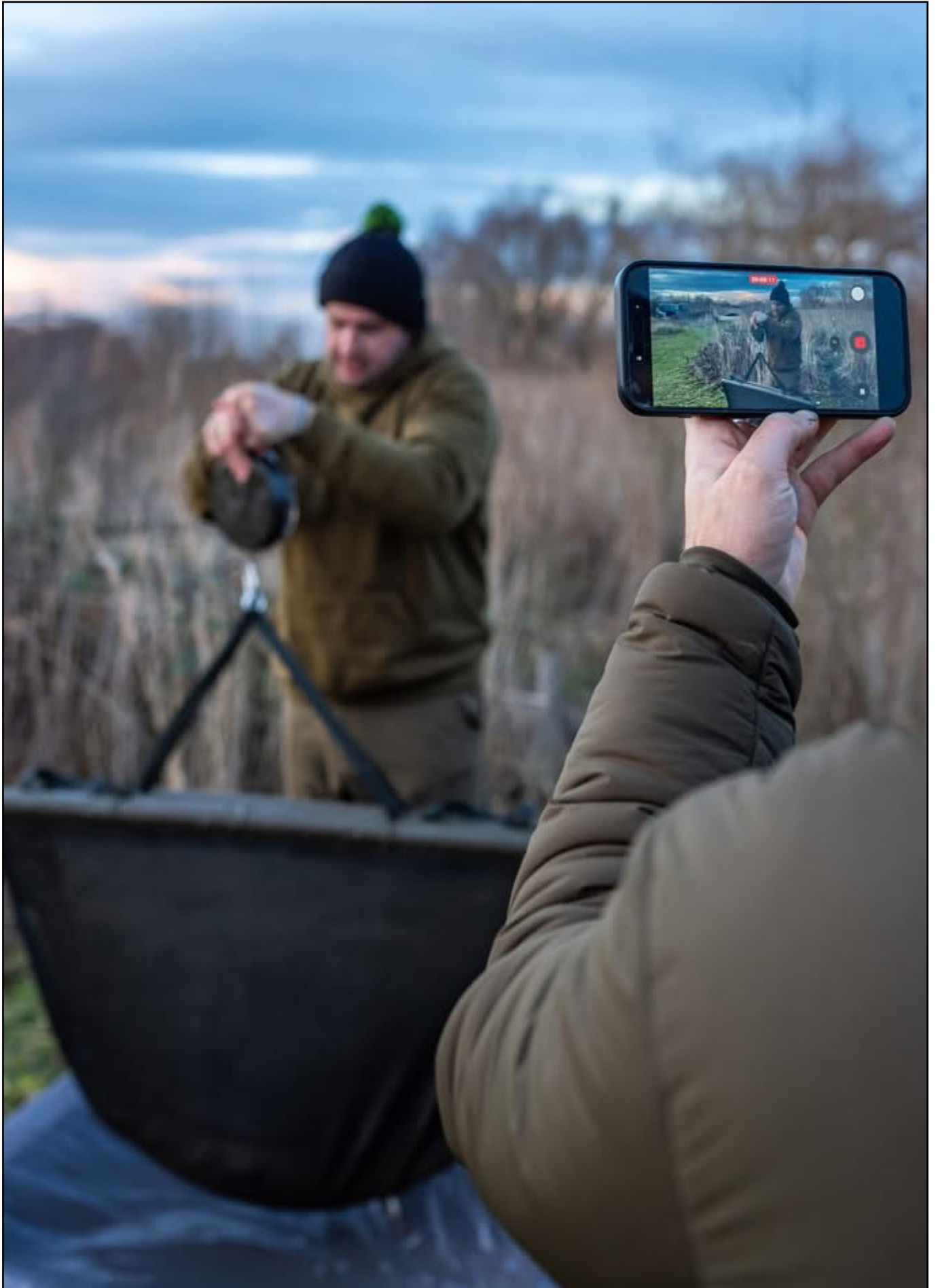


.A light mix of hemp, 2.3mm bloodworm pellets, sweetcorn, and a few halved boilies kept things subtle but effective, resulting in 8 bites - including 'The Peach' one of the best-looking carp in the lake!"

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BIG CARP

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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.

There will never be a collection like this again. Now is your only chance to own the history fish collection.

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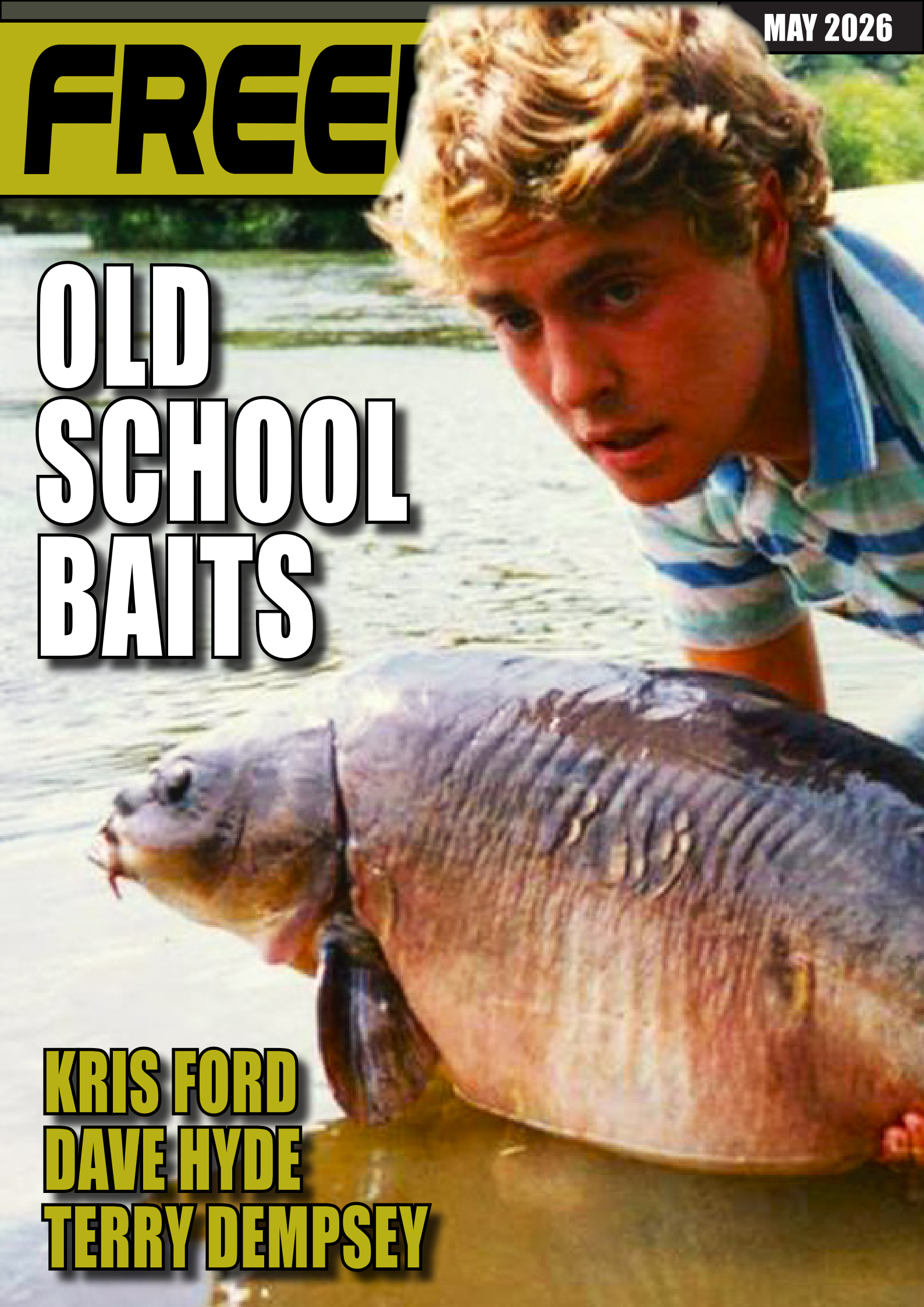


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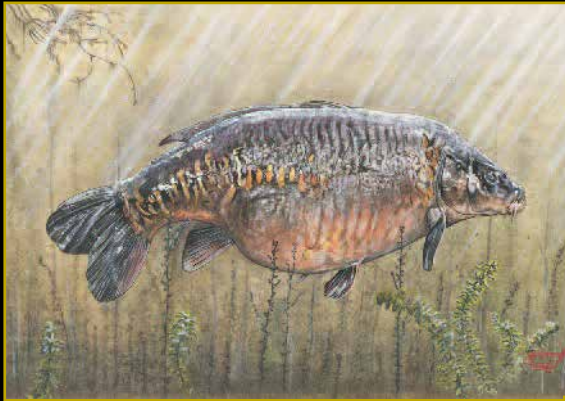
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TERRY DEMPSEY**

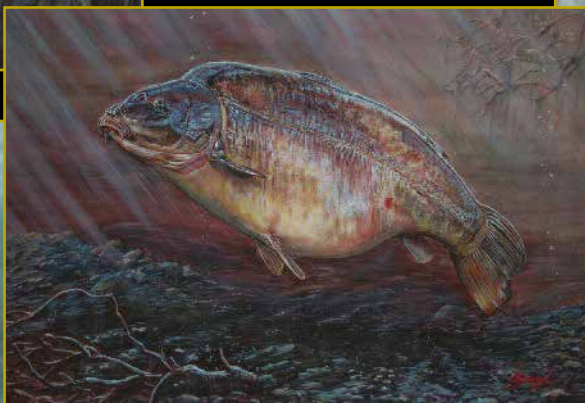


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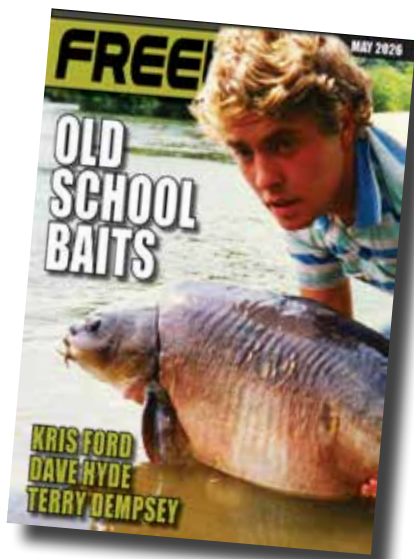
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Editor/Publisher
Rob Maylin
Bountyhunter
Publications
44 Herbs End
Cove, Hampshire
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07768 731425
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Design & Production
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Also available this
month Big Carp issue
358



Front Cover:
A young Terry Dempsey
with a big urban carp



FARMER FINED FOR POLLUTING

Farmer fined for causing the deaths of hundreds of fish. Michael Wade of Higher Melbury Farm, South Yeo, Yeo Vale, Bideford, pleaded guilty at Barnstaple Magistrates Court, and was ordered to pay £4,778 after an investigation into two separate slurry pollution incidents. The Environment Agency used considerable resources and pumping equipment to pump the slurry contaminated water out of the watercourse on to an adjacent field to avoid a more serious incident. Sadly more than 300 dead fish were collected from the watercourse, which included salmonids and lamprey.

8. CARP CHAT

20. CARP SCENE

26. DAVE HYDE

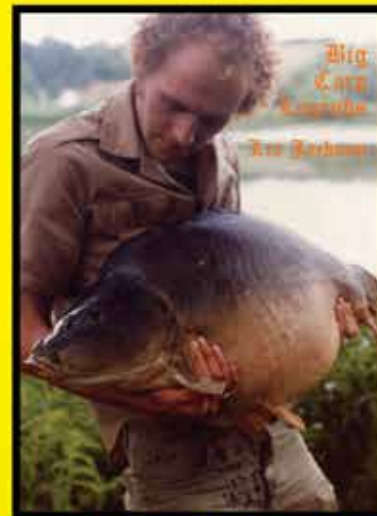
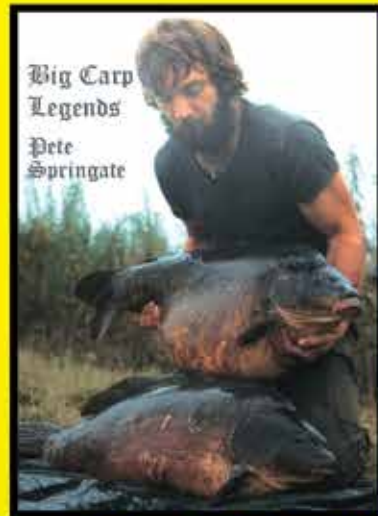
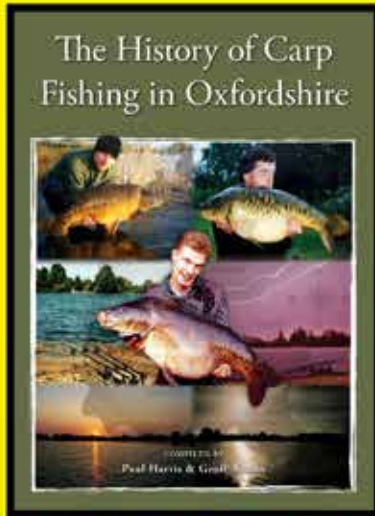
48. KRIS FORD

72. PETER LUCK

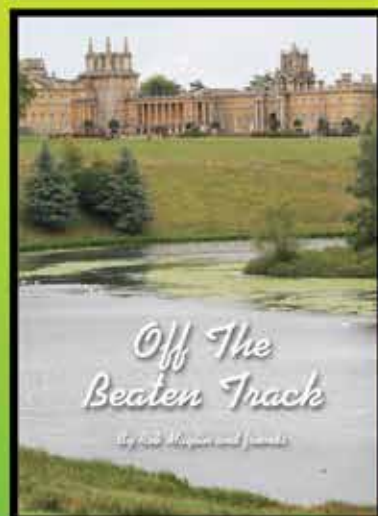
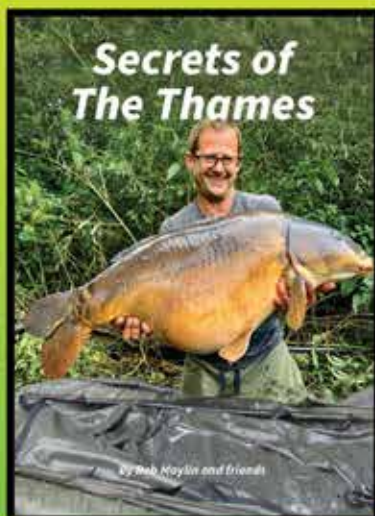
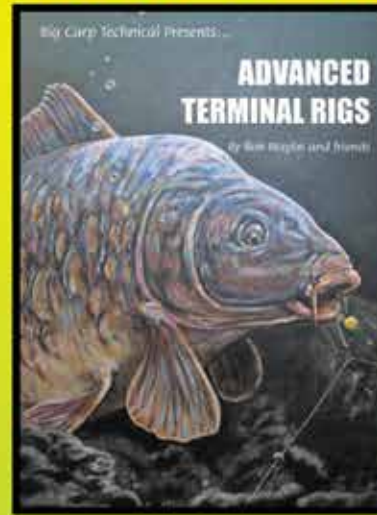
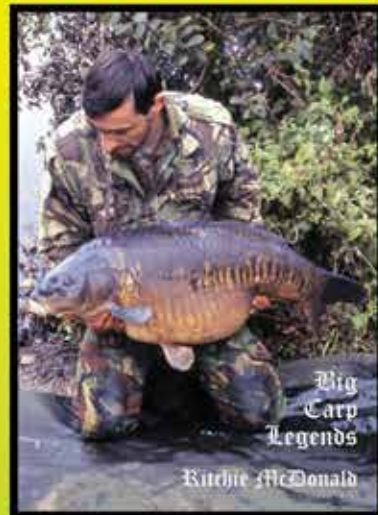
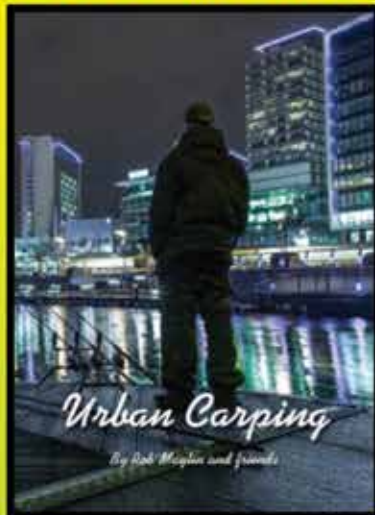
88. TERRY DEMPSEY



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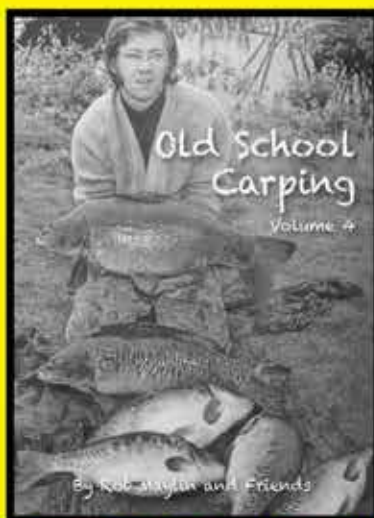
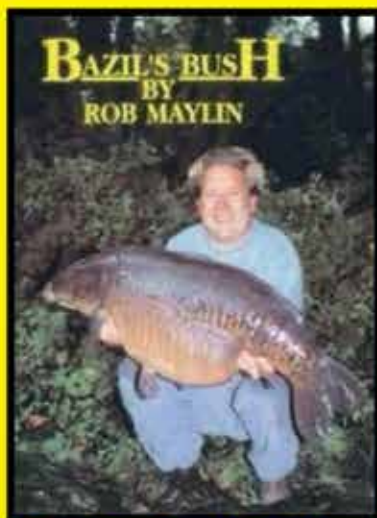


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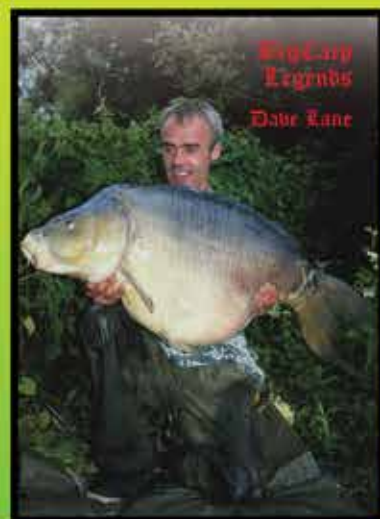
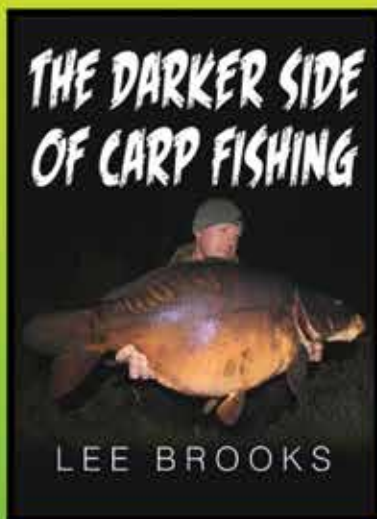
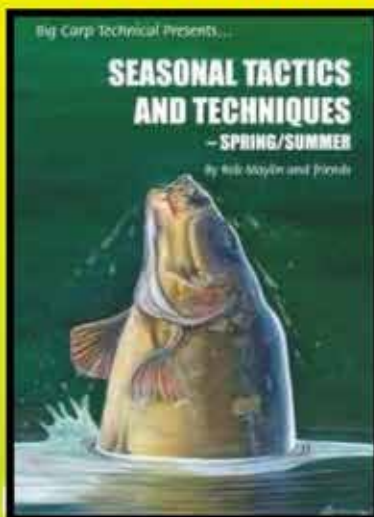
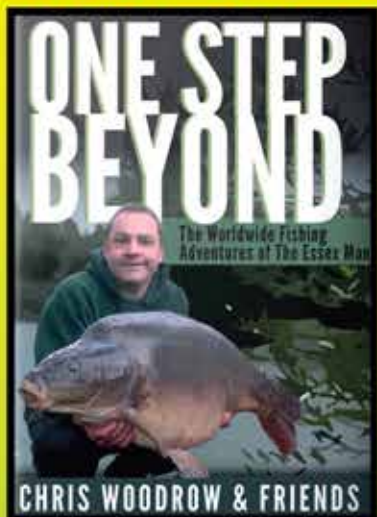


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TRAKKER TEAM UP WITH WCC



Trakker are officially joining the World Carp Classic 2026! A huge partnership for a huge year as we head to the incredible Orellana for what promises to be our biggest event yet.

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Team Members Wanted: We are looking for new UK team members! If you're over 17, passionate about angling and good with a camera, we would love to hear from you. Please contact @leon_soudet via Instagram messages or drop us an email at: promo@mistralbaits.co.uk

BLUEBELL LAKES NEWS

BENSON'S CAFE

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SERVED 17:00PM - 19:30PM

Classic Pie
Choose Steak & Potato or Chicken & Mushroom pie. £10.00
Served with chips, mushy peas and gravy.

Kebab
Choose Doner or Chicken meat served in pitta or naan bread with salad.
Upgrade to Chicken & Doner mix + £2 £10.00

Benson's Special Burger
Three ¼ burgers, Doner meat & 2 Cheese slices £8.50

Hunter's Chicken Burger
Chicken fillet, Bacon, 2 Onion rings, Cheese & BBQ Sauce. £7.50

Beef Burger:	¼ lb	½ lb	Cheese Burger:	¼ lb	½ lb
	£4.00	£5.50		£4.50	£6.50

Add bacon to any burger + £1.00

Chicken Burger £5.00 **Vegetarian Burger** £4.50

All burgers served in a bun, with optional salad and sauce.
Add Chips to any burger for + £2.50

PIZZA: 12"

Cheese & Tomato	- £8
Ham & Mushroom	- £10
Pepperoni	- £10
Meat Feast - Ham, Pepperoni, Chicken	- £10
Vegetarian - Mushroom, Onion, Peppers, Sweetcorn, Tomato	- £10

BREAKFAST

SERVED 08:00AM - 11:30AM

Benson's Bigger Breakfast
3 Sausages, 3 Bacon, 2 Eggs, 2 Hash Browns, Mushrooms, Baked Beans & Toast £12.50

Nemo Breakfast
2 Sausages, 2 Bacon, 1 Egg, 1 Hash Brown, Mushrooms, Baked Beans & Toast £9.50

Sausage, Bacon & Egg Bap £6.00

Sausage Bap £4.50

Bacon Bap £4.50

Egg Bap £4.00

Additional Items:
 Egg - 50p
 Hash Brown - 50p
 Mushrooms - 50p

EXTRAS

Cheese & Garlic Pizza	£8.00
7 Chicken Mini Fillets & Dip	£6.00
Chips & Cheese	£4.00
Large Chips	£4.00
Chips in Pitta	£4.00
Regular Chips	£3.00
Garlic Bread	£3.50
Garlic Bread with Cheese	£4.00
8 Onion Rings	£3.50

DESSERTS

Chocolate Fudge Cake	£3.00
Tennessee Toffee Pie	£3.00
Strawberry Cheesecake	£3.00

DRINKS

Coffee	£2.00
Tea	£1.80
Hot Chocolate	£2.00
Cans	£1.75
Bottle of Water	£1.50
Bottled Soft Drinks	£2.50

OPENING TIMES

	AM	PM
WEDNESDAY	08:00 - 11:30	
THURSDAY	08:00 - 11:30	17:00 - 19:30
FRIDAY	08:00 - 11:30	17:00 - 19:30
SATURDAY	08:00 - 11:30	17:00 - 19:30
SUNDAY	08:00 - 11:30	

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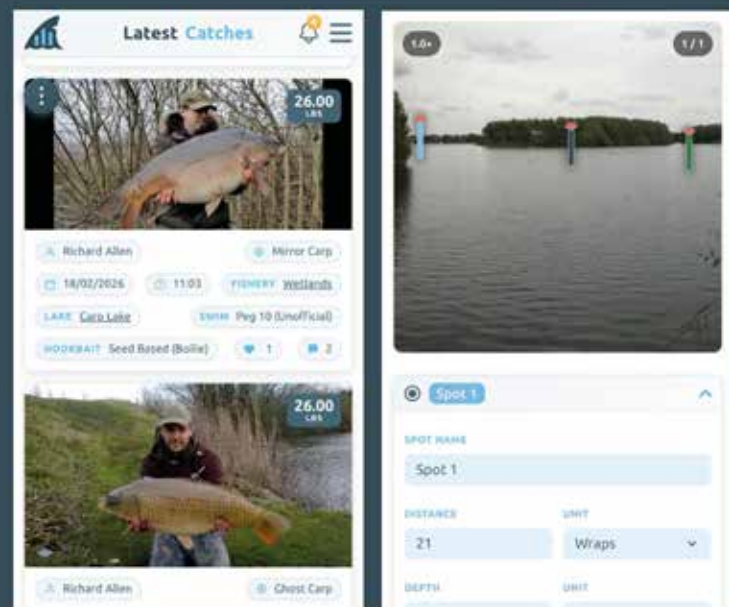


Bensons cafe has reopened. You can place orders from your peg call on 07904660969 and come collect. We've also made some changes elsewhere Lately we have been busy freshening up our tackle zone in the Bluebell Lakes shop. We have expanded the area with new signage - the perfect way to browse your tackle essentials. We might be bias but we think it looks great.

Open for breakfast:
 Weds 8:00am - 11:30am
 Thurs 08:00am - 11:30am
 Fri 08:00am - 11:30am
 Sat 08:00am - 11:30am
 Sun 08:00am - 11:30am

Open for evening meal
 Thurs 17:00pm - 19:30pm
 Fri 17:00pm - 19:30pm
 Sat 17:00pm - 19:30pm

CARP CHAT



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After 50 wonderful years Rovers Fishing Tackle will be closing its doors. We want to thank the generations of anglers, customers and friends who have supported us over the years. Your loyalty, stories and shared love of fishing made this shop something truly special. While this is the end of an era for Rovers Fishing Tackle, we are pleased to share that the shop will continue under new ownership as Tommy's Tackle — and the familiar Rovers staff will still be here to welcome you. This shop may be changing hands, but the memories and community built here will live on. Thank you everyone and best of luck to Tommys Tackle



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An illustration of fishing gear including a fishing rod, a net, and various lures hanging from a shelf. In the background, a window shows two people fishing in a lake at sunset. A purple circular call to action is overlaid on the scene.

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RIP ALAN PARTRIDGE



Very sad to hear of the passing of Alan Partridge, Alan was on the staff here at Rosemere and helped to make it the place it is today, he was also a great friend to many of our members and myself, he will be missed by a huge number of people in the angling world, those that had the pleasure of knowing him will tell you what a true innovator he was, if he needed something to do a job and it didn't exist, he'd invent it he was also a 3rd dan black belt, and way ahead of his time when it came to extreme range casting, one of the oldskool and without doubt a legend of the game. RIP my ole mate, I'll miss our chats and listening to your brilliant stories. From all at The Rosemere Syndicate

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- Web: nitewatches.com

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Size: Handle Length 24cm Pouch Length 16cm

RRP: £19.99

Web: www.thinkinganglers.com



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up the net, add the floatation system and now your carp is safely retained without you having to get it out the water to transfer it to a separate retainer. Less handling of the carp is obviously much safer. The 2 piece pole is super stiff and has a proper screw thread and a screw-in spike on the bottom. You can purchase additional sections to make the net longer and a weigh staff adapter is in the pipe line too. You can even use it as a prodding stick. The landing net arms are made by Century. The whole system comes in a heavy duty bag. You can buy additional mesh and arm kits. The net is head and shoulders above anything else available.

- RRP: from £170
- Web: sharptackle.co.uk



TWO DAYS IN SEPTEMBER

The alarm rang out its tortuous cry at 4.20am. If ever there was a time I could have turned over and gone straight back to sleep, it was then. In addition to the hectic week of work and long journeys, I'd only had 12 hours' sleep in four days. Eventually I managed to crawl out of bed, and with my eyes almost having to be propped open with matchsticks, I drove the half-hour journey to the lake. On arrival, conditions looked perfect – the sky was overcast and the lake deserted. I elected to fish my favourite swim, which was a simple narrow platform jutting out into the water from below a high bank. From this swim I had the great advantage that I could almost cast to any point of the lake and also be able to land fish without the immediate obstacle of snags in front of me. The only disadvantage with this swim was the bushes and trees behind, which made longer casting to the opposite bank a little difficult.

Despite the seemingly good conditions, my first impression as I looked out across the water was that it looked dead. There were no signs of bubbling, rolling or leaping, which normally signified that it would be a good day's fishing. I was a little out

of touch with the feeding times of the fish, as I hadn't fished the lake since the end of June, so I decided the best thing to do would be to fish through until midday and then move onto another lake, which often fished well in the afternoon. Whether I caught fish or not, I wasn't fully in the right frame of mind, and I knew the midday move would be the best thing to do, by which time I would have either had a few hours' sleep or possibly a fish or two, either of which would get me more in the mood for the rest of the session.

One bait was cast to a lily bed about eight yards to the left of my swim and the other to a bloodworm bed 30 yards directly in front of the swim. It was 7.30am before I spotted the first fish bubbling furiously over my right hand bait. A few line bites followed until at 8.30, just as I had given up all hope of staying awake any longer, the Optonic screamed out its battle cry, and I was into a fish. First impressions of its size were underestimated, as it swam straight towards me, but eventually it gathered strength and momentum to give a good fight under the rod tip.

Some five minutes later, it was landed and weighed at 20lb exactly. Not a bad start, I thought... at least the bait seemed to work; in fact thinking back, I should have been very pleased, as it was one of about only three fish that I had never caught from the lake. Still feeling generally knackered and apathetic, I decided to sack the fish and photograph it on departure from the lake, but after five minutes of the fish sending wave after wave of ripples across the flat calm surface, I decided to do it there and then. I left the baits out, knowing that it always went dead for an hour or two after a fish had been landed, and then walked around the lake to the car park to photograph the fish.

The car park was the only place where the bank was wide enough for the camera, fish, me or all three together not to fall into the lake, but just as I had taken the second photo, Sod's law was to strike, as it had done on a number of occasions that season. I knew on this occasion that if I had been sitting by my rods I would never have had a run. Quickly as I could, I wrapped the fish up in the carp sack and placed it on the ground praying that no one would drive into the car park and squash it, and then ran back round the lake to my rods.

By the time I arrived, the run had stopped. The take had occurred on the bait fished to the lily bed, and my immediate thoughts were that it would be a pretty hopeless task trying to get it out of there. I took my time, gathered my breath and calmly began to panic. The rod was lifted and pulled into a good bend. I watched as the whole lily bed moved a yard towards me. One minute the fish rolled on the other side of the lily bed and the next on my side, followed by it leaping completely out of the water, showing me that it wasn't a very big fish.

I pulled and wound as hard as I dared until the fish was safely within the landing net. I could easily recognise the fish from the previous session as one I had caught at about 15lb. The net was pulled up over the front of the swim, leaving the fish in the water, and then as quickly as I could, I ran back round the lake to where the other fish lay. I suppose I wasn't away from the fish for more than about two minutes, but not wanting to add to its misery, I took it to the water's edge to let it swim for freedom. I then gathered up the camera and tripod and returned to my swim.

Fortunately the fish had not towed the net into the water and was lying there perfectly still. The net was lifted from the water,

but as soon as it touched the ground the fish somersaulted, pulling free from the hook and then fell straight into the water. I looked down in amazement, wondering whether I had actually caught a fish or not. Having regained my senses, I recast to the lily bed. I decided my best bet after all the commotion was to recast the other bait to the potamogeton bed on the other side of the lake, a spot which had often produced fish for me at around midday.

The sun was now shining brightly, and the glare from the water was shining directly into my eyes. Behind my swim, I had the disadvantage of the trees and bushes, which had grown considerably since my last visit and made it difficult to obtain the swing required to get the bait to the correct position, so with a quick flick from the wrist, I punched the lead out. It seemed to be going forever, and eventually I had to check the line. It was a total miscast with the bait landing in a perfect position under a bush on the opposite bank. In all the years the lake had been fished, I bet no one had ever managed to cast to that spot, being virtually impossible from all angles. It certainly had to be worth leaving the bait there for half an hour or so, even though the chances of managing to land anything from there looked slim with a potamogeton bed five yards to one side and extending about 25 feet out from the bank, and to the other side a lily bed.

I didn't have to wait half an hour though; no sooner had I sat down and wiped the sweat from my brow than the Optonic sounded and the indicator lifted slowly to the top of the needle. I struck as quickly as I could. At first I couldn't feel anything, but gradually the rod began to bend. I wound down, lifted the rod again and then walked as far back up the bank as I could,

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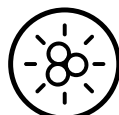
For the past year, Gareth De La Torre, Endurance Athlete, Author & Charity Fundraiser has tested his HAWK watch on some of the UK's toughest endurance events, running, rucking, climbing. He'll be participating in this years TCS London Marathon, raising funds for the Royal Marines Charity, wearing military boots and carrying 40lbs!

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FREELINE 31

leaning backwards into a blackberry bush. I could feel the fish desperately trying to gain sanctuary in the potamogeton, and the rod was by now almost forming a complete loop. I held the fish like that for a good two minutes, which doesn't sound long until you've actually tried it. Those minutes were nerve wracking to say the least, and I lost count of the prayers, for it was obviously a good fish, but eventually the fish swirled on the surface just within the first few leaves and then turned and made its way towards the lily bed. Against all the mechanics, I wound against the full bend of the rod and just managed to turn the fish before it reached the lilies.

Once that snag was negotiated, I knew that bar the hook pulling, the fish was mine, but it was still a full twenty minutes before the fish was finally in the net. In all the years I've spent carp fishing, I've never known a carp to fight like that one did. Not wanting the same to happen to this fish as the last one, I bit through the line and dismantled the arms of the net. I couldn't resist the temptation to weigh it there and then despite the fact that I had caught the fish the previous season at 27lb. I watched the scales as they clipped round well into the red... 27... 28... 29... 30 and finally rest at 30lb 8oz. I suppose in the heat of the moment, I temporarily forgot that the landing net weighed considerably more than the weighing sling, but realisation soon came, and the fish was weighed correctly at 27lb 12oz. I was dead chuffed to say the least.

It's amazing the way a few fish can change your whole frame of mind – forgotten was the tiredness. I didn't even care that I had a bum full of blackberry bush thorns, and for the first time in my life, my arms were actually aching through landing carp. I just couldn't believe what was happening; in fact I had

to pinch myself to see if I was really awake. It was a lake where the fish normally spooked very easily, and yet I'd been running up and down the bank and landing fish, all of which had made a few splashes, and yet they seemed to be going absolutely bananas. I sacked the fish in the car park swim and then walked back to my rods with the intention of bringing them in while I photographed the fish. Sod's Law had a habit of heading in my direction, and one panic in a day was quite enough for me.

When I arrived back, I could hardly believe what I was seeing; there was my rod jumping up and down in the bush at the front of the swim. As I lifted the rod, it met with the full force of it heading for the other side of the lake. Yet again, it was aching arms until yet another twenty was brought to the net. Well as you can imagine, if I had to pinch myself before, it was almost worth a thump in the mouth now to make sure that I was really conscious. The fish was weighed at 23lb 11oz, and then I went about the rigmarole of trying to photograph two fish together. Once back in my swim, I had to sit for 15 minutes or so just so that I could take it all in and also have a well-earned cup of coffee. The next two hours dragged past slowly without further action. It's strange the way your mind adapts to fast fishing, and during those two hours, I must have recast each rod three times in search for more feeding fish, when usually one cast would have sufficed. By midday, somewhat reluctantly, I decided to make my departure for the next lake and hopefully a couple more fish.

I arrived and was set up by 1pm. Conditions for the lake looked hopeless. The sky was now clear with not the slightest sign of a cloud in sight. The wind had picked up considerably



in strength to a force 5 and was blowing directly from the west. It was the exact opposite of the conditions I knew to be good for the lake, namely a very overcast sky with a southerly or northerly wind that would blow the full length of the long, narrow lake. I elected to fish a swim a third of the way along the lake at the point where the lake narrowed from 30 yards to 25 yards wide. One bait was cast to the opposite bank as close as possible to a reed bed whilst the other was simply lowered into the water to the left of the swim under an overhanging bush. The bedchair was pulled out of sight, and I sat back and relaxed with a cup of coffee.

Twenty minutes passed, and I could feel myself drifting into sleep when a sudden loud continuous beep sent me flying from the bed chair just in time to save the rod from being dragged into the water. It was always the same on this lake – every fish would always tear away so quickly that the reel handle could never keep up with it. As the rod was lifted, it instantly took up the curve as the fish made its way along the bank towards a lily bed. I immediately put a halt to its progress, making it clear from the start that there was no way it would be allowed to get there. The fight then developed in open water. It was a total contrast to the other lake, being able to let the fish take line from the clutch and still know that I was in total control. I fully appreciated those few minutes, enjoying every second of it until finally the fish rolled on its side and I drew it towards the waiting net. The fish was weighed at 20lb 12oz.

I felt as if I had kicked the winning goal in the FA Cup Final. If it wasn't for the fact that there had been other anglers on the lake, I would probably have been jumping up and down. OK, it wasn't a big fish by any standards, and on any other

day it would have probably been considered just another scraper twenty, but to be part of a four-twenties catch from two different lakes in the space of just 5½ hours' fishing, it felt absolutely great. It was just like catching my first twenty over again, a feeling of total euphoria, but little did I know that there was more... a lot more... to come. I gave it another hour in that swim before moving 20 yards down the bank, knowing that it often paid off to move after catching a fish at short range. The wind had by now increased in strength and had changed in direction to a north westerly.

By 5.30pm I was once again beginning to feel the effects of tiredness and was suffering from a splitting headache caused by the strong wind blowing directly into my face. I decided to give it half an hour more before moving back to the lake I had fished that morning. A last cast was made to the opposite bank to a place where I had seen a few ripples emerge from under a bush. A few minutes later, a few more ripples emerged followed by a bow wave, and at the same time, the Optonic screamed out. I hadn't really anticipated any action, and I was in a fairly hopeless position to land anything, having two large beds of lilies between the fish and me. I walked along the bank, holding the rod as high as possible to take the line over some bushes to a point two swims away in order to get enough side strain to pull the fish away from the first bed of lilies, and then having achieved that, I then had to walk four swims in the opposite direction in order to avoid the second lily bed. It all sounds simple on paper, but it certainly wasn't. Every time I tried to avoid the second bed of lilies, the fish swam back to the first and vice versa.

I must have been running up and down the bank for a full 30

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minutes before the fish was in enough open water for me to bring it to the net, Oh, did I say net? What net? That was 20 yards along the bank, totally forgotten about in the confusion. The fish was still too close to the lilies simply to put the rod down for a minute and to go and get it, so there was only one thing to do and that was to jump into the water, scoop the fish up in my arms and then clamber back to the bank. The fish was well worth the soaking, though, a beautiful long mirror of 25lb 6oz.

The time was now 7.30pm, the sun had sunk low in the sky, and it was time to move back to the lake I had fished that morning to get set up before darkness drew in. It was a welcome change not to have the cold wind blowing into my face. In fact the lake was so well sheltered that the only sign that there was any wind at all could be seen by the first few autumn leaves that had been blown from the trees and lay floating on the surface.

Once again the lake was deserted and absolutely peaceful, and despite the clear sky and cool evening I felt that chances of catching seemed good. There were no signs of any bubbling or fish rolling again, but from experience of the previous season, I knew my chances would most probably come around midnight, which would give me a chance to get a few hours' sleep. I sat awake until about 10.30pm without hearing a single fish move, and by this time, I had convinced myself that the lack of activity was going to signal a night without action.

The kettle was placed on the stove for the last time before getting my things sorted out so that I could settle down for the night when I looked down to see a large slug perched on top of the milk carton and another one climbing the sides to

join it. By the time the kettle had boiled, the slugs had gone, thank god! I hate the things. With the coffee finished I settled down, quickly shining the torch around the sleeping bag to make sure that none of the slugs had crawled inside, but fortunately I could see them back on the milk carton again. I can remember just as I was dozing off thinking that the milk must attract them.

I had only been asleep for about 30 minutes when the Optonic sounded for the first time during the night, and a common of about 15lb was soon landed. I had two other fish in what seemed fairly quick succession, one about 16lb and the other about 18lb. So far all the action had come to the left hand rod, which had been fished to the lily bed about eight yards away. I hadn't had so much as a line bite on the other rod fished two yards to the right of the swim under a bush, which was hardly surprising considering the amount of times I had been jumping up and down to land fish. Because of this, I decided to recast to another area further from the bank. I put my hand into the bait bag only to find a rather big and slimy boilie, and on looking closer I could see it was a huge slug. The torch was shone into the bag to reveal about a dozen of them eating my bait. I now realised what they had been doing - climbing up the milk carton, crawling onto the rucksack and then into the bait bag. Not only had I developed a good bait but probably the ultimate slug attractor as well. The offenders were soon removed with the aid of forceps and thrown in the lake for groundbait and then the bait bag was flung from the highest branch I could find. I recast to somewhere into the wet bit. Where it landed, I'll never know, and to tell you the truth I wasn't too bothered. All that I wanted at that particular

moment was a few hours' undisturbed sleep.

I always have very vivid dreams when I'm fishing, sometimes even nightmares, and this one was probably half way between the two. I awoke with a start to find the Optonic was indeed bleeping slowly and the indicator was crawling to the top of the needle. I leapt from the bedchair, managing to attach myself to one of the ribs of the umbrella and struck firmly. At first the fish didn't even realise it had been hooked, and if it wasn't for the fact that I was battling to free myself from the umbrella, which was firmly caught in the sleeve of my jumper and at the same time try to free my feet from a tangled sleeping bag, I probably would have landed the fish straight away.

The carp soon realised something wasn't quite right and had gathered up considerable strength as it swam frantically from one side of the swim to the other. It was no spectacular fight, but after five minutes or so, I began to realise that it was bigger than I had thought. I could still hardly move at this stage, being stuck on a narrow platform and one big tangled mess of sleeping bag, and wool from the jumper sleeve, which was now receding at a rate of knots in the panic to free it. Eventually everything was sorted out, by which time the fish had totally given up and done everything bar throw itself on the bank, unhook itself and climb in the carp sack.

I could see it was another twenty but decided to leave the weighing part of the operation until the morning. Venus was already high in the sky, and daybreak was close. By now I had had a total of 16 hours' sleep in the past five nights. I hadn't eaten for over a day, something that had been totally forgotten in all the excitement. My umbrella was wrecked and tangled in a few hundred feet of wool, which was once the sleeve of

my jumper, and I had a bum full of blackberry bush thorns, which made it feel as if I was sitting on a pineapple, and yet I was as pleased as Punch. I had by now caught ten fish in the past twenty hours of fishing, six of them over 20lb and for a total weight of over 200lb; in fact the two waters between them only held nine twenties, so I considered that I hadn't done badly at all. I've had two twenties in a session on a good number of occasions and twice had three but to take six in a session was certainly beyond my wildest dreams. I fell asleep for a couple of hours before the heat of the early morning sun woke me.

It was a beautiful morning, for sunbathing that is, but certainly not carp fishing. I strained my eyes to peer out across the lake, which was difficult with both the sun at a low angle and the reflection from the water. Nothing was moving, not even bubbling over the usual areas. I sat watching for about three quarters of an hour whilst enjoying several cups of coffee and then decided to retrieve the baits and weigh the fish caught a few hours previously.

Photographing the fish proved difficult. I could hardly even focus my eyes let alone the camera. Having taken a few snaps, I then returned the not so beautiful looking mirror of 22lb 7oz to fight another day, which no doubt it would, and fairly soon as well, as it was the mug fish of the lake. The previous season that fish had become quite a pest to me. During the space of eight short sessions, I had caught it six times and hooked and lost it on the other two. It was a standing joke at the time that I used to keep it in my rucksack and take it out and hook it up on arrival each session. Well, that certainly wasn't true, but I'm sure that if fish could have grown legs

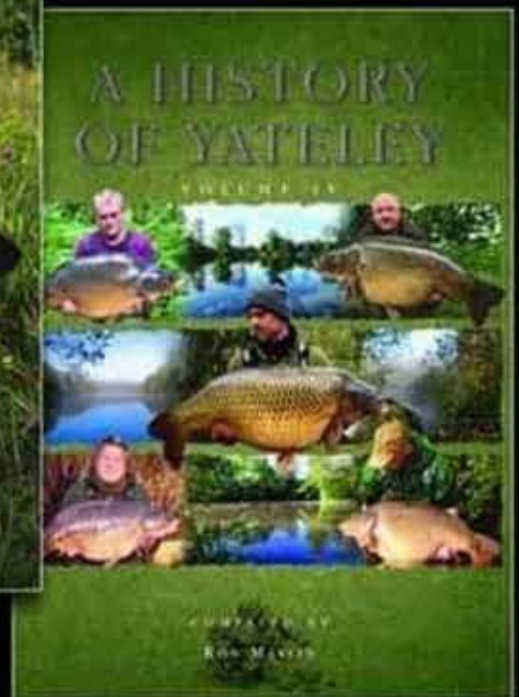
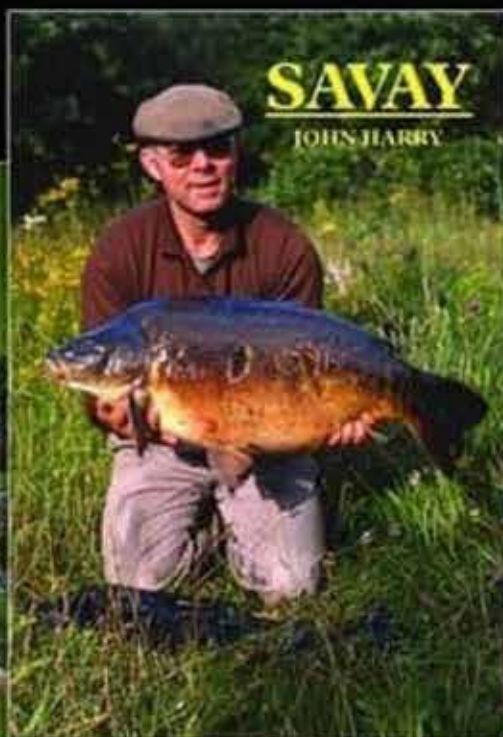
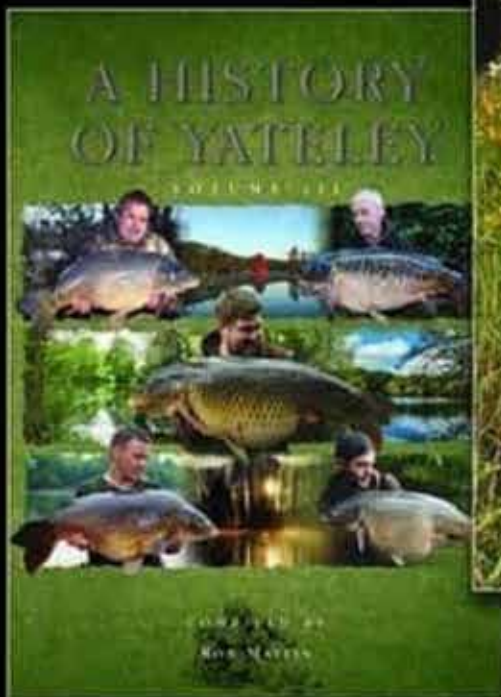
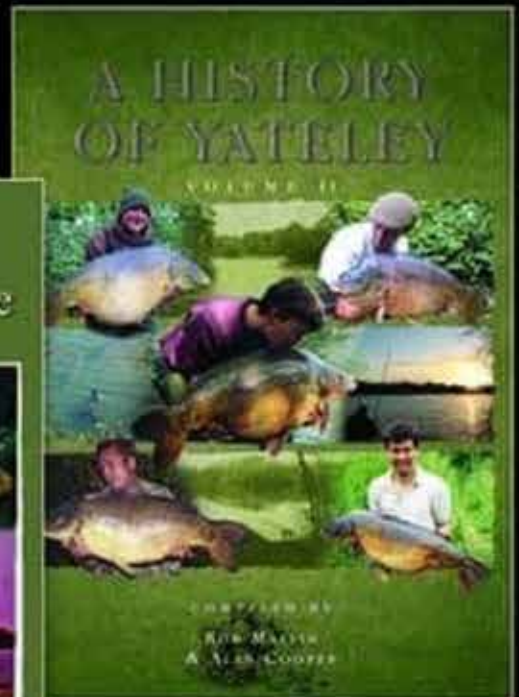
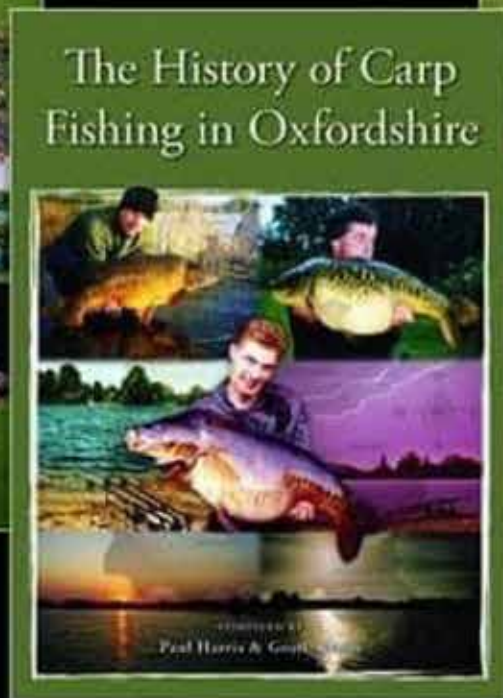
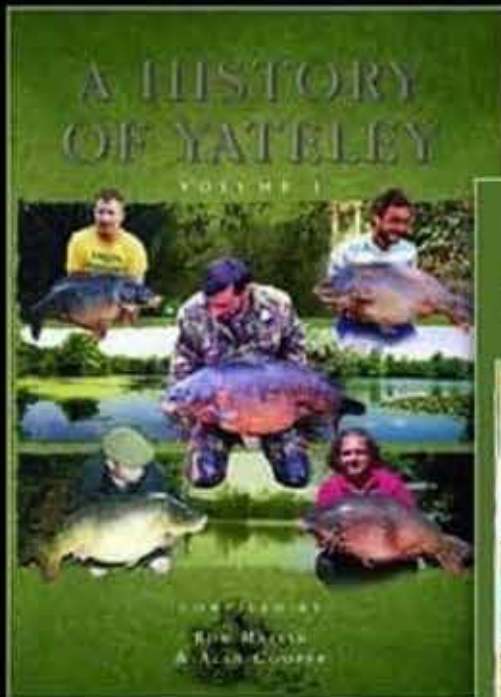
it would have willingly followed me home to live in my bait cupboard. However, mug fish or not, it didn't really matter. The way I felt, it could have been the first time I caught it.

The next two hours dragged by slowly and turned out to be very uncomfortable. The sun was shining directly into my face. Such things as sunglasses had been thrown away in disgust, as it had rained every day since I bought the damn things. I had stripped down to my underpants in order to cool down from the intense heat. In fact it was quite a cool day, but the swim was so well sheltered from the wind and formed such a good suntrap that it was never the place to fish on a sunny morning. I can remember fishing the swim one day in November a couple of years ago and having to strip down to my pants on that occasion, the temperature in the swim being over 80F, although the actual air temperature was only 13C.

Wasps and flies started to buzz round me continuously. Had anyone arrived at that moment, they would have most probably thought I was a complete loony, sitting there almost starkers and continually waving my arms and legs around. In the end there was only one way out, so I crawled under the sleeping bag, setting my alarm clock for 11 o'clock just in case I fell asleep.

I was just beginning to doze off when I suddenly noticed a strange burning smell. Peering out from beneath the sleeping bag, I could see the lake was completely enveloped in a thick cloud of smoke, and behind me I could hear the loud crackling sound of fire. My first thoughts, being in a rather sleepy daze, was that the thick copse of bushes behind me was on fire, but fortunately I realised that it was the stubble in the field behind being burnt off before I gathered up all my tackle and jumped in the lake. I managed to sit it out for half an hour

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before I had finally had enough.

With my throat stinging and eyes streaming, I threw my gear in the car to head for the other lake. Such was my desire to get away quickly, I didn't even bother to get dressed. The car was driven down to the gate, and it was there that it became obvious that it was just not going to be my day. Just as I was unlocking the gate, one of the other members arrived with his wife. What a fool I felt standing there in just my pants and a pair of size 10 waders. If ever there was a time I wished the ground could have swallowed me up it was then.

Some short while later, I arrived at the other lake. There were three or four cars in the car park, which was disappointing to say the least. I feared the best swims would be taken, but fortunately an angler was just vacating what I would have considered to be the best swim in the conditions of that day, although no swim really seemed that it would be very productive in the clear blue sky and cool northwesterly wind. I had fished the lake on and off for about a year, and one thing that I did know was that it hardly ever fished well on such days.

Rather than move around from swim to swim as I often did on this lake, I decided that if I was going to catch at all, I would be best off staying put in one spot. At this stage, I knew the best I could hope for was only one or two more fish, but despite the seemingly poor conditions, I felt the chances of picking up one of the better ones was quite good, for I had found from previous sessions that the bigger fish seemed to feed on most days and could be caught providing you fished the right area. Both baits were cast to the opposite bank, dropping them about a foot short of the reeds. I then sat down and gorged myself on a two-day supply of food all in one go – six bread

rolls filled to capacity with soft cheese, followed by a tin of ravioli, barbeque beans and chilli con carne followed by four apple pies and all washed down with five cups of coffee.

Having eaten, I felt considerably better, or for a while at least. Now all that was needed was a few zeds to get really in the mood again. I had just settled down and was beginning to doze off when suddenly I could hear beep beep beep beep. I flew out of the bedchair to realise it was the alarm clock. I'm sure the designer of the thing must have been a carp angler, for it sounded just like the high pitch of the Optonic, just the thing to get you out of bed every morning in time for work, but it never did. However, when I was fishing, it always had the same dramatic effect, sending me sprawling across the ground wondering which rod to strike. On this occasion, I was in no humorous mood to say the least, and the damn thing was thrown straight in the drink. It's probably still down there going beep beep beep beep even now.

Three hours later, having sat through another session of stubble burning in the field opposite, an abortive pick up on the left hand bait, two or three anglers coming round for a chat and the farmer's dog having run straight through my rods and then proceeding to try and lick me to death, I'd given up all hope of getting any sleep, so I just sat back enjoying the early autumn sunshine. The previous day had been so hectic that I hadn't had time to notice the leaves turning pale autumn shades of yellows and golds. It gave me time to realise that carp fishing is not only about putting carp on the bank. It turned out to be just the tonic I needed, and once again I was in the mood. A fish moved into my swim shortly afterwards, frantically bashing the reeds from one side to another, and I

knew my chance was soon to come.

Two hours later and also two casts later, placing the bait ever closer to the reeds, and I was still waiting, although the carp was still there. Once again I could feel my eyes beginning to close when suddenly the Optonic sounded and the indicator cracked up against the rod. As I lifted the rod, I could see the angle of the line across the water, and fortunately the fish was swimming away from the reeds. As I walked backwards into the field behind me in order to try to pull the fish towards me and away from danger, the fish suddenly turned. The rod just simply bent and bent until even the butt was bending. Suddenly I saw one of the outside reeds knock, and then followed a loud crack as the line broke sending me flying over backwards onto the ground.

It's easy to overestimate the size of fish, especially when they get away, but I know well what a big fish feels like on hooking it, and I would have willingly bet all my tackle that the lost fish would have been a real cracker. I suppose the disappointment of losing the fish was made even greater as I had been expecting a run for the past two hours as I watched the fish lurking over my baits. However, it was lost, and there was no use in crying over spilt milk. I kept telling myself that for the next four hours!

Darkness arrived, and the lake fell flat calm. The air hung heavy with the smell of smoke, the result of national stubble burning day. I stayed awake for a couple of hours after dark to listen for any signs of rolling fish, but there were none, which was unusual for that lake. I was awoken six times during the night – three times with the cold, for

it turned out to be the first ground frost of the autumn, once for a line bite and twice to land fish, both commons, one of about 13lb and the other about 15lb.

I woke the following morning at about 7.30am, feeling at least a little refreshed for a few hours' sleep. I recast for the last time and threw out the remainder of the bait. It wasn't long before a fish arrived on the scene, bashing the reeds from one side to the other, but time ran out on me. I had promised I would be home at 9.00, and it was already 9.30. If I could have stayed another hour, I felt sure that I would have caught that fish, but it didn't really seem to matter... there was always another day.





REVELATIONS- HOW IT WAS

In the beginning God created the water and the fish, and it was good. Then God created the light, and so came Walker and his rod, and it was also good. Man was told that carp were too hard to catch, and life was too short to bother pursuing them. Dick Walker and his comrades in the Carp Catchers Club (CCC) began in earnest to study and pursue carp primarily in the few lakes in the Home Counties that held the elusive fish. This band of merry men were achieving some success and had begun to dispel the “uncatchable” label that had been attributed to them. The successes of the CCC grew, and as they spread further afield, Redmire Pool (Bernithan Court) in Herefordshire was discovered and ultimately surrendered

KRIS FORD



to Dick what was arguably the pinnacle of his career a record common carp of 44lbs, Clarissa as she became known, on the 13th September 1952.

Almost a year to the day before Dick' momentous capture, I was born. He was totally unaware of this at the time. Like so many before me, I started to fish at an early age. For me this was as a three-year-old led and coached by my father on a farm pond in Headcorn, Kent. A diet of minnows, sticklebacks, rudd and perch kindled and stoked the fire that was to become a lifetime's obsession. In those days of never ending summers, it was safe for an eight to twelve-year-old to be alone on a riverbank. From our home in Gillingham where my father had his antique and auction business, I could safely catch a bus to Maidstone and then another out to Teston, Wateringbury or Yalding on the River Medway. As I got older but still at primary school, I switched to my pushbike and used to make the journeys more independently.

Teenage years were swallowed up all too soon by family travels to Australia and New Zealand where focus was mainly on surfing and football, both of which I was quite good at despite a couple of close encounters with death on the surfboard. Fishing focus was only taken care of by saltwater fishing, which by its very nature was mainly for the table.

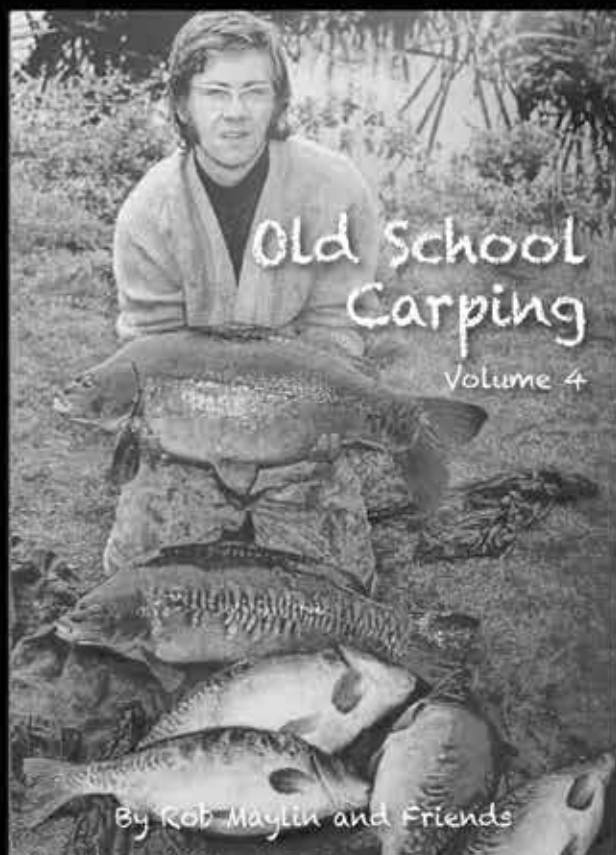
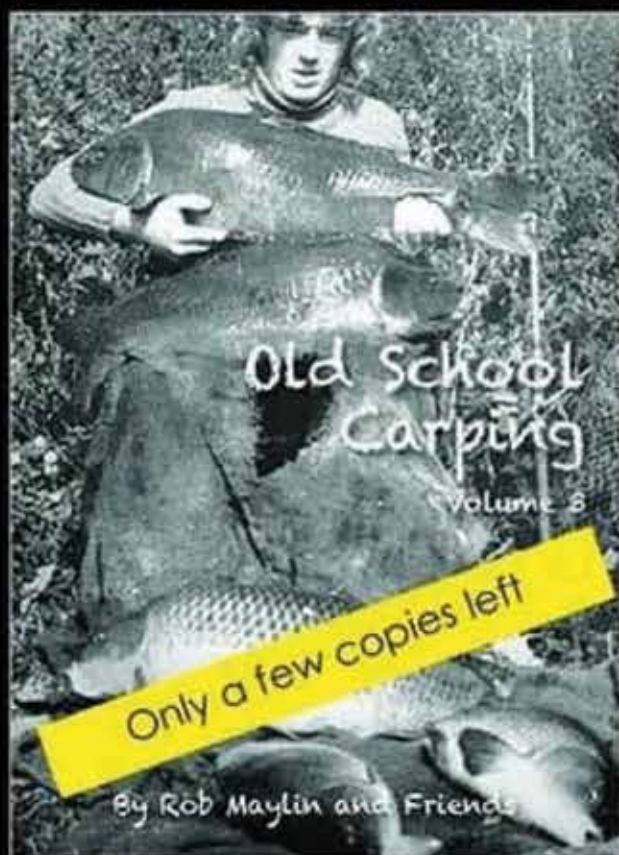
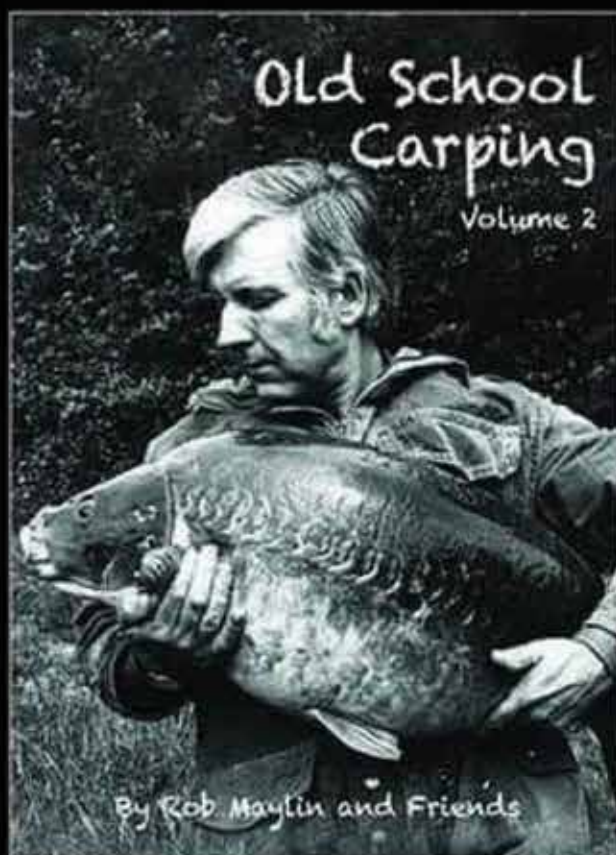
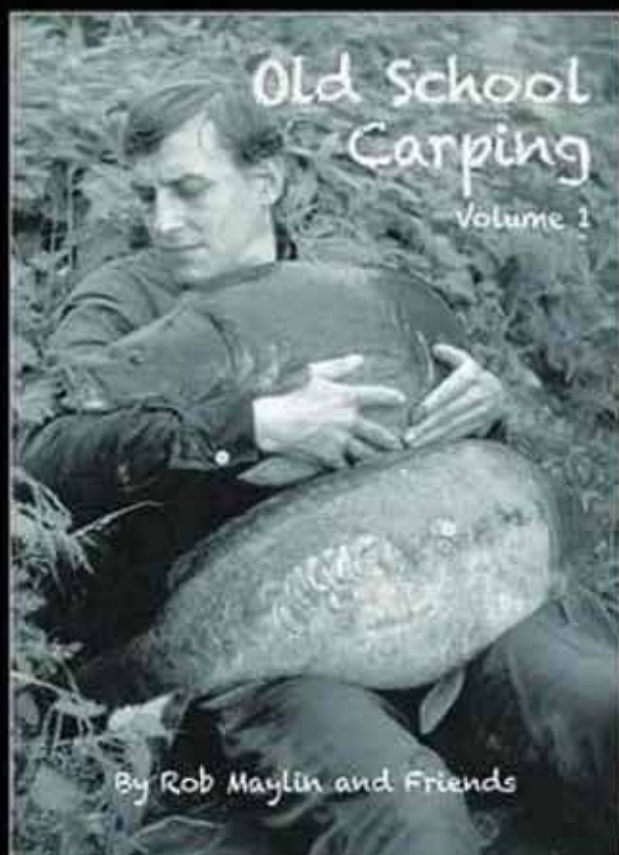
1966 saw my return to the UK in Southend, Essex. My home was opposite Priory Park, which then was more famous for its spiritual ghosts than the few carp that swam in its stew ponds. The two lakes in Priory were separate then; what is now a long island actually joined the bank at both ends, and we used to fish off it all the time. There were a couple of lily pads along its sides, which always were an attraction for fishing. My first



encounter with the fish was a 3lb Crucian, but sadly, I doubt there are any more in there these days. My tackle then was very poor – from memory, an 11ft bamboo rod with solid glass tip section and Intrepid reel of some sort. The capture of my first proper carp from another lake at a whacking 4lbs really fuelled the flames.

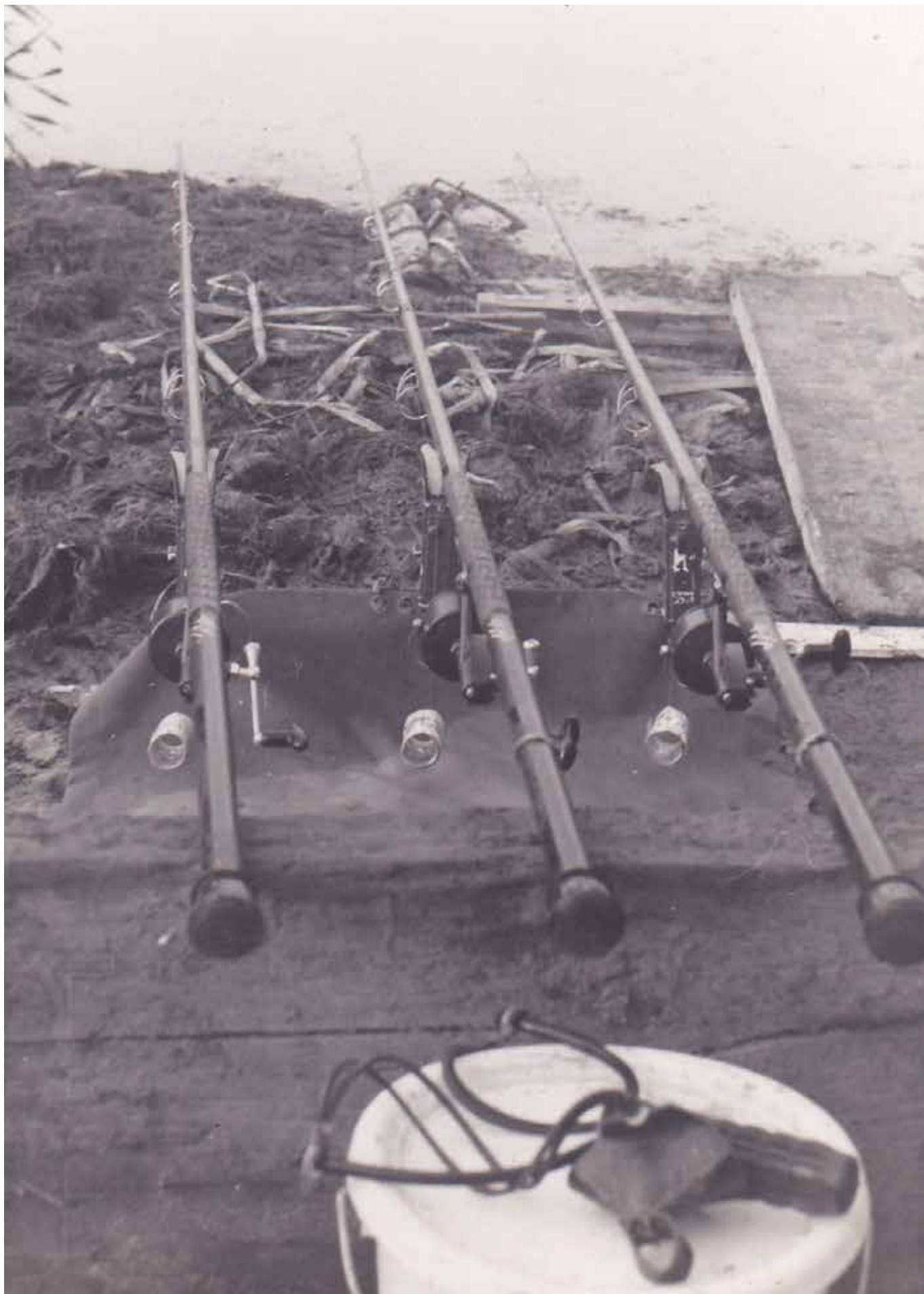
Of course catching a fish almost 10% in weight of the existing record demanded an upgrading of tackle ASAP. The only information available then was from the tackle shop or the weekly comics, *Angling Times* and *Anglers Mail*. We called them comics mainly because of the exaggerated accounts and photos of apparently huge fish of various species being held up close to the camera lens so as to make a 1lb roach look like

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a 10lbs carp, a bit like modern day carp anglers have adopted from the Europeans so that it's hard to tell if they are lying or not about a claimed weight. Not everyone has read Dick Walker's "No need to Lie" and adopted its ethic.

So a pair of Richard Walker Mark IV carp rods were acquired and a pair of Mitchell 300s and the almost obligatory Egeeco Specimen Hunters landing net, not to forget the essential Heron bite alarms with their high volume very raspy buzzer box and the even more essential maximum span 45" (1.14m) umbrella. I caught a fair number of carp on this tackle, and although the MK IVs were a delight to use, they had serious limitations and were under-gunned to put it mildly. Luckily Southend boasted one of the best tackle shops in the country, Going Brothers, not just selling the mass-produced items like the majority of shops, Going's management had a developmental side.

Going's pedigree was that they, or rather their master rod builder, Bill Roberts, and his lieutenant Martin Ashby (no relation to Bruce) served a clientele that included very demanding fly fishermen, beach and boat fishermen, pike fishermen and now the growing army of carp anglers. Split cane and Tonkin had been and gone, solid fibreglass was on its way out and hollow fibreglass was the new market leader. Here began the other essential and critical dimension for the then modern day carp angler, self-reliance. With a lot of help and instruction from Bill and Martin, I built my first set of rods, built on 10ft Fibretube SS4 blanks that were ringed with centre-bridge hard-chrome rings, full length cork handles and sliding winch fittings for the reels. Reels too were upgraded from 300 LHW to 301 RHW and then to 411 RHW as experience switching hands when netting fish with my stronger right

arm had proved a nuisance when fish turned away, and the heavyweight Efgeeco SH net made a pragmatic swap the only option. Although by now the landing net had been swapped too for a selfmade one with hollow glass 48in arms with a hand made custom net by a Mr Cattermole from darkest Essex.

It was obvious that DIY would be the way to go. All of the then manufacturers, British and foreign, only really catered for the so-called pleasure anglers and match fishermen. Of course the seeds were sown very firmly by Dick Walker in "Stillwater Angling". Hadn't he designed and built the legendary MK IV carp rod amongst others along with laminated bamboo landing net and the iconic Heron bite alarm? I enhanced my Herons, adding GPO contacts amongst other things, but eventually ended up designing and making a set of Perspex heads, while I contracted an electronic genius cousin to build me a three-tone buzzer box with plug in 20ft leads, like GPO telephone wire. They were everything I wanted with high, medium and low tones to indicate which rod and nothing mechanical, all done with LEDs and integrated circuitry (gasp). That setup plus increases in rod numbers, all self-made, lasted me an eternity.

An amusing incident occurred in the autumn 2018 while I was fishing a local syndicate lake. A passing gentleman stopped to ask about any fishy success, so we chatted. After a while, he pointed at my main current choice of rod setup and said how good they looked and asked whose they were. I told him, "Thank you; they're mine." He laughed and said, "Of course, but whose are they?" Again I said, "Thank you; they're mine... really mine... I made them." Stepping closer to study the rod butts, he read the graphics announcing, "They are really



nice! So you are Kris Ford then?" "That's right," I said, "Pass me the landing net please."

From the early days, I had kept a fishing diary in a small notebook. It was very handy, but once I accepted that a camera was a great accessory to carry in my rucksack, it was a bit of a liability for photographs. A foolscap ring binder was acquired and the content of the notebook transferred verbatim into it, typewritten. The notebook(s) remain essential to the rucksack to this day. For many years, the typewriter and "Kris Carp Diary and Records" joined me on the bank when I was fishing long sessions. As for cameras, I started off with a Kodak Instamatic - better than nothing, but only just. A sketchpad and charcoal might have been better in the right hands.

In Going Bros I had met a carp angler called Dick Gayner who was to become a friend and remains so today. He was also into photography. A Pentax man as I recall, he pointed me towards the SLR (Single Lens Reflex) cameras, and things improved radically. Sadly, quality equipment doesn't guarantee quality results. That sounds eerily familiar somehow, and trusting other anglers or passersby to photograph captures became too much of a gamble, so tripod and remote control quickly became essential. Being decades before digital was even a word, film was the main limitation with only 12, 24 or 36 shots available, and then the processing was a challenge.

Having discussed fish and captures and apparently impressed by them, Dick introduced me to the British Carp Study Group (BCSG), recently formed by Peter Mohan. What a revelation this was to be. In 1971, meeting other carp anglers on the bank was a rare occurrence. There were probably only 20-30 carp anglers in Essex at that time. I stand to be corrected on

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these numbers, but carp anglers were certainly very thin on the ground, as were waters that held good sized carp. Carp men were fanatical to the point of obsession, but with it came a commitment. This wasn't just a passing phase as many folks suggested, and probably why there are so many of we oldies still fishing now.

Joining the BCSG required a vetting interview where I think commitment was regarded as highly as the catches made and waters fished. I was accepted into the ranks in autumn 1971 having caught 25 doubles that year and was welcomed over time by the 100 or so other members at the regular but infrequent meetings, which at that time were mainly held in south west London (ish). Famous as we now know it was reserved for music and film stars, but the meetings were always full of personalities (good carp anglers). I enjoyed every minute of these meetings discussing waters, fish, rods, methods and all manner of things with the like of Richard Walker, Peter Mohan, Kevin Clifford, Rod Hutchinson, Chris Yates, Chris Ball, Jack Hilton, Tom Mintram, Mike Starkey, Kevin Maddocks, Pete Springate and many others. All had a total lack of airs and graces; we were all comrades in arms, a band of gentlemen with a common cause and interest, my peers, and I was proud to be amongst them and able to phone at any time. Sadly the BCSG is now a shadow of its former self with the steering group (hierarchy) more interested in finances and trying desperately to be the next "name", although there are many great guys and gentlemen still in the grass roots membership and many exceptional anglers amongst them.

Finding waters was a challenge. Every spring (close season), armed with Ordnance Survey maps, we scoured the countryside,

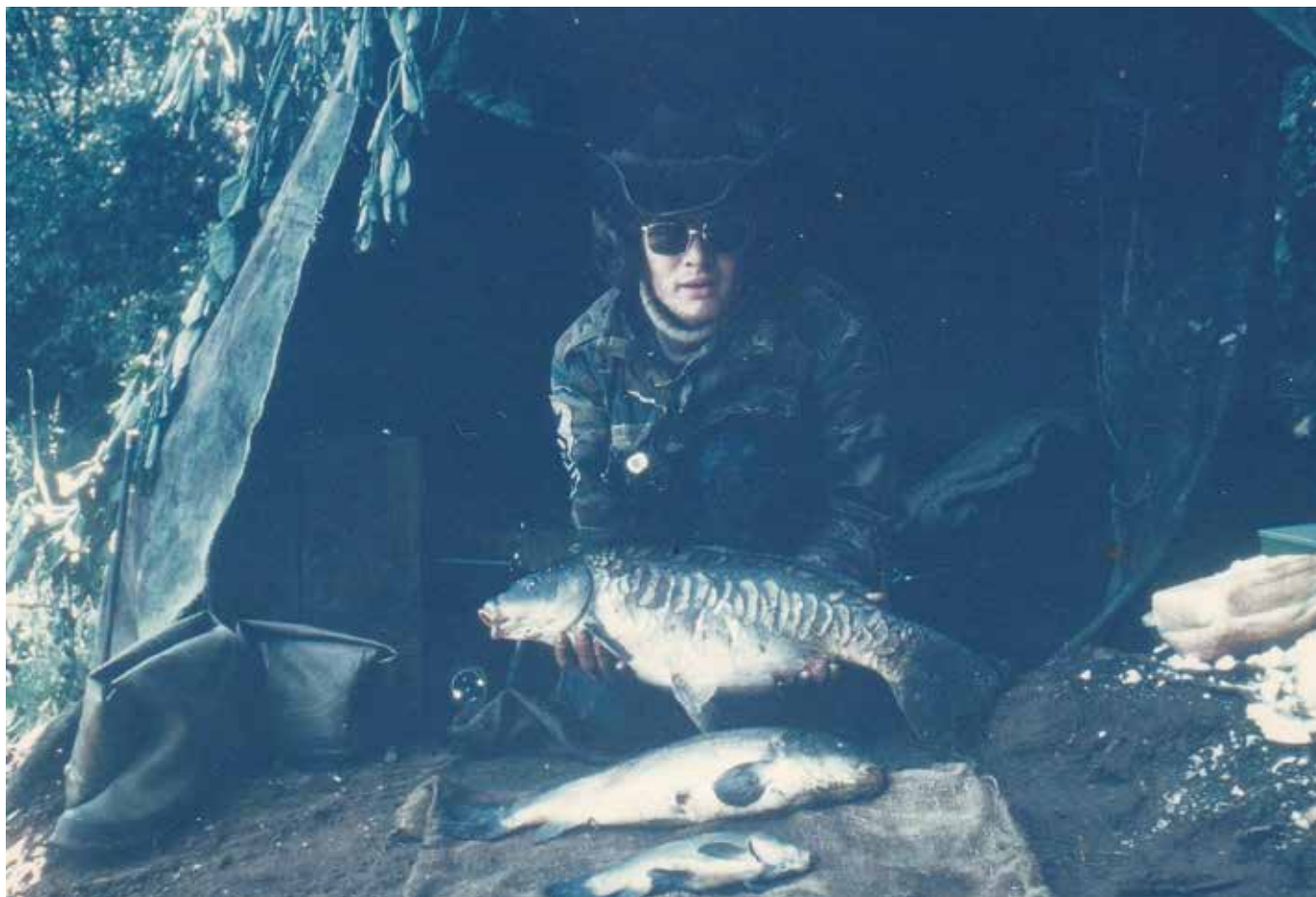
perfectly summed up in the title of Frank Warwick's excellent book "Every Bit of Blue", seeking out ownership and permissions to fish for every bit of blue that could be found on the maps and travelling further and further afield in the quest for carp. I don't think there were enough of us around in those days for Jack Hilton's amazing book "Quest for Carp" to provide him with the income to retire, but the title alone struck loud, harmonious chords, let alone the magical content about Redmire and Ashlea pools. No Interweb in those days, just mile after mile of minor roads across Essex and the Home Counties.

As already illustrated, rods and tackle, or rather the lack of it, wasn't a big deal. If you couldn't buy what you thought of as a good idea, you simply made it, or if beyond your skills, you paid someone to make it for you. Dick Walker led this trend, a first generation carp angler, and even in his wonderful "Stillwater Angling", he demonstrated self-made rods, landing net and bite alarms. He clearly showed us the way to find solutions. If Dick was first^t generation, then the BCSG membership and many other carp anglers around became the second generation and were the epitome of self-reliance in all things carpy, providing an immense base of knowledge, experience, innovation and determination for future generations to benefit from, who as we all know, like the four Yorkshiremen said, "They'll never believe it!"

Imagine a world with no ready tied rigs, except for the noddies (matchmen), no bedchairs, just unreliable sun loungers that needed customising before they were any good, no multiple bank stick and buzzer bars unless you made them yourself and no bivvies, just the 45in umbrella with a canvas or plastic

wrap around or throwover. A trip to Horton Kirby in Kent in the early 70s threw up a funny but potentially devastating event. I can't remember the exact topography now, but basically my mate and I were fishing on a right hand bank, which ran up to a corner to our right and then at right angles across, 6 o'clock to 12 then across to 9 if that makes sense. Anyway, my mate and I had sat there all day in very windy conditions. Across on the bank at right angles to us was a guy fishing under a turquoise umbrella with a sheet of plastic wrapped around it – not builder's plastic but the kind you get as windows in today's bivvies or convertible cars. It was really annoying, as he hadn't pegged the bottom down, and all day it was flapping and sometimes cracking like gunshots as the wind battered it. Anyway, at some time during the afternoon, the carp gods smiled on us as we witnessed the setup going up in flames with a whoosh. The occupant luckily escaped unhurt, I think, as he rolled across the bank towards the water escaping the inferno. We guessed that the kettle had been boiled just once too often. Canvas is always the best option I think, even if still risky. Of course now everything is poly something or other – another word for plastic.

Bivvies have always been a challenge, but in the early seventies, I found what was to become for me the ultimate bivvy. There was a wonderful publication called Exchange & Mart (E&M), which was for many decades the published equivalent of today's eBay. An army surplus shop in Leytonstone east London was advertising "ex-army igloo tents" for just £25, so I travelled the 30-odd miles from Southend to Leytonstone. £25 was not quite as cheap as it sounds today, but when I saw the igloo, I knew it was just the ticket. Made from heavyweight olive

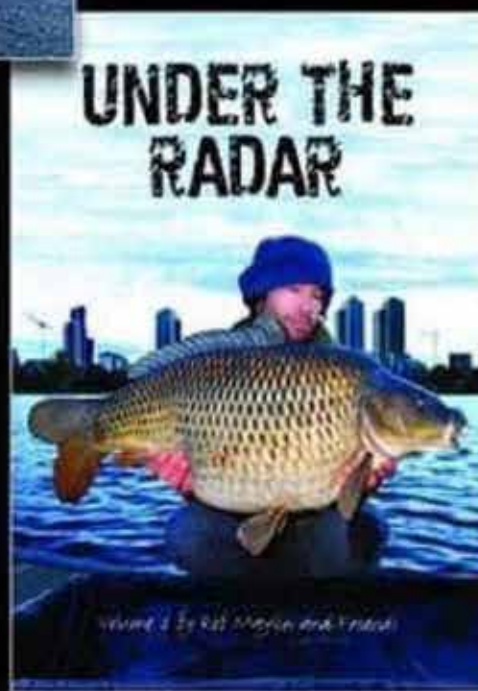
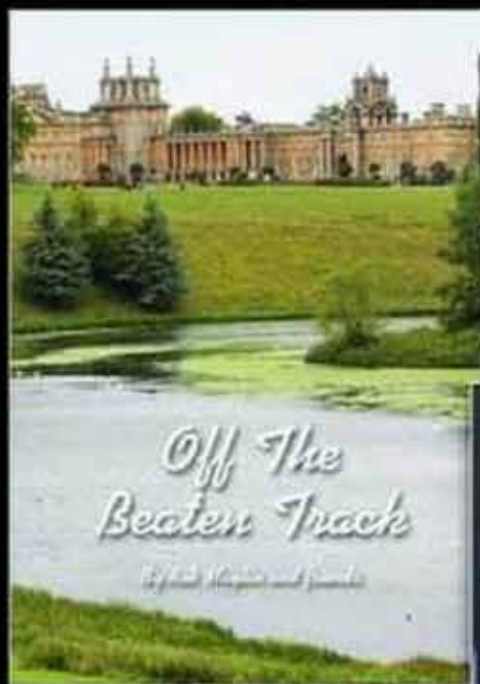


canvas with a roll down flap over the entrance, it had four ribs forming a cross that were actually all joined. Erecting it was so simple, as it was inflatable, and using a car foot pump, it took exactly 100 pump compressions to inflate it to just the right firmness. Of course the foot pump didn't need to be stamped down to the ground, so fixing it up was relatively silent. There were fixings for guy ropes and pegs on the corners, but I never used them. After years trying to cram myself and all my gear under a 45in umbrella, this was extreme luxury beyond belief. My igloo lasted for over 20 years, and apart from needing a replacement inner tube following an embarrassing incident in scorching weather in front of Tom Mintram at Yeoveney, I used it until it got lost in a house move.

Many comments are made about so-called old school anglers' reliance on military clothing and fashion. The angling world

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KRIS FORD





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then relied mainly on noisy and condensation prone plasticky type stuff while the military was streets ahead for camouflage and weather proofing... well, in theory at least. Infamously inadequate but logically a must was the tank suit. In sandy (desert) or DPM (woodland) camo, it was a one-piece suit with a blanket fabric lining, so it had to be good but in reality, not at all. Army tanks are notoriously hot inside, so why we thought clothing designed to be worn inside an oven would keep us warm in freezing conditions, heaven only knows, but we soon learned. The army green jumper with epaulettes became a fashion icon when Kevin Maddocks arrived on the scene in the 80s, but many of us had been wearing them for a decade already. Camo and stealth are of particular interest to me for several essential reasons, but I'll save further comment for another day.

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CUSTOMER REVIEWS

Big shoutout to the lads at Digger Boats Ltd I've been living onsite at Carthagena Fisheries for 23 years now, and we've had plenty of work done over the years... but this one tops the lot! We've been fighting a losing battle with reeds taking over the entrance to one of our bays for a few years now. Even tried getting in ourselves with dry suits and pulling them out by hand absolutely brutal work and getting nowhere fast... was starting to think we'd lose the bay completely. On top of that, the carp were loving it — hiding in the reeds and becoming a nightmare to catch we'd had other companies in before with weed boats, but if I'm honest, the results just weren't great. Got James from Digger Boats in, he came down, had a proper look and got stuck in... and what a job they've done! 3 days later and the place has been completely transformed it's something I've wanted sorted for years and it's finally done. Already this spring we've had over 22 fish out — including a few we haven't seen in years! Normally we'd only see a handful by now. Can't recommend them enough — top lads, proper job done Thanks again boys — Jerry Hammond

“

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 🙌

★★★★★

Stuart Stockton
Chesterton Community Angling Club



Neil Ellis 📍 recommends Digger Boats. 39m · 🌐

diggerboats.com has just completed some norfolk reed removal on one of our club lakes. The diggerboats team worked their socks off and done a great job giving great value for money, going well beyond what was the basic requirement, feedback from members has been really positive with how the lake is now looking. If you are a club or commercial fishery looking for a professional fishery management/ maintenance company then give diggerboats a call, we at Colchester Piscatorial Society are already looking at more fallen tree removal work for the diggerboat team to undertake !

Mark Turrell
Great job done, can't believe the difference, thank you guys at Digger boat 🙌 🍷

👑 Top fan
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THE ESTATE POOL

Old Bill was sitting in his usual corner in the village inn; his mind had wandered back to what seemed ages past, although in reality it was just a few weeks back that he had reeled in his lines for the last time. It was now May. “Oh,” Bill thought. “Only six more weeks to go and all will be roses again.” Just as Bill was about to drain his glass, the bar door swung open and a man dressed in overalls walked in. Bill didn’t recognise him, and it seemed neither did any of the other locals, for all conversation suddenly died and all eyes fell coldly on the stranger. It was a fact of village life in a small community such as this that all strangers are viewed with suspicion.

It seemed an age before anyone spoke, and it was the landlord who broke the stony silence. “Good evening. Pint is it?” “Er, yes please... best bitter if you wouldn’t mind,” said the stranger. It seemed as if a switch had been turned because all the icy

stares had vanished and the gentle conversation returned to all the tables round the bar. "You working around here?" Bill asked. The chap turned to face him, startled by the fact that someone had actually spoken to him. "Er yeah, I'm working on the old estate up the road," he said. Bill ordered another pint at the same time as he finally drained his glass. "No, I'll get it," said the stranger. "Much obliged," said Bill.

They both took long swigs from their respective glasses and then paused, savouring the cool amber liquid as it flowed down their throats. "Lovely drop of beer!" the stranger exclaimed. "Yeah, especially on a warm day like today," Bill mused. "You looked a bit peeved when I came in. Anything wrong?" asked the stranger. "Nah, not really; I'm just suffering withdrawal symptoms, that's all," said Bill. The stranger looked taken aback for a second and then asked timidly, "Withdrawal from what, then?" "Fishing!" exclaimed Bill. "Fishing?" replied the stranger with a sigh of relief. "For a moment I thought I'd met some kind of junkie." Bill laughed at this and slapped the stranger heartily on the back, causing the stranger to nearly choke on his beer.

"What did you say your name was?" asked Bill, still chuckling at the stranger's last remark. "I didn't, but it's Pete," said the stranger. "Well, Pete, I'm certainly glad you came in tonight; you've really been a tonic to me. I've been moping around all day," said Bill, taking another swig from his glass. "Tell me," asked Pete. "Why withdrawal symptoms? Lost your fishing rod or something?" Bill replied, "It's obvious you're not an angler; this is the closed season, and I'm certainly missing it this year." "When does it reopen then?" asked Pete. "June sixteenth," Bill answered. "Have you ever fished the lake in the estate I'm

working on?" asked Pete. "Nah," said Bill. "Nothing in there anyway." "Nothing in there! You must be joking, of course," said Pete. "Only this afternoon while repairing the roof of the old house, I could clearly see great fat blue-backed shapes moving up and down the centre of the lake, and every so often a great fish would leap, landing back with a thunderous splash."

By now, Bill's ears had pricked up, and his pupils had dilated like a five-year-old's on sighting his first ice cream. "I thought that old lake had drained and dried up years ago, let alone still had fish in it," said Bill. "What sort of fish would you say they were then?" asked Pete. "From what you tell me, Pete, I'd say they were blooming great carp," replied Bill, licking his lips at the sudden thought of a chance to stick a number six hook into one of their mouths. "Any chance of a looksee tomorrow?" asked Bill. "Yeah, why not?" said Pete. "Come to the house at one; it's my lunch break then, you see." "Won't the owner mind?" asked Bill. "Nah, nobody lives there anymore - too expensive to heat in winter, so they moved to a smaller house in town; there's no need to worry on that score," replied Pete. "Okey dokey then, I'll take you up on that offer, Pete. I must leave you now, or I'll have to answer to the missus. I'll see you tomorrow at one then," said Bill as he put on his jacket. Pete stayed and ordered another pint after saying goodbye to Bill.

Bill awoke the following morning earlier than usual after what had been a fitful sleep dreaming of the great fish he might see later in the day. He looked at the clock, saw that it was eight o'clock and then glanced at the empty space beside him. Suddenly he remembered that the missus had told him yesterday that she was going into town early to get the best of the goods at a closing down sale at one of the big stores. Good,

he thought - no odd jobs for me to get lumbered with today. She'll not be back until mid afternoon at least.

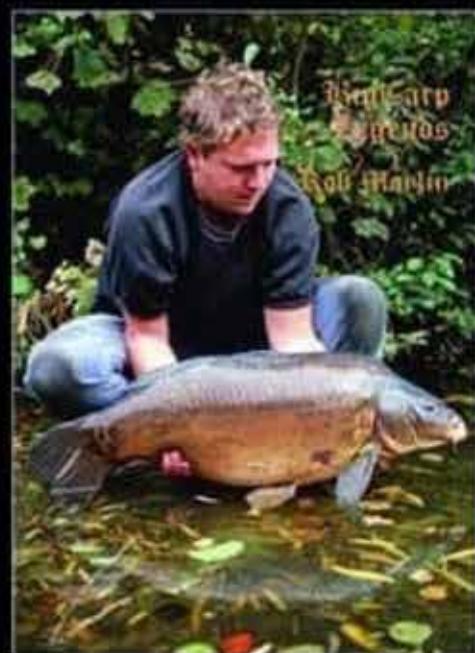
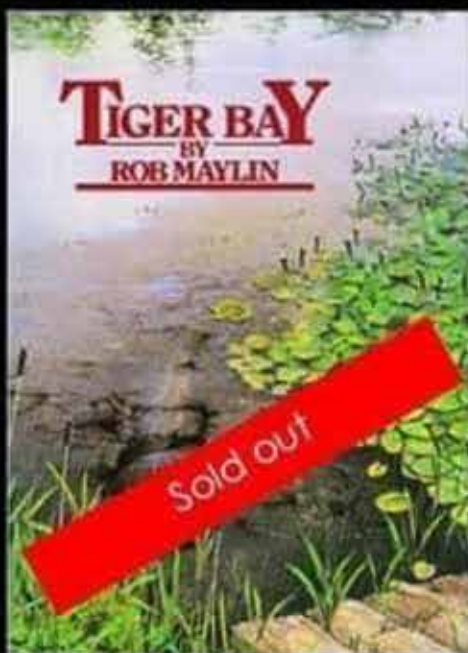
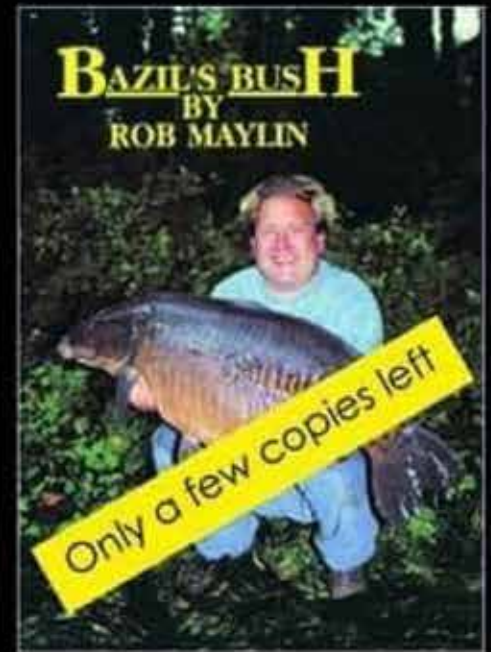
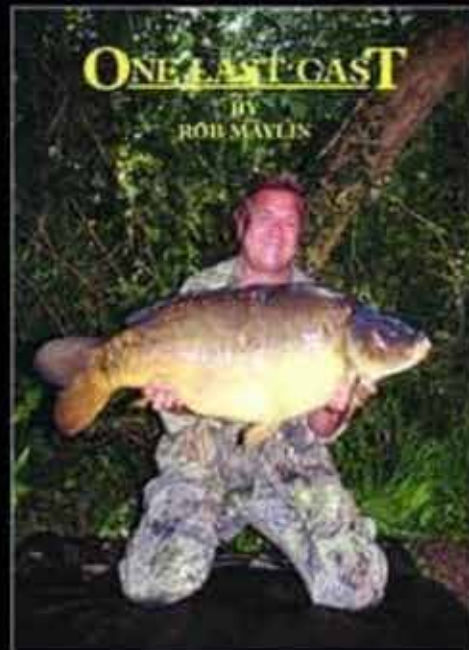
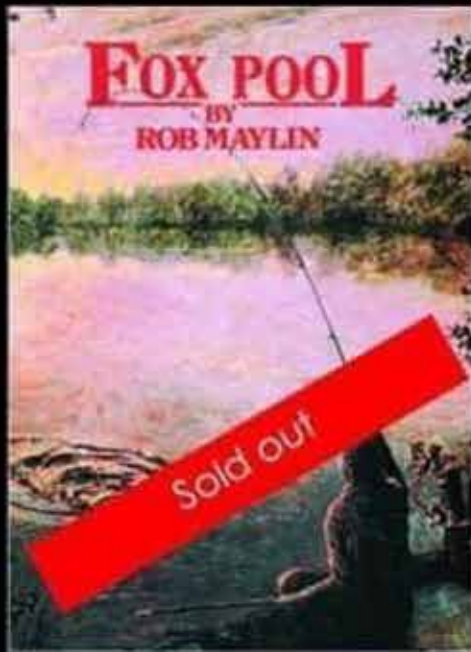
The time passed quickly today, and Bill soon found it time to get his old bike out of the shed and start his journey to the old house on the estate. It was a lovely day, bright blue sky, no wind, with a lovely warm sun beating down. Great, the fish will be on top, he thought to himself. It took him just fifteen minutes to cover the three and half miles to the entrance to the estate. Bill had given himself half an hour to cover the distance, so as not to be late. Bill got off his bike and decided to push it the last four hundred yards to the house down the leafy driveway. It didn't take long to cover the quarter mile or so to the house, and Bill was just leaving his bike against an old oak tree when he heard a shout.

Walking out from under the leafy canopy, Bill looked about but could see no one. "Hello, Bill, up here!" shouted the voice. Bill looked up and immediately recognised his newfound friend Pete sitting astride the roof of the old house. "Hello, Pete. I thought it was ghosts for a minute," chuckled Bill. "Won't be a sec... I'll come down." Pete disappeared down the other side of the roof out of Bill's sight. He must have his ladder round the back, he thought to himself. Bill walked around the back of the house to meet Pete, but he, or the ladder was nowhere to be found. Blimey, he got down from there quickly, thought Bill - he must have walked around to the front the other way. Bill walked back to the front of the building, and on arriving there, he looked about him, but still Pete was nowhere to be seen. He was just about to call out when he felt someone tap him on the shoulder.

He turned around, and there stood Pete with a big grin across

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his face. "Sorry, Bill. Did I startle you?" grinned Pete. "How did you get down? I didn't see a ladder round the back," asked Bill. "I've hidden it in the bushes away from the house. You know how it is in this day and age, a ladder up against the side of a house is an open invitation to every, crook around," replied Pete. "Yeah, better safe than sorry, I suppose," said Bill, still shaking from the jump Pete had given him minutes earlier. "Shall we go then? I've only an hour break and I'm due to finish the work by this evening," said Pete. "Does that mean we won't be meeting again after today?" Bill asked. "'Fraid so. I'm off on another job after today, so it'll be goodbye after you have seen the lake," Pete said as they walked down a shady path.

As they went along in silence, Bill's mind went back to the uncanny speed that Pete was able to get down from the roof, put the ladder away and get round to the front of the house. After all, wasn't the house four storeys high so the ladder would have to be quite large and clumsy to reach to that height? In fact even if it was one of those alloy ones, it would still be unwieldy for one man to manage all on his own! "There's the lake!" exclaimed Pete. Bill's mind left those troubled thoughts behind as he set eyes upon the most beautiful lake he had seen for many a year, nestling in amongst the trees like a jewel.

As he just stood there for a few moments taking it all in, a great fish leapt out not ten yards in front of them and seemed to hover, totally out of the water for ages before shattering the tranquility of the pool with an almighty splash as the mighty fish re-entered its watery domain. "Christ! That fish must've been over thirty-five at least!" Bill shouted excitedly. "Is that good then?" Pete asked naively. "Is that good? IS THAT

GOOD? he asks me,” said Bill out loud to himself. “Just let me at ‘em! Sorry, Pete. I didn’t mean to be rude. I’m just a little overexcited,” apologised Bill. “Alright, Bill... no offence taken,” was the reply. “Is there any chance of a spot of fishing when the season opens?” asked Bill pleadingly. “None at all, I’m afraid, Bill. I’ve mentioned already that this is my last day here, and after I’ve gone, the estate will be locked up good and tight,” explained Pete.

Bill’s previous joy suddenly turned to despair. Pete said, “But if you wish to pop off home and grab your tackle, there’s no reason why you couldn’t fish through until this evening. I shan’t be leaving until about nine.” “Yeah, but it’s the closed season till June!” exclaimed Bill. “Who’s to know? It isn’t going to hurt just this once, is it?” said Pete. “You’re right; it won’t, will it? It’s only once after all, and it isn’t going to be a habit,” reasoned Bill. Before Pete could reply, old Bill was racing up the path towards his bike. “See you in an hour!” Bill shouted.

Old Bill was back at the lake within fifty minutes. He waved to Pete up on the roof of the old house as he rushed past. Thank God for all the readymade boilies of this day and age; it was only a couple of seasons back that half the precious fishing time was spent weighing, mixing and rolling various exotic ingredients and then standing over a hot stove cooking the damn things. Now all you need to do is go to your nearest tackle dealer and there they are ready mixed, ready rolled and ready cooked to boot. Just dip your hand in the chest freezer and away you go.

Bill set up his tackle at the water’s edge, not yet having picked his swim. He methodically tied each knot with precision and tested each one in turn. He had chosen his trusty eleven-foot

1¾lb compound taper carbons for the job. No long casting needed here, Bill thought. These were coupled with a couple of 410s, which hadn't let him down yet, so there was no reason why it should be any different now. The bale arms were well maintained, and as long as you backwound and didn't rely on the clutch, they were great. As for the end tackle, or "the rig" as they call it nowadays, Bill wondered if it was worth using the hair but decided that these fish probably hadn't been caught before and concluded that a side or top-hooked bait on a heavy lead and short braided hook link to prevent any confident feeding fish gorging the bait and biting him off would be better. Take no chances, my son, he thought to himself.

As Bill was going through this procedure, his heart was pounding, and he was aware of leviathans crashing out all over the pool, causing him to drop the size two hooks several times in his excited expectations. He could hardly contain himself as he snicked on a mango flavoured boilie on each of the hooks in readiness for the expected action, then last but not least, he set up his enormous forty-two inch Springbow. He had no need to move to find the fish, as he noticed there were plenty directly in front of where he stood. No longer were they leaping, but they betrayed their presence by bubbling profusely. A great cloud of silt was billowing up all around, and the surface of the pool resembled a ginormous glass of champagne - you could almost hear the fizz!

Bill shoved in his front buzzer bar with converted Optonics into the soft, peaty earth, not worrying that they weren't straight in line with the back rest; not for him the spirit level approach he had witnessed on the lake up the road. Right, he thought, all ready to go... now where to cast? There wasn't

any problem, because fish were bubbling everywhere, so he cast one bait twenty yards to the right and the other ten yards to the left. Bill knew the heavy lead and short hook length would sink well into the silt out of sight, but he wasn't worried because he had learnt long ago that fish bubbling like these wouldn't find a bait on top of the silt but would if it was deep in it, for he had observed many a fish feeding thus with all its head and half its shoulders buried deep in the bottom debris, trying to root out the tasty titbits that live within the silt.

After casting, he threw ten baits around each hookbait with twenty more in the trails leading in several directions from the small concentrations of feed around each hopeful catching area. Bill didn't have long to wait for action, because within fifteen minutes of his groundbaiting, the right hand monkey slowly crept up the needle. Bill had already put in the pickup before the monkey had reached the rod and in the same movement swept the rod over his right shoulder. "Damn - missed it!" he muttered to himself and quickly wound in.

He had only turned the handle of the 410 a dozen times when the rod slammed over in his hands. Such was the power, it nearly toppled him into the lake head first. The fish tore up the lake with unbelievable power, leaving a massive bow wave and Bill backwinding like the clappers. It must have swum straight towards me, Bill mused. Eventually, Bill got the fish under control with the runs lessening as the 11lbs Sylcast took its toll, and after half an hour, Bill had the fish circling on a short line. He had seen the fish, and it looked a big twenty at least. Let's get it in the net before I start counting my chickens, he thought. Three quarters of an hour went by before the great fish gave up and Bill was able to net it, and a great big mirror

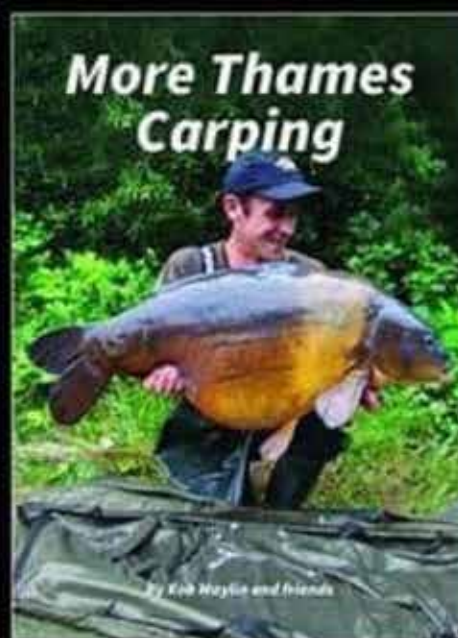
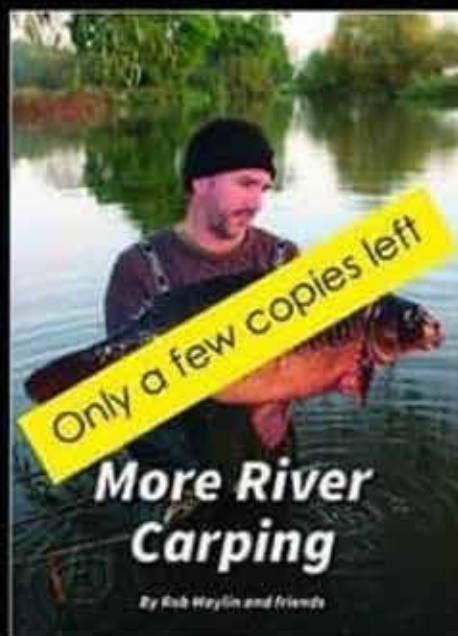
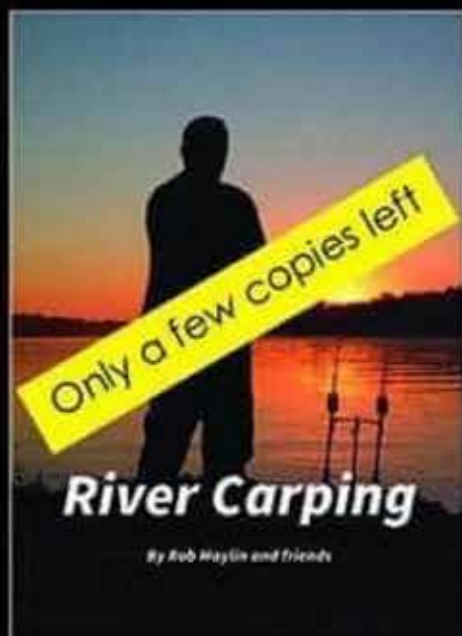
rolled over the drawstring of his net. Bill was very relieved, as his arm was aching like hell as he tossed his rod into the bush to allow him two hands on the net. Bill gathered up the mesh of the net in his hands and heaved the great fish out of the water. Blooming 'eck, he thought – this is more than a big twenty – it must be thirty six inches long!

He quickly got out his fifty-six pound balance and weigh sling, and after wetting the sling and zeroing the scales, he manhandled the great fish carefully into the sling. He then hooked on the scales and slowly took up the tension. Round and round the needle went until it eventually stopped on forty-one pounds exactly! Bill could not believe his eyes, so he lowered the great fish gently to the ground and repeated the procedure once again. No, he wasn't seeing things the first time, as again it read forty-one pounds exactly. The trouble was poor old Bill didn't have a camera. He had broken his old one weeks before and not bothered to replace it, thinking he would buy a new one just before the new season started.

Oh well, the fish comes first before I anything else, he thought to himself. It's a shame I won't get a photo to remember this moment, but the fish must go back unharmed or I'd never forgive myself if anything happened to it because of my selfish behaviour. Bill took one last look at the beautiful great fish, and after giving it an affectionate kiss on the forehead, he watched with great satisfaction as it slowly waddled its way out of sight into the depths of the pool. Bill just stared into the water where he had last seen the great fish for what seemed an age. He didn't bother rebaiting the rod he had just done battle with; he was quite content already and had no wish to catch anything else. The memory of that fish would remain

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with him for the rest of his life.

He just lay back on the dry leafy bank, head rested on hands, taking in the splendour of his surroundings when suddenly he heard, beep, beep, beep! Yes, the other rod was away – he had forgotten all about the other tackle. Even so, he was on the rod like a shot. The monkey had stopped half way up the needle. Bill's hand hovered over the rod for what seemed an age. The pickup had been engaged the moment Bill had reached the rod, ready for an instant strike. Minutes passed, and Bill was still hovering expectantly over the butt of the remaining rod, and still the indicator was at half mast. Bill could sense a take about to happen, so stuck at his post with hand hovering over the butt, when as if it were willed to move, the indicator slowly crept the rest of the way to the top of the needle.

Whoosh went the rod with Bill expecting the rod to come over his shoulder once again, but no, this time the rod didn't even reach forty five degrees before it slammed over in an almighty battle curve. Again a great fish tore up the lake, spreading a massive bow wave in its wake. This time it was an hour before Bill had the fish on a short line circling under his rod tip and an hour and ten minutes before the great fish rolled over into the confines of Bill's net. As the fish rolled into the net, Bill noticed it was a bloody great common with scales like golden sovereigns. It was a long fish, almost as long as the mirror, but it didn't have the belly of the first fish – still a big fish, mind, like a golden torpedo.

After carefully unhooking it, the beautiful fish was gently slid into the dampened weighing sling. The scales were hooked on and slowly Bill lifted her off the ground. Around went the needle and settled on thirty-five pounds twelve. "Magic!"

shouted Bill, as he gently lowered the fish to the ground and cradled it lovingly to the water's edge. Once again he wished he had a photo but settled for a lingering look and a loving kiss on the leviathan's forehead. The fish lay still in the shallow margin for a few seconds before gently gliding off into the depths. What a wonderful life, Bill thought as he lay back once more with his hands behind his head.

He had no desire to cast out again and drifted into such a pleasant sleep, it was gone seven thirty when he woke. He looked at his watch and thought he had better start packing away his gear, for Pete had told him he would go by nine, and Bill didn't want to overstay his welcome. Besides, at the speed Bill put away his tackle, it would be eight thirty anyway by the time he walked up to the house. It was eight twenty-five when he finally reached the house, and after tying his rods to the crossbar of his bike, he set off round the house to find Pete to thank him for letting him fish and also tell of the two great fish that had come his way. Pete was nowhere to be found. Bill looked all over for him but couldn't find him anywhere. "Must have gone early," Bill muttered. "Oh well, never mind, I would have liked to at least have said goodbye though."

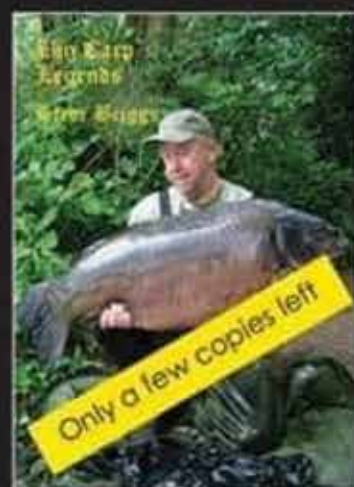
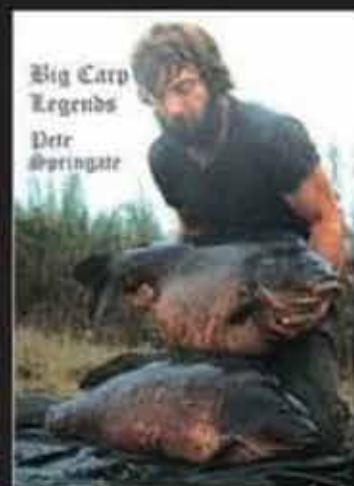
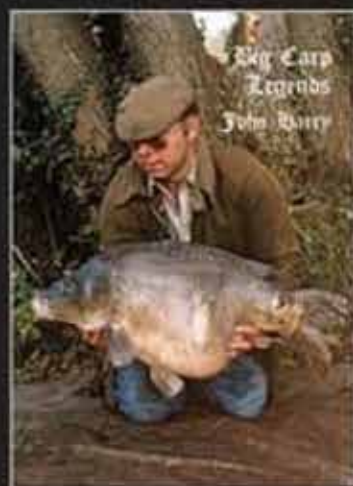
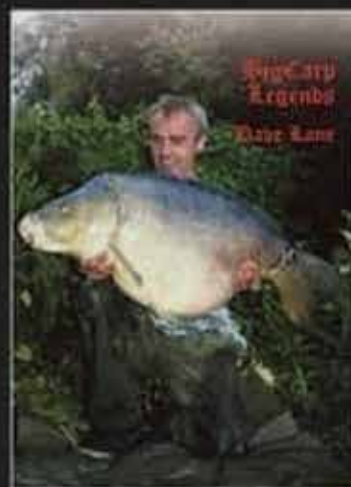
Bill slung his rucksack on his back and set off down the driveway on his journey home, turning left out of the large gateway and pedaled off down the lane towards the village. By the time he got to the outskirts of the village it was just growing dark, and about one hundred yards from home, he met the village bobby. "Hello, Bill," said the bobby. "Hello, sarge," replied Bill. The old copper eyed Bill's fishing tackle with suspicion and said, "Closed season, innit?" "Er, yeah," Bill replied sheepishly. "Where have you been then? Can't have

been on the day ticket lake, coz you would have been caught – the bailiffs on there are too keen for anyone to get away with fishing in the closed season.” “No, I’ve been fishing in the old estate lake by invitation,” stated Bill. “Invitation from whom?” asked the bobby. “Pete, the workman on the roof,” replied Bill. “That lake’s been dry for years, Bill.” “Don’t talk rubbish, sarge. I’ve been fishing there all afternoon!” At that, Bill got back on his bike and slowly pedaled away. The old copper then called out, “And the only bloke who worked at the old house, by the name of Pete, was killed... ten years ago it was... fell off the roof he did... broke his neck!” Bill turned a deathly shade of pale and promptly fell off his bike...



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OLD SCHOOL CARP BAIT

Rob Maylin – I will pass you over to Terry. He's going to talk about where carp baits started with him way back in the good old days and where he got a lot of his bait recipes that he uses today.

Terry Dempsey – Hi, Rob. As you know, like yourself, I go back a long way in carp fishing, and you know the first carp baits I ever made in those days were called specials. Pretty much everyone had their own secret formulas. Originally, my friends and I, especially Tony, who I fished with for many years, got a lot of our ingredients from supermarkets. It would have been ground rice or semolina, you know, supermarket food. Even the flavourings we originally used would have been almond flavourings that would have been sold in the supermarkets in those days. So I'd say my first introduction in to baits would have been about 1981.

TERRY DEMPSEY



Another bait we had a go with in those days was cat food. We would get cat food mushed up, mixing that into a paste using certain ingredients such as semolina to help bind it. It was all paste baits really. I started to find milk proteins around that sort of time as well that I would buy in a fishing tackle shop in Prince Regent's Lane called Robinson's. It's still around today in Dagenham, and there's a guy in there called Bob who was an old school carp fisherman and had a bait company called Universal Baits. Bob would sell sodium caseinate. Casein would be more for boilies, as it was really good for hardening your baits, whereas the sodium caseinate was better for paste baits, or so we thought in those times. We would mix the sodium caseinate with some soya flour and some wheat gluten and we would put some lactalbumin in, which was another ingredient the Bob used to sell, and that would make a good firm paste bait with the wheat gluten. We'd mix it with eggs, and it would have good binding qualities and stay on the hook for quite a while. That's how I caught my first decent carp really, using paste baits like that, and we would use shrimp flavourings or maple flavouring.

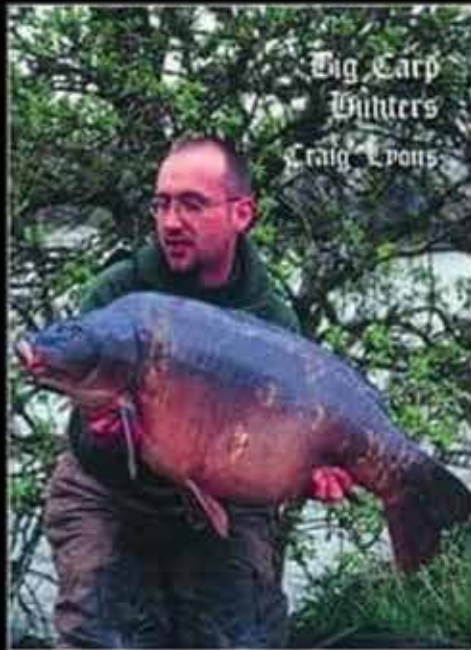
My first boilies were shortly after that, and the first bait I caught really well on, I got out of Kevin Maddocks' book, *Carp Fever* when that first came out. That was a milk protein that would have been like 5oz of casein to an ounce of calcium caseinate and an ounce of lactalbumin. Another ingredient I used in those days was Vitamealo. I used that in my paste baits, but I also used that in my boilies. It had a very strong smell to it, and that's what I used. I used a lot of milk proteins that I would buy off Martin Cowlis. I bought a lot of ingredients from Martin in the early 80s. He was well renowned for his Dutch



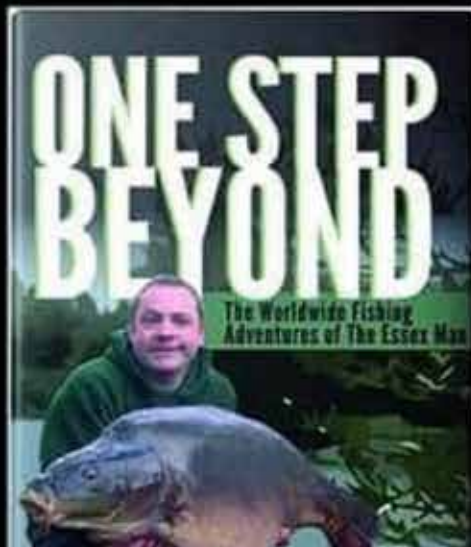
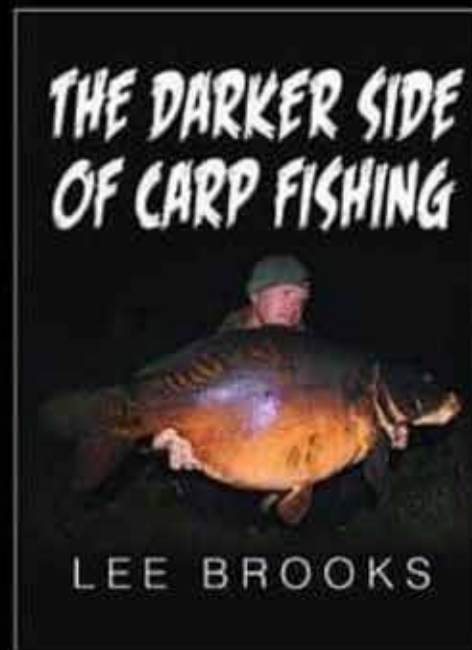
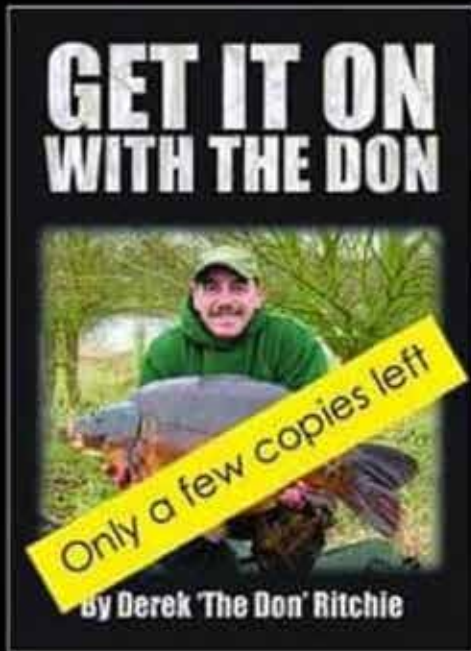
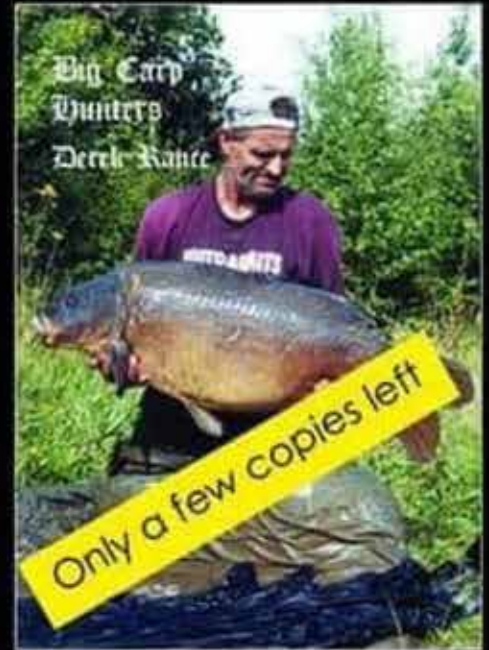
caseins, so I would buy the Dutch casein. My first boilies really after the paste baits were all milk proteins, and because of the expense, we never really put a lot out.

It wasn't until about '85 that I first got introduced into using bird foods in my baits, especially Sluis, which was like a breadcrumb-based bird food. I started using that, and what we realised was, we could really bulk our baits out with this gear. It was a lot cheaper, and instead of paying a fiver a kilo, it was a pound or one pound ten. This helped us put more bait in, so then we started using Sluis with our milk proteins, and our results were really good. The first time I caught twenty twenties was, I think, in '86, which was a big thing in those days, and all of these were on milk protein baits.

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TERRY DEMPSEY



I was using Martin Cowl's alcohol flavourings such as strawberry. He did a good pineapple and a good Cornish cream too. I used them quite a lot, and I did really well on those. The baits would be 60% milk proteins and 40% Sluis bulking it out and making it more affordable for us to fish with. So that was my first really good boilie that I could use in bulk. You could put a couple of kilos out without getting a mortgage.

Then I sort of bumped into some of the Premier Bait guys around '86/'87. They were just starting out, and in those days, it was Phil and Geoff. Then I got into swapping a lot of my milk proteins. We still carried on using the Sluis and some of the milk proteins, but then we started using fishmeals, which were again a lot cheaper, so you could use a lot more. You could bait the swims more heavily, holding the fish and pulling the fish into your swim. We started using blends of fishmeals with milk proteins with the Sluis, and we stayed along those type of lines.

It's not a lot different to what we are doing today with Urban Bait; we have been carrying on with this sort of thing I suppose all those years from when I first started seeing people using boilies. This would have been on Lake Meadows in Essex where a lot of the innovators of carp fishing stated out, and the South Weald lot and Hainault Forest. I was luckily enough that I grew up in an era where we had to make our own carp baits. It wasn't until later that Richworth came out; there was none of that, and literally you had to go and buy a set of ingredients, mix them yourself, and it was the old saying - suck it and see. That's why we would turn up at a lake with three or four different baits, as you would use three or four different baits and one of the baits would hit it off. People



would say that carp eat anything, but we know that's not true. How many baits haven't worked? There are a lot!

One thing that's missing nowadays is that not many guys make their own baits. For instance, Urban Baits only make four different baits; we can't spread ourselves any wider than that, as it just wouldn't work, and we wouldn't be able to keep up. For anglers that want to make their own baits, there's still a lot of room out there to explore and do stuff like we did in the early days, like even using the liver powders and liquid livers and minamino, going to all the bodybuilding shops like we did in the 80s. I always remember going in the bodybuilding shops, and we could use half the gear in there; it's only going to help our bait.

Rob - Minamino was a big secret when we discovered that, and corn steep liquor.

Terry – That’s right. All that these were little breakthroughs, and we started the sesame seed oil. We were using really oily baits, filling out milk protein baits with sesame seed oils and Chinese sesame seed oil. One of the most prolific anglers when you and I first met was a guy called Alan Smith. One of his favourites was grinding down cat biscuits. That’s what they were into, a lot of those guys. A lot of those good baits came from supermarkets, didn’t they? Still today, if you went in the supermarket you could make a brilliant bait.

Rob – So what sort of year did you start using Tuna and Garlic?

Terry – When I started fishing Wraysbury was I started using the Tuna and Garlic. The original Tuna and Garlic was when I would get liquidised tins of tuna. I very rarely put any flavourings in baits because I was a heavy baiter. I knew

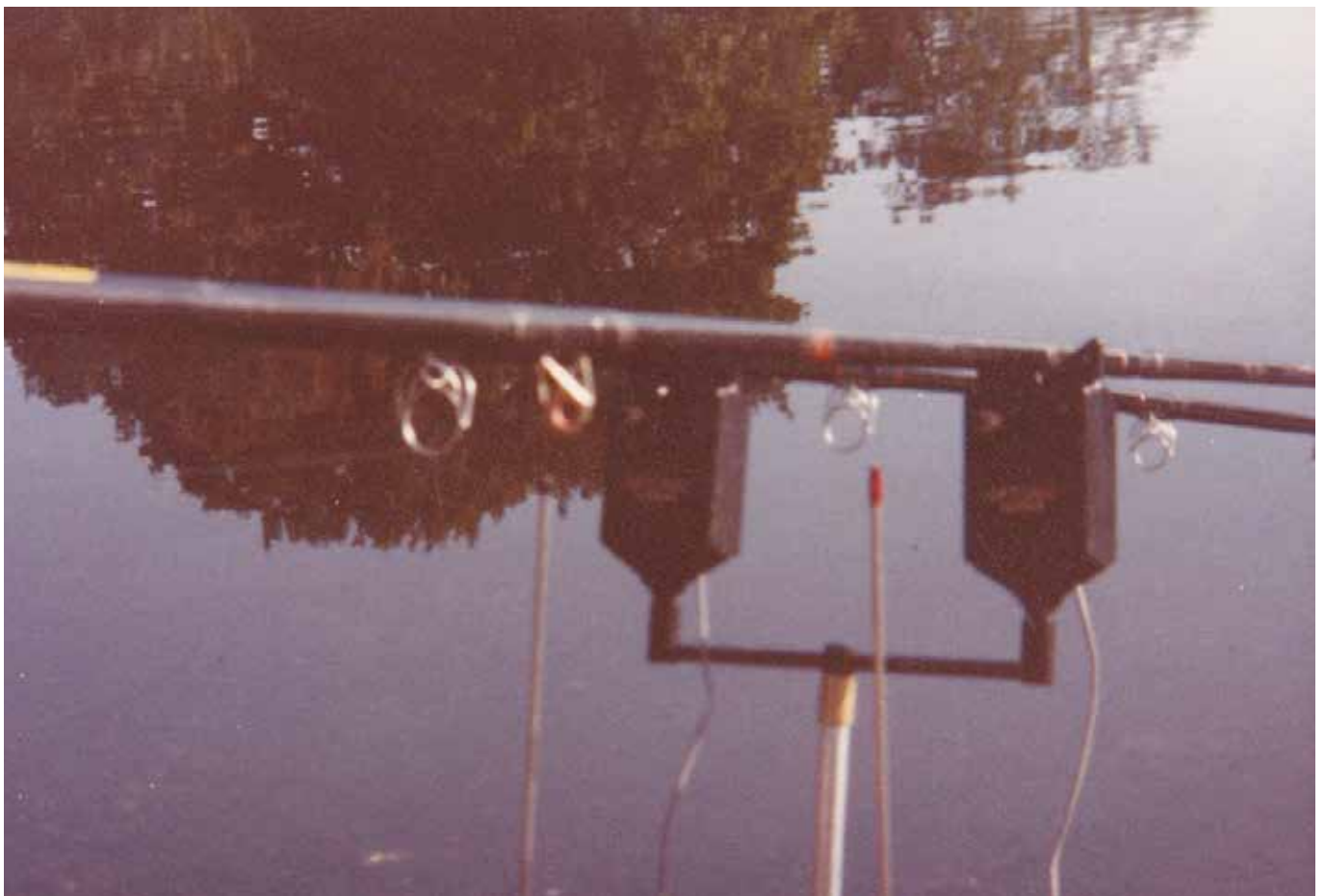


TERRY DEMPSEY

I didn't need any flavouring in my bait because I'm putting down a decent amount of bait, so the Tuna and Garlic was a totally natural bait. It was some garlic powder and a little bit of garlic oil, but then what I would do was make the bait up using the fishmeal base mix but with liquidised tuna. I would get my egg mix and literally throw six or seven cans of tuna in with some salt, and I caught so well on that bait. I caught well everywhere; I think I hooked one on my third night on Wraysbury. The Wraysbury fish loved it, and I caught some of my best carp. Then I used it again on other waters, and it was a brilliant bait for me.

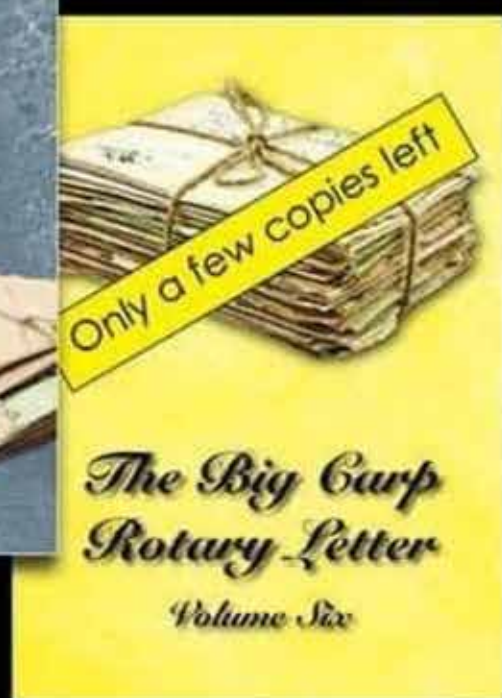
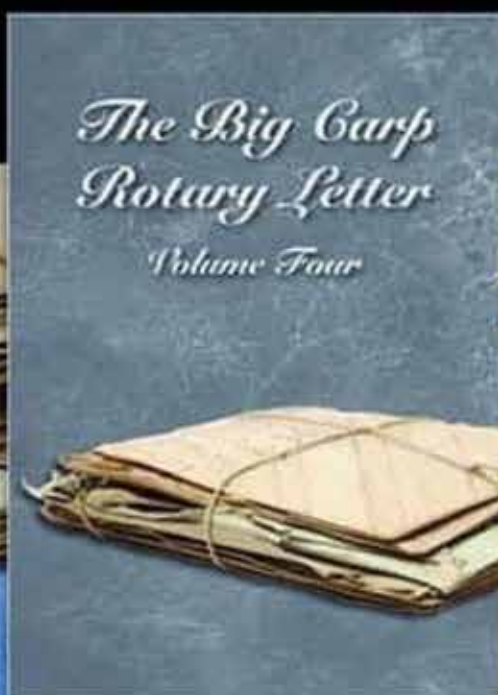
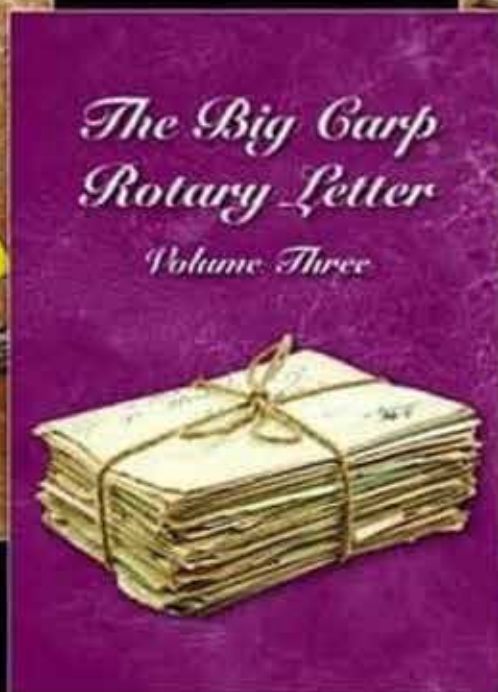
Rob Maylin - Do you think that's your favourite bait?

Terry - I think that's my favourite bait, but the I've caught my PB on the Nutcracker. In fact when I fished Wingham, the amount of big'uns I had on the Nutcracker was unbelievable.



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They wouldn't eat anything else; they just loved the Nutcracker in there! I can honestly say on that particular lake, they loved it, but the Tuna and Garlic is a bait that I love. It's a very natural bait, and there is no heavy chemical flavouring in it. It's such a natural, lovely bait, it really is, and easily digestible. For someone who fishes like I do, putting a lot of bait in to prep areas, it's an ideal bait to use. Some of the guys are the same with the Red Spicy Fish. Again, it's a very natural bait. A lot of the stuff that goes into the Red Spicy Fish you can buy in supermarkets. We go and buy a lot of our ingredients from food wholesalers, and again it's going back to those same principles as what we were talking about - keeping the baits natural and making them a food source and not trying to complicate them too much.

Rob - Well, it certainly does the trick, that's for sure! Urban

Baits has come from nowhere in the last ten years to the top of the tree, and all four of your baits are catching big'uns all over the country. I'd just like to thank Terry for sharing all of his thoughts with us and his ideas of his baits from over the years. I promise not to leave it this long again before I do another interview. Thanks very much, Tel.



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