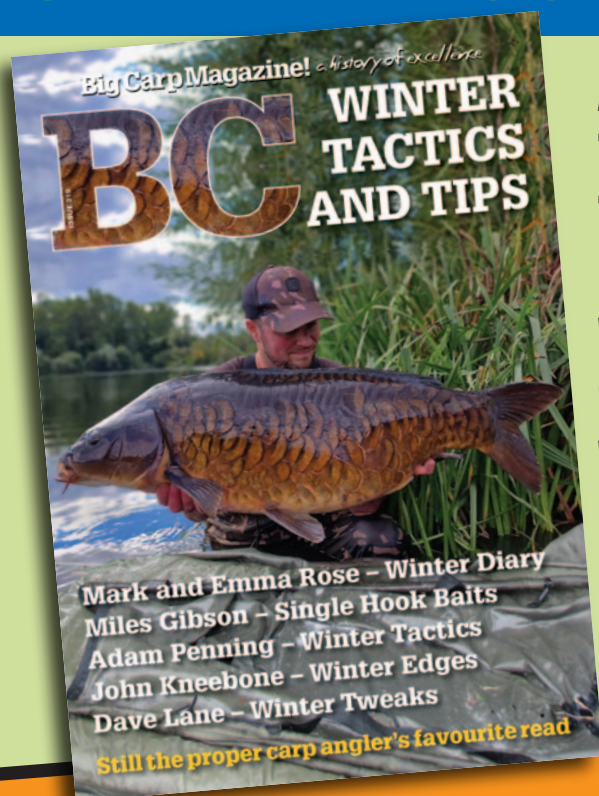


FEBRUARY ISSUES OF **BIG CARP** AND **FREE LINE** MAGAZINES FREE HERE www.freelinemagazine.com or www.freelinemagazine.co.uk



A Year to Remember by Craig Runham
The Single Hookbait... by Myles Gibson
The Winter Diary Part 2 by Mark and Emma Rose
Go-To Winter Tips by Adam Penning
Winter Tactics by John Kneebone
'H' A Somerset 40! by Tristan Cooper
Winter Tweaks by Dave Lane
Dinton Pastures News by Simon Bartlam

River Carp Story by Daniel Scranage
Secret Diary of the Urban Myth Rob Maylin
chats with Terry Dempsey – October 2015
Avon Adventure by Gary Whelan
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BC

ISSUE 319

**WINTER
TACTICS
AND TIPS**



Mark and Emma Rose – Winter Diary

Miles Gibson – Single Hook Baits

Adam Penning – Winter Tactics

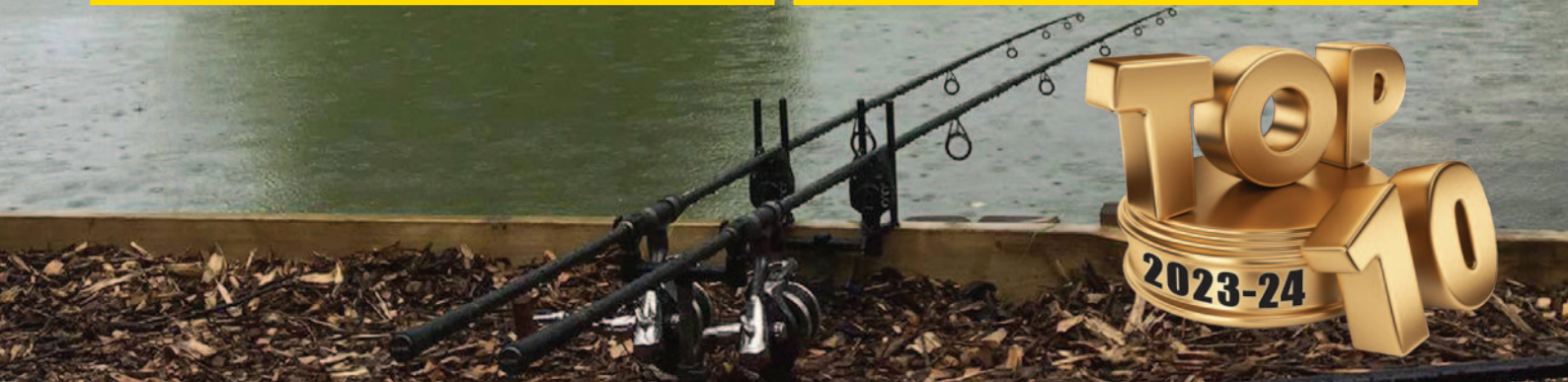
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Winter Tactics and Tips

Blimey, hasn't it been cold? I can't remember such a prolonged spell of minus night-time temperatures. I bet there's been a few batteries sold this year. I know mine passed away. Plus, the heater in my car hardly works, so night time driving means constant defrosting. I really don't like the cold, must be my age.

So, as the lakes are frozen and you are all missing your angling 'fix' I have got two fantastic free magazines to remind you that spring is just around the corner. We will soon feel the sun on our faces, carp will be jumping and rolling all over the lake and buzzers everywhere will be singing that sweet tune once again. Thank you, God. Actually, I have so much stuff crammed into this month's Big Carp that I don't really know where to begin. It's a Winter Tactics and Tips special this month, but there's so much more too.

Let's start with the cover, and as you may have noticed it's Craig Runham once again. He has had a few covers over the years, but when this one turned up on my email, I just could not resist. What an incredible fish!

Craig is back this month with a look back on his past season, 'A Year to Remember' indeed, everyone a cracker. Craig has very limited time, he is not a full timer like so many these days. He is a committed family man, on very limited time. However, his catches are up there with the best in the land. Thanks Craig, for letting us see your incredible catches. Top man!

Incidentally, we are looking for articles, if you have some spare time, we would really appreciate and love to see your catches. Speaking of looking back at the past season that's exactly what fishery manager, Simon Bartlam does in his Dinton Round-up piece this month. What a venue Dinton Pastures is, and by golly, are they getting big. Feast your eyes on the best of Dinton this month.

Finally, before we get onto the winter stuff and speaking of incredible looking carp, Tristan Cooper is back this month with the tale of 'H', A Somerset 40. What a stunner! So, as the cover says, let's take a look at our winter content this issue. Filled with useful tips and edges to catch you a winter carp once the lid on our lakes finally melts (hopefully before this comes out on February 1st).

Mark and Emma Rose return this month with part two of their three-part Winter Diary, and they have been on top form. PB's all round, nice going by the husband-and-wife team.

Dave Lane makes a welcome return with the first of four technical pieces. Dave's Winter Tweaks are well worth a look, a consistent winter catcher for several decades, who could fail to learn?

Miles Gibson, looks at my favourite type of winter angling, Single Hook Baits, a method still overlooked by many. John Kneebone and Adam Penning step up with their Winter Edges and Tactics. Very few anglers can match their winter success. Technical information that will definitely catch you some extra fish this winter.

Free Line Magazine is a COLD WEATHER WARMER this month with some great articles from Dempsey, Runham, Whelan, Scranage, Eaglestone, Briggs, Murphy, Smith and Gaskin. Add to these loads of 'carpy' humour, all the latest tackle reviews and 'carpy' news and competitions and there's something for everyone again this month.

I hope you have been enjoying our two free monthly carp magazines, Big Carp and Free Line, see them both here - www.freelinemagazine.co.uk

Now I need your help!

Filling two magazines each month means I need twice as many articles, some people say they want to write, but never do. If you have had a successful start back, we would love to hear your tale. There are no picture or word limits. Simply Email your article to info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk

If you would like to join our FREE subscription list to be sent the mags as soon as they come out Email FREE SUBBY to info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk

WITHOUT YOUR INPUT THERE WILL BE NO MAGS!

Have a great Winter friends, catch a monster and send us the story. Be part of the UK's fantastic carp angling history!

Rob Maylin

PS We are doing some great ADVERTISING deals to help everyone through the pandemic, drop me a line at info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk if you would like to see the deals and our media information pack.

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BIG CARP 319
March 2023

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Front Cover
Carig Runham returning
The Big Fully.



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ShockLeader

What's happening, where and when in the carp scene

Urgent request for help from Midlands Carpers

Dear Big Carp readers,

The team at the Midlands Carpers have been asked to organise a fund-raising event for the 4 young boys that sadly lost their lives while playing on the ice at Babbismill lake, Solihull. As we have been approached directly by the families involved, we aim to put as much effort and dedication into these events as possible. Many of us learned our trade fishing Babbismill lake as children and many of our members continue to fish this local park lake in the midlands.

This tragic event has touched the hearts of so many people, be it anglers, parents, grandparents or children so the Midlands Carpers team aim to bring the angling community together to show our support for the families involved. The Midlands Carpers is a community Facebook group with approximately 4000 members that organises social events and tutorials for all levels of carp angler throughout the year. Our main focus is building a strong like-minded group of anglers without the pressures of experience or skill.

We have already started to raise money by auctioning gifts kindly donated by some local fisheries and the response has been amazing. Numerous tackle shops and manufacturers have already gifted prizes (apologies if you have already donated) and several high-profile anglers have offered their time and services to support the event. The



event is scheduled to run between April - July 2023 and we are currently in talks with 4 large midlands fishery to host the event. Our plan is to hold a large doubles match with up to 60 anglers and all proceeds will be going to "Babbismill Princes" Gofund Me page. Once a venue/date has been secured we will start advertising the event and explain its structure. On the final morning we will be holding a live, bank side auction to try and maximise the donations. This is where we need your support.

The initial interest from anglers has been overwhelming and we now look to the UK carp industry for additional support. We fully understand the current economic restraints businesses are facing, but any donation of any size will be greatly appreciated. We

are looking for prizes, gifts, time or support so anything donated however big or small will make a massive difference. I am sure you all get requests for donations on a daily basis but this is a true opportunity to positively affect the lives of these shattered families and a chance for the carping community to show its strength and compassion. In addition to the monetary donation, we will be installing a memorial bench (already donated) at the lake its self along with a plaque to honour the boys.

Thank you for taking the time to read our request and I hope to hear back from you all.

Have a great day. Regards The Midlands Carpers

Garath Edwards - 07840 144 036

Martin Arnell - 07771 364 825



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Carpy Humour: Carpy days by Doctor Kibble

Beware, they are amongst us Rob! I don't know why, but someone emailed me a crossdressing link via Facebook the other day. I've never travelled on the other bus, or drunk out of both taps in my life. Though nothing ever surprises me these days. Years ago I had a fishing website. One month in 2004 I did a feature, 'Carp Anglers Girlfriends'. Unexpectedly I had quite a large response. Even a bigger surprise was when Julian Cundiff was the first to send me some photographs. I saw a video not so long ago on Youtube of Kenny Gates being interviewed by Kevin Ellis. I don't know how, but Kenny hasn't aged in over 25 years. He must have a good plastic surgeon, or he must sleep in a freezer at night time. I would just like to point out I'm not a real doctor though. My own personal doctor is really weird. He makes me cough while I'm holding his boilies.

I heard a rumour recently, that two men broke into a chemist in the Yateley area, and stole all the Viagra. The police put out an alert the other day to be on the lookout for the two hardened criminals. A geezer comes home from a two night session at Farlows. His girlfriend says, "Darling, I shaved myself down there last night. Do you know what that means?" The boyfriend says, "Yeah, it means the ***k'in plug hole in the shower is clogged up again." It's probably something you don't want to think about too much, but if you were born in September, it's a pretty safe bet to assume that your parents started

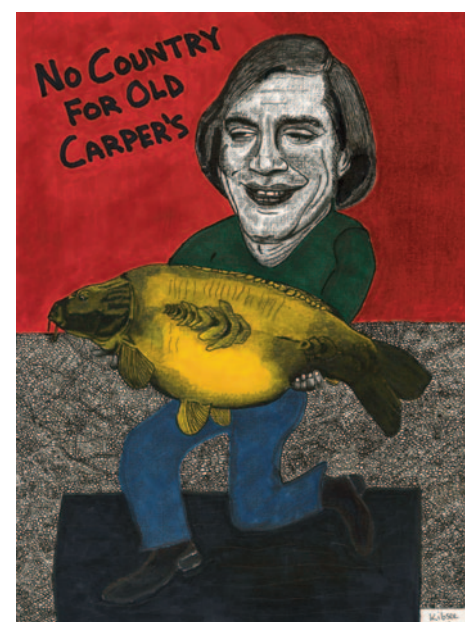


their new year with a bang. Apparently the most popular geezer at the nudist colony is the man who can carry a cup of tea or coffee in each hand and a dozen ring doughnuts. I think it was Phil Harper who told me that one once. Though I don't know how he would know such a thing.

The things on TV these days. I just found an origami porn channel, but it's paper view only. Sideways Sally caught me one day watching a porn channel. So I quickly turned over to a fishing channel. On her way out she said, "You should stay on the porn

channel. You know how to fish!" Though I don't think there is enough fishing on TV. I see Ali Hamidi has left the 'Monster Carp' team, and now has his own show with ex-pro footballer Bobby Zamora, 'The Grand Fishing Adventure'. I suppose there are only so many times you can be spooned by 'Spoonier'. Though I enjoy watching both shows, I wouldn't let Ali blind-fold me. That is like a cross between kinky, and being kidnapped.

As I said previously in Big Carp Magazine. You should always listen, and take advice from older, and wiser





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anglers. Like not to shake hands with Pete Regan at a carp lake, but for many years I used to mistake him for the record producer Pete Waterman. Though where have the years gone? I can remember when it was two pounds a rod a day to fish Wraysbury No1, and you could get away with night fishing there for free if you bought a day ticket. In the days when there were only about a dozen carp swimming in 120 acres of water. You rarely see anglers fishing there then, especially midweek in those days.

As Nigel once said to me, you can't beat sucking on a fisherman's friend in the winter months. My favourites are the Honey and Lemon ones. Surprisingly Nigel never got a sponsor from them.

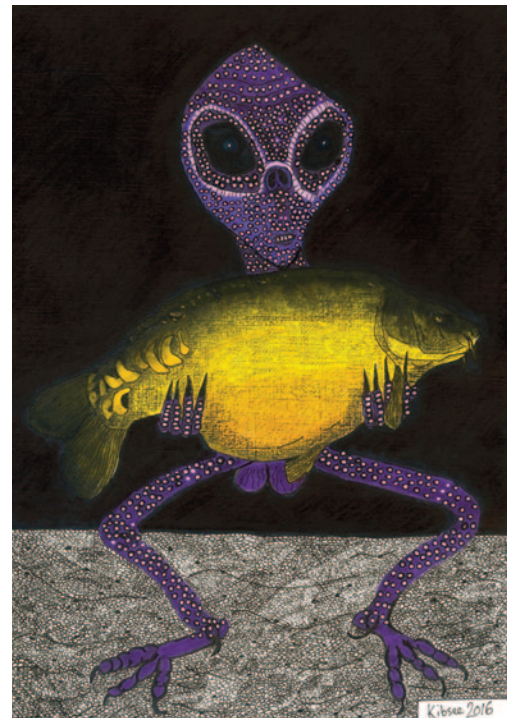
You know when you are getting old. It's when you go to a gentlemen's club, and you ask the private dancer for their ID. I once was invited to a Halloween swingers party in a large mansion in Kent, by some Darenth lads. The women had to put their keys in one bowl, and then the men had to put their keys in another. I accidentally put my keys in the wrong bowl. I'll tell you how lucky I am. I put my keys in the wrong bowl, and with my eyes shut picked out my own keys. So I sat in a room all night touching myself. One of the first people I ever met when fishing Darenth Big Lake one very hot summer day in August 1990, was Pauline Selman. I remember thinking to myself at the time I

bet he owns a two man bivvy. Though two man bivvys are quite common nowadays. Though he was just wearing a pair of Speedo's, and flip flops at the time. Which was a bit painful on the eyes.

I saw my old mate Rodders the other week. He said he went dogging with his girlfriend the other night! Never again he said. Apparently by the time she'd finished parking the car everyone had ****ed off! I didn't know what dogging was. Until I accidentally took the wrong path one night. When looking around Singleton Lake in Kent. Though apparently Kent is quite well known for sheeping as well now. I was once told Dartford was twinned with Maldwyn in Wales. Only a rumour though.

I meet them, I do. Recently while walking around a local lake. A young geezer told me he can fire his jizz ten yards across a lake. I told him I can fire mine fifty yards out. Though I didn't tell him I was using a catapult at the time. Even better are those particle pults. Though make sure the wind is hitting you in the back, and not coming towards you. Otherwise it's like tiger nut juice hitting you in the face in windy conditions.

While once walking down the river Lea. On a very eerie dark, and misty Friday night. Looking like a perfect night for Jack the Kipper. I heard a lady shout out from some nearby bushes. Five pounds to blow the baldie man's flute. I thought to myself



five pounds for a BJ, is there a sale on!.....Is it Black Friday? Then a man dressed as a copper put his hand on my shoulder. He said, "That's an on the spot fifty pound fine for encouraging soliciting". I realise now they were a pair of con artists, but at the time I wasn't sure who to pay first.

Anyway, Happy new year to all BC readers. Don't do anything I wouldn't. but if you do, make sure you take photographs.

Have it large! Doctor Kibble (Kibsee)



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New lake record 47lb 6oz

There are a few fish in the Thorn that I've been itching to see how they've grown this summer. But they've evaded capture for much of the year. Sometimes only being caught once or twice a year.

As the year comes to a close, Ben and myself had been tallying up the number of 30+ fish, which last week we had at 34 of them over the 30+ weight, and 4 of them over 40lb. If you've caught one this year, we would love to see them posted on the comments below to round off the year for us.

We know there's always going to be a new lake record when certain fish are caught, because they are still relatively young fish, and still growing. So yesterday it was great to hear the warrior had been hoisted into Adam's net (at a new record weight!).

We knew he would be up for a water shot, as it was also his pb. That water is still cold! But it didn't stop him catching 5 fish over 3 nights. Which shows we are lucky enough to have a venue with good winter form if you can find them.

His other fish were 2mid 20's, 30.4, 35, and of course the warrior at 47.6.

It's exciting times for us with a fish at this weight. I remember 10 years ago saying it would be a dream if we could one day have a 40 in the lake, and I would have been happy with that. I'm too superstitious to forecast a 50+ fish, but we can keep dreaming

We have some late deals in January and also taking bookings for 2023.

For bookings & availability please message us directly & information can be found on the pinned post at the top of our page or at - <http://www.blackthornfishery.co.uk>



We all know winter fishing can be hard graft, but with a little extra effort, and the right venue and tactics, the results are there to be had! Jordan Pashley recently managed 7 bites, with 4 going over the thirty pound mark. This heavily scaled mirror at 35lb, was the looker of the trip, all taken on solid bags cast to likely looking areas. #StickyBaits #Bloodworm #Krill



Carbon baits consultant ends 2022 on a high

John Williams ends 2022 on a very high note, here is his amazing catch report. After bagging one as the lake was freezing up around me a couple of weeks prior I was itching to get back after the big thaw and with the coincidence of a low pressure front the timing of my session couldn't have been better. On arrival I was surprised to see no other anglers about which made it easy for me to get back on the spot I caught from before the freeze. After a quiet night 9.30 arrived and like clockwork from the previous session, one of my rods was away and after a good steady battle, I managed to slip the net under one of the rarer ones in the lake a fish named the immaculate at an impressive 46.14. I was totally blown away as it was one I dearly wanted to catch, the first thing I did and always do is slip the hook out and get the rod back out asap as bite times can be a very short period at this time of year. With the rod back out it was time for me to enjoy my moment with such a special old carp and with good company.

With time passing into the afternoon I thought my chance for another one had gone until at least the following morning, that was until 2pm when a steady take resulted in a lovely old leathery 30lb, with the fish secured in the net one of my other rods was away this time with a stocky so it turned out to be a bit of a red letter day as with the nature of the pit and true to form the following day was uneventful. What a great way to end the year. All three fish came to the same tactic of a Pfish pop up fished over a mix of 12mm Pfish, Hemp and crushed Peanut and a few Maggots all plugged in Chilli liver What a session John, massive well done.



Day Ticket 40!

Well, that's one way to round off 2022 for Lukas Hughes; a mega coal-black 40lb common. Solid bags crammed full of an array of Manilla products, then finished off with an injection of Cloudy Bloodworm did the trick on a Christmas session on Farlows Lake. #StickyBaits #Manilla #Bloodworm #Farlows sLake.



Urban's Ben Blower and his brother have recently returned from a busy session on Brasenose One which saw them land 6 fish between them to just under 40lb!!

Fishing a match the hatch approach at range and baiting a tight area regularly with 12mm #nutcracker kept the bites coming. Fantastic result guys!! Available now at www.urbanbait.co.uk

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Tom Loraine seems to have started the new year in the same way he left the last; catching big carp! Winter ticket success this time on a quite little water just down the road from his home. On only his second trip, Tom managed this cool character known as 'Apples' at 38lb 8oz. His go to of straight boilies, with hinges over the top being as reliable as ever. #StickyBaits #TheKrill



Carbon Baits Tigers sort these out Jack Brady told us

The brace shot shown was in the transition from summer to autumn last year. I had been catching some of the lakes bigger residents catapulting Tigers in a loose spread on some snags and fishing a balanced one locked up. The first cold night had approached so I target a similar area in the same little corner and just decided that I'd underarm a balanced tiger on each rod on a smalls area. I then catapulted around 20 tigers around then and this produced a brace of 20 pound mirrors. This ancient linear was caught over about 3kg of bait spombed tight to a hole in the weed using boilie and tigers soaked in Hemp oil and Hydra kray. Great work Jack.

Off the Mark with an 80lb+ brace!

Dan Savill took full advantage of the mild weather in the lead up to Christmas and was rewarded with a couple of special early presents in the shape of this impressive brace of old English warriors on Christmas Eve.

The Box Mirror at 41lb 12oz was the first to slip up, swiftly followed by the Mohawk Common at 39lb 6oz.

Both fell to 15mm wafers on my ever faithful German rig using the Cryogen Curve-Shanx and Tungsten Loaded X-Stiff links. Dan had only recently started fishing the venue so to get among the A-Team in the depths of winter was a seriously good bit of angling, well done Dan!



When targeting big carp, a lot of the time things don't seem to fall into place, but from time to time there are moments where the stars align, and your relentless efforts are rewarded! Davy Claus landed this monumental, heavily scaled 52lb mirror, whilst making the most of some favourable weekend weather conditions. A bucket of broken Manilla and mixed particle was prepped, and distributed over a spot that he'd recently had some success fishing, a Mulbz pop-up was placed over the top and as they say 'the rest is history'. #StickyBaits #Manilla #Mulbz



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- Toilet block with male/female/disabled toilets at the car park.
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"It was one of them nights you know. Full moon, windy conditions... I spent the night twisting and turning in the sleeping bag and was wide awake when the bite came at 4.30am. Again, on the same left-hand rod. Immediately I hopped into the boat and steered it in direction of the hooked carp. Once above it I could feel that tell-tale heavy resistance of a big'un, and although there lived a few big carp in this lake, I could only think on the one. Not much later a giant framed carp with a huge set of shoulders appeared for a first time on the moonlit surface, I burst out in laughter. And when it dived back down with force in the 40ft depth below me I just knew it wasn't going to come off or get stuck somewhere, it was going to be mine. "And mine it was. All the way back in the boat I was shaking my head, chuckling to myself. How the events of that autumn had culminated in the capture of this 75lb public giant just felt a bit unreal. The frustrating six weeks without fishing, the mega brace on Plan C and then the disappearance of the rota guys on Plan B followed by netting the targeted giant during the first night."

Davy Claus.



Marcus Howarth has been a busy man with family commitments this season, but when he did get out angling, he still caught some incredible carp. This dark creature went uncaught for three years, but eventually slipped up to Marcus's combo of 12 and 16mm Krill, mixed in with some bloodworm pellet, and a handful of hemp, with a match the hatch pop-up over the top. #StickyBaits #TheKrill



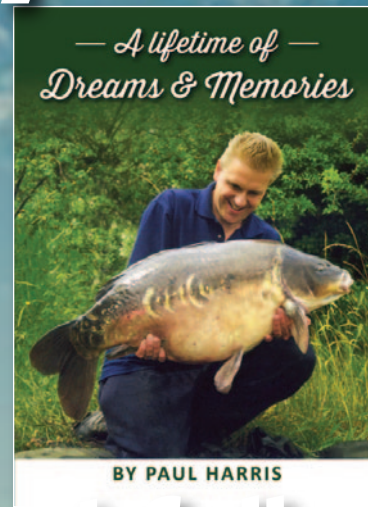
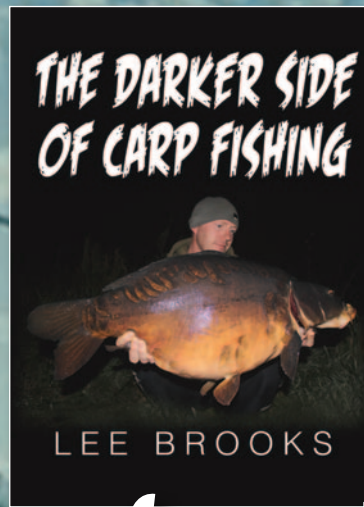
Just dusted off the gear after a little break over the Xmas period and this is my first carp of 2023 - The Big Fully at 37lb. #carpfishing #carpfix #bigcarp #korda #mainline



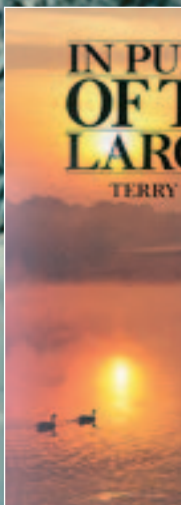
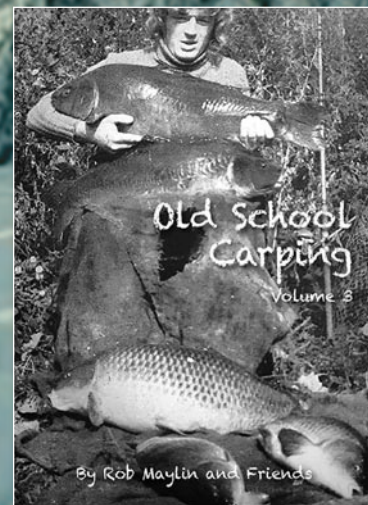
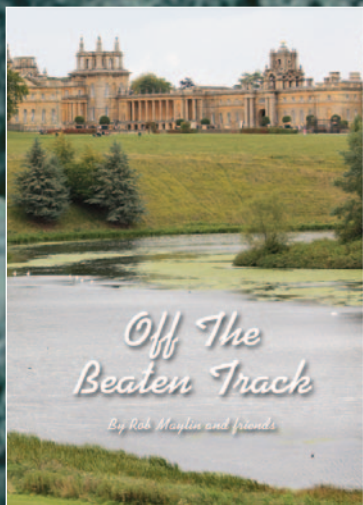
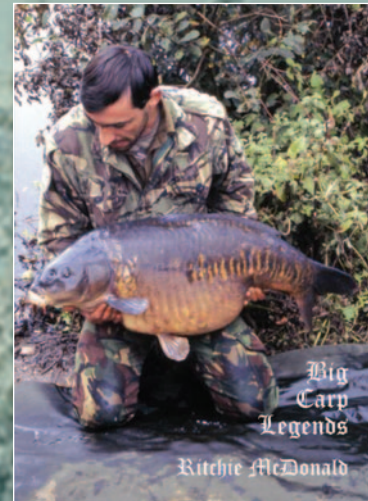
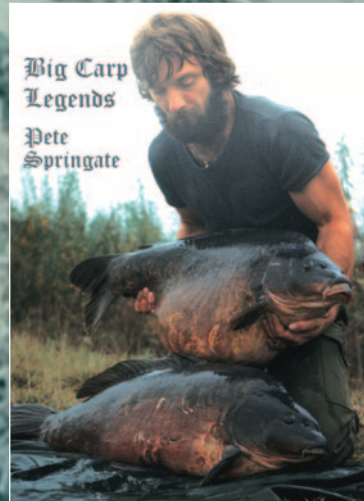
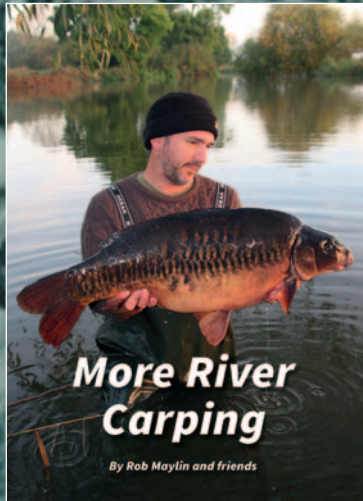
WHAT A YEAR!

Charlie Pryor wraps up his year with 17 UK carp over 40lb, including two 50s! Here's a selection of some of the beauties he caught... Congrats Charlie. #RidgeMonkey #Fishing #Fish #Outdoors

Warm Away the Cold

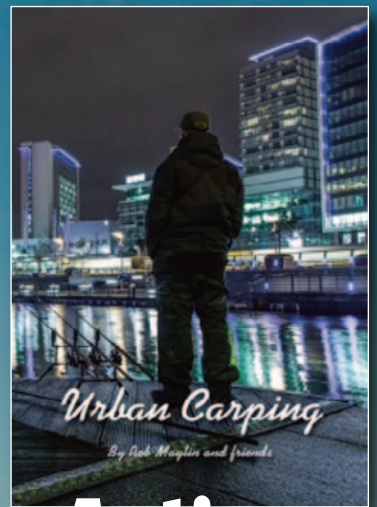
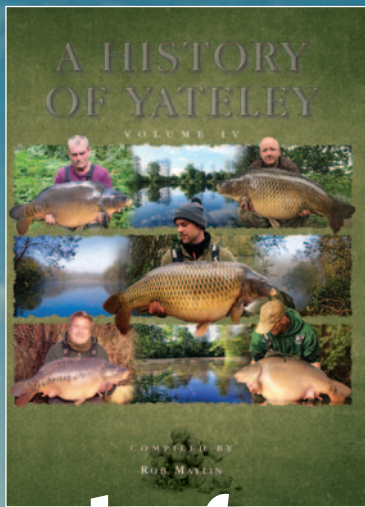


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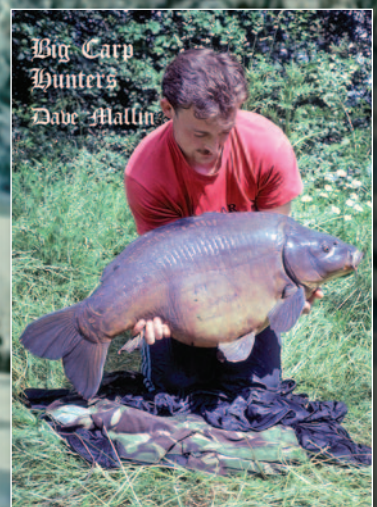
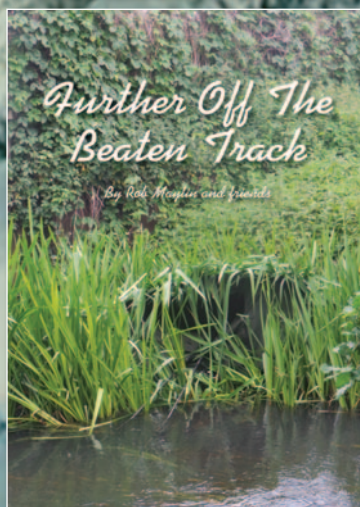
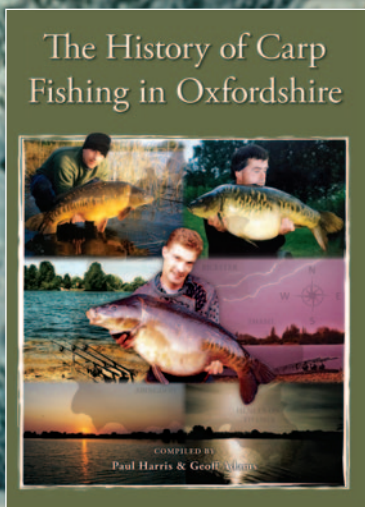
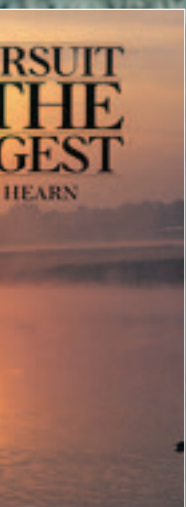
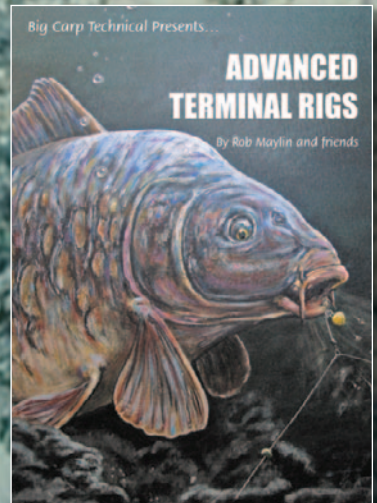
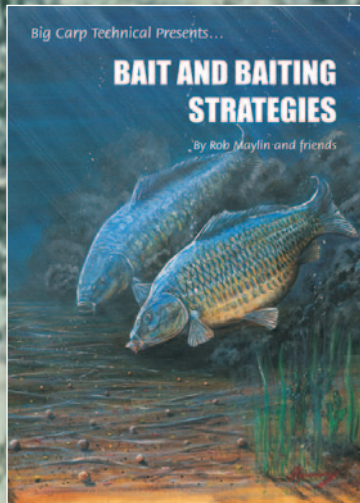
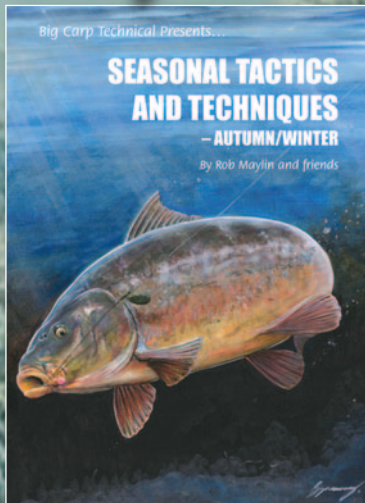


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Good Weather This Year



get ready for some Winter Action



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Our monthly reviews on products currently on the market

In this issue:

- Geoff Anderson
- Schrade
- Geoff Anderson



Press release



Rough **Uncompromising** **waterproof design**

Our mission with version Rough is to manufacture the strongest Dozer & Urus version that will do more and last longer under extreme conditions.

This means that among several improvements along the making we have developed on the fabric so that the lifetime and the water-repellent effect/waterproofness are dramatically improved. Detailed tailor features and methods have been added version Rough. Designed for the really demanding fishing whether it is in a boat or on a muddy river bank. ■



Fw: Schrade® Knives and Rage® Broadheads Collaborate to Launch The Schrade Enrage Series

COLUMBIA, MO., January 11, 2023 – Schrade® knives and Rage® broadheads have collaborated to create the Schrade Enrage Series, a revolutionary line of replaceable blade knives that delivers the best of two iconic, American brands.

Scheduled for launch at the ATA Show in Indianapolis (January 11-13, 2023), the Enrage Series will be available at select retailers in March 2023. Bringing together one of America's most historic cutlery companies with the best-selling hunting broadhead of all time, the Schrade Enrage Series is engineered with Rage® blade technology to deliver a trio of razor-sharp, replaceable blade knives, built for performance and endurance, and designed to perform in any situation, from breaking down a trophy in the field, to everyday carry.

The Enrage Series utilizes replaceable blade technology, which eliminates the need to sharpen blades, and comes standard with replacement blades and a proprietary blade removal tool. Brian Murphy, President and CEO of American Outdoor Brands, parent company of Schrade®, said, "We are excited to partner with the team at Rage®, a brand renowned among hunters for its award-winning blade technology, in a collaboration that is unique within our industry."

Together, our teams have developed a truly innovative solution for consumers seeking a high-quality, replaceable blade knife solution that eliminates knife sharpening and covers their needs from everyday carry to extreme environments." Offered in three ergonomic options, each Enrage Series is designed for those who demand the most from their equipment, whether for hunting, fishing, utility, or everyday carry.

Each features a distinct handle configuration, 6", 7", and 8" blade options, premium materials, and proprietary features (<https://www.schrade.com/enrage/>) Isolate Enrage: Fully Rubberized Non-Slip Grip for Hunting (\$39.99-\$49.99) Phantom Enrage: Premium Carbon Fiber for

Everyday Carry (\$49.99-\$59.99) Stryche Enrage: Superior Forged Carbon Fiber for Everyday Carry & Hunting (\$64.99-\$74.99) The Enrage Series knife systems and replacement blades will be available at the finest retailers nationwide, at <https://www.feradyne.com/rage-broadheads/> or at <https://www.schrade.com/> Todd Seyfert, CEO of FeraDyne Outdoors®, parent company of Rage® Broadheads, said, "For over 130 years, Schrade® knives have earned the trust of consumers by delivering some of the toughest and most innovative knives on the market."

We are excited to pair our best-selling blade technology with the storied Schrade® brand, to deliver consumers with a truly revolutionary product: a premium performance, everyday carry knife with replaceable blade technology."

About American Outdoor Brands, Inc. American Outdoor Brands, Inc.

(NASDAQ Global Select: AOUT) is an industry leading provider of outdoor products and accessories, including hunting, fishing, camping, shooting, outdoor cooking, and personal security and defense products, for rugged outdoor enthusiasts.

The company produces innovative, top quality products under its brands BOG®; BUBBA®; Caldwell®; Crimson Trace®; Frankford Arsenal®; Grilla Grills®; Hooyman®; Imperial®; LaserLyte®; Lockdown®; MEAT!

Old Timer®; Schrade®; Tipton®; Uncle Henry®; ust®; and Wheeler®.

For more information about all the brands and products from American Outdoor Brands, Inc., visit www.aob.com. About FeraDyne Outdoors® Headquartered in Superior, Wisconsin, FeraDyne Outdoors® is a U.S.-based leader in the manufacturing and marketing of an ever-growing assembly of category-leading archery, hunting and outdoor brands.

Through the design and development of industry-changing technologies, each brand supports a constantly evolving global marketplace of outdoor enthusiasts with one goal in mind – success in the field.

Fueled by an unwavering commitment to the satisfaction of sharing in each customer's accomplishments FeraDyne brings together a series of iconic, award-winning and performance-oriented companies that include: Axe® Crossbows, Rage® broadheads, Muzzy® broadheads, Muzzy® Bowfishing, Carbon Express® arrows and accessories, Nocktural® lighted nocks, TruFire® releases, Block® targets, GlenDel® targets, Shooter® 3D targets, Black Hole® targets, Hurricane™ bag targets, IQ® Bowsights, Sure-Loc® Archery Products, S4Gear®, Eastman Outdoors®, Apple Archery®, Rocky Mountain Archery, Wac'Em® Archery, Covert Scouting Cameras®, Covert Optics® and Scent Crusher®.

For more information, please visit www.feradyne.com. ■

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Carpy Humour



Oak Lakes Fisheries

www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk



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



A Special Mention! This is firefighter Jimmy who is new to carp fishing but here he is with his 8lbs catch. You can see how delighted he is and we were very pleased for him.



Ricky Collett has done two sessions this winter. He's caught 14 fish between the two sessions: two x 40s; four x 30s; seven x 20s and one tench at 6lb 14oz. The biggest was twisted scale at 41lb 6oz – the current Pipe Lake record.

Lake Prices

Day ticket lake – Oak Lake

– £10 a day and £20 for 24 hours.

Predator Lake – Prices are the same as the day ticket lake for pike during the winter – £20 a day and £30 for 24 hours for catfish in the summer.

Match Lake – £6 for one rod and £10 for two rods.



We were pleased to welcome some firefighters in January spending 48 hours on the day ticket lake where they had an enjoyable session and kindly sent us these photos. These were the biggest catches but they had others too, including some bream. Biggest carp was 19lbs 1oz and the smallest was 10lbs 13oz. Thanks for the photos – Tom, Steve, Wayne and Jimmy.

A Year to Remember

By Craig Runham

Hello and welcome to my yearly round up for 2022. It's certainly been a year to remember with a couple of very special captures. Ones that are very high up on my favourite captures of all time.

It starts off with a very early spring capture of a couple of very nice carp topped by a 40lber for good measure.

Early spring had me at a bit of a loose end as it was still far too cold to be targeting a certain big common that I was targeting in a certain big pit not too far from home. More about that fish later. So, with the first signs

of early spring in the air I headed to my syndicate to do a morning session. It was still very early spring but I hoped to see some early signs to get a idea of their whereabouts. It was just on the cusp of first light when I see a carp show in a seriously shallow area of the lake. I was shocked at first that they would be in the area as it was only 2.5ft depth maximum. A freezing cold biting easterly was also roughing the surface in this area. Hardly felt like the place I certainly expected to see them. I set up 2 rods both rigged with helicopter set ups and hinges all tied using Fox rig components. I opted to use some washed out Cfood pop ups from Hinders baits

as hook baits. I had upmost confidence in the bait as I had a extremely good year previously using them. I flicked the two rods out into the area the fish had showed and rained around 20 Cfood baits over the rods. After 30mins or so passed the left rod whipped up tight and amazingly I was into my first one of the trip. A stunning mid twenty scaley soon was nestled in the confines of the net. I was over the moon with that fish and it certainly had me beaming ear to ear in the early spring sunshine. It wasn't long before I was away again on the remaining rod. This fish felt much bigger from the off and after a typical big fish battle a rather large carp sur-



An early spring 40lber – Moonscale.



A great start to the year a lovely scaly mid twenty.



More early spring antics.



More early spring antics.



The big common.



The big common.



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The leopard a return to the big pit in search of the big common.



Back on the syndicate quiet banks are needed.



Back on the syndicate quiet banks are needed.



At loose ends on club water.



At loose ends on club water.



More syndicate shenanigans.



Dream Maker

CARBON THROWING STICK





More syndicate shenanigans.



The big fully.



The big fully.

faced. I knew instantly what fish it was it was one known as moonscale its last capture being over 40lbs. After a few last minute lunges, I slipped it into the outstretched net. It was indeed over 40lb as the needle rested on 40lb 8oz. I was over the moon to capture that fish and at over 40lb it certainly started off a memorable few week's fishing days only on the syndicate. Fishing the in the same Manor I was able to put together a good run of fish early that spring with quite a few good 30s among the captures.

It was around early May that the urge had got the better of me to go chase that big common that had eluded me for around 3 years. I had caught a good amount of the big pits stock and felt rather unlucky to not have had my time with the magnificent fish. The first couple of trips see me struggle as it had felt they was only just waking up on there. I managed a few by the middle if may and knew that time was running out for me as my ticket ran out on June the 16th and with elsewhere in mind, I had to try my best to finish the job in the coming trips. Unfortunately, the

big common done a capture the middle of May from an area I least expected it to come from. I had two trips planned before my ticket run out both 2 nighters so felt I had to be angling my best. Easier said than done when the lake is extremely busy and hosts a hoard of full timers. As with most big fish they can easily do a second capture fairly quickly so I was not to put off with the capture mid-May. I had a gut feeling it would possibly come out of a swim the opposite end of the lake from its previous capture. It was now end of May and I arrived for my 2-night session. Instantly I knew given the weather that the fish wouldn't be too far off from spawning I just prayed it wouldn't be during this trip. Luckily for me the swim I had in mind was just being vacated as I arrived. I see this as a sign and ran round with the gear eager to hope the stars would be aligned and my gut feeling would be right. First night passed by with just a couple of liners. Shortly after first light my Cfood brown pop up was picked up and I soon had a 33lb mirror smiling for the camera. It was a new one

for me too known as the leopard. Great start I thought to myself now where is that big common. Mid-morning a rather large fish crashed beyond the area I was fishing probably 20 yards beyond my spot. I was fishing at around 100 yards. That evening a cross wind picked up and I knew getting the rods out perfect would be a tad tricky. By 5pm I had all 3 rods on hinges fished perfectly at over 100 yards. I baited with around 12 spombs of mixed sized Hinders Cfood boilies, hemp and tigers. The majority of my bait being 15mm cfood as I was fishing matching pop ups. A hour passed and around 6pm I had a stuttery take. I wasn't surprised when I was soon unhooking a tench in the margin. The wind had got uo even more and I knew it would take a few casts to get it on the spot. It took 3 attempts but I knew it had to be perfect. A couple of friends popped in for a brew just as I was sitting back down. We were just laughing at the fact I had caught a tench from that range and they saluted me for getting the rod out on only 3 attempts. No sooner had the kettle boiled that

same rod absolutely tore off, I was fishing braided mainline and with the clutches done up tight due to the mountain of weed beyond the spot the rod almost got ripped in. I was on it in no time at all. It really was a weird time for a bite as most bites had been early hours of the morning or shortly after first light. I know from the off that it was clearly a bigger fish. There was an island to my right and the unseen fish was heading that way. I locked up tight and prayed my Fox beak chod hook held firm. A large boil under the branches of the island confirmed that I couldn't give an inch of line. Luckily for me everything held firm and despite being weeded up on 3 or 4 occasions I soon had the fish in the margin ploughing up and down ripping weed beds up as it swam through them. Finally, after what seemed an eternity the fish topped. I was in the water at the top of my chesties so couldn't really see due to the glare what I was attached to. One of my mates who was recording the special moment suddenly said it was a black common. I now fell to pieces

as I outstretched the net and scooped up a rather large common. I was absolutely buzzing to say the least when I looked into the net. I was in no doubt he big common was finally mine. I had dreamt about this moment so many times. She looked simply massive and was certainly a new Pb common for me but size never really bothered me with that fish. It was one I just really wanted for years. After a couple of calls, I quickly had the right people in the swim. The lads hoisted her up for me as the adrenaline was pumping so much. We settled on a weight of 49lb 14oz. It was so close to the 50lb Mark but I called it at 49lb 14oz. I didn't care about a few ounces it was the fish I was after not the weight. After some superb photos were taken and I watched the big common swim away I punched the air. It was job done for me. After having over 45 fish from the big pit I had finally completed the job. I drove away from the lake smiling away knowing that was a close call in running out of time. Sometimes the planets align and everything goes

right. Happy fucking days.

So, after the capture of the big common again I was at a loose end really so with fish spawning in the coming weeks on the lakes I had tickets for I had a little rest which included a family holiday. Before long it was time to get my head back into my angling as autumn would soon be approaching. I purchased a local club water ticket and dabbled on there catching some lovely fish but I soon felt the urge for quieter banks once again.

I headed to my syndicate again for a few trips, I caught some lovely carp in simply lovely surroundings and quiet banks. With plenty of lovely 30s I was simply enjoying my angling once more.

This certain trip I had organised a guesty for my good long term friend Dye. It was late September/early October when we arrived for a 2-night session. We quickly found some fish and as with all my guests he had first pick of swims. He obviously set up on the most activity. Who wouldn't. After around 2 hours we had seen very little I guess getting the rods out



October/November angling.

had moved the fish out out of the blue one if my rods ripped off resulting in a beautiful clean common of over 30lbs. With it looking dead I spotted some fish the other side of Dye in a empty swim. It was extremely weedy in front of that particular swim but I took the risk and hoped I would find some clear areas. Luckily for me I soon found a couple of spots in amongst the thick weed beds. I soon had the rods out and was relaxing in the afternoon sunshine. Dye was due to pop to the shops to pick up some BBQ food so as he left, he said don't go catching whilst I'm away. Around 30mins passed and I heard a crack of the bobbins on the left rod. I was away again. Instantly the fish charged off weeding me up solid pretty quickly. I applied steady pressure and soon felt some movement and the line whipped up as a large boil appeared on the surface. I man-

aged to gain around 10 yards of line before yet again being weeded solid. This time after 10 mins of full compression I decided to put the rod on the rest as I needed a wee. Literally walking back to the rod and line began ticking of the clutch. Picking the rod up u felt some movement before the rod was literally pulled out of my hands this time the fish stayed up high in the water charging into a floating weed bed. Soon everything came to a halt once again but this time after steady pressure I had the whole weed bed and hopefully the fish coming towards me. I dragged the mountain of weed some 40 yards back praying the fish was in the middle of the weed bed. I skipped the net under the whole weed bed imagining where the fish must be. I lifted with all my strength till I engulfed most of the weed into the net I slipped my waders on and started tearing away

for my prize. After throwing a silly amount of weed into the air I finally caught a glimpse of a big cluster of scales and a chestnut-coloured flank. I'm not going to lie as I tore back the weed, I was left in awe with each piece of weed I removed. Not only was it one of the best fish I had ever seen it certainly wasn't small either. I figured it out to be only one fish and that was an extremely rare fish that to my knowledge had only done one other capture ever. It was indeed confirmed later to be that very fish. What a buzz that was I certainly won't be forgetting it in a long time. At ounces under 40lb a incredible carp and certainly one of my finest ever.

Since that trip I have continued to enjoy my angling on my syndicate catching some lovely carp.

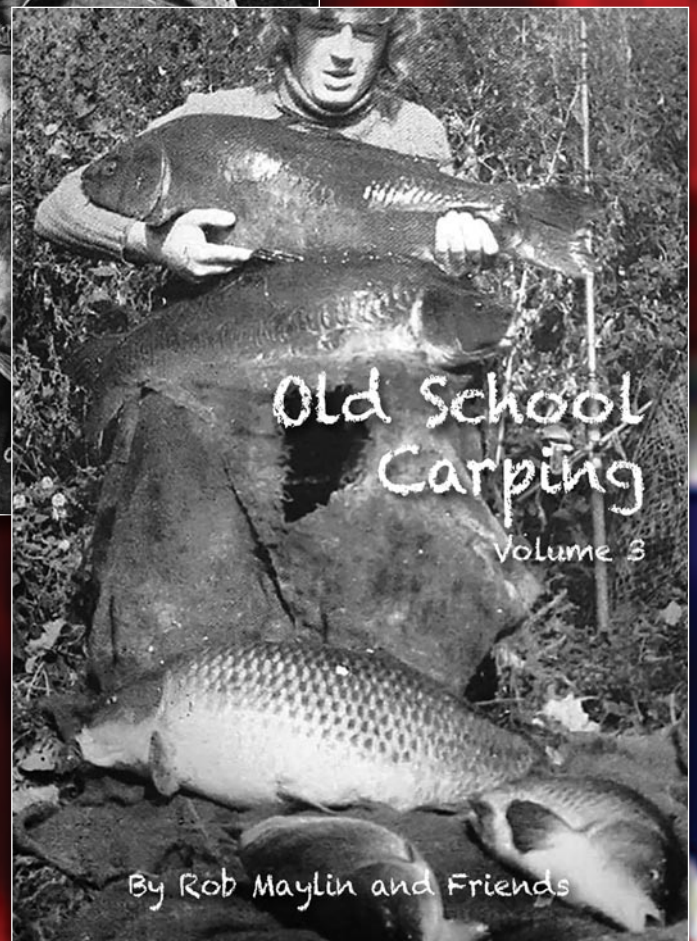
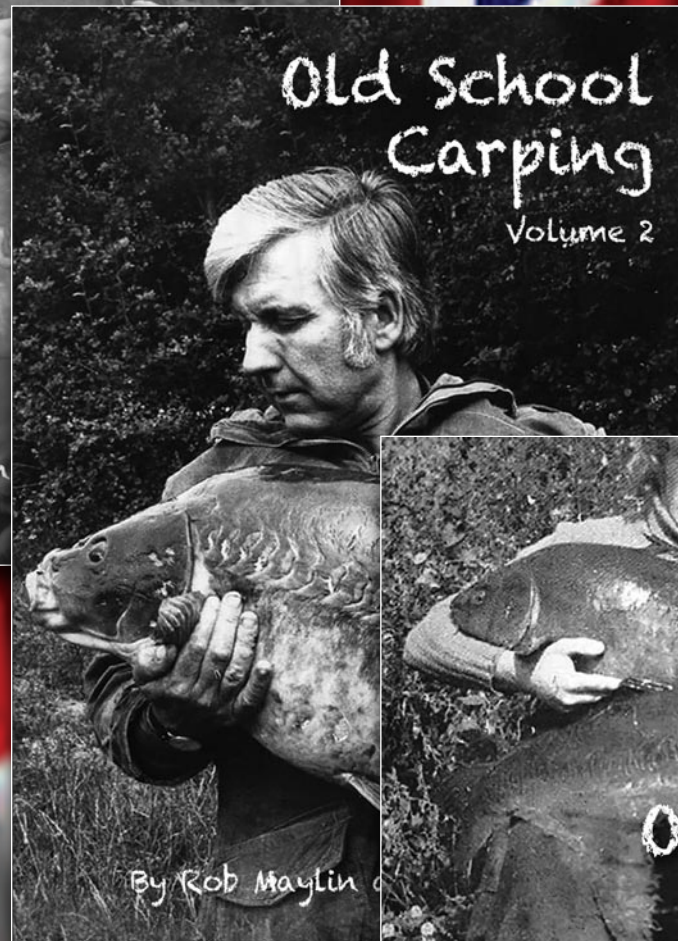
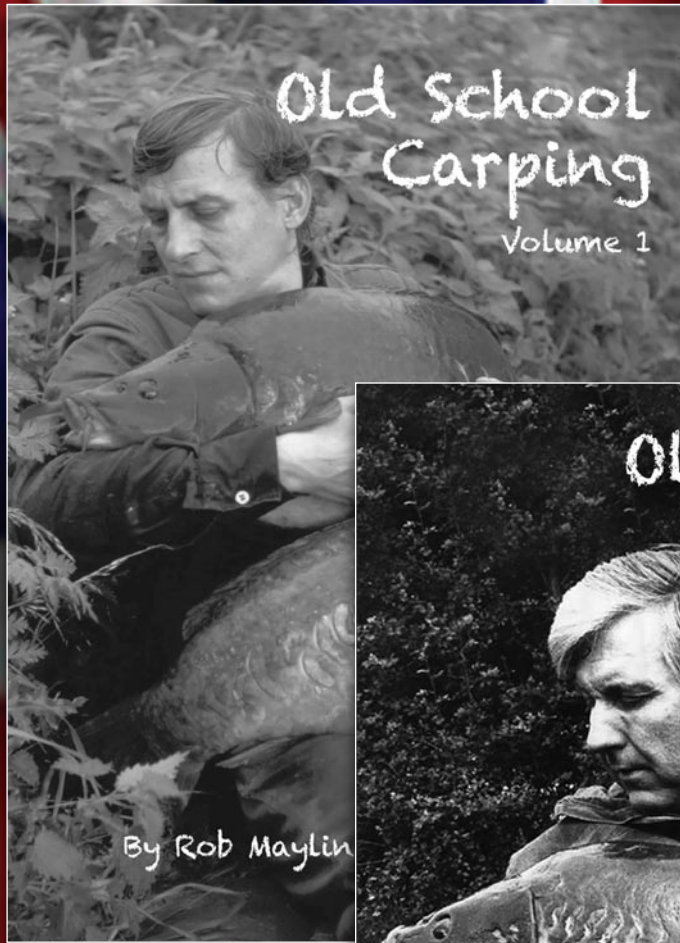
Now it's end of December as I write this its cold and wet. Roll on spring!

Be lucky Craig Runham ■



October/November angling.

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Exclusive

The Single Hookbait...

By Myles Gibson

Single hookbait fishing is a devastating method, yet you see so few people doing it. A single can be productive anytime of the year, but they really do come into their own especially

through winter and into spring.

Being cold blooded, even the slightest rise in water temperature is enough to wake the carp up. However, you can't go lumping in the bait, they just won't be interested. All the fish do, is start moving around a bit

more, as such they seek out quick, easy meals as they go on their travels." With a turn of better weather this weekend, maybe it's time to get the high attract single hookbaits out, and what better way to start than with a Mulbz... ■



Exclusive

The Winter Diary

Part 2 by Mark and Emma Rose



The plan with the winter ticket was to always do a long stint when it started. But with the swims all booked it wasn't to be.

So, after the success from the first session, we found ourselves heading back just four days later to have another go albeit in different swims.

This trip found us in pegs 8 and 9. Peg 9 is a well-known favourite area of the lake's biggest resident, 'Rosie' who goes around the impressive high 40lb mark. (Which for the South West is a massive fish and certainly on many an angler's wanted list).

The lake was busier this time, but from chatting to the other anglers, it seemed only one peg had produced a fish.

So, after a toss of the coin, Emma chose to go in peg 8, which commanded a much greater volume of water and 9 being a smaller, more intimate swim.

To be honest both swims have

good form so I wouldn't have been disappointed in either, even though secretly my preferred choice was nine. So, win, win!

With everything set up and four nights ahead of us, our spirits were high. With the conditions being overcast and windy we were hopeful of banking at least one between us.

With darkness descending, the rods were cast out onto our chosen spots.

Both opting for a Bait Guru 'Salamino' Dumbbell Wafer on one rod and a 'Salamino' High Class Hookbait on our 2nd, we attached a 'Carp Craze' Mesh bag of matching Stick and Pellet Mix coated in matching Liquid Food, to a Terminal Tackle Size 6 Barbless Hook, and finished off with the 'Carp Craze' PVA Nugget. A small helping of Bait Guru's 'Salamino', in 12mm and 15mm was then scattered over the spots.

Our third rods, however, we decided on Bait Guru's 'Jungle' High Class Hookbait, with the only difference being Emma topping hers off



with a Bait Guru 'Essential Fruit' Pink Tipper.

With the traps set, it was time, with a cold beer in hand and a lovely homemade Chilli con Carne on the go, to sit back and chill whilst watching the water after what had felt like a very long day.





With the food demolished and a couple of beers drunk, Emma decided to retire for the night, so I headed back to my bivvy, made a coffee and sat back staring into the darkness, watching and listening for any signs of the lake's habitants to give up their whereabouts.

By 2am and with only a couple of small tell-tale signs, I decided to get a couple hours' kip, ready to be up for sunrise, as I was still getting over a nasty bug that I'd had for the last 3 or 4 weeks that had certainly taken its toll.

With the early morning sunrise having passed, a number of coffees consumed and not a single indication between us, I have to say it wasn't what I was expecting. But having faith in everything I do and use, I knew that if they were in front of us, there would always be a chance.

Just as I was making another brew, a single beep sounded out on the receiver and with the bobbin slowly rising, I lifted into the rod and was immediately met with the unmistakable feeling of a Carp attached to the other end.

A slow and sluggish battle ensued, but I knew by the way it moved that it wasn't fighting like one of the smaller residents of the lake.

After a nerve racking battle, I finally got my first sighting, as a lovely scaly Mirror broke the surface layers with what I thought was at least a 20lber. I was soon, however, to be corrected as I pulled back the net and could not only see an absolutely stunning, fully scaled Mirror but what looked likely to be heading towards the 30lb mark.

With everything wetted and zeroed, the needle finally landed on 31lb 12oz. To say I was ecstatic would be an understatement, but more





importantly. What a way to start the trip with the rods only being in for around 14 hours or so.

With photos done, by my ever obliging Wife, the fish was safely returned and with a new

‘Salamino’ High Class Hookbait and another small Carp Craze Mesh bag nicked on, the rod was sent flying back out onto the spot.

With the disturbance caused with the capture, I decided to redo the other two rods at the same time and Emma quickly followed suit, due to the fact that we were fishing in pegs next door to each other.

With the rods back out and the customary chocolate digestives devoured and washed down with a few coffees, I decided to spend some time tying up some more bottom bait rigs.

Being organized and prepped is key to me. I try to keep a minimum of 20 of my favourite bottom bait and wafter rigs, at all times, ready to go.

It's very rare I talk about rigs as I genuinely believe we all have our own preferences. But in the modern day fishing world, the amount of options, let alone components, is a minefield, especially to a newcomer to the sport.

Anyone who's ever fished with me over the years, will know that whenever I can, my first point of call will be, match the hatch bottom baits. It's always done me well and with 40

years of fishing experience behind me (25 of those being solely for Carp), it has taught me that if it works, don't change it. Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that bright pop ups etc, don't work, as obviously they catch a





huge amount of Carp and in the right circumstances I will obviously use them. But for me, confidence is key, so that's my preferred option as and when possible.

It's the same with rigs. I see so many examples of overly complicated rigs, that just aren't needed, in my personal opinion. Obviously, all rigs have a time and place but again when the situation suits.

I personally will go as simple as I possibly can.

As an example - A Coated Semi stiff Hook Link with a section striped back. Knotless knot, with a small slither of Silicone, to trap the hair in place on the shank of a 'Terminal Tackle' Advanced Wide Gape Hook (seriously the strongest and sharpest hook on the market, in my opinion).

Then I would use either a mini kicker or small piece of shrink tube, to

turn the hook that little bit quicker with a figure of eight loop knot and an Anti-tangle Sleeve and a small blob of Putty, from the 'Terminal Tackle UK' range. My absolute preference in choice when tying bottom bait rigs.

Anyway, enough of my waffling on and back to the important bit.

By Midday, I was surprised we hadn't seen more sightings, as with over-cast skies and a pretty gusty wind. You could say, conditions were certainly more than favourable.

With this in mind, and with the lack of Carp in the area, I decided to scatter about 20 or so 'Salamino' boilies coated in matching Liquid Food.

Within an hour, the little top up had worked its magic and I found myself attached to a very disgruntled Carp, who was determined to try to snag me at every possible opportunity. Finally, and with a sigh of relief, I

The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

Carp fishing has a very rich history. In the early days of it becoming popular, Kent and the Colne Valley were the hot beds of our fledgling pastime and of course there was the legendary Redmire Pool.

Into the new Millennium and one area above all others exploded onto the scene, this was of course Oxfordshire. The quality of the stock of carp in this county was incredible but where did these beautiful scaly beasts come from? When did the Leney's get stocked? What were the origins of the famous Linch Hill fish and what of the history of the now infamous Linear Fisheries? Over the course of the pages of this book all will be revealed as Paul and Geoff have put together the facts of how these lakes were stocked and also banded together many successful local anglers, some of which have never published any of their catches, who tell their fishing tales on these stunning lakes.

With more than 300 pictures of some of this country's finest ever carp and several full page maps, this huge volume tells the story of Oxfordshire's carp fishing history whilst still leaving a little bit of mystery for your imagination!

Included within the pages of this book is the foreword written by local legendary angler and former tackle dealer Joe Taylor. We have chapters from Paul Kitchin on the legendary Vauxhall Lake. David Brian Williams tells us the story of the lakes in the City of Oxford itself! Chris Robinson has written an incredible chapter on two of Dorchester's lakes. Orchid and The Lagoon. The history told in Chris' chapter on these lakes is just incredible and wait until you see the pictures!

Next door to The Lagoon is Dorchester's Alliance Club Lake and Joe Forrester tells his story of the incredible scaly carp that inhabited this lake and how he outwitted them.

We have a real coup in the fact that brilliant all-round Oxford angler John Everard agreed to be interviewed and he has an incredible amount of historical information to share, as has Gerald Stratford who is also included in this informative chapter.

No book about Oxfordshire's carp fishing history would be complete without the story of Oxford's first forty and what a story it is. Richard 'Paddy' Paradine has never written or published any of his catches before and we have his interview here for you of his historic catch which was kept under the radar for so long.

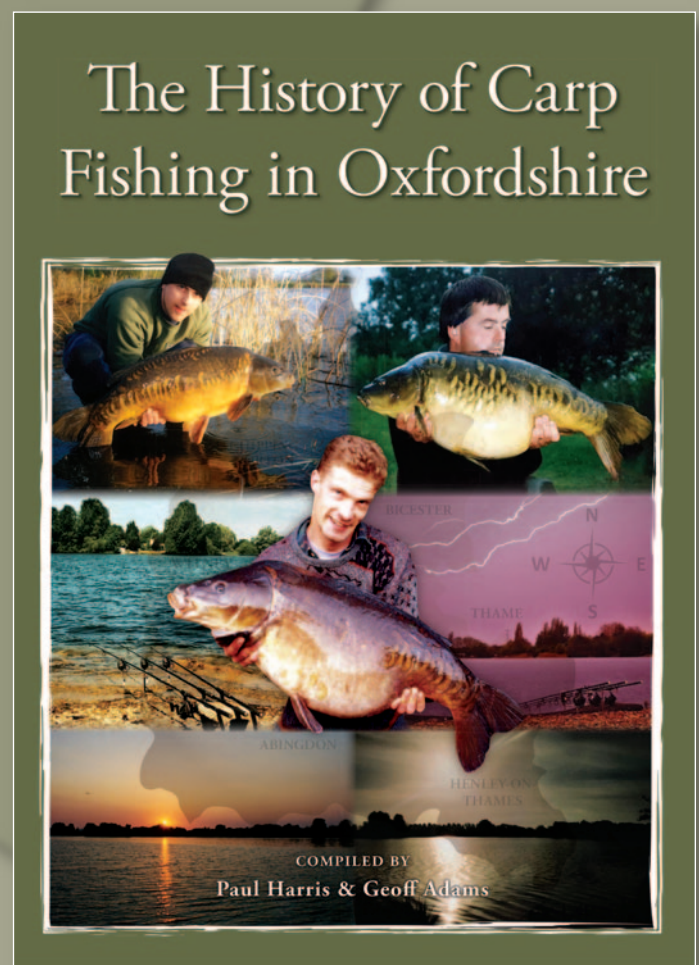
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing on The Leisure Park was back in the day when the Leney's were still about and culminates with his capture of The Big Leney at its biggest ever weight, the iconic 'Paddy's Fish'.

We have brilliant chapters on Newlands from Ginger Robinson and Milton Pools from Stuart Rothwell. Danny Aplin has written about his time on Linch Hill which will just blow you away! His pictures alone are worth purchasing this book.

Nick Franklin has written a lovely chapter on one of Oxfordshire's little known lakes and his account really hits home that carp fishing isn't always about the numbers game. Sometimes it's just you fishing for the unknown! There are superb chapters on Manor Farm from Paul Hathaway and St Johns from Stewart Roper.

If that wasn't enough Paul and Geoff have wrote chapters themselves which cover the stocking history of lakes, how the gravel company ARC played such a big part in the early stockings of Oxford's lakes, the early days of Linch Hill and Linear Fisheries and facts and stories regarding Oxford's other lakes, some very off the radar!

If you like your history, you like carp fishing and love stories of beautiful scaly carp, there is only one book to purchase this year. Here it is...



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A V A I L A B L E N O W



slipped the net under another lovely 'Festival' Carp.

Yet again the ever faithful 'Bait Guru' 'Salamino' High Class Hookbait doing the damage. This time the only difference being that this one had been soaked in Bait Guru's 'Mexican' Halo.

Although this Carp wasn't as big as the first, it still flattened out at 21lb 8oz, so a lovely follow up for sure and nothing to be disappointed about.



With Emma yet again being my long suffering photographer (this time with a 'if looks could kill look on her face'), doing the honours and the fish returned to its home. I quickly re-wrapped the rod and got it straight back out, with the same hook bait with another 'Carp Craze' Mesh Bag

of 'Salamino' Stick and Pellet Mix, complete with PVA Nugget, attached.

With the rest of the afternoon passing by uneventful and the weather taking a turn for the worse, with the winds strengthening significantly. We said our goodnights and headed back to our bivvies.





I was kept awake most of the night and would like to say it was from catching, however, the night had passed by uneventfully with the wind and rain being the culprit.

As we sat eating breakfast, we

noticed a few, albeit small signs of carp in front of us. With the odd twitch of the reeds and a couple bubbles here and there, we decided to leave the rods in situ until at least midday.

One of the joys of working as a team and 9 times out of ten being in swims next to each other, has its advantages and certainly does pay dividends. With working together and redoing rods at the same time, the strategy is to keep disturbance to a minimum, rather than someone you don't know thrashing the water to a pulp with constant recasting or spodding especially when things are hard going.

Just as the kettle lid started to jangle, Emma's rod burst into life for the first time on the campaign.

As Emma started to guide it carefully out of the bay and away from the reeds. You could see from the battle, that it certainly wasn't going to be in with a chance of breaking any records. But for Emma it would be her first Carp on the Winter ticket, but more importantly from the venue itself. A perfectly formed Common slid over the cord, with this time me on netting duties. The smile and sigh of

relief on Emma's face said it all, as she jumped up and down in the air... She was finally off the mark and the pressure, off.

With the Reubens, setting on 12lb 8oz and the photos done. Emma quickly rebated with a 'Bait Guru' 'Jungle' Highclass Hookbait, matching Stick and Pellet Mesh Bag, topped off with 'Carp Craze' PVA Nugget and cast the rod back out onto the spot. Whilst waiting for her line to sink, she scattered a dozen or so freebies over the top, with the throwing stick. Just enough to entice but not over feed, especially with the water temperature dropping. With time passing by and no further action forthcoming, we soon found ourselves redoing our rods, for what would be, the final hours of darkness, before our departure the following day.

With the rods refreshed and our traditional evening Baileys coffee, I have to admit my thoughts for the night ahead were not filled with confidence, with the lake going completely mill pond-like and a cold mist starting to limit the view.

By first light my thoughts had been confirmed, with not a single bleep between us. With time cracking on



and a slow pack up in progress, I have to admit I thought Emma's fish from the day before, was to be our last.

However, I was to be proven wrong, with my middle rod letting out a one tone bleep and my bobbin slowly rising at a now steady pace.

I soon found myself attached to my third of the trip. With it safely landed, after a very, shall we say, short but spirited battle. A lovely 18lb 8oz Mirror stared back at me from my unhooking mat. Even though it wasn't a monster, it just showed that with 8 fish in two sessions between us the tactics we were employing were spot on.

A couple snaps were done and the fish returned. With only an hour or so to go, I decided not to recast the rod that I had just caught on, as it was fairly close to my right hand one.

That said, it was to be the last action of the trip and as we loaded the last of the gear into the cars and headed for home, my thoughts had already turned towards the next trip, which would be a Birthday session for me. Something that I've not managed to do in nearly ten years.

But in the meantime, reality beckoned with a little break of two nights away in Bournemouth and a Kaiser Chiefs Concert, thrown in for good measure.

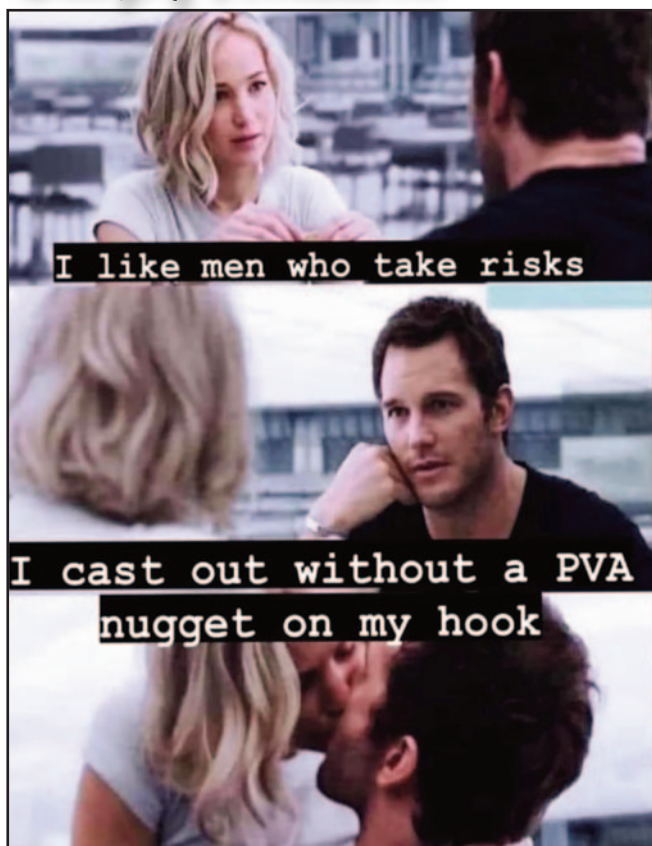
Would our good start to the Winter

Ticket come to an end! Well, you'll just have to read the next part of 'The Winter Diary' to find out...

And leaving you on that note, as we, at 'Obsession Carp' say, "Believe in your Dreams!" ■



Carpy Humour



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Legendary Carp Paintings



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

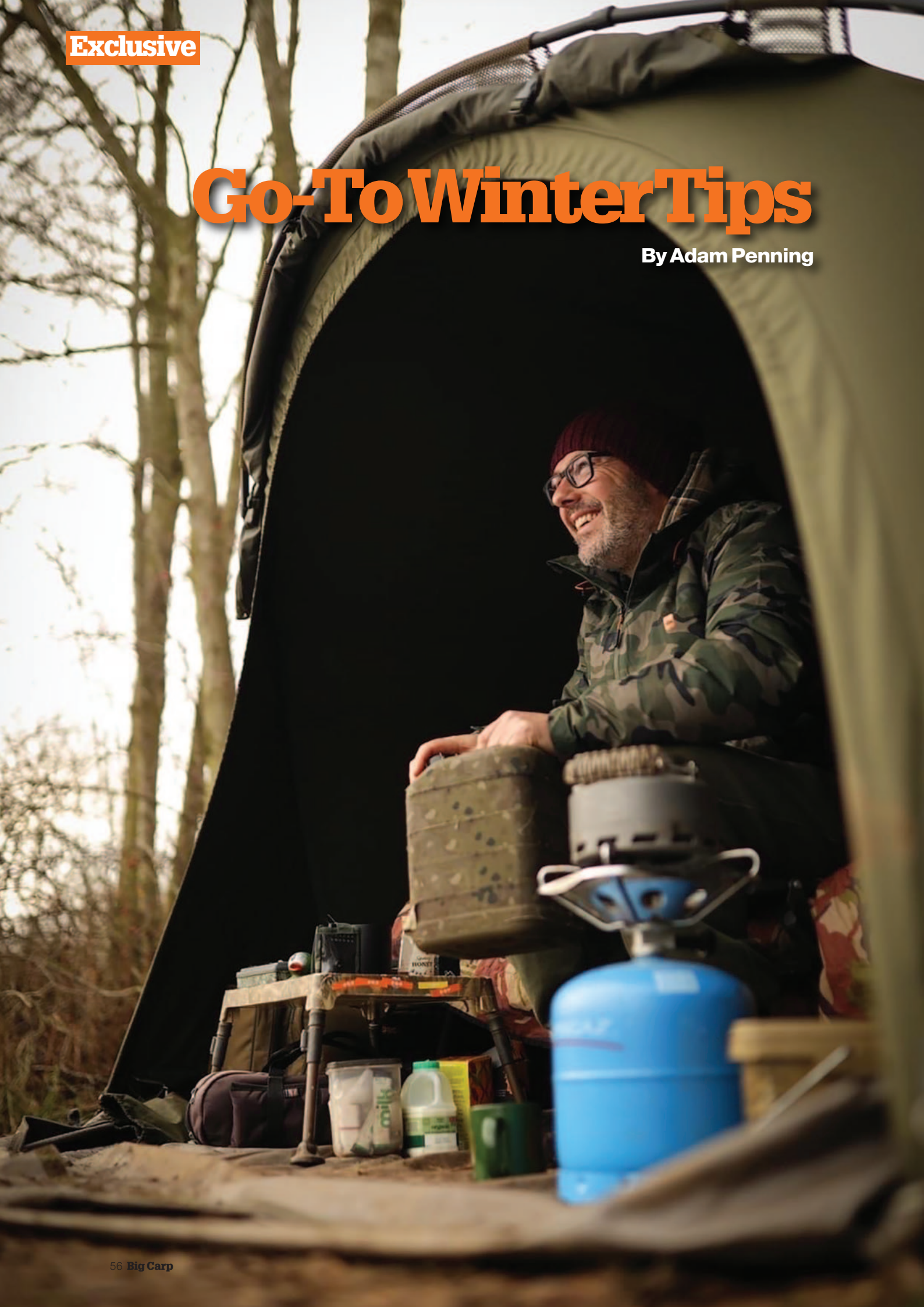


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Exclusive

Go-To Winter Tips

By Adam Penning



Winter carp fishing benefits from refinement, i.e., scaling down your approach as much as you can. It's vital that you still fish responsibly and only fine down your end tackle in situations where snags and weed aren't a problem. I have found reducing the size of your hooks and hookbait to be the most important, closely followed by the diameter of your chosen hook-link.

"In terms of bait, the finer and smaller the better. My preferred method is a super-charged boilie crumb combined with small pellets. Crumb is one of the deadliest things you can use no matter the season, but

even more so in the winter. It's the ultimate carpet feed, which is further boosted when combined with the Pure Naturals Range. I have used this combination for years, but it's been improved since the advent of the Manilla Active.

By blending the Active boilies up, it produces particles of soluble paste too which only add to the mix's effectiveness. It's finished off with Bloodworm Pellets and a trio of liquids; Bailey's, Cloudy Manilla Liquid and Amaretto, these not only add more soluble attraction but also help bind the mix. I'll touch on this mix in greater detail another time as it's vital you get it right...

"Another key element to success is knowing your bite times. It's one of the key things I find out if upon arrival

at a lake where people are willing to share the info. It allows you to re-do rods at the right time, have everything set when required and means you don't miss opportunities that could be happening whilst you're at the Café or shop.

"Last but by no means least is of course location. There aren't any real rules, just generalisations as every lake is different. Carp are wild animals at the end of the day, but if you wanted a rough guide, the centre of the lake is always a good starting point, as are any south-facing reeds or snags which will hold warmth. Use your eyes, put the effort in and watch for those vital signs that can really give their game away."

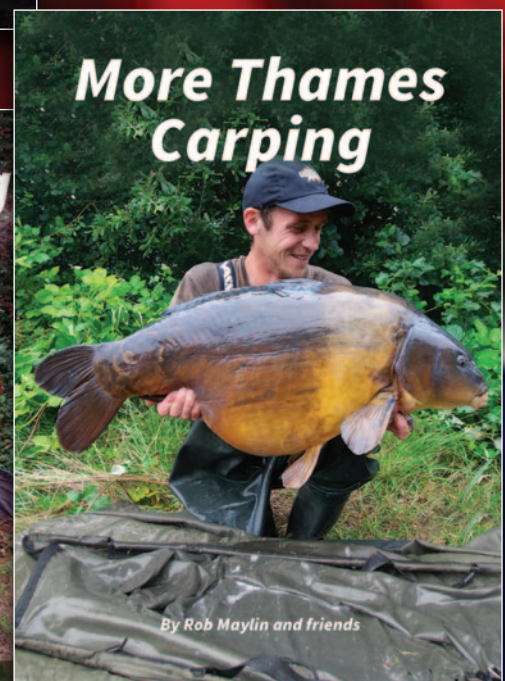
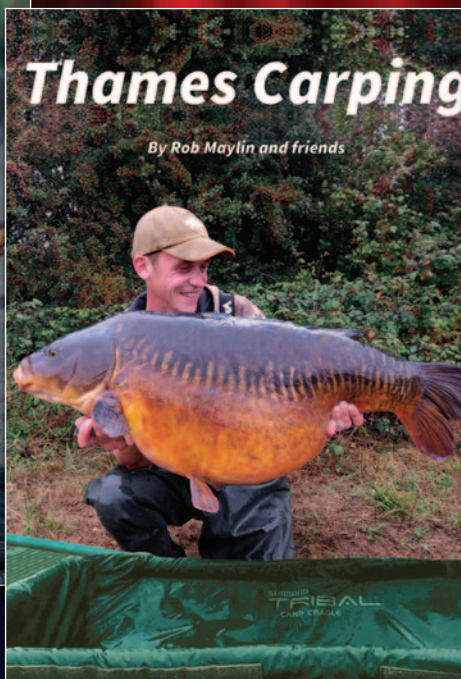
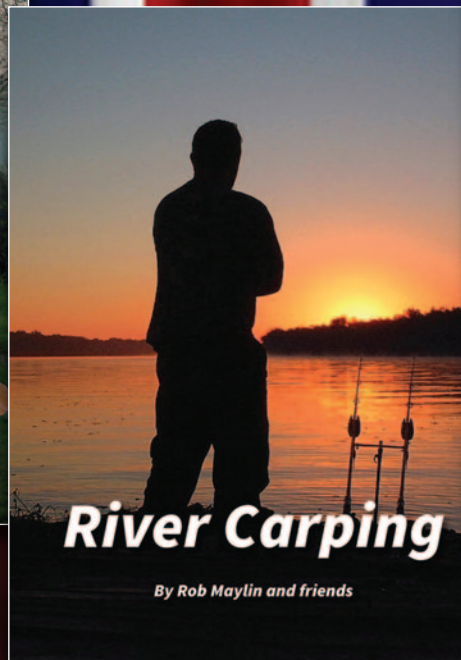
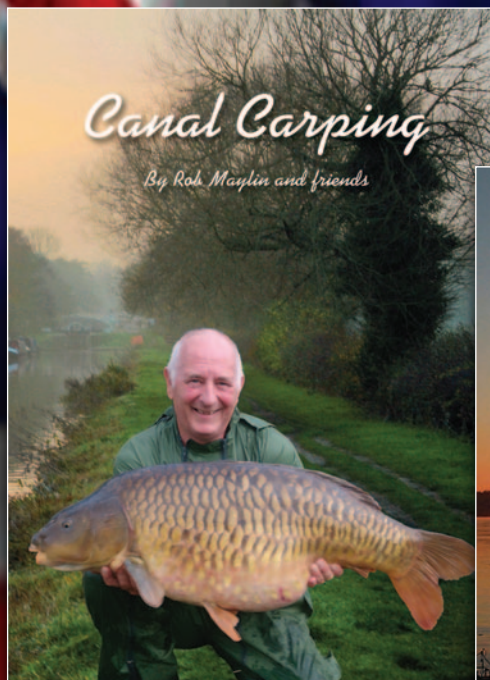
Adam Penning, #StickyBaits #ManillaActive. ■





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Winter Tactics

By John Kneebone

John Kneebone explains how catching carp in the spring and summer can all start in the depths of winter.

I've always advocated that not all fishing takes place on the bank, and not every path leading to the capture of a carp begins at the lake? No, many begin much, much earlier in preparation for the challenge, perhaps at home in the carp shed or kitchen. Okay, the 'fishing feeling' is not the same as being on the bank, but when you make lean times of the year such as a winter productive then yes, they are just as much a part of the fishing experience when angling for carp!

Prepping in winter can bring big results come spring!

So, what I'm talking about is making good use of time when you may have ordinarily been on the bank by getting bits ready for when you are.



Because let's face it, even the most dedicated carper can't do much when lakes freeze over, and there will be times when turning up to cold, wet,

wintery venue in the dark for an overnigher just won't be the one. Luckily there's a stack of things to do and this time can actually be





extremely valuable and motivating. I for one only have prep the rig box one evening with some freshly tied rigs to then be gaging to get on the bank for my next session. An edge in itself if that provides the motivation for a winter session when looking at the rain beating onto the living room window probably won't!

Besides your hands this is pretty much all the kit you need to make some custom pop-ups.

Perhaps the biggest of home-prep motivators comes in the kitchen with a bit of bait making. The aroma of freshly rolled boilies air-drying on the side may not be to the liking of every household member, but there's nothing better for a spur of carpy inspiration. On top of the nasal blast, you'll also save yourself a few quid rolling your own boilies, and the process couldn't be simpler. All you need is a Dedicated Base Mix such as Cell or Hybrid, the liquid Activator matching this flavour, some eggs and a little time. A few weekends well spent like this and you'll soon have the freezer well stocked ready for spring. Perhaps best of all you'll be adding a heap of satisfaction into catching on those baits you've made yourself.

There is no reason why sweet, fruit flavoured baits cannot have unconventional colours.

A question I get asked a lot is "can I add another flavour to the mix to make my Activ-8, Cell, Hybrid or Essential Cell boilies a little different to the rest?" Well, that option is there... but, I would always advise staying with the recommended level/mix given in the instructions by Mainline. These are the proven, optimum levels and mix ratio, and Main-

line have already created the Base Mix and Activator from a mix of active ingredients, again at the ideal ratio/quantity so you've none of this science to worry about. What's more these 'food source' baits have disproved the theory that baits can 'blow' over time. They have continued to produce the goods year after year after year.

Making your baits allows you to add extra additives.

Now, I'm not saying a little bait edge here and there isn't a good thing, no, I just prefer to maintain the confidence carp have in my freebies. Instead adding a few tweaks and diversity when it comes to hookbaits. Now this is where you can really go to town. Size, shape, colour and of course flavours are all customisable to your preference. It's down to you, you can make these differences from standard hookbaits as simple or as complicated as you like. Not all edges need to be drastic changes, they can

be as simple as rolling say Cell pop-ups in a different colour, yellow or orange perhaps. Or taking a fruity blend of flavours away from a traditional bright colour such as yellow or pink and colouring them brown or red.

It's not only the visual appearance that can be customised, you can also incorporate other tweaks such as the buoyancy levels of hookbaits to create 'critically-balanced' hookbaits, perhaps designed to match the weight of your favourite rig perfectly. Sounds complicated, but it's just a simple case of mixing 2 parts Polaris Pop-Up Mix and 1.25 parts Dedicated Base Mix together thoroughly. Then blend your flavours with a single and build a paste using your dry mix. Before boiling the baits add one to your rig and test the buoyancy in a bowl of water. If it's not quite right add a smidge of Pop-Up or Base Mix to your dry mix and test again, until the desired buoyancy is bang on.

Generally, I find myself rolling personalised pop-ups most often. Bright baits with increased flavour levels, higher than the norm to make a hookbait that really stands out. Whether that's fishing over a baited area or casting a winter single. What's the best flavour combinations to use? Well that's the fun part, as there are no rules! It's only your imagination that holds any boundary. As a rule of thumb I recommend starting with a couple of flavours equally 5ml added to a single egg, plus 2ml of sweetener to round them off nicely. After that experiment as much as you like - the sky's the limit (and perhaps the patience of your other half)! ■



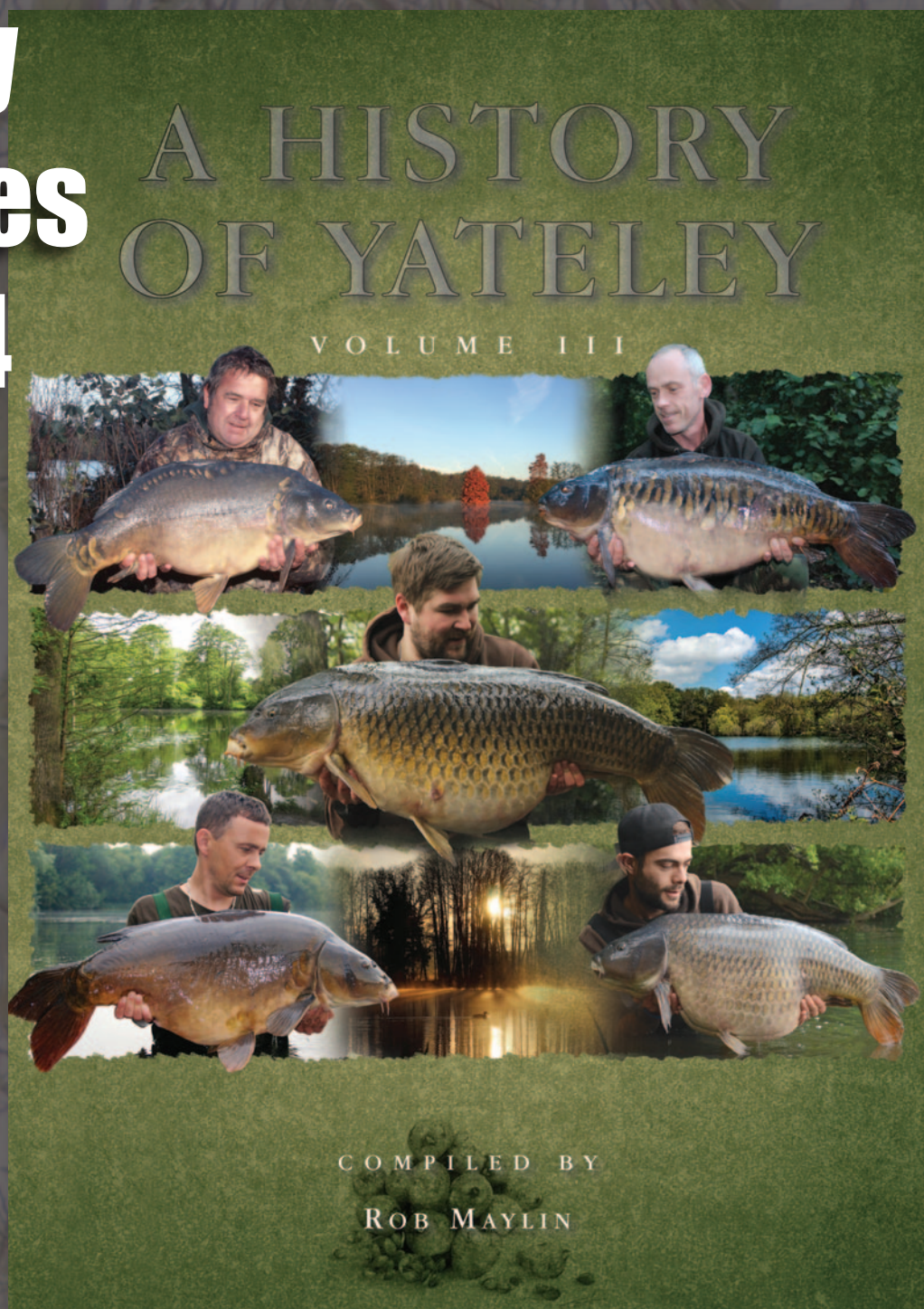
Yateley Volumes 3 and 4

In the time since the Cemex sell-off, Yateley has had a new lease of life. Although those legendary carp like Basil, Heather and their buddies are now long gone, the new stock has grown and returned Yateley to its former glory. Likewise, its banks may not now be trodden by the likes of Terry Hearn and me, but the anglers that fish Yateley now are just as passionate about the Yateley carp as we were 20 years ago.

Every lake has come on leaps and bounds in this time: The North boasts commons up to 54lb with a handful approaching 50. The Car Park too has numerous good forties. The Split Lake is a real eye-opener with a good head of big fish up to 47lb! You would never have dreamed it. The Pad Lake, South Lake and even the diddy little Horseshoe and Pump House all contain big fish. The Pad has numerous forty-pluses.

Over the other side of the road there is a similar story: multiple forties in the Match, some beasts now in the Copse and The Nursery holding fish to 47lb and maybe bigger, as its anglers keep very secret squirrel about what goes on over there. The Nursery is certainly Yateley's secret jewel in the crown.

Hence the reason for this book... It's been six



years since the first two volumes, and the changes are phenomenal, the fish huge, and only living five minutes from the complex, I felt duty bound to record the history further on these lakes, the UK's true heritage waters. The format remains much the same: the page numbers continue through the volumes. Maybe in another ten years, there will be more history to record, even perhaps a Yateley British record... who knows? Now wouldn't that be something?

I have also decided to include the Yateley lakes on the edge of the old Cemex complex, these being Little Moulsham, Mill Lane, Swan Valley and Sandhurst. Each contain their own

treasures including a couple of fifties!

Because of the sheer size of this project and to do justice to all the lakes there will once again be two volumes.

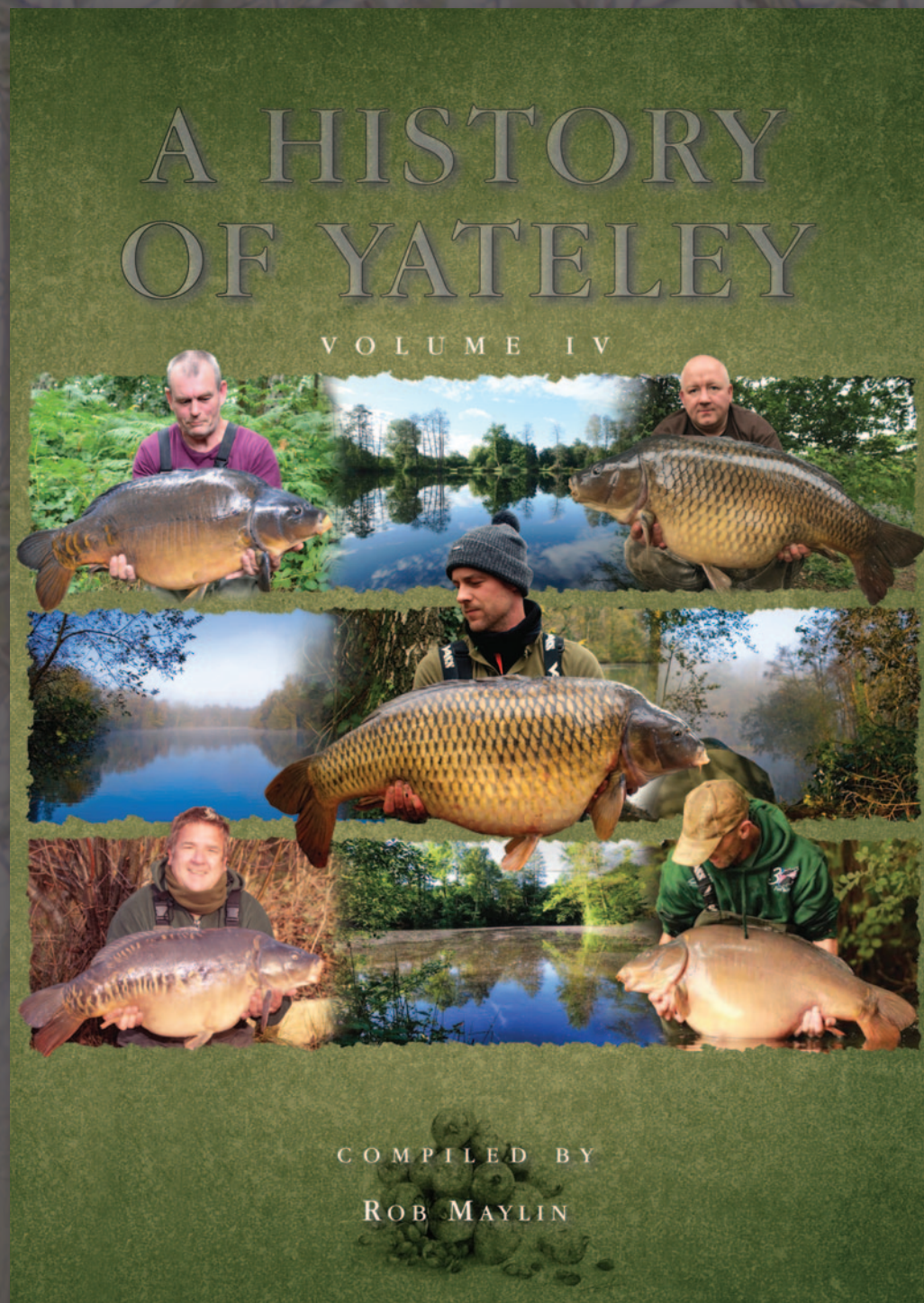
Volume 3 contains chapters on the North Lake, The Split Lake, Horseshoe and Pumphouse. The Pads Lake, Car Park, Moulsham and Mill Lane.

Volume 4 contains the chapters on The South Lake, Match Lake, Copse Lake, Nursery Lake, Sandhurst and Swan Valley.

There are some great introductory pieces from Martin Gardener, owner of Yateley West Fisheries and Ian Gray, Honorary Secretary of Farnham Angling Society, the owners of Yateley East, plus a chapter featuring the famous

Stoney and Friends MacMillan bashes each year. There are stock lists with photos of as many of the new residents as it was possible to get and chapters from the guys who fish there at present – ordinary guys with some great tales to tell of their captures on each of the lakes.

All this is combined with fantastic colour photography throughout, some amazing paintings of each lake and a host of special drawings commissioned for these volumes. These volumes are as much if not more of a work of art as the predecessors. The first two volumes were amazing and received worldwide praise... but dare I say, in my opinion, these two volumes could be even better? A massive thanks to all concerned, and long may Yateley continue! Long live the king of English carp fishing history!



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'H' A Somerset 40!

By Tristan Cooper

After joining essential baits opportunities to fish special lakes started to open up, and this story is the outcome.

I made my way too Springwood fishery in Somerset. This stunning lake is a syndicate with a lovely stock of carp! Including some over the magical 40 mark, that you could call fish of angler's dreams. When I arrived, we were greeted by a cold bitterly wind pushing into my bay (summers bay) which didn't fill me with much hope of catching, but having confidence in the bait I'm using and the rigs I'm using I just knew I

always had a very good chance. The GS10 from essential baits has a brilliant garlic and cream attractor pack which is such a fantastic winter bait and after having such great success in the previous months catching the advert fish, I knew this was my chosen bait no matter where I go.

After getting the rods out I introduced three handfuls of the GS10 halves and wholes over both rods just fishing for a bite at a time. The first day and night passed quietly resulting in nothing not even a line bite. Out of nowhere some bubbles started to appear in my swim and not a million miles away from my right hand rod.... which nudged my confidence up a notch, and after seeing that I

couldn't help but sit behind my rods full of anticipation.

The minutes continued to pass which turned into hours and before I knew it the night started to draw in. With a full moon on the card tonight I was praying for the superstitions of big commons and full moons becoming a reality.

Darkness turned to dawn which meant another quiet night and my chances of a magical 40 was falling out of sight. After trying to hold it off pack up time was a reluctant must, once I packed down my bivvy I took my rods off the alarms and lay them onto the ground. I stood behind my rods for one last chance.

Out of the blue my rod tip twitched



ever so delicately and then my reel ticked. After knowing how delicate carp can be in the winter, I had to hope this was a take. I picked into it... and yesss fish on!

After pulling the fish through the weed and seeing this massive head and mouth appear I knew this was a big fish. The fish rolled in hope to take one last attempted to get into the weed and after seeing the huge scales glisten in the winter sunlight I knew this was a very special fish!

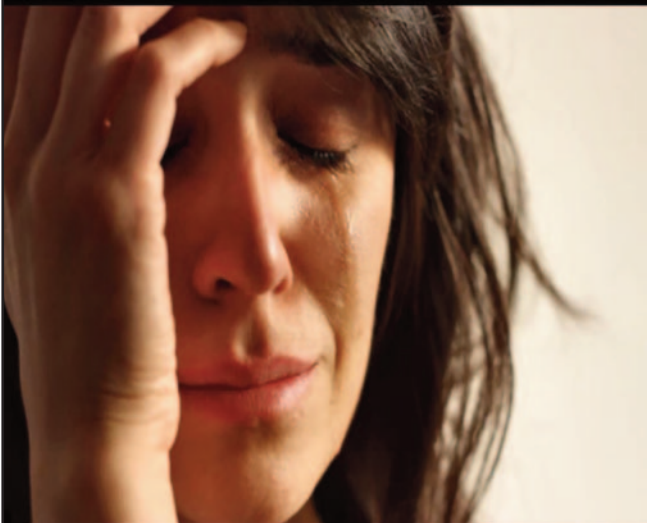
And finally, it was ready to be netted, and once the huge mirror got over the net cord a monument-us amount of relief took the pressure off just when I knew what I've just caught. I phoned Mike willmott and lee Willmott to confirm which fish it was and they were 100% sure it was 'H' which is a fish that has gone 40lb in the past!

After seeing Lee Willmott sprint down to the lake It really added to the importance of this catch, and then he confirmed it was 110% 'H'. We weighed this incredible mirror at 40lb 12oz! A truly incredible capture and a unbelievable PB. ■



Carp Humour

HE CALLED AND SAID "ONE MORE CAST" AND I'LL BE HOME



THAT WAS FIVE DAYS AGO

THAT SMILE



WHEN YOU FIGURE OUT WHAT THE FISH WANT.

Winter Tweaks

By Dave Lane

Dave Lane explains the small tweaks and adjustments he makes to his approach throughout the cooler months!

When the temperatures drop in winter and the all-important bites times are reduced in size and frequency, you really need to know that what is out in the pond is not going to let you down at these crucial times. For that reason, I generally keep to proven methods, tactics and baits even if I do tweak or adapt them for the lesser than favourable conditions.

Proven methods produce proven results!

If I am using boilies, as I usually do on at least one rod in winter, I like to

change it up a bit from my normal Summer and Autumn approach of whole baits and spend some extra time preparing my baits, chopping and grinding to achieve a mixed sized approach. Nowadays there are many different commercially available bait choppers on the market for just this application. I have a big wind-up chopper from Ridge Monkey that will render a bag of boilies down to a mixed crumb in no time at all, but I find that the finished product is a bit too fine for the whole mix, therefore I have also bought a simple vegetable chopper from Amazon that has interchangeable blades and I use this to simply quarter some of the baits as well.

To this I add a few Response Pellets, some 10mm boilies, the odd

15mm whole and halved ones and, hey presto, I have a bucket full of decent quality boilies that are all shapes and sizes from crumb right up to whole baits. Adding attraction to boost what may be a delivery of food quite small in quantity is also a good idea - an area where liquids can really come into their own with a sensory appeal dispersing into the water column.

So, I always add a liquid attractor to the finished mix, at the moment I am using a combination of the new 'Smart Liquids' and the old faithful 'Activator' both matched to the main bait, which just happens to be the Cell for this winter. Confidence in your bait is absolutely crucial at this time of year and you cannot beat a tried and trusted formula. ■





Carpy Humour

I could swear he is doing it wrong,
but since I dont own a boat, I'm
going to keep my opinion to myself!



IF YOU LEAVE RUBBISH
BEHIND AFTER FISHING
YOU ARE NOT AN ANGLER
YOU ARE JUST A
KNOBHEAD WITH A ROD

Dinton Pastures News

By Simon Bartlam

Well, the weather this season has been Public Enemy No.1 and our greatest friend - a slightly odd statement to make. The super-hot summer created fantastic conditions for growth across all of our waters but low water levels, 28-degree water temperatures, weed and algal growth from hell, definitely caused a few issues. Luckily, we managed to secure our weed removal contractor for 3 weeks this year, rather than just the 1 as in previous years. This meant that over 100 tractor trailer loads of weed were removed. This prevented any crashes and allowed for some good sport over the summer period.

However, all of the highs and lows have been overshadowed by the capture of 'Spike' at 60lb 8oz by Spencer Lunn, which is incredible! Let's hope Spike continues at its current growth rate and lasts a few more years before old age catches up. As a 1991 stocky, it is already 34 years old, so every year we get now is a bonus.

We have seen again, across all of the lakes this season, lots of new fish topping the 30,40 and 50lb barriers giving us another positive year. There is, as usual, an awful lot coming out that I don't know about so as always, please keep me informed of your captures so that we can monitor stock numbers and growth - I promise not to jump on your spots!

There are a few general points that I feel need mentioning at this point:

We really are seeing more and more very special fish coming out of our lakes and this is creating its own issues with a growth in carp-obsessive behaviour to capture them. Because of this we have changed some of the rules on the water to curb some of this overzealous angling. Moving forward, and with immediate effect, all members must adhere to the following rules relating to time on the waters:

24 hours on - 24 hours off the site

48 hours on - 48 hours off the site

72 hours on - 72 hours off the site

This will mean that no-one can fish more than 4 days in any 7-day period and long-distance members won't be penalised by making it unviable for them to travel to site.

Zig fishing and maggots will be























allowed from 1st December until the last day of February each year. This will hopefully allow good opportunities for winter captures without affecting the fish adversely. However, please note that if we start getting numbers of anglers turning up with tens of gallons of maggots, competing with each other rather than the fish, we will remove this opportunity.

Finally, the capture of that prized fish should be the ultimate goal, and the safety of that fish should be our personal responsibility. I appreciate we have lots of anglers nowadays with professional fishing-related interests but we all need to remember that we should be fishing for fish – and not for photos. The idea of sacking a fish up for 8 hours so we can get a daylight shot or the media down to site is not acceptable when there are numerous anglers about that can help. We have never, as far as I am aware, had a problem relating to fish care. I know we have some incredibly experienced anglers on our waters but if the trend continues, it will only be a matter of time before we have a problem as honest mistakes do happen. Please put the fish first when considering the photography side of your capture. Thank you.

White Swan Lake:

White Swan always feels really hard but it's actually been a really good season with 83 thirty plus fish out so far this season and numerous anglers getting close to or well over the 20 fish mark – this is really something to be pleased about.

We also had 3 new thirty pounders and one forty pounder which is great news as these fish continue to pile on the pounds.

Highlights, however, must be the capture of Darren's Linear to Brett Harvey at 52lb 8oz, and Manny's capture of Triple Row at back over the 50lb mark.

Unfortunately, the low point was the loss of the Grey earlier in the year which was our main casualty from this summer's extreme weather.

Black Swan Lake:

I suppose Black Swan has shocked a few anglers this year but none more so than me. I've been astounded by the continuing improvement of this lake and how well it's doing. 140 different thirties including 6 different 50lb, as well as Spike at over 60lb, was never in my wildest dreams some-

thing I expected to be reporting!

We also had a new 50lber in the shape of the Saddleback linear, 3 new 40lbbers and 11 new thirties to back up these A-Team members.

A huge well done, however, has to go to Spencer Lunn for his banking of a new lake and complex record, Spike at 60lb 8oz.

Longmoor Lake:

Another good year at California, with fish to mid-thirties being caught as well as at least 8 different 30's out and lots of twenties. Some great sport has been had throughout the year. As usual, a few fish are still coming which makes it worth a go during the winter months.

Twyford Reserve:

The Reserve is again another of our waters getting better and better. More fish are making it into the 30lb bracket and this year we have had

another confirmed new 40lber being banked – and a season best of over 46lbs. We've also had good catches of Chub to over 6lbs, and Barbel to 13+ from the weir pool making this a great all-round ticket.

River Loddon (Dinton):

Another quiet season on the river but it has still produced some good Barbel to 13lb and Chub to over 6lb. Perseverance, as ever, is the key to fishing the river but it is well worth the effort.

I hope you all continue to enjoy the remainder of the season and look forward to seeing you back in 2023-24.

Renewals 2023-24

We will be sending out the instructions on renewing in the next couple of weeks. Please look out for an email from the countryside service email address. In the meantime, please see the fee information below.

Specimen Group Membership Fees 2023-24:

Gold £1625

Black Swan £830

White Swan £830

River Loddon £150

Longmoor Lake £275

Twyford Reserve £400

Day Season Adult Full price per rod £93.50

Day Season Concessionary per rod £65.00

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING DETAILS REGARDS TO WAITING LISTS

GOLD - CURRENTLY AT 100 AND CLOSED

BLACK SWAN - CURRENTLY AT 150 AND CLOSED

WHITE SWAN - CURRENTLY AT 150 AND CLOSED

RIVER LODDON - OPEN AND TICKETS AVAILABLE

LONGMOOR LAKE - OPEN AND 10 ANGLERS ON IT

TWYFORD RESERVE - OPEN WITH 81 ANGLERS ON IT

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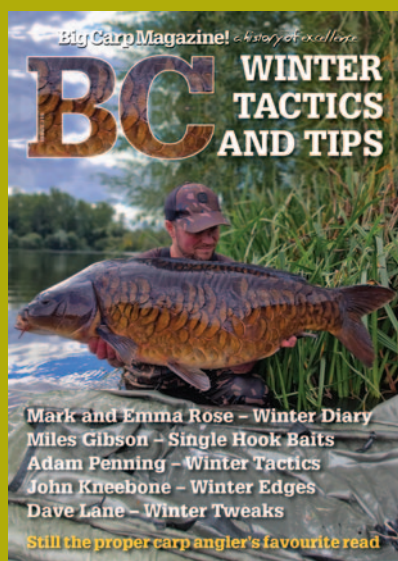
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Also available this month,
Big Carp Issue 319.
Miss it and miss out!

Use them or lose them!

I know there will be many an opinion regarding this article.

But I scream to you all to SHOP LOCAL and support your local tackle shops. Once they are gone the likelihood of them coming back is pretty non-existent.

We have seen so many shops close since myself and Chris Sparks went on the tackle shops campaign some even that we visited which is a huge loss to the local communities they served. Look after your local shops

There is no comparison between them and these



RAISING MONEY
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ANGLING EVENTS
SINCE 1996

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big mainly online corporations that are only chasing the money. Once your local shop closes you will lose all the local knowledge in your area.

You will lose the ability to go into a shop and physically pick up and look at an item prior to purchasing. Local shops are a place where new people can find our sport and ask many a question. So, we all need to do our part

If you find a price, online call your local shop and see what they can do for you. Use them or lose them!

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Angling Trust smash target to sign up 50 angling clubs for litter clean ups

An Angling Trust initiative to sign up 50 angling clubs to take part in litter collections has reached its target two months ahead of deadline.

In total, 58 clubs across the country have pledged to take part in at least two organised litter collections and will receive free litter picking kits provided by Shimano, our Anglers Against Litter sponsor.

Shimano became the exclusive fishing tackle sponsor of our Anglers Against Litter campaign in April of this year and have been working with the Angling Trust to combat litter pollution around waterways, providing resources to enable clubs to undertake litter picks and encouraging all anglers to pledge their support to 'Take 5' – picking up five items of litter or spending five minutes at the end of a fishing session to collect and safely dispose of litter.

Earlier this year we set a target to recruit 50 clubs by the end of December to undertake regular litter picks. With 58 clubs already signed up and another 31 on the waiting list for next year, at least 116 litter picks will be carried out in coming months.

Steve Frost, Angling Trust Environment Manager, said:

"Litter and plastic pollution can be harmful to fish and other wildlife living in and around rivers, lakes, canals, sea or estuary, as well as being an unsightly addition to our environ-



ment. Once again, the angling community has come together to help tackle this major issue and we wish to thank Shimano for the financial support which has enabled free litter picking kits to be provided to angling clubs."

Shimano's partnership with the Angling Trust supports the Japanese tackle manufacturer's mission statement to "promote health and happiness through the enjoyment of nature and the world around us" and recognises the importance of preserving

our environment to protect fish and fishing.

Ian Latham, Shimano UK Managing Director said:

"We are delighted at such a positive response from the angling clubs and individuals across the country. With over 100 clubs committing to collecting litter in 2023, we as an industry should be proud of our community and the proactive approach to dealing with this blight on the landscape and making the environment more enjoyable for all."

If you are on the committee of an angling club and your club is willing to commit to at least two litter picks a year and send us details and photos, you can apply for one of these amazing kits that includes 10 Anglers Against Litter Hi Vis vests and 10 litter pickers.

All kits for this year have been allocated, but we are now taking expressions of interest for 2023. Just drop an email to: stephen.frost@anglingtrust.net

The Anglers Against Litter's 'Take 5' initiative is run in partnership with the Environment Agency and funded from fishing licence income. ■

Carpy Humour



Angling Trust's call for water companies' fines to be invested in the environment accepted by the government

The government has announced that fines handed out to water companies for polluting our rivers will be reinvested into environmental improvements.

Presently, fines paid by water companies - over £141m since 2015 - disappear into the Treasury with no benefit to the environment for the damage caused. This change will mean future fines will be used for environmental improvements such as creating wetlands, re-vegetating riverbanks and reconnecting meanders to the main channel of rivers.

Jamie Cook, CEO of the Angling Trust, said:

"We welcome this move by Defra and the Treasury. We have been campaigning for this change and justice for our rivers, seas and fish from the damage water companies have done for a long time.

"We wrote to MPs in November 2021 calling for this course of action to be implemented. Following a huge amount of work behind the scenes and another year's worth of proactive campaigning on behalf of the angling community we are pleased to see that the government have now adopted this logical suggestion.

"Fish Legal have always worked on the basis of returning damages to the impacted club or fishery where resource is needed to re-build, and we must now ensure that this commitment by Defra is directed to where the resource is required to make a difference for fish and the environments they depend upon.

"This should not be a decision for Defra alone. We have been calling for such a fund to be administered by a national panel run by Defra and the Environment Agency with an independent chair, NGO representatives and technical specialists."

This announcement comes ahead of the COP15 global biodiversity conference in Montréal. Globally, wildlife populations have dropped by 69% since 1970 but freshwater habitats have seen a decline of 83%, and migratory fish numbers in Europe have crashed by an alarming 93%.

Sir Charles Walker MP, chair of the Angling Trust, said:

"This is fantastic news for our rivers. It follows that the polluter pays principle should be extended to the



restoration of damaged water courses. The Angling Trust backed the River Restoration Fund more than a year ago and now it's been delivered."

Further details of this change will be published next year. Given that only 14% of our water bodies meet good ecological status, and none meet good chemical status under the Water Framework Directive, this could make a significant difference if designed correctly. The Angling Trust will be engaging with Defra and the Treasury in the design of the scheme and in how any money raised is spent.

Improving our freshwater and coastal environment is vitally important if we are going to meet the commitment set out in the Environment Act and through the government's own environmental improvement plans. Restoring our rivers back to a near natural state will bring immense benefits, not only to the environment but also to the health and wellbeing

of many people who enjoy the connections with our natural world through our blue spaces. Anglers know this better than anyone.

Stuart Singleton-White, Head of Campaigns at the Angling Trust, said:

"The Angling Trust has been presenting evidence to Defra, Environmental Audit Committee and MPs on just how potentially game changing such a move could be. There is an irony that we can secure compensation for small pollution incidents through a process called environmental undertakings, seeing that money reinvested in improving the environment and helping rivers and fish stocks recover. Yet, when it came to the big damage and the big fines, the environment and our fish get nothing.

"We need to consider the detail carefully; this must be new money and cannot be used to replace the investment Defra have already committed. We want to see a level of independence introduced in how any money raised through future fines is then spent.

"Central to any schemes this proposal will fund in the future is to see improvements to our fisheries and actions to support healthy fish populations across all our waters. Investment in supporting the recovery of Atlantic salmon or improving sea grass meadows as vital nursery grounds for sea bass are just two examples of urgent action this funding can support." ■



Welcome to your Members Newsletter

Welcome to the latest issue of the Angling Trust & Fish Legal Members Newsletter. Today we report on the launch of our annual Christmas Raffle which raises vital funds to support our work to protect fish, fishing and the environment; how sea angling can benefit from an £18m fund; our latest trade associate partner Zerofit who have a special offer for members; the fantastic film we have produced of this year's RiverFest final on the Trent; and loads more! Tight lines! John Cheyne, Marketing, Communications & Membership Manager:



Waterways and wildlife under threat as environmental protections face being axed by new UK Bill

The Angling Trust has joined the campaign to protect the UK's existing environmental protections derived from European Law by emphasising the damaging impact on rivers, lakes and coastal waters should they be weakened or removed by a Bill currently going through Parliament.

This follows the 'Attack on Nature' campaign launched by the Wildlife Trust, RSPB and the National Trust against the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill, which has the potential to reverse what limited legal protections our waterbodies, wildlife and natural environments currently enjoy.

In a special briefing sent to MPs and Ministers, the Angling Trust argues that the Bill as currently drafted constitutes a major threat to the protection of our waters.



Hoveton Great Broad fish barrier plan is dropped



Anglers in the Norfolk Broads are celebrating the decision by Natural England to drop their controversial plans to erect barriers to fish movements in and out of Hoveton Great Broad – a prime spawning site for the local bream population.

Leading fisheries scientists and angling representatives had jointly condemned the decision by the Environment Agency in 2020 to grant Natural England a permit to install a fish barrier at Hoveton Great Broad, a private water connected to the River Bure in the northern Norfolk Broads, in order to promote better weed growth.

Get Fishing Fund 2023

The Angling Trust in partnership with the Environment Agency is pleased to announce the return of the Get Fishing Fund. The fund will be relaunched on Monday, 5th December giving organisations the chance to apply for up to £2,500 to get more people into fishing in 2023.





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How Anglers Can Feel Free of the Tree Pollen this Spring

It's the peak of the tree pollen season in March and April and this can be one of the worst times of year if you suffer with hay fever and enjoy angling. Several species of tree are pollinating, especially birch, alder, elm and willow. Ash, plane and oak pollen is also around at this time, making it a misery for anglers. However, there are some simple things you can do to help. Airborne allergens expert Max Wiseberg gives his top tips...

"Hay fever is a result of our immune system's overreaction to innocuous particles such as pollen," explains Max. "The body's reaction to pollen is to produce histamines. Normal amounts of histamines in your brain are good – they keep us alert, attentive and awake. But, when there are too many in the body, they produce symptoms including sneezing, a runny nose, itchy and watery or streaming eyes, nasal congestion and a general stuffed up feeling in the nose and throat."

"Some people also experience itching around the face and mouth," says Max, "including an itchy mouth, itchy roof of mouth, and a burning sensation in the throat. Headaches and wheezing can also occur."

"Avoiding the allergen is always key with any allergy, whatever it

might be. So here is a selection of practical tips for anglers."

"Keep the pollen off and out of your body – less allergen, less reaction. Wear wraparound sunglasses when fishing to prevent pollen particles coming in contact with your eyes. Tie your hair up and wear a cap, hat or other head cover to prevent pollen particles being caught in your hair. Use HayMax. The organic drug-free balm can be applied to the nostrils and around the bones of the eyes in the morning, throughout the day and at night to trap dust and pet allergens and more than a third of pollen before it enters the body[1]."

"Avoid fishing when pollen counts are highest during the peak morning and evening periods. Pollen is released early in the morning then travels upwards as the air warms up. In the evening, as the air cools, it moves back down again and the pollen grains reach nose height. Symptoms are usually worst at these times, so avoid going outdoors then."

"Try to find a spot that's way from as many trees as possible."

"Change your clothes when you return home and wash your face or take a shower to wash away allergens so that they can't cause a reaction. A cool compress will soothe sore eyes.

Shower at night before sleeping to remove pollen particles from your hair and body."

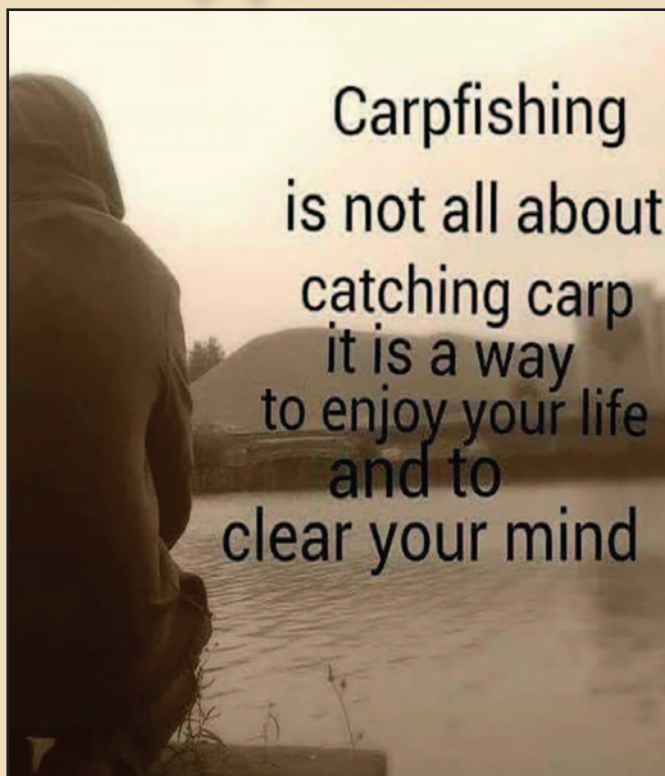
"Dry your clothes indoors rather than on an outdoor clothes line to stop pollen being blown onto it by the outside wind."

"A healthy diet can also help with hay fever. Eating healthily helps to keep our respiratory system strong. Some foods such as ginger or fresh basil, ease blocked nasal passages, helping us to breathe more easily, whilst others such as spinach and almonds contain nutrients that can help boost our immune systems and help our bodies fight sinus and respiratory infections, which are linked to allergies and hay fever."

"If your symptoms are particularly severe or the pollen count is particularly high, or you find that one product is not enough or stops working, you could try creating your own hay fever first aid kit. I suggest that your ideal hay fever first aid kit will consist of one or more natural products, such as HayMax, only one antihistamine, only one steroid nasal spray and eye drops.

Never take two antihistamines together, never take two steroid nasal sprays together, and consult your pharmacist or doctor if you are already taking any other medication." ■

Carpy Humour



Report highlights amazing work of angling community



The 2021/22 Annual Report of the National Angling Strategy features the latest highlights from the angling community following the upheavals and social restrictions experienced in the previous year due to Covid-19. This year's report includes some of the exciting incentives that got underway, such as the Angling Trust's 'Reel Education' schools programme backed by Shakespeare, and Defra's new Fisheries and Seafood Scheme aiming to support recreational sea angling, as well as case studies detailing the amazing work undertaken by the angling community.

Day in the life of a fisheries officer

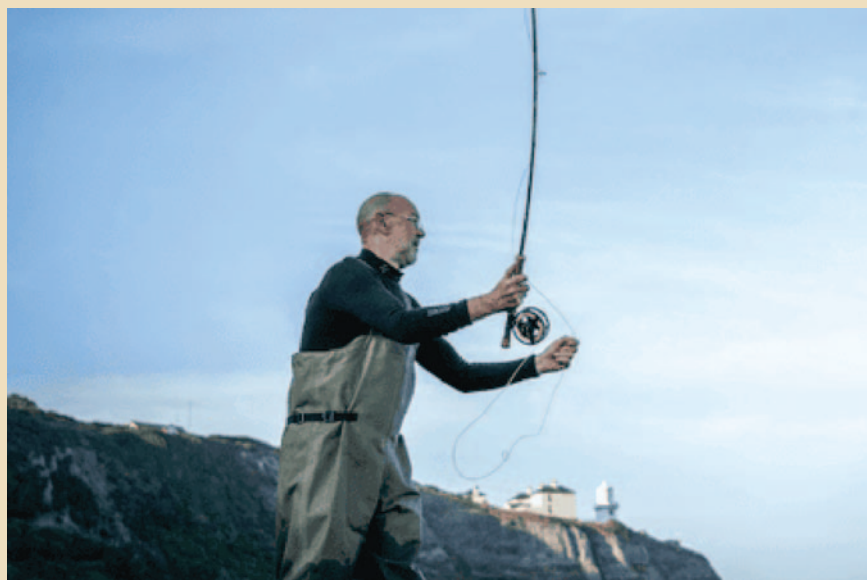


The work of an Environment Agency Fisheries Officer ranges from dealing with distressed, ailing fish to assisting happy, enthusiastic junior anglers. In the first of a three-part series, Phil Mephem joins EA Fisheries Officer Ben Norrington to discover the multitude of challenges that regularly confronts him.

Angling clubs: register now for free litter picking kits

As part of our Anglers Against Litter campaign we've teamed up with Shimano-Fishing to offer angling clubs free litter picking kits. All kits have been allocated for this year, but we are now taking expressions of interest for 2023. If you are on the committee of an angling club and your club is willing to commit to at least two litter picks a year and send us details and photos, then why not apply for a kit which include hi vis vests and litter picks?

New 2XL and 3XL sizes available with Zerofit - plus free thermal hat worth £20 with any baselayer purchase



Angling Trust trade partner Zerofit, the Japanese baselayer brand, is delighted to announce that the award-winning Heatrub Ultimate baselayer (£55) is now available in 2XL (48-52") and 3XL (52-56") sizes for the first time, meaning more anglers can fish better for longer this winter without feeling the cold.

To celebrate the partnership with the Trust, Zerofit have extended their offer of a FREE THERMAL HAT WORTH £20 with any Zerofit baselayer purchase to all anglers. Just use code FREEHATTRUST when you checkout here.

The Ultimate baselayer is now available in black, green and navy blue in these larger sizes, as well as being offered in small, medium, large and extra-large. Customers who want a grey, red or white version can also purchase these in S, M, L, XL.



Virtual Forum: Important changes to the Reservoir Act

CHANGES TO THE RESERVOIR ACT

Live at 7pm -
Wednesday 23rd
November 2022 (Via
Zoom)





ANGLING TRUST

Funded by fishing licence income and delivered in partnership with the



Environment Agency

Does your club own or lease a reservoir over 10,000 cubic metres in size? If so, changes to the Reservoir Act could affect your responsibilities. In this Virtual Fisheries Forum, the Environment Agency's Tony Deakin takes a look at the changes.

Anglers Against Pollution campaign!



Water quality testing in Cheshire by members of Mottram St. Andrew Fly Fishing Club has inspired a local campaign to clean up a polluted river.

The tests were carried out using equipment supplied through the Angling Trust's Water Quality Monitoring Network (WOMN) initiative, a key part of our Anglers Against Pollution campaign, and provided evidence that there was heavy pollution of the River Bollin.

The WOMN initiative is supported financially by Orvis UK and APTUS tackle and the "Big Yellow Boxes" are supplied by Flambeau Outdoors. If your club would like to get involved, please contact kristian.kent@anglingtrust.net

Double gold for England Kayak



It was a clean sweep for the Angling Trust's England Kayak Lure team in the first Kayak Fishing World Championships at Sobaor Lakes in Portugal. Huge congratulations to the whole team especially to new world champion Mike McGuire.

Preston Innovations - thank you for your support

Preston Innovations, one of the biggest names in match fishing, have agreed to become a Trade Associate partner of the Angling Trust for the next 12 months.

As part of the agreement, Preston Innovations will play an active role in supporting the essential work of the Trust including campaigns to protect waterways for the benefit of fish, fishing and the environment, and growing our sport by encouraging more people to take up fishing.





Lake Serene Up For Sale

Situated in the Champagne Region near Vitry-le-François, the lake is just a three and a half hour drive from Calais.

Set over a 16-acre site, the lake occupies 10 acres, with a phenomenal stock of over 280 carp. (Average weight of 45lb to 47lb).

Situated within woodlands and off the beaten track, the lake is very secluded and peaceful. It has a 3-bedroom lodge and separate toilets and showers for the anglers.

It is a wonderful business opportunity for someone younger to drive it forward as the owners are wanting to retire.

If serious please **call John on +447763303712**
to find out more information and arrange a visit...

Paul scoops Pike Champs title



Northampton predator ace Paul Croft is the new British Pike Champion following a tight final event on Cambridgeshire's Fenland Drains.

Southern Water drop plan to abstract water from rare chalk stream after Fish Legal challenge

Southern Water has quietly dropped its application for a drought permit that would have allowed it to continue taking water out of the River Test – even if the river fell below an agreed minimum level previously set for the protection of the Test's salmon population. The application was submitted to the Environment Agency on 19 July but was formally withdrawn on 4 November.

Fish Legal and the Testwood & Nursling fishery near Southampton challenged the drought permit application at a public inquiry in August, arguing that Southern Water had made inadequate efforts to minimise customer demand and to mitigate the potential impact on the river's fish stocks and ecology.

Race to Parco – Charity Fundraiser

Dear Big Carp Magazine readers, Myself, Leigh Garfield and Lee Seddon will set off on a journey of a lifetime to raise money for MacMillan Cancer Support and Fishing The Mind, two charities close to all of our hearts. All money raised goes to the charities; the whole trip is being funded by the ourselves and goodwill from other anglers, companies and fisheries alike. We already have Dave Levy lined up for our Essex stop off at Churchgate Fishery and have ex-footballer Chris Kirkland (Liverpool and England goalkeeper) also lined up for our launch at Hurlston Hall on 11th August. We are current in talks with a few other known anglers to which we will release info as and when we get full confirmation.

We are looking to raise £10000 with a 50/50 split going to both charities. Currently we have raised £465 in our first month of releasing the information on

our gofundme page. During this time we have had so many donations from different companies we decided to run a raffle to be drawn on the launch night. At £10 a ticket with a list of prizes that continues to grow, lake exclusives, bait bundles, terminal tackle, books, vouchers, an iPad and a framed Virgil Van Dijk signed Liverpool shirt. From the raffle we have currently sold 21 tickets from 2000. We hope that we can sell all 2000 tickets giving the charities more than £10000 each. Again, as I have mentioned, all this while funding the whole trip including bait, tickets where needed, food, fuel etc.

We will set off on a rod race from Hurlston Hall Fishery to Parco Del Brenta with the aim of catching fish in a two week period; each pound of fish gets them one mile closer. The journey will feature on YouTube, Facebook and Instagram to share the experience and



hopefully help to raise awareness for these great charities.

For more information on these charities, go to www.macmillan.org.uk and <https://fishingthemind.org.uk/>. Hopefully you guys find this of interest and it's something that would interest you magazine.

Kind Regards; Matt Scoffham
#rodracetoparco. ■



PAUL RODRIGUEZ

RoSPA issues ice safety advice as weather conditions worsen across UK

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents is deeply saddened by the tragic events at Babbs Mill Park, Kingshurst in Solihull, and extends its condolences to the families and communities impacted by the news.

RoSPA is urging people across Britain to be especially cautious around open waters during the current extreme weather conditions that Britain is facing. With news of the Met Office's current yellow weather warning, where temperatures are set to drop as low as -15 in parts of Britain, RoSPA is concerned that icy conditions could result in further harm.

David Walker, Head of Road and Leisure Safety, said: "With the current weather conditions as they are, it's important that people are especially careful around open waters. If you encounter somebody who is in trouble on or near ice, it's vital that you don't go in too.

"Call the emergency services on



999. If you can, find an object like a pole or a life-ring that they can hold onto and help them stay afloat."

Key ice safety advice

If someone falls through the ice:

- Call the emergency services
- Do not attempt to go out on to the ice yourself
- Tell the person to stay still to maintain heat and energy
- Try finding something which will extend your reach, such as a rope, pole or branch
- Throw the object out and, once ensuring you are stable on the bank either by lying down or having

someone hold on to you, pull them in

- If you cannot find something to reach with, try finding an object that will float and push that out to them
- Ensure that you keep off the ice at all times during the rescue, continue to reassure the casualty and keep them talking until help arrives
- Once the person has been rescued, keep them warm and take them to hospital even if they appear to be unaffected

Press Enquiries: Joseph Tinkler, Email: Pressoffice@ROSPA.com

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Mora's Companion Knife is the perfect gift

Brighten any outdoor enthusiast's day with the colourful Companion Stainless Steel Knife from Swedish experts, Mora. A family-run company with more than 125 years of expertise behind it, the Mora Companion Stainless Steel is exactly what it says, a trustworthy, reliable companion for lovers of the great outdoors.

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Find out more about Mora at www.mora-kniv.se. RRP: £15.00



Rod Hutchinson Products



The new technologies and materials gradually filter down from the aerospace and Formula One industries to the fishing tackle industry. This has enabled us to entrust our concept of 'the perfect curve' to another range of mouth-watering rods that feature improved recovery for enhanced casting performance. Our new DMX rods are more than capable of carrying the much-vaunted 'DMX' crest. Featuring an attractive, skeletal handle and titanium dioxide lined rings.



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Leatherman launches Raptor® Response emergency shears

Multi-tool specialist Leatherman has launched the new Raptor® Response emergency shears, enabling medical professionals and everyday users alike to cut through materials with ease in an emergency situation or during routine cutting tasks.

An ideal addition to any first aid kit for the home, workplace or when on the move in the outdoors, the Leatherman Raptor® Response's compact, foldable shears glide through most materials, from clothing to bandages and thick outerwear, while the micro-serrations on the inner blade keep fabrics from slipping and binding. The tool features the time-tested shears of the brand's Raptor® family but with slimmer handle grips, while the handy ring cutter, ruler, oxygen tank wrench and pocket clip offer additional functionality.

The Leatherman Raptor® Response tools are made from premium stainless steel, while the contoured handle grips are designed for comfort and ease, finished with a durable ceramic coating. Weighing 157g, the tool is available in a choice of Grey, Crimson and Navy and retails at £89.95.

Along with the full Leatherman range, the Raptor® Response is covered by the brand's 25-year guarantee and is available now at www.leatherman.co.uk. ■



BIG CARP TOP TEN

Carp Fisheries



Web: cottingtonlakes.co.uk
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River Carp Story

By Daniel Scranage

Every time I turned up on the prebaited area you could tell there were carp around due to fizzing up in the water or seeing a little roll. Adrenalin was pumping constantly. I was taking the minimum amount of fishing gear, two rods, and stalking them, knowing by putting the effort in to get to the difficult areas of the river it would pay off.

There was a certain area I was fishing on the river under a fallen tree where the carp always seemed to be. I remember when I went down and caught my first 20lb'er, just shy of 26lb. I dropped around half a dozen broken boilies and a handful of sweet-corn. The hookbait was nice and simple on a KD rig on a bottom bait with yellow plastic corn. Within three quarters of an hour a dark mirror came in and ate the lot as I watched it. I could

see it turn and take the hookbait and then it belted off. Fifteen minutes later after a great fight it was in the landing net. It was a great experience to land a beautiful 26lb river carp, which had clearly not been caught before. I'd recommend to any carp angler to go and catch a river carp. Unfortunately where I was fishing due to construction around the area it's all changing, but it won't stop me looking for my next river carp!



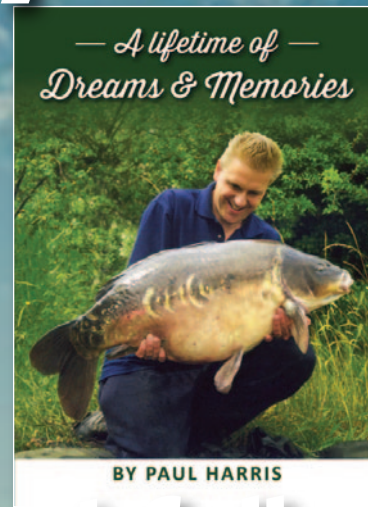
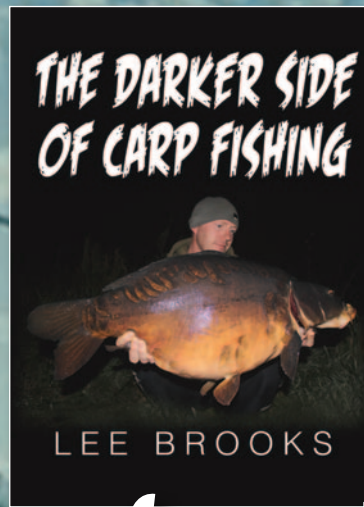


River Irwell

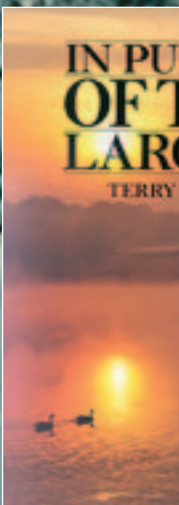
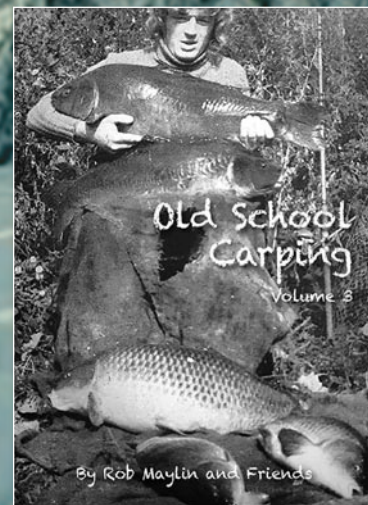
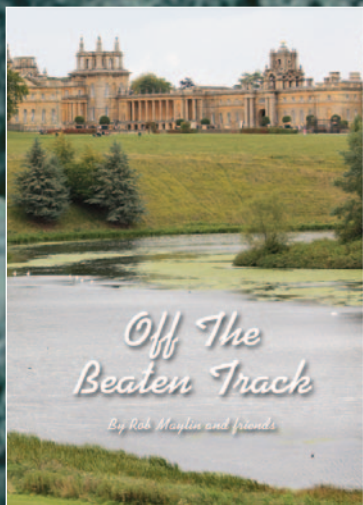
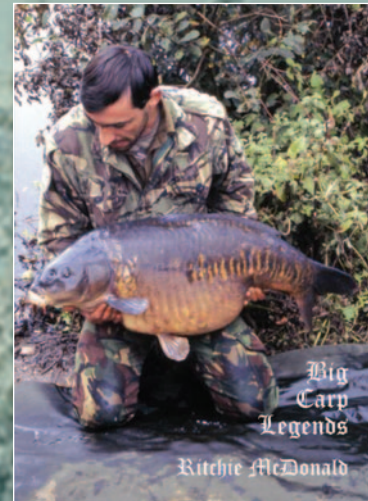
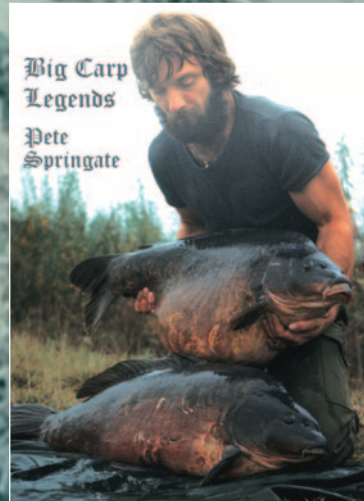
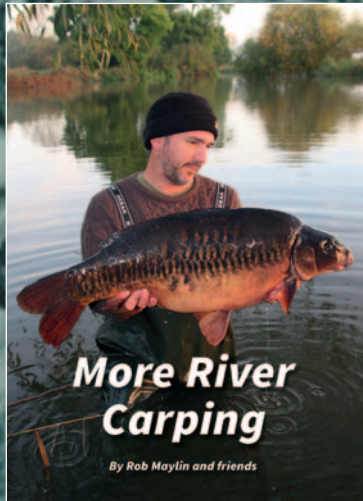
From 2008 to the present day I have fished the River Irwell. I have come across small pockets of really old, wily carp, catching a fair few high 20lb and few mid doubles. Every carp has been a great achievement and wonderful memory, which you can see in the pictures. Success has been through a lot of prebaiting with Urban Bait Nutcracker 14mm and 18mm and corn. Prebaiting and simple tactics using the KD rig, straight bottom bait Nutcracker and a piece of plastic corn wafer style did the business. I recommend trying to catch a river carp because it's such an amazing experience and achievement. ■



Warm Away the Cold

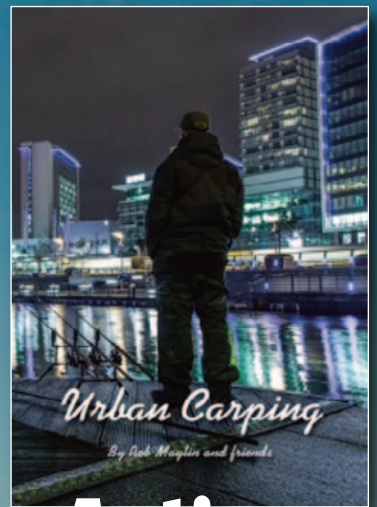
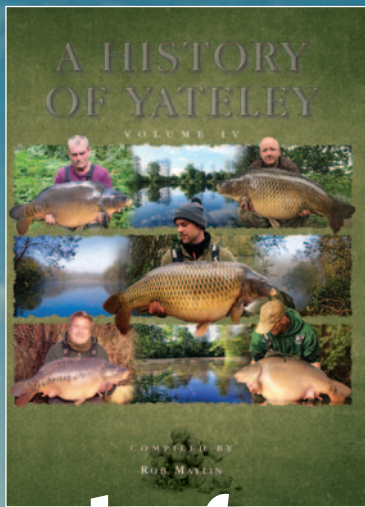


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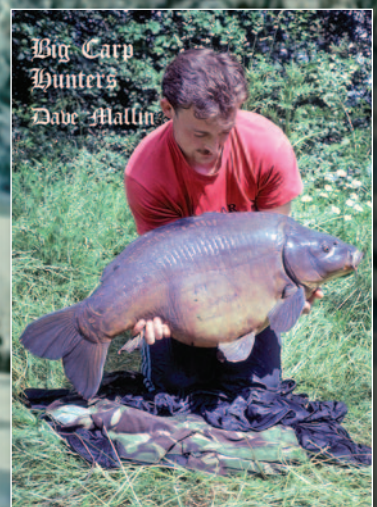
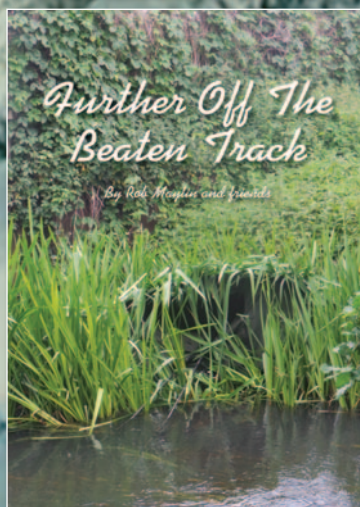
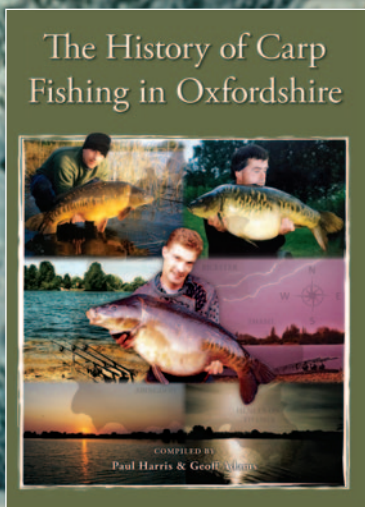
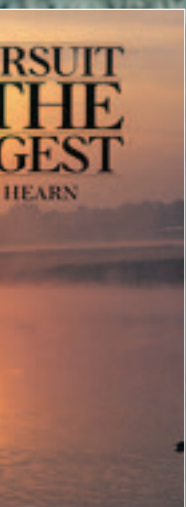
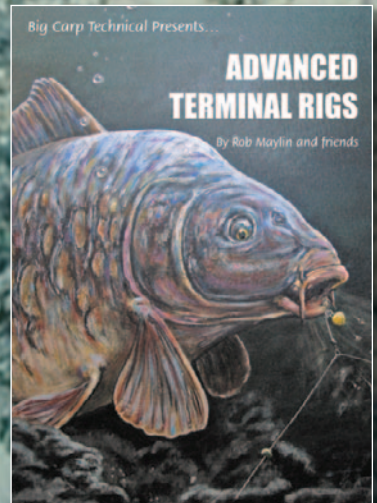
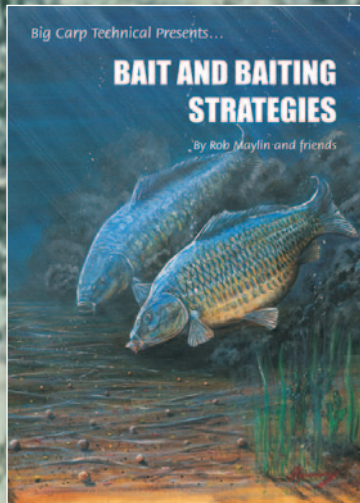
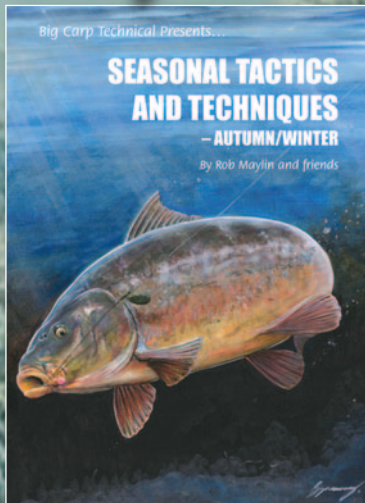


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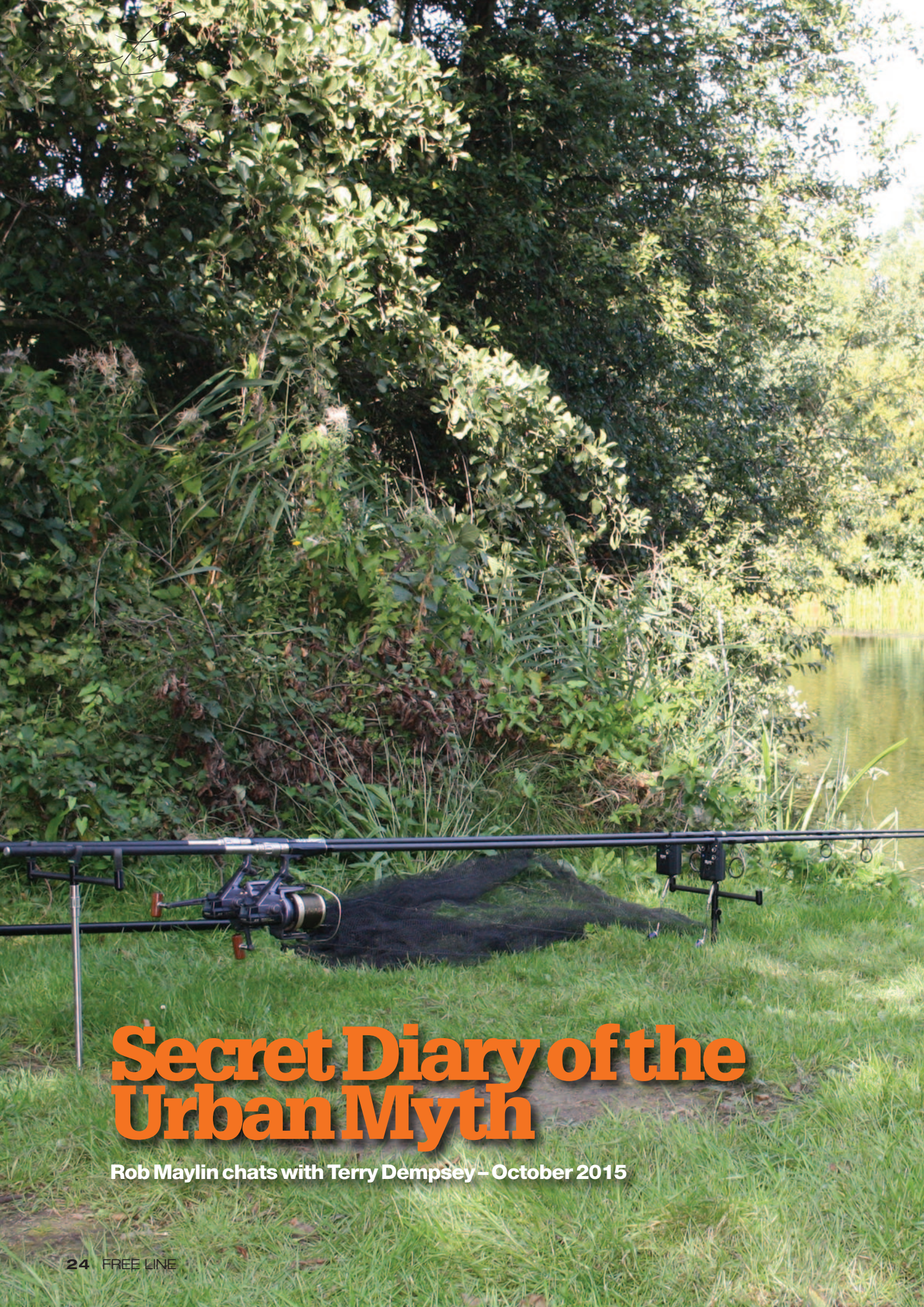
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Secret Diary of the Urban Myth

Rob Maylin chats with Terry Dempsey – October 2015

Rob: Early October, I met up with Terry Dempsey again to do the exclusive secret diary of our Urban Myth here. We have a big story for you this month – fantastic stuff. Before we get into that, I have just been talking to Tel about the numbers of fish that have been out in September and October this year, and big fish too. Now we have the social media, you don't have to wait for a weekly newspaper to see the captures; they are all banged up on Facebook and Twitter straight away. We had a bit of a lean period through July to August. I was watching my posts everyday and saw very few big fish coming up compared to earlier on through early April, May and June. Once again it was carp clubbing season, and everyone was catching them. Throughout the summer, which started early, there was a lot of spawning going on, and then it got wet, which put an end to the captures, but there was the odd one coming in.

All of a sudden in September, just

one after another was coming in, and through October they all came out. They were ready to come out on all those difficult venues for the bigger fish. As I said, Tel has had a very, very big fish, and he is going to tell you all about that in a moment. It's a funny – a lot of people are banging names around about who is the best carp angler. It is always the same faces you see in the voting that people talk about, and I am not going to name any names here, but there are always three or four guys that always get mentioned when you are talking about the best carp angler in the country. For some reason, Tel is never mentioned in that list.

I'll be honest with you; I have fished with the best of the best over the years... I have fished with Maddox, Hutchinson in the early years and then later on with the likes of Steve Allcott, Lockey and what-have-you, really good anglers. Later on when I found myself at Yateley I was in the company of Jim Shelley, Nigel Sharp and Terry Hearn and all those same faces – very good anglers. But you never hear Tel's name mentioned,

but I will be honest with you, he is one of the best carp anglers this country has ever seen. I know he is not going to like me saying, as his face is all red and all the rest of it... He is not seeking praise, but for the limited time that this bloke has, the fish that he catches are unbelievable really.

Over the last couple of years of doing these diaries in the magazine with Tel, he has basically fished two waters: one of them is a no-publicity, so I am not going to divulge details here, but it is one of the hardest lakes in the country, and Tel has found it fairly easy. In the very, very limited time that he has there he's had numerous 40s off the top and the bottom, inside out, anyway you want to do it, and he has had hardly any time on the bank at all. It's a syndicate water, as you know. You have good anglers over there, and some of them have fished for years with hardly a bite, and some with no bites.

The other water is his Kent syndicate water, again really difficult with only fifty fish in there. Tel was told how difficult it would be when he



Terry with his 51lb personal best common from his Kent syndicate.



went on there. He has hardly spent any time on there are all, and he has had seven different forties out of there and now a 50lb common. It speaks for itself really. Alright he's got his own bait, but there is more to it than that. If you only have one or two nights fishing per month you can't be expected to keep up with the big names in fishing, but he has, and not only that, he has outfished them. The Kent syndicate water has some really good anglers on it, some who write in the magazine as well, and they found it really difficult over there; they haven't had a bite even. Some of the anglers have been fishing over there for three years and haven't had a bite. Tel goes over there and puts some groundwork in. We know how important things like prebaiting are, and Tel goes the extra mile with equal rewards. He gets himself prepared, and he is a confident fisher in weed, which is very difficult for some people, but he can find spots.

Once he has found them, he baits them to get ready for his one session a month when his missus lets him go fishing. She is really tough on him like that; he gets this one night down

there, and bang, bang, bang... In the last edition of the magazine, you saw it, three or four fish out of the Colne Valley water with 40s included, and now here he is again! The next session a month later, just a couple of nights down on his Kent Syndicate water, and what does he catch? The biggest fish in the lake. Anyway, that's me blowing Terry's trumpet for him, so let's hear all about it.

Terry: Good to see you again, Rob. It only seems like that the other day that we were sitting here, and as you say, quite a bit has happened to me since then. I haven't done a great deal of fishing mainly because of the bait, and also because my son is only six years of age and I have to take him to school every day because my wife works full-time. It's tough for me getting out, and I don't fish weekends because I spend it with my children, so I only get out during the week. A couple of weeks ago, I could see this big moon coming. Everybody talks about the moon. Some of the guys that I fish with nowadays are really into their moon phases. They have added it all up, and you can see that the results are definitely becoming

better on certain moon phases.

When I fished Wraysbury, I had limited time on there, so what I used to do is pick the better times to go – weather conditions or whatever it was. A lot of people talk about low pressures and high pressures. I have been fishing on the Colne Valley gravel pits now for over twenty years since I fished Longfield over twenty-five years ago. I found that high pressures are good on a lot of these gravel pits. A lot of people go, "Oh my God, the pressure is over one thousand – you are not going to catch anything." This has been the total opposite to what I found on a lot of lakes over the last twenty-odd years, and I proved it last week. We had the massive moon coming – the 'Super Moon' they called it.

A couple of weeks before my session I went to the lake and sprinkled some baits onto the spots, just to make sure that the fish were having a dig around. It had been a few weeks since I had been down to my syndicate lake, so I was totally out of touch with it, but I know the lake quite well – it is my third year on there. I have got to know the certain places that



FISHING RESORT



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they like at certain times of the year. It is a very, very weedy lake, and a lot of the weeds aren't rooted, so it is blowing around the lake. What I found is that wherever the weed is, that is normally where the carp are. So I found a really weedy area and sprinkled some bait a couple of times. I got the green light from my wife to get two nights in. I got someone to pick up my son from school, so everything was good.

I got down to the lake on Monday afternoon, and there were a few people down there, which I was surprised about, what with it being midweek. In fact 70% of the swims on the lake were taken. A couple of the swims that I really fancied, including one that I had been baiting, were taken, so I went to another area that I had fished a few times. I spoke to my mate Bob Copeland; he had been down there for a few days and hadn't caught a fish. He was talking about the pressure, saying it was 1,000 millibars, which a lot of people would say is not good carp weather. Over the years I have done so well in high pressures, and going back a long time, I have caught some of my best fish like Mary's Mate and Jack The Net Ripper

– some of the best catches I have ever had in my life on really high pressures in really hot temperatures.

What I have always said about carp is that they are very similar to reptiles. The warmer it is the more active they are; the colder it is the less active they are. So when it is warm, they are moving around a lot, and they use up a lot of energy so they become hungry, and that's how we get fish. Anyway, with the high pressure as it was, I was still confident because of the moon phase. It was a massive moon that night, and as it was getting dark I could see it rising up over the little bay I was fishing. It was unbelievable – bright and big with a massive ring around it. There was something about the night that was quite eerie, and I could feel some expectation. The crazy thing was that I was really tired; I had been working so hard for days and days on end that not long after dark I was asleep on my bedchair... I didn't even get in my sleeping bag.

I must have been in such a deep sleep, Rob, because all of a sudden the buzzer shrieked off, but I didn't even know where I was. I ran out to the wrong end of the bivvy, out of the

back, and I got tangled up. In the process I broke my storm rods and absolutely wrecked my setup. If anybody had seen me, they would have been laughing their heads off. It would have been a great scene for a Mr Bean film. Once I had untangled myself from my brolly, my bedchair and my groundsheet, I realised a swan had gone through my lines. What a disaster! I was fishing in a little hole in the weed, and I mean a hole in the weed. It was pitch black apart from the moon shining, but it's not easy to get the rods set back up on the spots. Anyway, a couple of casts and I got them back out there, but I wasn't as confident as I should have been, knowing that my bait had been moved and everything else.

I got back in the sleeping bag, and I was lying there cursing this swan. I had to reset my bivvy in the night, and it wasn't warm. My feet were soaked, as I'd run out in my socks. I just wrecked my setup. But there was something about the moon that night, which woke the fish up. I hadn't heard of fish showing on this particular lake all season since the spring when they had a good little show, but



42lb Wingham common caught on a September full moon.



Big Sutton common landed during a July full moon and very high pressure.

since then it had been quiet, especially at night. But that night I could hear them; they were jumping all over the lake. I must have heard about eight or nine crashes, which is a lot for there because it is a fairly low stock lake. Throughout the night I could hear them crashing, and one of them must have been only twenty metres away from where I was fishing, so I knew I was on fish. And that's what it is all about on there – location is so key. I was beaming with confidence...

I managed to get back to sleep, and it must have been 3.30am when I got two bleeps. I woke up and there was nothing else around, so it was obviously a liner. I was thinking there were fish present, and then I tried to drift back to sleep again. I don't know the time exactly, but it was around 5.30am when it absolutely belted off. The buzzer just shrieked! I was all locked up, but the line was just ripping off the spool. I knew it was a good take. I came running out of my sleeping bag, this time on the right side (I had learnt my lesson from earlier), and I pulled into this big fish,

which took about 30 yards of line off me. It just kept going, and even on a tight clutch it was ripping line off me. Then all of a sudden it went totally solid; it just locked up. I was pulling and pulling and nothing. I put the rod back on the rest, and still nothing... it just wasn't happening.

I was sitting there cursing, and the next thing I thought was let's have one more try. I really leaned into it and started to gain an inch... and then I gained another inch... and then another. Cut a long story short, soon I had a weedbed about the size of a Transit van sitting in the margins. My line was poking into the weedbed, but I couldn't net it. It was colossal this thing, so I stuck a torch on and jumped in the lake with my net. I started putting my hand through the weed to see if I could feel the back of a carp. I kept looking and looking, and all of a sudden I saw this big, big back just lying there motionless at the back end of the weed. So I lifted my net round this massive bit of weed, and the fish didn't even know what was going on. I started ripping out the weed around the fish to get my arms

and my net up, and all of a sudden he was in the net... He was mine... and that's when he woke up and went bananas in the net.

I was after a certain fish, which is a mirror, but when I saw it was a common, I wasn't disappointed. I was over the moon because when I looked more closely I saw the most amazing big common I have ever seen in my life. It was absolutely immense in every proportion. It wasn't fat at all; it was long, really wide across the back, and I knew straight away the first glimpse I got of him that it was a 50lb-plus fish. I thought I would weigh him on the spot just before light in the sling, and he was 55lb ½oz. I took the sling off, and it weighed 51lbs – a colossal fish. It was just getting light, and I was on cloud nine. I didn't know what to do. I reeled my other rod in and went to get one of the lads up the bank. He came down and we did the photos, but what a morning, eh? A September 50lb common. The pressure was unbelievably high, which everyone puts a cross against saying it's not the right weather, but it just shows

you, the pressure can work. Following pressure can work against you. The moon phase definitely played a part, I am sure. A lot of people talk about big commons on big moons, and I will definitely be going out fishing on the next big moon, I know that!

Rob: Nice one, Tel. What a great story, eh? Yes, I have caught a few big commons on those big moons myself. I remember on Harefield one night I had three 30lb commons, all with a big full moon in September. I remember standing up on that hump, line sinking in the weed and a 30lbs common locked up behind the Harefield bars. It was a really windy night; I was looking up to the sky, and what few clouds were up there were racing past the moon. I was in the pub earlier that day, got absolutely shitfaced, cast them out when I came back and caught three 30lb commons. After the third one I screamed out like a banshee across the lake. I got them all stacked up in the net for the morning photos. That's it, mate – big commons and big moons go together. What a great story – not only a big common,

but one of the hardest commons to catch in the country. There are not that many 50lb commons to catch in this country; you can probably count them on three or four fingers. None of them are easy, but that is a nice one for Tel to catch. Well done, mate!

Anyway before we round this up, there are a couple of things I want to tell you about. Urban Myth books... I bought the last lot off of Tel a little while ago, so I've got those in stock this Christmas, and when they are gone they are gone. So if you want one, get on the website now. Also the Urban Bait subby is back with a bang! With the colder temperatures coming in, Tel has put together a subby deal suitable for this time of the year based upon his Red Spicy Fish boilies and Liver Cracker powder, and you know what a deadly combination they are! You also get the stick mix, which is brilliant at this time of the year. Also there are dumbbell hookbaits, pop-ups... the works, so have a look out for that on the website in subscriptions. That's your cold weather Urban subby – Red Spicy Fish and

Nutcracker. Anyway until next month, that is all from Tel. He said he is going to have a few more trips back down there, as he still has that big mirror to catch. I am sure all of you out there who are reading this are wishing him all the luck in the world.

Terry: Thanks, Rob. I am looking forward to the six or seven nights I have left this year, so I am going to choose them wisely. I will be watching for the moon phases and get down there at the right time and hopefully get the fish that I want. A lot of the captures on that particular lake are repeats. The first year I fished it I did really, really well on there. I probably caught a large proportion of the carp in the lake, so I am one or two fish short from moving on to my next lake. In a way it will be quite sad to leave it because I have really enjoyed my fishing on this particular lake, and it is somewhere where I would probably want to fish for the rest of my life, but you never know, I might not catch and I might be on there forever, eh?

Rob: (Both laugh) That has jinxed it now, Tel! ■



Wraysbury common landed during very high pressure and an August full moon.



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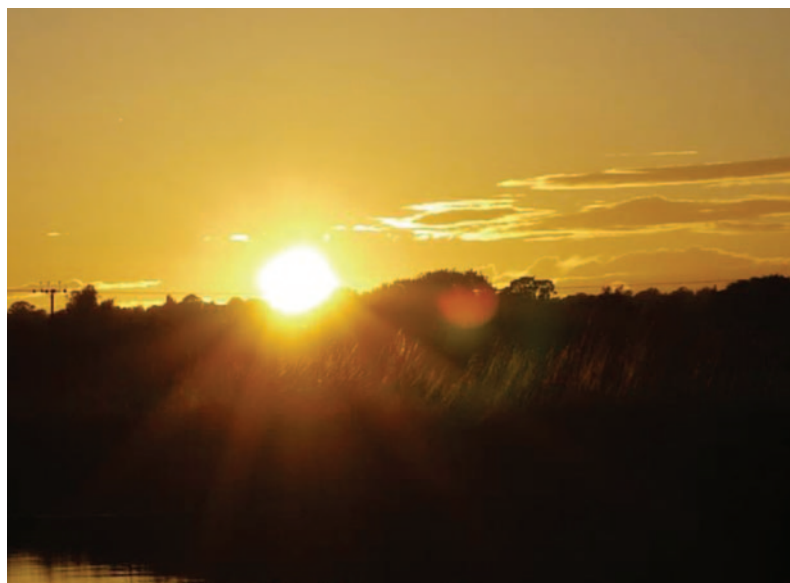


Avon Adventure

By Gary Whelan

A few years ago now I set myself a target of catching myself a river carp. For a week or so I looked at maps, books and every other possible source of information I could find on likely stretches of rivers that weren't far from home that possibly could hold carp and that I could possibly land my first river carp from. With the information locked into my head and a map I set off one Saturday morning looking for likely places that I could possibly fish over the coming weekends. I found a few likely places on two stretches of two different rivers, but it was the Avon I settled on.

The Warwickshire Avon is a great river with its reed lined edges and long, straight sections with occasional beds of lilies, which were great places to start looking for my target. I walked along a few miles of bank looking in every possible place for a carp, but to no avail. I noted down a few likely areas I could set up a brolly and still fish to areas I thought would hold fish in passing or be a home to resident fish.



I passed a couple of anglers, stopped and spoke to those who would speak back and managed to get a bit of information out of a few, which was of great help in the future. I was told of carp to 30lb being present and was shown a picture of the fish. With this picture in my head, my plan was made.

The first weekend fishing was fast approaching, and I was sorting

through my tackle tying rigs up and preparing bait. I opted to fish two similar rigs, which were a simple knotless knot rigs tied blowback style in some coated braid to either a long shank hook or a wide gape hook in a size 6. The rigs then either had two 14mm fishmeal barrels or two 16mm boilies mounted on the hair. I opted to fish leadcore leaders with lead clips on, which was spliced to a braided mainline.

I got to the river to find one person fishing about 100 yards upstream of where I wanted to fish. There were two swims that were next to each other that I liked the look of. I opted to fish the left hand swim, as there was a big snag tree on the far bank and a nice deep run through the middle of the river. I baited up quite heavily on the left hand rod, which was in the middle run of the river and just fished PVA bags of chops and catapulted a few free offerings over the left hand rod tight to the snag.

I baited up with a mixture of boilies, barrels and pellets on the right hand rod in the channel, and under-armed the rig out over the top and dropped a back lead onto the line so the braid was kept close to the bottom out of the way of the boats. The right hand rod was a bit more pre-



cisely placed. Two casts and the PVA bag and rig was as tight under the snag tree as I could get it. The braided mainline was again sunk to the bottom and a back lead was placed down the channel.

I sat back and watched the evening slowly go by, and just as it got to dusk I had three vicious liners on the channel rod, which was a good sign. Only half an hour later saw me reel in a bream. I replaced the rod into the channel again, put some more bait in and got ready to turn in for the night when the left hand rod screamed off. A scrappy fight produced a chub of around 4lb. At this point I was thinking I was going to be up all night! I had one more bream at about 1am, and finally I managed to get some sleep for a few hours.

At about 5am my left hand snag tree rod screamed off. This time I knew it was no bream or chub. The fish powered off downstream taking 60 yards on its first run. I can remember thinking how powerful the fish was; it kept going and going, staying deep in the middle of the river using the current. All of a sudden I saw a gold flash in the light of the head torch, and after a few minutes it went into the net – a big gold koi!

I couldn't believe my eyes when I opened the mesh of the net up in the edge. There were gold colours, yellows and oranges and bits of black all over it – a proper koi, which was a big surprise. I never thought I'd catch such a fish. I hoisted it up onto the mat and weighed it at 23lb 7oz – a personal best koi. I returned the fish to its home and when it was light, I recast the rod as tightly as I could next to the snag. The rest of the first session was then spent sat there just looking for signs, as catching the koi seemed to have spooked everything off. No bream or chub came my way either, so I packed away and headed for home happy with the result I'd had.

A week later saw me fish the right hand swim, which had a deep marginal hole with weed at one end of it and a reed bed opposite. I put one rod in the deep marginal hole and one as close as I could near the reeds. Same baiting strategy as the previous week was used with a PVA bag and a few freebies to the far bank and a big bed of bait in the deeper water.

It was just gone midnight and the

22lb 8oz common



right hand rod registered a steady take from what I thought was a barbel or chub, but it turned out to be a surprise carp. The fight was savage in the deep margin; it tried to get me in a big bed of cabbages twice, but the 3.5lb test curve rod stopped it from beating me, and I slipped the net under what was definitely another 20lb-plus fish. My smile was ear-to-ear as the scales spun round to 22lb 5oz. The fish fell to a double bottom bait, two 14mm fishmeal barrels on the long shank hook rig and a 4oz black grip lead. The fish was a deep-bodied warrior mirror carp with big fins and a huge tail – most probably an escapee from a local lake in the floods one winter.

I managed another bream that weekend, and again I was left watching and learning. As I was packing away and getting ready for the walk back to the car, I noticed two decent carp swimming up the middle of the river accompanied by a chub of a good size, so I followed them to see where they went. I walked about 100 yards further downstream from where I was fishing where they disappeared under a big overhanging bush. I noted this in my head as a possible swim to try next time I was down.

The next time I managed to get to the river was two weeks later. The weather hadn't been great, and the river was up a good two feet when I got there. The two swims I had fished previously were out of the question as the bank was steep and one foot in the wrong place would have meant

falling in the river, so I looked for another swim. I had a look where there was a small back eddy and a small island in the river first, which I liked the look of. On closer inspection there were a lot of snags close in, which would have hampered landing anything if I was to get a take. I carried on and looked at the swim with the overhanging bush where I saw the two carp disappear under as I was packing up on the last trip. I decided to give it a night in there to see if anything was about, and if not, I would move first thing in the morning.

I set up slightly differently, opting to put both rods over tight to the other bank, one either side of the overhanging bush to try to cut the fish off going in and out of the bush. The night passed without a bleep, so I got up early on the Saturday morn-



Boilies, hemp, pellet, maples and a few grains of maize was my mix for the river when baiting heavily in the boat channel.

ing and decided to go for a walk. I got to a fence, which stopped you going any further, and I was looking around in the last few swims when I saw a barbel and a chub not far out. I stopped and watched for a short while and saw a small common appear. I decided to quickly go and pack the stuff onto the barrow and move to this area for the Saturday night.

I had been set up about an hour when I had a screaming take, which took me around the fence and downstream. I couldn't stop this fish! It was on the way to the next town, and as I tried to make some line back on it, the braided mainline must have caught something on the bottom, and ping... the fish was gone. I set the rod back up and got it back out on the same spot, which was just in the boat channel. I was fishing both rods half way across the river and sat down contemplating what I had just had happened to me.

A couple of hours went by, and a dog walker stopped and said "Hello" and told me that a man had had a carp from where I was fishing earlier that week, which was good to know. I carried on, and just after teatime, as it was getting dark, my right hand rod was off again. I was on it quickly this time and just held on as the fish tried to do what the one earlier in the afternoon had done, but I managed to turn it before it got too far downstream. It was a strong fish, and a long common came up to be netted – a big fish as well. As I looked into the net again I



23lb 7oz of hard fighting river koi.

thought to myself another 20 possibly. As I hoisted the fish onto the mat I knew it was the biggest one yet, and at 25lb 7oz I was smiling again. I took some photos of the fish on self-take and just hoped they had come out. A quick check of the camera before putting the fish back, and the pictures were great. I released the fish and under-armed the rod back out into place. I put around half a kilo of bait around the rod to see if I could buy another bite. At around three on the Sunday morning I had a take on the same rod, which resulted in a small common of around 10lb. I didn't weigh it; I just took some photos and released it.

The summer was coming to an end, and the nights were drawing in, so

my river trips came to an end. There wasn't enough time for me to drive, park up and walk to the swim before it got dark after work on the Fridays. I tried to go back the following year. I was all set to start early only to find out that the stretch had been sold and was now closed to fishing.

I was really happy with what I achieved on the section of the Avon. I set out to catch one fish but managed four, which was great, and I was really pleased to have three 20lb-plus fish that probably had never been caught before. ■



My standard river setup comprising of a 4oz black grip lead and a 14 inch coated hooklink tied to a wide gape or longshank hook in a size 6 and PVA bag.



Small common.



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A person in a dark jacket and waders stands on a grassy bank, holding a fishing rod that arches high into the sky. The rod is positioned diagonally across the frame. In the foreground, two other fishing rods are set up on the bank. The background shows a calm lake reflecting the soft light of dawn, with a line of trees on the opposite shore. The sky is a pale blue, and the water is still, mirroring the sky and the distant trees. The overall mood is peaceful and quiet.

Wasing Way

By Craig Runham

Unbelievably I was connected to a carp in the worst conditions imaginable. It was a stunning, cold morning.

A new adventure had begun as I unlocked the padlock to a water of mystery. I knew very little about my upcoming endeavour; the water in question was always shrouded in silence, and to be fair I could understand why as I looked across a piece of heaven. Straight away I fell in love with what lay before my eyes. Old wooden jetties stretched out into the crystal clear shallow margins, remnants of the previous trout syndicate left behind. Norfolk reeds encroached the margins, and old leaning trees stretched out into the weed filled edges. It truly is a place that dreams are made of, and I knew I would enjoy every minute of being there! I knew next to nothing about the lake's stock apart from a rumour it had produced a large common of over forty-five pounds. This I took with a pinch of salt, as I have been led a merry old dance with rumours in the past.

I had done some homework before purchasing the ticket and had come across very little, except a few photos including a stunning low thirty mirror, one of the original fish stocked into the lake many years ago, a fish that was my main target for sure! What else the lake contained was a pure mystery. Shortly after joining it was apparent that there had been a recent stocking: thirty new fish had been added to boost the stock levels! These are not your typical stocked fish; these are without doubt the best



stocked fish I have ever had the honour of catching! The lake in question is around six to seven acres with depths that range to over twenty feet. The bottom, I discovered, is fairly uniform and deep – typical of an old trout fishery. The depths at first seemed a tad daunting, as I had never fished lakes of these depths!

My first trip with the rods was in early July. A mini heatwave was upon us – hardly the ideal weather to be fishing such a deep lake. At the very most I had hoped to see some of the

lake's inhabitants basking in the warm summer rays. Within twenty yards of the lake I could see a crusty black back creasing the surface through the scum-laden layers. I knew then it was to be hard work this trip. Instantly scurrying back to the car, I grabbed my floater gear in anticipation of tempting one of the lake's inhabitants off the surface. Back in the swim I 'pulted out a pouch full of mixers just past a group of three fish all enjoying the warm rays of sunlight kissing their backs. As the fish headed towards the mixers my heart skipped a beat before they swam underneath the mixers and completely ignored them. My heart dropped a level. I chased a few groups of fish for a few hours, firing floaters out with absolutely no results. With not a single floater being taken, these carp certainly appeared to be no walk in the park.

After giving up on the floater fishing and heading back to the car with my tail between my legs, I set about searching for a much needed shady swim to set the brolly up in. The heat was well and truly intense. I settled

(Top) It truly is a stunning place!
(Left) First few trips and I had to change my plan of attack. It wasn't working so I drew a blank. I had a lot to learn.





into a swim I had previously seen a fish show on one of my walks late one evening. I decided to fish the bottom of the shelf and spread three rods along the shelf at different depths. I scattered three to four kilos of Main-line Cell over the rods. That night I fell asleep to the sound of fish crashing all over the rods. I was fully expecting to be dragged from my slumber at some point during the night! As dawn

broke I awoke and couldn't believe I hadn't had any action. The bobbins and the lines hung limp and unstuck from their positions from the night before! I still felt confident, as a few fizzers appeared over the rods. By 9am it was time to head home. When I reeled in I couldn't believe it! I had no baits on all three rods. I cursed the crayfish, as I hadn't expected them to be that bad!

I knew I had to change my plan of attack, and due to the crayfish I decided to fish mainly plastic hook-baits. A few weeks prior Korda brought out a new plastic range, and I knew these would be perfect. I ordered a load of different colours and sizes in anticipation of my next trip, which was to be early August. I had five nights with good friend and long-term fishing partner, Dye. We were both buzzing in anticipation of doing a long session on the new water. I hoped it would only be a matter of time before I was holding my first Wasing carp.

We arrived late afternoon, and with hot weather on the way we decided to fish the shallowest area of the lake. I chose to fish a small relatively unfished peg in the corner of the lake. With a large reed bed to my left and some weedy deeper water out in front it felt like a really good option. After an hour or so with the marker I found a large gravel area in around five feet of water up against the reeds big enough to fit two rods on. I decided to fish 5oz flat pear leads to stop them rolling down the gravel slope that lead away from the reeds. The rigs were tied using Korda Hybrid Stiff in 20lb and size 6 Wide Gape X hooks. I

needed gear I could rely on and trust due to the nature of the nearby reed bed. I attached the new Korda Fake Baits dumb-bells in fishy fish flavour. These sat incredibly on the rigs, wafting just above the sticky sharp wide gape.

The rods went out perfectly with the tips vibrating as the heavy leads crashed down onto the clean gravel area. Over the top I baited with a mixture of hemp, tigers



(Top) First few bites from the water where the left rod produced five bites but I only landed one from a reed bed to the right of the swim pictured! A different approach was needed.

(Left) First blood – a cracking common just shy of twenty-nine pounds! A great way to open my account.

The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

Carp fishing has a very rich history. In the early days of it becoming popular, Kent and the Colne Valley were the hot beds of our fledgling pastime and of course there was the legendary Redmire Pool.

Into the new Millennium and one area above all others exploded onto the scene, this was of course Oxfordshire. The quality of the stock of carp in this county was incredible but where did these beautiful scaly beasts come from? When did the Leney's get stocked? What were the origins of the famous Linch Hill fish and what of the history of the now infamous Linear Fisheries? Over the course of the pages of this book all will be revealed as Paul and Geoff have put together the facts of how these lakes were stocked and also banded together many successful local anglers, some of which have never published any of their catches, who tell their fishing tales on these stunning lakes.

With more than 300 pictures of some of this country's finest ever carp and several full page maps, this huge volume tells the story of Oxfordshire's carp fishing history whilst still leaving a little bit of mystery for your imagination!

Included within the pages of this book is the foreword written by local legendary angler and former tackle dealer Joe Taylor. We have chapters from Paul Kitchin on the legendary Vauxhall Lake. David Brian Williams tells us the story of the lakes in the City of Oxford itself! Chris Robinson has written an incredible chapter on two of Dorchester's lakes. Orchid and The Lagoon. The history told in Chris' chapter on these lakes is just incredible and wait until you see the pictures!

Next door to The Lagoon is Dorchester's Alliance Club Lake and Joe Forrester tells his story of the incredible scaly carp that inhabited this lake and how he outwitted them.

We have a real coup in the fact that brilliant all-round Oxford angler John Everard agreed to be interviewed and he has an incredible amount of historical information to share, as has Gerald Stratford who is also included in this informative chapter.

No book about Oxfordshire's carp fishing history would be complete without the story of Oxford's first forty and what a story it is. Richard 'Paddy' Paradine has never written or published any of his catches before and we have his interview here for you of his historic catch which was kept under the radar for so long.

Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing on The Leisure Park was back in the day when the Leney's were still about and culminates with his capture of The Big Leney at its biggest ever weight, the iconic 'Paddy's Fish'.

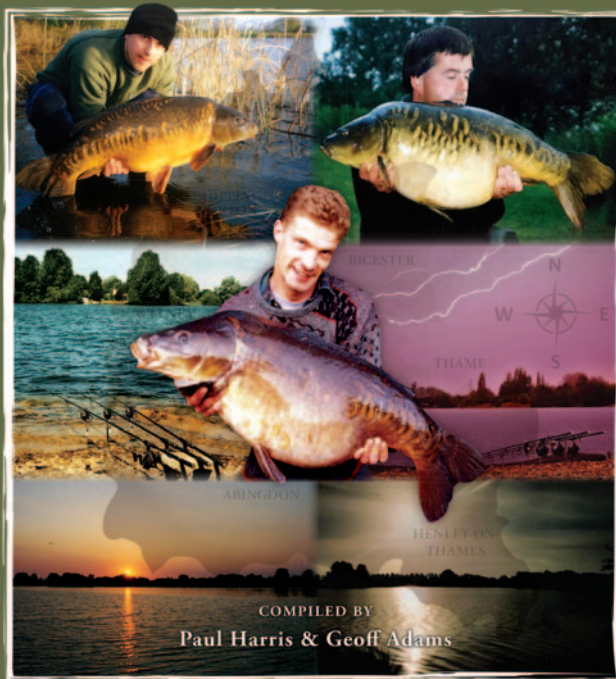
We have brilliant chapters on Newlands from Ginger Robinson and Milton Pools from Stuart Rothwell. Danny Aplin has written about his time on Linch Hill which will just blow you away! His pictures alone are worth purchasing this book.

Nick Franklin has written a lovely chapter on one of Oxfordshire's little known lakes and his account really hits home that carp fishing isn't always about the numbers game. Sometimes it's just you fishing for the unknown! There are superb chapters on Manor Farm from Paul Hathaway and St Johns from Stewart Roper.

If that wasn't enough Paul and Geoff have wrote chapters themselves which cover the stocking history of lakes, how the gravel company ARC played such a big part in the early stockings of Oxford's lakes, the early days of Linch Hill and Linear Fisheries and facts and stories regarding Oxford's other lakes, some very off the radar!

If you like your history, you like carp fishing and love stories of beautiful scaly carp, there is only one book to purchase this year. Here it is...

The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire



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A V A I L A B L E N O W

and Cell boilies. Around two kilos of the mixture was spread across the two rods with the use of a spod. The other two rods were positioned behind a large weedbed at forty yards range. The rigs were kept identical to the other two rods, and a further two kilos of the mix was put out over the top. As evening approached a large mirror cleared the water around fifty yards out, filling me with confidence. After a good catch up with Dye that evening it was soon time to climb into the bag for some much needed kip.

Once again dawn appeared and with no action during the night I felt rather despondent. At least the sunrise was a glorious one. The lake looked sunning with a layer of mist

(Right) A different line angle was needed to fish the reed bed spot. The swim hadn't been fished in a long, long time.

(Below) A move of swim, a change of rigs and a stunning fully scaled in the net. The different line angle made the difference!





The change of angles clearly made the difference in tempting this upper twenty.



I was glad I had moved; the next bite from the reeds produced this scale perfect twenty-seven pound common. I felt I was on a roll.

rising off the inky looking lake. It sure was a stunning morning, and I still felt there was plenty of time for a bite before the sun climbed high into the clear blue sky. Around 10am the left rod bent round and the clutch was in a blur as a clearly angry fish headed up along the reeds. I picked up the bent carbon and was instantly forced to give line. I jumped down the bank and into the margin. After a twenty-yard run I began slowly leading the fish along the reeds. My legs were shaking, as the first bite on a new water is always a tad special. Dye turned up by my side and passed the net to me in my position in the water. The fish held deep for an age before rising up through the water and giving us a clear view of its golden flanks. I could make out a common of upper twenties twisting a turning through the crystal clear water, the small plastic dumbbell hanging from its lower lip.

After a few more heart-stopping moments, including one involving a

large branch the fish managed to pick up on one of its surges along the margins, the fish was finally coughing water just past the net cord. I leant out with the net and scooped up my first Wasing carp. That moment was a truly special one that I will surely treasure forever. With Dye organising the unhooking mat and weighing gear I hoisted out my prize, passing the fish up the bank to him and onto the waiting mat. The fish was in immaculate condition and its golden flanks glistened in the morning sun. On the scales it went twenty-seven pounds and eight ounces. I was smiling like a Cheshire cat as I held up my first special carp of my campaign.

I redid the rod and baited with a further kilo of Cell, hemp and tigers. Around 11am my right rod buckled round and the Delkim screamed away as a fish hit the surface around forty-five yards out. I picked up the rod only for the hook to fall out almost instantly. My head dropped as I reeled in my rig minus the lead. I inspected

the rig, which still seemed as good as before I put it out. I was gutted and simply put it down to bad luck. I put a new lead on and a new rig and cast it back to the spot, feeling the lead down with a crack as it landed on the firm bottom.

At 3pm a large fish cleared the water with an almighty crash as water was sent flying everywhere along the reeds just beyond my spot. I grinned to myself and turned to Dye and said, "That wasn't a small fish!" with a big smile on my face. Around 4pm I popped into the swim next door for a brew with Dye placing my receiver on his bivvy roof in case of any further action. 4.30pm and the receiver went into meltdown, barely keeping up with the speed of the take. I was up like a shot and ran next door to see my left rod bent round double buckling in the rests! I plucked the rod and was met with a very powerful run of around forty yards. It was one of those really slow, powerful runs, and I knew I was connected with



A mint old original stunner from Gate One. The move really paid off.

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One of the newest additions – a low twenty stockie from Gate One!



My first thirty from Shalford in the shape of this thirty-pound and ounces common on the last morning.



something a little special.

As I slowed the initial run down the fish hit the surface right out into the lake with an almighty eruption and the water dropping around the rings. The fish then dropped lower and powered further out into the lake. It was now a long way out, and I was panicking and shaking like a leaf... I really didn't want to lose this fish. Dye appeared by my side commenting on the water the fish moved out in the lake only making me more nervous. I managed to start gaining line at this point. I had gained forty yards back pretty easily, leading a heavy weight lunging around and shaking its head towards me from around fifty yards out. I started to feel I had won the

battle. The fish had other ideas and started to kite straight towards the reeds. I reeled as hard as possible, wading out to my waist to better the angle on the fish. The rod was virtually pulled from my hands as the fish headed for the sanctuary of the reed bed.

I pulled as hard as I possibly could, and my aching arms were pushed to the max leaning out as far as possible with the rod at full curve, I heaved as the fish made the reeds, causing them to rock. With the rod outstretched and

bent round, the fish still pulled line from the almost locked-up clutch. Suddenly the rod sprung back. The next few things to come out of my mouth I won't put to paper, but I'm sure you can imagine. The rod was thrown into the bushes as I trudged out of the margins, soaked and well and truly gutted.

After I calmed down, I grabbed the rod from the bushes and wound in the slack line. The hook link parted half way along. I knew I was putting the gear to the max and was shocked how much pressure it took before something gave. I was truly shaken and gutted, as I knew I had just lost something very special. To this day I have no idea what I lost that warm evening.

It got worse after that loss, as I lost a further two fish due to hook pulls. Something I was doing wasn't working correctly. My rigs were too short, I figured, so I adjusted the rigs by a further two inches to around six inches long. I also was struggling with silkworm and a weedbed short of the spot. I felt that a different line angle was needed, and I knew just the swim. The swim needed a bit of work – it had grown over, so it needed to be opened up, but this would give me a direct line angle to the reeds rather than pulling the fish along the reed

(Top left) Returning my first thirty pounder.

(Below left) My hookbait choice was these Korda fake food dumbbells. I was extremely impressed with these baits. It also stopped the crayfish problems.

(Below) My hook choice was the reliable Korda Wide Gape X pattern, a hook I have the utmost trust in.





This stunning twenty-seven pound linear was great return to Gate One – my first part of a brace that morning!



The other side of the stunning zip linear. Dan Chappell did the honours with some cracking pictures. Cheers, mate.

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beds. The new swim would allow me to pull the fish, should I have any more, away from the reed bed.

The new longer rigs and the move paid off the following morning, and the next three bites all resulted in landed fish including a twenty-eight pound common and a stunning fully scaled mirror of almost twenty pounds. The choice of the plastic Korda baits seemed a wise move, and the rigs and bait was clearly working well. After the capture of the three fish the spot dried up, and I was soon moving the kit into a swim known as Gate One. This swim offered the most water on the lake, and after seeing over ten shows it seemed a wise move. As I sat in the swim with a warm breeze blowing in my face, I saw a further five shows at various areas in front of Gate One. I flicked rigs out with each one landing cleanly on a firm bottom in around ten feet of water. I also placed the right rod down the margin in shallow water.

The shows stopped and the fish moved off. Had I blown my chances by creating disturbance? I decided to get some bait out and set up the bivvy. The swim appeared dead and devoid of any movement as I laid my frustrated head on the pillow. As I rubbed my eyes and leant over to put the kettle on, a decent splash had me looking up at a large set of rings within a few yards of my left hand rod.

They were back for breakfast, as I had hoped. I made the first brew of the day and sat on a bucket at the front of the swim. A further two shows had me full of anticipation – surely only a matter of time, I said to myself. I was treated to another stunning act of nature, as the sunrise was simply breathtaking. A large area of fizzing appeared above the left hand rod, and ten seconds later the spool was spinning as an angry carp ripped off at a rate of knots. I was soon cupping the spool as the unseen fish

surged out into the lake and into deep water. I headed out onto the old wooden platform to get a better angle, which would also keep the fish away from the other lines. Once again I had the shakes as I felt the fish was a good one. Before long I had the fish holding deep I front of my elevated position on the platform. After a great fight I was surprised to see a low-twenty dark mirror roll into the net. It was a proper cracker though, and at over twenty-three pounds the move had clearly been a wise one, and there was plenty of time for another one.

Around 9am one of the bailiffs walked into my swim and was surprised when I told him of my action so far. He explained I would be lucky to catch five in a year. I didn't tell him I had landed five already at this point. As I we stood there chatting a large common cleared the water right in front of the swim, again right over one of the rods. I turned to him and said, "Time for another one." He wished me



The one I really wanted, a fish known as Meg. Check out the size of her tail.



good luck and returned to his car and drove off. He just turned the corner when the middle rod once again one-toned off, the clutch spinning into a blur as I picked the rod up. Once again I was convinced this was a good fish as it headed down the steep marginal slope and attempted to

empty my spool of line. After an initial run of around forty yards I slowed the powerful fish down. With a large boil sending a deep echoing sound across the lake, I led the fish towards my waiting position on the platform once more. Under the tip the fish felt heavy, and short powerful runs had me

believing this could be something special. Through the dark, clear water I could make out a common rather angrily shaking its head. It looked over thirty pounds, and my heart rate went up. I was constantly saying to myself, "Don't lose this one." I needn't have worried as the large-framed common glided over the cord. I quickly peered into the mesh and a common of over thirty pounds looked rather unhappily back at my beaming face. On the scales the well-built common went thirty pounds and ounces. It didn't end there, and just a short time after releasing the thirty common the left rod was away again producing an old silky-to-the-touch original common. This one went twenty-two pounds and completed my session.

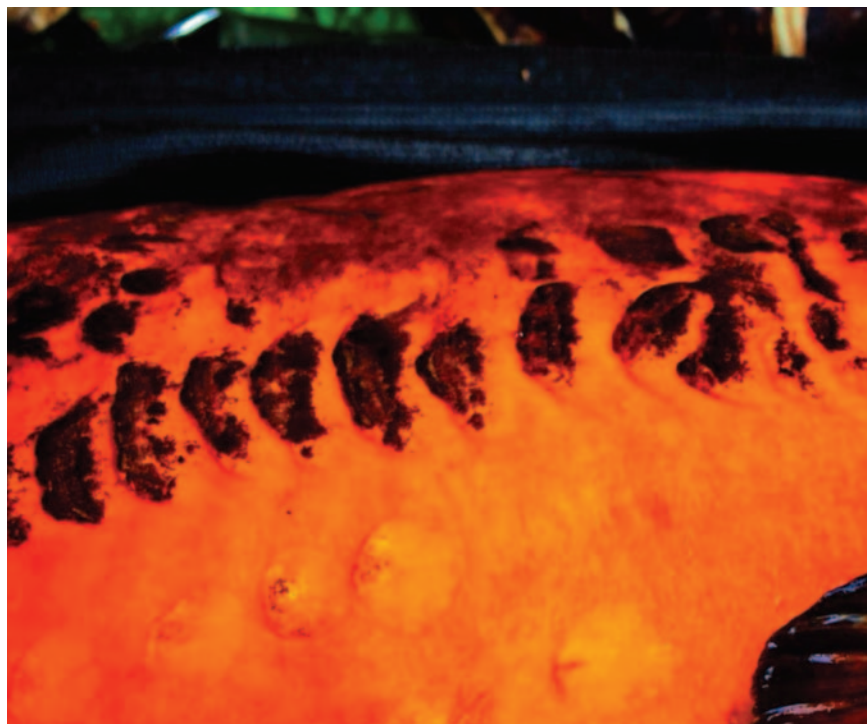
Work couldn't end quickly enough that Friday afternoon. I was buzzing with anticipation of what the week-



(Top) A proper old one – one of the few originals left – at thirty-two pounds and twelve ounces.

(Left) Dan and Mike popped down to help with the photos of the morning brace. Celebrating with a brew.

end could bring. Around 6pm I was once again opening the padlock to my secret heaven, hopefully for more of the same as the week before. I had returned two days prior to this trip on the Wednesday and scattered five kilos of Mainline Cell over the same areas that had produced so well for me previously. It was around 8pm by the time the rods were out, and I settled down to put some dinner on. It wasn't long before I was in the land of nod, dreaming of big carp. I was dragged from my rather deep sleep in a mad panic as the alarm on the middle rod illuminated the spool spinning. I was on it in a flash, forgetting my trainers because of the ferocity of the take. After an epic battle with the unseen fish I pulled a dark shape over the cord. Excited to see what lay within the mesh, I scurried back to the brolly to fetch my head torch. Illuminated in the folds of the mesh lay an incredible linear of over twenty-five pounds, the scales lighting up its

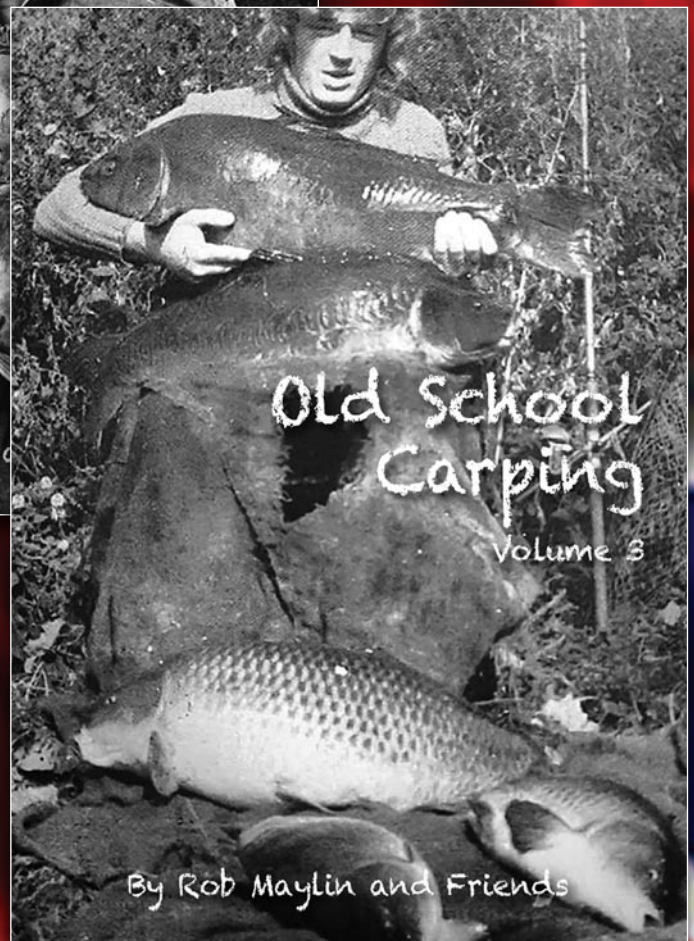
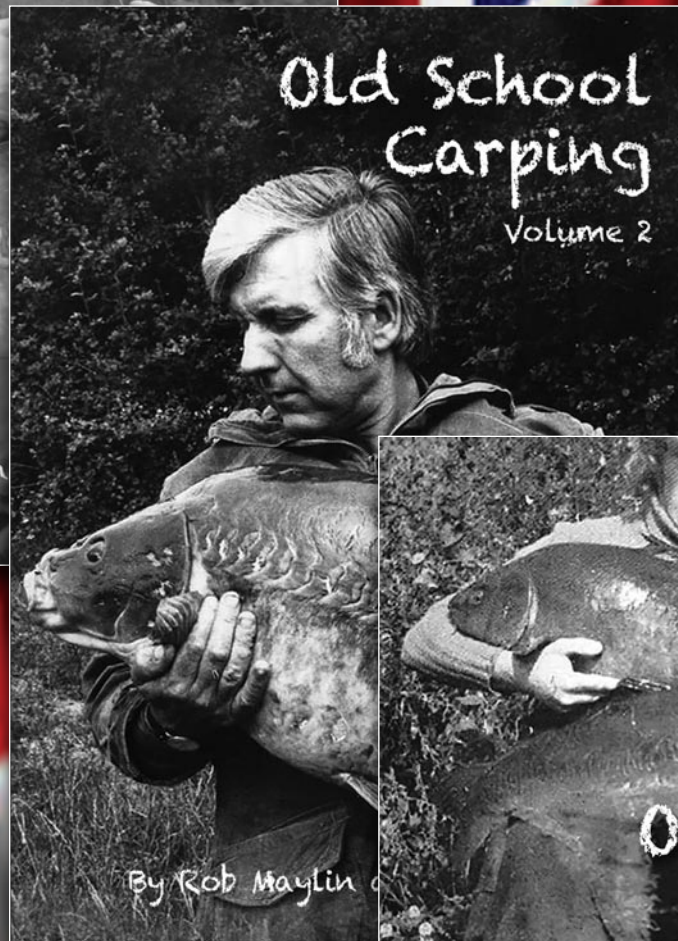
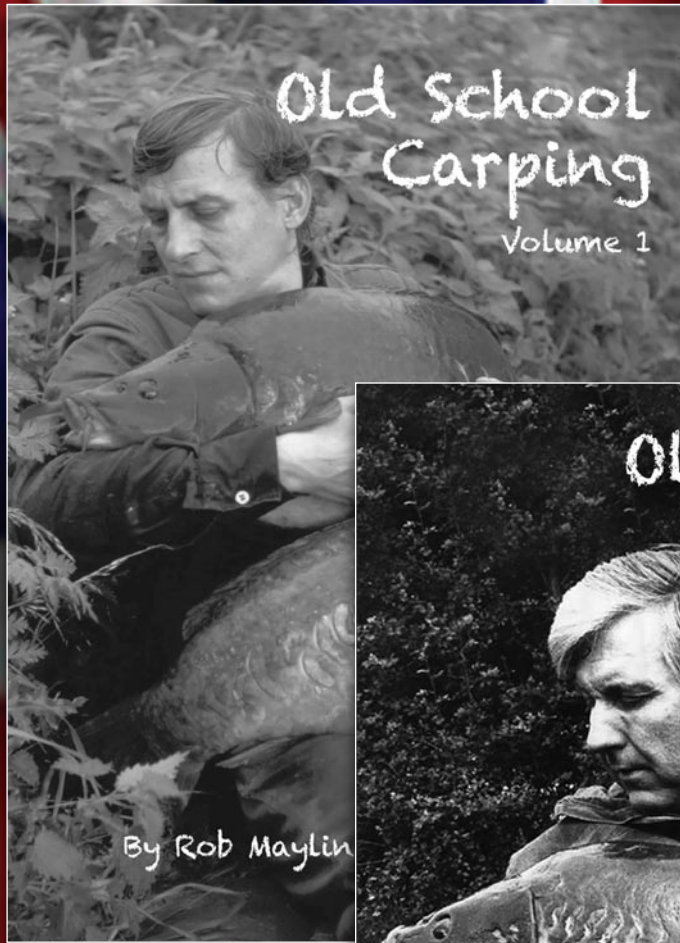


As I peeled back the sling the most stunning array of oranges looked back at me.



The rarest in the lake, the Koi at a shade under twenty-seven pounds. Only the second ever capture of the fish. Breathtaking isn't the word.

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perfect form. A quick lift onto the scales showed the perfect zip linear going twenty-seven pounds and ounces. I slipped her in the sling for the morning and returned to bed for some much needed sleep.

I woke to the phone alarm at 5.30am and was up with a spring in my step, overwhelmed by what lay in the sling. I popped the kettle on before contacting a friend, Dan Chap-

pel, to do the photos. He informed me he would be down within the hour, and also another good friend, Mike Patrick, was on his way. Moments after putting the phone down a large fish crashed over the right rod, sending mini waves out across the lake and leaving behind a large frothy area. I had missed the fish due to the nature of the bushes at the front of the swim, but it sounded like a decent

fish. I stared at the spot like a hawk, hoping to see another show, but after thirty minutes had past I needed a cup of tea, plus Dan and Mike were due down shortly.

As I poured the water into the cup the right rod buckled round in the rest before the line pinged out of the clip, and the spool once more began to spin. Again I plucked the rod from its rests and pulled into a heavy weight. This fish didn't tear off like all the rest; it simply held its ground and plodded along the marginal shelf. It was far from an energetic fish, but it did however have a bit of weight to it. As it neared the margin by me on the old wooden jetty, my arm was almost pulled from its socket as the fish woke up and went on a powerful thirty-yard run back down the marginal slope, stopping with a plume of bubbles as the fish ploughed into the silt. I led

(Top) A break from Shalford was needed as I married my soulmate. (Below) I returned from a break to find Gate One busy. It was time for a change of swim, and I soon settled into a corner that hadn't produced a bite that year. This old twenty-eight pound original soon changed that.



back a clearly decent, powerful fish towards the bank again, and with relative ease the fish was soon under the tip, cutting up through the water. At first glimpse through the window of scum-layered surface I could make out a rather decent mirror with scattered scales along its tail. Instantly I knew which fish it must be, and my legs went to jelly.

Everything held firm as the wide backed mirror glided over the cord, and I engulfed the fish with a swoop and a punch of the air, as I knew it was a main target. The biggest known mirror was in the net. I admired her beauty for a moment or two before hoisting her onto the waiting mat. On inspection of all of the hook holds I had received, it became apparent the rigs were working perfectly, as the size 6 Wide Gape X nestled over an inch back in the mouth. Laid before me was a carp known as Meg. With big plate-like scales and a massive tail, the fish was worthy of a place in anyone's album. At just shy of thirty-three pounds I couldn't believe my luck. I popped her into the

deep margins so we could both get our breath back, as I think we needed it after that battle.

My hands were still trembling when Dan popped his head round the brolly. I put the kettle on while I relayed the events that had unfolded. Dan was buzzing for me, as he knew how much of a tricky lake this could be. Shortly after the kettle boiled, Mike popped into the swim clutching his cup. "Perfect timing," he said, with a beaming smile. He looked into the margin and said, "Why are there two slings?" We both looked at each other and laughed. Once again I relayed the story. After a cup of tea each it was time to get some photos done starting with the smaller linear. It was possibly its first ever capture, making it a truly special moment indeed. As I unzipped the sling, all three of us were open-mouthed; it was a truly stunning, perfect fish with not a single mark on its frame. As I held the linear aloft I couldn't help but smile, as the lake had been overly kind to me once again. As I released the linear I wondered when it would next

see the bank.

Next it was Meg's turn to smile for the camera, and once again as we unzipped the sling we were all in complete and utter awe of the incredible old beast that lay before our eyes. After we all commented on her immaculate looks and her incredibly large tail, I hoisted the piece of history aloft and the cameras clicked away. She looked breathtaking in the early morning sunshine. She was carrying an array of colours on her flanks, and I simply couldn't resist a water shot of the incredible creature. As she waddled out of my hands and into the depths, I knew that this was one of the best moments in my angling years. After another brew to celebrate the captures, Mike and Dan left me to pack away the bomb site that was left in the aftermath. The rest of the weekend passed with only a small scaly mirror on the Sunday morning. Before leaving I scattered my remaining bait onto the spots and vowed to return midweek with more goodness that the carp were clearly returning for.



Its first capture for some time, and to my knowledge it hasn't been caught since. I had to give the corner some time.



Another corner swim capture and another original with skin like silk; it was a stunning fish.

I had plans with the wife on the Saturday night the following weekend, so I only had a short overnight session on the Friday after work. I returned to the lake around 6pm and headed straight for Gate One. I was over the moon to see the swim vacant. It wasn't too long before the rods were back on the spots from the previous week's fishing. I put a little less bait in over the four rods, opting for around a kilo over each rod. I tied up new rigs consisting of Hybrid Stiff and some super sharp size 6 Wide Gape X hooks. My confidence was uplifted further, as on dark a decent fish stuck its head out over the left rod. It appeared to be orange... It was the famous Koi, only ever being caught once in ten years of being put in the lake, a target fish for me and one of the ones I wanted in my album for sure. Even though I'm not a fan of kois, this one was worthy of capture for sure. I went to sleep dreaming of the big orange koi paying me a visit during the night.

First light had just dawned, and the mist rolled off the surface of the mysterious water like ghosts drifting on a mirrored floor. It was one of those

mornings when it just had to happen. If it didn't it really didn't matter though, as the surroundings were truly spectacular. I checked the time on the phone, and it was 5.20am. It felt chilly for late August, and I knew autumn would soon be on its way. I soon forgot about the chilly morning as the right hand rod once again was almost torn from the rests as the alarm shrilled out into the morning air. I was soon stood on the platform with the rod bent and the spool still emptying as the fish headed for the far bank. It was scary how much line was taken from the spool. I finally slowed the fish down over fifty yards away from where I had hooked it, and I led the fish back towards me on a long line.

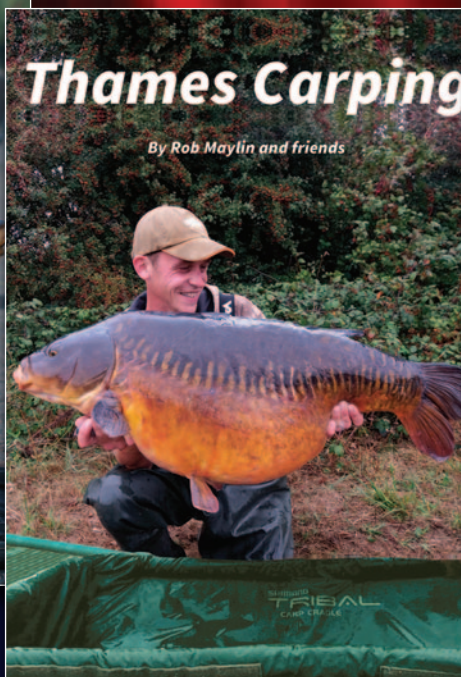
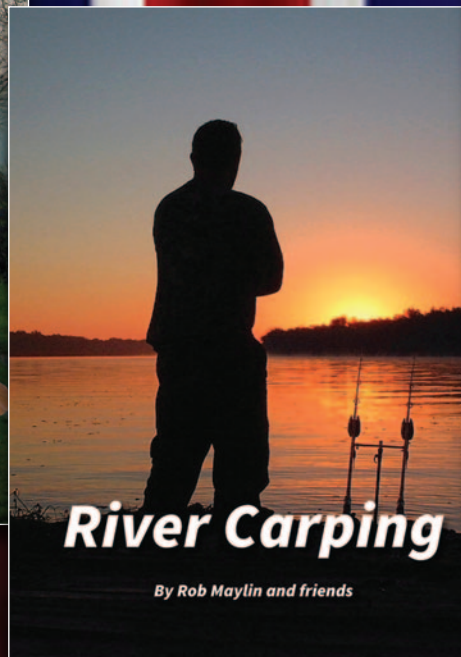
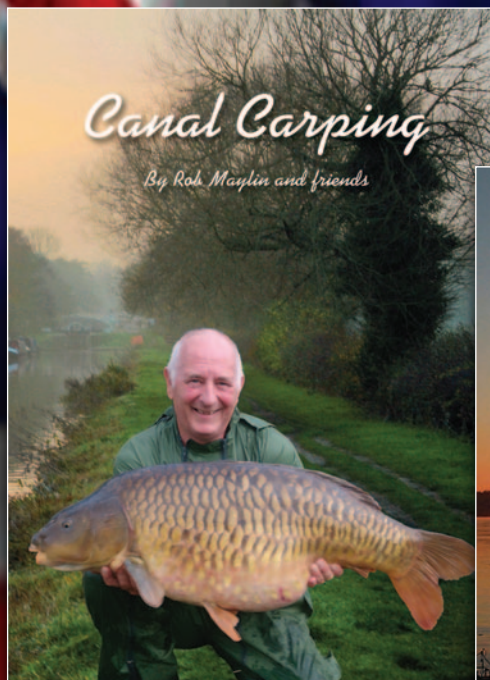
The first run was spectacular, and I half expected to see a wild looking common as it drifted past the boards of the jetty. What I did see was certainly something very different, and with a bright orange flash it suddenly dawned on me I had the rare Koi on. The next few minutes of the fight I prayed the hook stayed in its position, as I'm sure no one would have believed me if it fell off. I need not

have worried, and soon the most interesting and most stunning of kois languished within the net. I bit the leadcore off the line and lifted it out onto the mat. There was something overwhelming about an orange fish on a green mat. With charcoal-like scales scattered in a broken linear over its body it surely was an incredible animal. It had certainly been on the bait as well, excreting the mixture I was using. I recorded a weight of just shy of twenty-seven pounds and slipped it into the margins. I wanted some decent photos of this one, so Dan was once again called, and he sounded like he was more excited to see it than me. He said he was on his way.

A bailiff called Ronnie was a few swims down, and I remembered he always used to comment on how amazing it was and that he had never seen it on the bank in all the years he had fished the place. I fetched him and told him it was in the sling, much to his amazement. I told him I would be doing the photos upon Dan's arrival. Dye was another one who was fishing only a few swims down, and with the Koi being one he had put on

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his list from the start, he would want to witness only its second ever capture. It wasn't long before we were all stood around the sling waiting for a glimmer of orange. Through the sling you could see its orangey belly and its black, perfectly placed scaled. As I peeled back the mesh everyone gasped at its sheer beauty. After a minute or two of investigating what lay before my eyes, I lifted the koi to the sound of cameras clicking away and beamed once again like a Cheshire cat. After letting the koi slip back into the depths a sense of achievement came over me. I knew the koi was the hardest to catch in the lake, and I had achieved that. What would be next?

Over the next few weeks I had exciting things to organise, as I was to marry my soulmate, my rock and my best friend. The wedding was the best day ever, and I was truly proud and honoured to be calling my beautiful wife Mrs. Jessica Runham. The wedding went perfectly well and was a superb day and night with so many old friends turning up and celebrating

our special day. I was so proud of Jessica who I must say did most of the planning. It was a brilliant day and one I will cherish for the rest of my life.

After a few weeks' break I managed to get back to the lake for a quick night. The problem was word had gotten out of my captures, and Gate One was occupied, so I had to opt for a new area. I had seen fish consistently showing in a corner of the lake known to us as the Hut swim. It was yet to do a fish this season, but I was sure with the amount of shows I had seen coming from the corner they must be feeding. I found the water much deeper here and opted to fish the bottom of the slope in 14ft of water. A few kilos of chopped Cell was spayed with the use of a new toy, the Korda catapult, over the top of the plastic dumbbell hookbaits. I settled down for the evening and fell into a deep sleep.

The next thing I knew the rod was screaming off and the clutch was in a blur, illuminated by the alarm LED. I picked up the rod and slowed down a

decent feeling fish. Without much of a scrap I lifted the net around the dark looking shape. Once again I fetched the head torch, and a dark mirror peered back at me. It looked to be one of the originals with a large scale placed perfectly in the middle of its flank. At over twenty-eight pounds it made not getting in Gate One seem not so bad after all. I popped it into the deep margin as it would soon be first light and Mike Patrick was a couple of swims up. Shortly after first light the rod was away again, and a stunning scaly mirror rolled into the net! I was totally blown away. It wasn't weighed, just popped into the margin to join its mate. I woke Mike up, and after being called a jammy git and a few other words he congratulated me on my fish. The photos taken by Mike came out blinding, doing the fish and me proud. Thanks, Mike. I managed a few more fish around the lake before autumn started to set in and the colder nights were upon us.

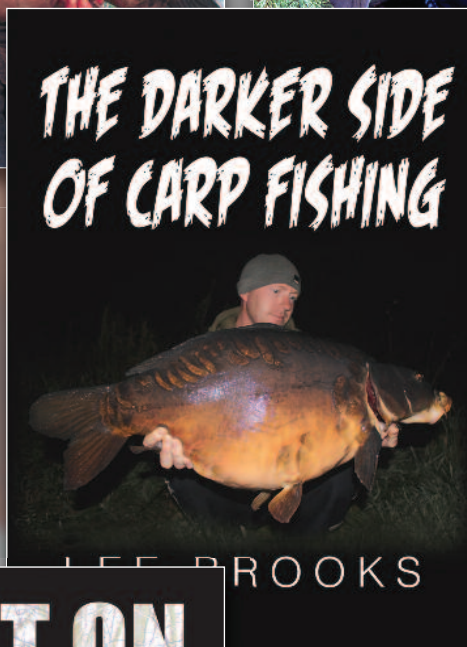
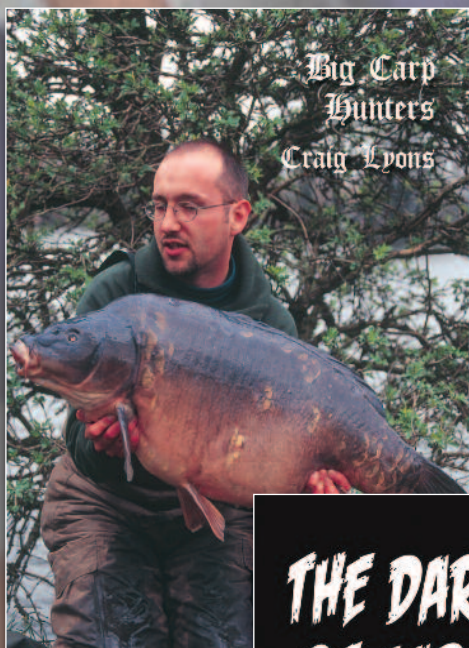
Join us in a near future issue of Big Carp magazine where Craig continues his exploits on Wasing. ■



The corner swim produced a few more with my favourite being this simply stunning scaly stockie.

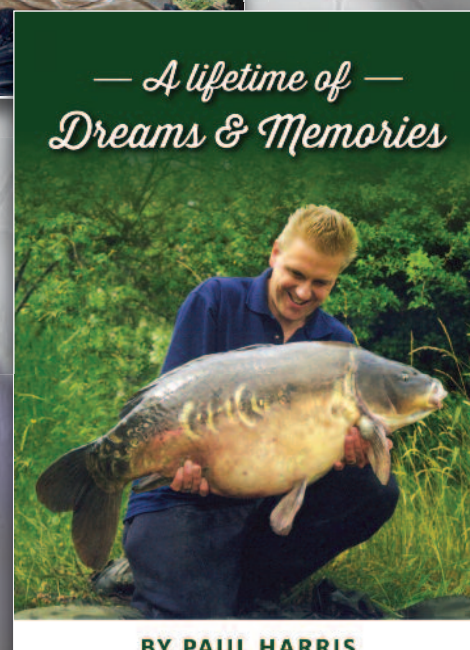
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Chalk and Cheese

By Steve Briggs

First light in Cambridge.

There are many ways to catch a carp; I think we all know that. Personally I put a lot of faith in bait to get my results or at least start me off in the right direction. But as much as I like the big baiting approach, there are times when I have to think differently and change and adapt what I'm doing to end up with fish on the bank. Two recent trips show perfectly what I mean when I had ideas of the way I wanted to fish, but what's good for one water isn't always good for another.

Grenville Lake in Cambridge is a big, windswept piece of water covering 72 acres, but besides its large surface area the depths also go down to over 40ft in many places, so there is a big volume of water to contend with. The fish can be very nomadic, and weather conditions play a large part in where the carp will be and what mood they will be in. For the three



days that I had at my disposal they were all spent in the Cabin swim, probably one of the most desirable swims that I know of, not only for the comforts and facilities that come with that swim – of which there are many – but because it covers a lovely part of the lake including one large plateau within fairly easy casting range. Of course the trouble with having a swim already designated is that you

are relying on conditions being right and the fish being there, otherwise it's going to be a quiet and frustrating trip.

You could say conditions were both good and bad, a low pressure front had moved in just prior to my arrival, and that normally got the fish feeding. The problem was that the wind was blowing from behind me and across to the far corner, which was far from

(Top) Grenville Lake – 72 acres of windswept water.

(Below) Last-gasp Grenville beauty of 35lb 8oz.





ideal. If the weatherman had got it right the wind was due to gradually turn and blow towards me, but that would be right at the end of the trip. The hope that I was clinging onto was that although I knew that the fish would move quickly on to a new wind, they also tend to start backing off of it after so many hours, so all I could do was to fish the way I knew best and hope that luck was on my side.

It was quite clear that at the start the fish weren't anywhere near me, so how would you go about baiting in that situation? I had two choices: I could either bait heavily as I'd planned in the hope that they would turn up in numbers eventually, or I

could hold onto everything and just wait to see what unfolded – possibly fishing single hookbaits to trap any passing stragglers that might turn up. From previous experience I knew that the fish loved bait and plenty of it, and so I went with plan A. I baited around two markers on the plateau with about 10kg of Nash 4G Squid and about the same again in hemp, and although I might have been wasting a lot of bait if the fish didn't arrive, I thought it was better than them turning up and moving straight through because there was no food there.

For the first 24 hours I kept my eyes glued to the markers, but they didn't twitch, and there were no signs of carp anywhere out there. Pole mark-

ers can be good indicators of whether fish are in the swim or not, as for some reason the fish seem to be really attracted to them and use them as rubbing posts but also can't help knocking them as they feed in the area. On Grenville in particular it's always a good sign that fish are around, but other times they can be deceptive as other species like the poles too, and it's surprising how even roach and bream can move them around.

It was going to be a waiting game, and they are the times I find more difficult really. I'm one of those people who like to find fish and move on to them rather than wait in hope, but I had no other choices, so I sat there watching the wind slowly turning hour by hour. 48 hours after starting and the wind had turned 45 degrees blowing in to the bank on my right. It was a better scene for sure, and the bait on the plateau must have been giving off all the right signals after being down there for several hours. Bit by bit the wind gradually turned towards me, and with the last evening approaching I finally saw the first fish show out on the plateau! The first one was soon followed by another and another, all over quite a wide area, but they were certainly moving in. I was waiting for one of the tips to pull over at any moment, but I still had to sit on my hands – but the difference now



(Top left) I love to use the heavy-baiting approach whenever possible.
(Top right) I prefer the simple approach when fishing over lots of bait.
(Left) Heaven in Devon at Emperor Lakes.

was that I knew it was going to happen!

In fact it was 4am before the alarm finally sounded, and at last I was into a fish. It felt good after waiting so long, and although it wasn't a big one at 23lb, it was a lovely scaly fish, and in reality I would have been pleased with anything. In the calm morning light I watched as several fish showed around the markers, and the marker poles themselves were hardly still. My three little basic rigs were all out just waiting to be picked up, I normally tend to use fairly basic rigs when fishing over a lot of bait, as the most important thing is to get the fish pre-occupied in feeding and then they make their own mistakes. My little snowman setup was attached to a size 5 Fang Twister and 35lb coated Combilink with the coating left on apart from the hair, which I still strip. For some reason I've had more action by leaving the coating on than I've had by the normal way of stripping

(Top) 30lb 6oz – first action on the pop-ups!

(Below) The hinge stiff rig has been so reliable for me over the years.



the last few centimetres.

With time running out another one of the alarms sounded, and I was into what felt like a better fish. There are many good fish in Grenville, but in such a vast water they can often go for long periods without getting caught. In the deep, clear water I could see the shape of a nice mirror twisting and turning, and sure

enough it was a nice chunky fish of 35lb 8oz. I was both chuffed and disappointed at the same time, as my patience had been rewarded and the swim was now alive with fish, but the big problem was that my time had run out, and I had to pack up! It was a real wrench, as I knew that fish were out there to be caught, but I had no choice, as the swim had already been



booked for the next days by someone else, otherwise I would have stayed longer for sure. I had to be content with knowing that my plan had worked, albeit my timing was a little bit out – but at least it had come right in the end. I wasn't surprised to hear that the angler who followed me in did well including banking two of the prized forties. That's life, and I was just grateful to get the chance to fish there – and I will be back!

I didn't have too long to think of what might have been, as just a few days later I was on the road again, this time to Devon and the very impressive Emperor Lakes. I'd not been there before; in fact I hadn't been to Devon since my school days with my parents, so it would be a long overdue return to that part of the world. I didn't know anything about Emperor Lakes at all so when we were shown around by owner, Dave

Lidstone, it was more than a pleasant surprise. At around five acres it much smaller than where I'd come from, but it looked beautiful, old and mature with three large islands splitting the water into different areas. The lake had been reserved for a Nash team weekend, and the familiar faces of Alan Price, Mikey Wilson and Lee Dowding would be fishing along with a few others plus owner Dave himself would have the rods out.

As I'd arrived before most of the other guys I had the choice of the swims, all of which had their plus points. The trouble I always have when arriving at a new venue is that all swims look pretty much the same, and it's only after a while that I start to get a real feel for the water and where I should be. So I took the Dead End swim, which had a nice section of water out in front and looked the most peaceful of the swims. There

were good reed-lined margins both sides of the swim with a large island both left and right of where I stood with a clear channel running away from me through the middle with just a few lily pad leaves showing on the surface.

Not knowing anything about the lake, I planned to go in with what I knew, which was of course the heavy baiting plan again. I had three nights to play with and felt that it should be enough time to get the fish interested and feeding. While I was unloading the van I heard a fish show and raced back to the swim just in time to see the ripples spreading out from the lily pad leaves in the open channel. That was good enough for me, and so the plan was to bait heavily with hemp and 4G Squid boilies in the channel with two rods placed in amongst that with my third rod flicked just adown the left margin but still with a fair



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Mikey was getting amongst them further down the bank.

amount of bait around it. It was close enough that I could just throw the boilies out by hand over the reeds.

It was just on dark when I finally got the rods out, and I wasn't expecting anything too instant, but hopefully the fish would arrive quicker than they had at Grenville. As it turned out the night was quiet, and I woke to see all the indicators in the same positions as I'd left them. The kettle went on for the first cup of tea of the day, and with that I heard an alarm! I looked up to see the left-hand tip jaggling around with line being ripped from the spool. The fish went on a powerful run left, and I had to lean around the reeds and hold on as best I could. I turned the fish, but it felt strong and fought well for several minutes before the net went under a mirror that was much smaller than I'd envisaged! If I'd lost it I would've said it was definitely over 30lb, but it weighed just 17lb – but it was my first Devon carp and reason enough to raise my cup of tea in celebration.

It's always a nice moment with the fish returned and tea still hot, but as I relaxed in the first hours of daylight I heard a good fish break the calm surface. I stood up to see the ripples spreading from a spot towards the left island, but not close, maybe a rod length short. As I stared at the spot the fish again came half out of the water again! It looked a decent one and well worth putting a bait to. The fish I'd just caught was on a double bottom bait, but I only wanted to risk putting a single hookbait to the showing fish, and I preferred the idea of a pop-up for that. So I sat back down and tied up one of my old favourite hinge stiff rigs. I'd not used one for some time, but it has been one of my most reliable pop-up rigs over the years, and I felt it was worth taking the time to do. A little 14mm Citruz pop-up was tied on to the back of a size 6 Chod Twister hook and then flicked out to where the fish had shown.

I felt the small lead down to what

felt like fairly soft bottom – not the firm lake bed I was hoping to feel, but it was where the fish had shown so that was good enough.

Nothing else showed after that, and I was wondering if I'd spooked the fish by casting on top of it, but three hours later the pop-up rod burst in to life, and I was into my second fish of the morning. It didn't seem to have the power of the first one but felt heavier, and it was a bit of a surprise to see a decent common rise up towards the net. This time it looked smaller than the 30lb 6oz that the scales read, but it was a nice fish and a good morning's work. Speaking to some of the regulars many had only caught two or three fish all year, so to get two in a morning was very pleasing. After the good start the next night and day were quiet, and I wondered if my good start had been a bit of a fluke. More people had now arrived, and most swims were taken, which could've had an effect too I guess, but I was already happy

enough to have caught, so I wasn't getting stressed about it. Mikey had moved swims down to my left where he'd spotted some fish, and he'd already bagged a couple too, including a nice scaly upper 20, so he had fished well.

With the dawn chorus in full swing and the last morning just turning from dark to light I was awake early but just lying there in the bag still listening out for any activity. In the distance I heard an alarm sound, and from the sound it must have been Dave's or Alan's over in the far corner. It was comfortable where I was, so I stayed put, and just a short time later the silence was broken when the pop-up rod rattled off once again. I love doing battle in the early morning silence, and it was nice to see a good set of scaly shoulders break the surface. I thought I'd got another 30, but the needle just wouldn't quite go there, and I settled for 29lb 15oz.

I saw people gathering for a chat at the far end and decided to go down and see what the night had brought

them. In fact they had gathered as John Cooper, who was fishing next to Alan Price was into a good fish. He was now snagged in some pads, and his knees were certainly knocking! Dave mentioned that he had a 40lb common in the sling, which was the earlier take I'd heard, so that was a proper one for sure! John was winning his battle and finally was able to net a cracking 35lb 12oz part-linear mirror.

But just at that moment I heard my alarm sound again, and I was soon legging it back to the swim to find Joan holding the rod with line being stripped from the reel. It was the pop-up rod yet again, which had only been back out less than an hour. This time it was one of the very special A-Team mirrors – an old jet-black warrior of 35lb 4oz that looked ancient – a very special one for sure. With the fish safely secured I went back to tell the guys what had gone on, and Dave suggested a group photo. Seeing as it was his lake and his fish it seemed like a great idea to have three such

lovely fish all together in one picture – and I have to say I'm really glad he suggested it, as it's one of my favourite pics for sure!

With sun climbing higher and getting warmer things slowed down a little. I did have one more lovely little scaly mirror – again on the stiff-rigged pop-up before we had to start packing the van to head for home. The big area of bait that I'd put out did nothing at all for me, and the single pop-ups on the hinge rig easily out-fished everything else I tried. It just shows how different lakes and indeed situations can be.

I'd fished two waters just days apart and for the same lengths of time, and yet the tactics needed to catch couldn't have been more different – a bit like chalk and cheese as we say in England. But the whole point is that both times I managed to find something that the fish wanted, and decent fish were banked. I guess there is always a way of catching fish – it's just a matter of if we can work it out or not. ■



Three of the A-Team – 35lb 4oz, 40lb 8oz and 35lb 12oz – a great final morning at Emperor Lakes!

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Ashmead

Daniel Smith

Thirty-five-year-old Daniel Smith from Seaton in Devon had a fantastic seven-night session on the amazing Ashmead day ticket venue.

The property maintenance engineer said, "All the bigger fish were caught from a narrow little channel where I fished next to an overhanging silver birch tree, baiting with just a handful of Krill per take.

Tackle comprised Century NG+ 3lb SU rods combined with Shimano Technium XTC 12000 reels loaded with ESP Syncro XT 15lb line.

Helicopter rigs and end tackle were exactly as I always use but with no leader.

All leaders are banned, so I just

used a big blob of putty a few feet back from the lead to keep everything pinned down."

Daniel ended up with a total of five fish: 25lb, 29lb 6oz, 35lb 8oz, 40lb 6oz and Moon Scale at 45lb 8oz. ■



(Right) 15lb.
(Below) 29lb 6oz.





35lb 8oz.



40lb 6oz.

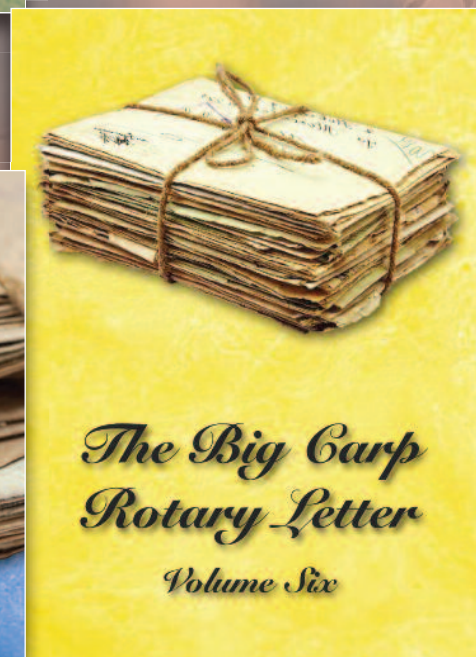
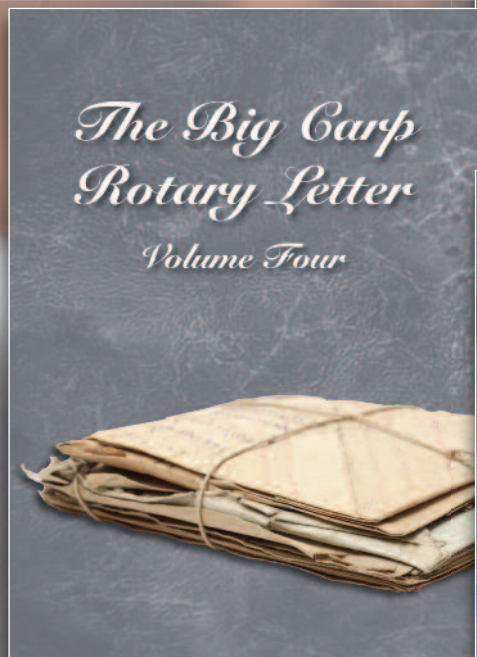
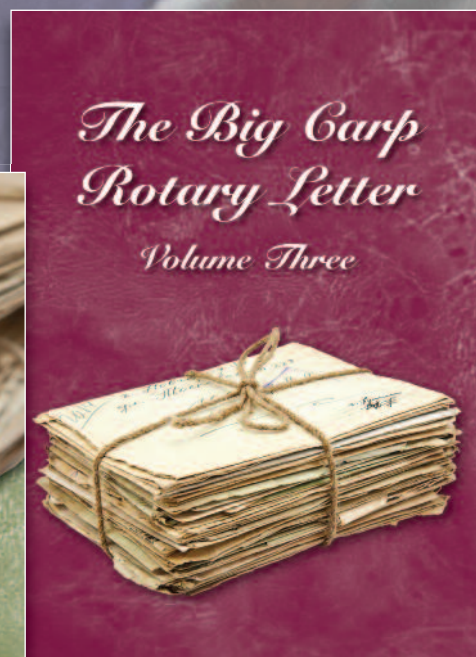
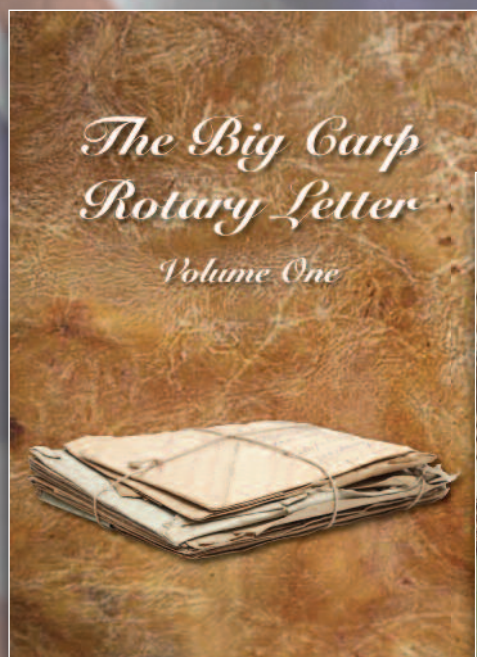


45lb 8oz.



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Waterside Fishery

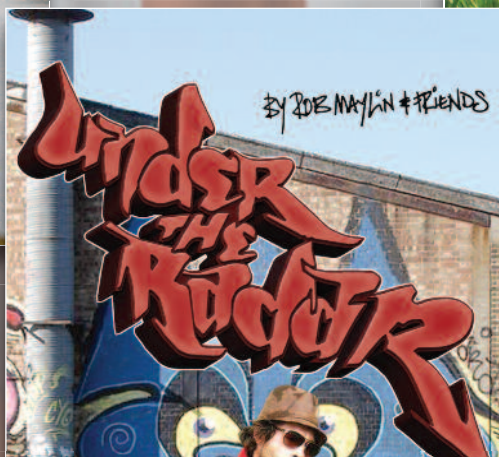
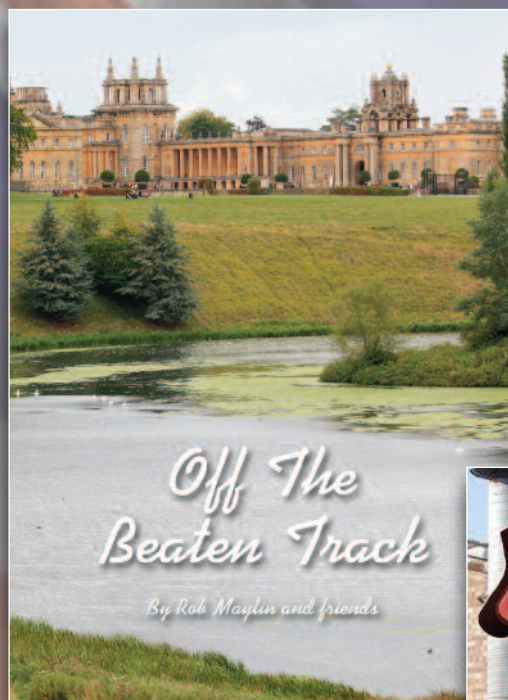
By Aaron Murphy

I've recently done a few sessions on Waterside Fishery where I'm a bailiff, and I had some great results landing ten fish in total topped by these three absolute stunners. The heavily plated mirror was 16lb, the big plated mirror was 34lb 6oz, and the common was 34lb 2oz. I also had another five twenties and two doubles, all landed on CC Moore's Live System fishing chods and hinge stiff rigs over a spread of boilies and particle.



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The Manor

By Chris Eaglestone

My season on the Manor so far has been something of a roller-coaster with countless ups and downs. At points I've been near suicidal, but at the other end of the spectrum I've been in states of euphoria. And it seems when I've been at my lowest and contemplating putting my gear on eBay when I return home, the depths of this Essex pond gives me a gift of a lifetime.

It's hard to know where to start, as my first 15 nights or so were uneventful. Even though it wasn't fishing that well I saw enough of the lake's gems in that time to get me craving that first bite! Now it's no secret the size of the carp in the Manor, but it's far from a 40 a chuck like a lot of people would believe. The one thing that would surprise a lot of people is the quality of the fish. Nearly all are in immaculate condition and there are so many different strains. When that

rods starts wailing you really don't know what's going to be at the other end. It's a bit of a special place to be honest, and as frustrating as it can be at times, there is definitely a magic about the place. Whether it be the carp or the huge depths of water that this place holds, it really does get under your skin and leaves you spending more time than you should thinking about it.

So let's start talking about when my luck changed... well, sort of. More like when I started getting bites, as my fortune wasn't great even when I did start getting some movement on the bobbins. This little side story is probably one of my lowest points in my fishing life. Now I'd done a fair bit of time up till now and had felt so close on a few occasions. When the Manor carp decide to show it really is a spectacle to behold. It's not only because of the amount of shows... three to four fish at a time is more than possible... but the size of the fish and the racket they make as

they break the surface and come crashing back down. It's like someone's chucking hand grenades in the lake, and to be honest it can be intimidating! A few times I've been woken up in the middle of the night by one crashing out at close range, and it can be very startling. If I were at home I'd be getting the baseball bat from under the bed and creeping down stairs in my smalls to see who just kicked my front door through.

Anyway, back to my point. I'd spent a few nights fishing over large numbers of carp just waiting for one of the rods to start singing a tune, but it just didn't seem to happen. Now I've spent a bit more time there I'm convinced these carp are VERY spotty. Now I know there are a lot of guys that may disagree with that, but that's how I've found it. When I find that spot that really stands out as being harder than anything else in front of me and the fish turn up, I've had bites, and I think this is where I was going wrong. My first bite was



Northern Linear at 47lb 2oz.



George's at 45lb 6oz.

pretty textbook... I got in a swim called The Flat that had been doing a few fish of late and found a couple of spots that really felt good. The fish were clearly there, and to be honest I knew I was going to get a bite; I could feel it in my bones.

Just into dark my left hand rod signalled a bite. I was on it like a flash and was jelly-legged as soon as the high pitched sound from the Nevs hit my ear. But unfortunately this was a battle that was over before it had even begun. The water was still really high and the reeds very dense. The fish was in there before I had even got to the rod. I got in the waders and tried to wade down to see if I could free the fish up, but I'm pretty sure the fish had transferred my hook into the reeds before I was even close. At this stage I was hugely deflated. I hung about there for another night, but knew full well that my chance had slipped away. I don't think I've ever felt that low whilst fishing. Without sounding overly righteous I really felt I deserved that bite. I'm not going to lie; I felt it for days after, trying to take the positives away with me. I got on fish and got a bite, but it wasn't

making it any easier. I just needed to get back down and right this wrong that the lake had dealt me, and to be honest the next card it dealt me was an ace.

I arrived at the pond on my next session after work, I and knew almost immediately where I needed to be, as there seemed to be a lot of fish showing in two swims – the Rope and Steps. Now both swims were occupied, but I knew the guy in the Steps was off at midday the next day, so I set up in the car park where you get a good view of the lake. The Manor carp do seem to hang around in areas for a few days sometimes, but can also be up and down the lake in very quick time. I knew I wasn't on fish, but with dusk approaching my plan was to do a night under the stars with minimal tackle and use the swim as an observation point. All through the night the fish didn't really seem to move and continued to show well in to the depths of darkness. I decided to set the alarm and see if they showed early on, and then I would make a decision from about where I would set up for my session. I think it was around 4:30am. I was heavy eyed but

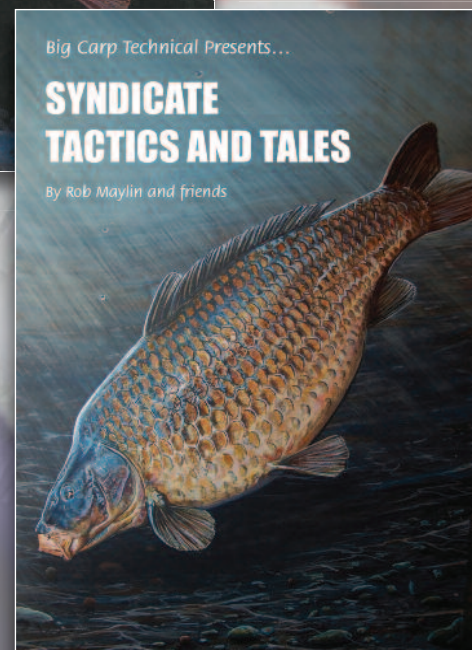
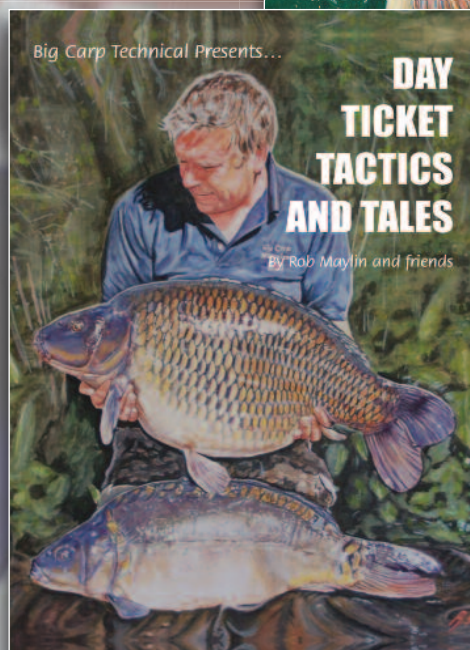
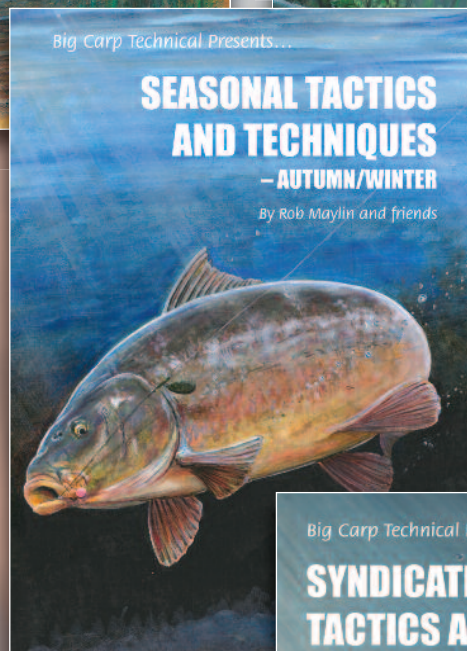
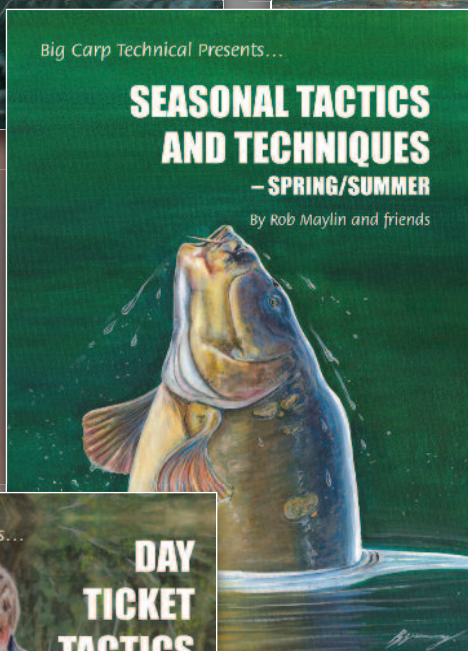
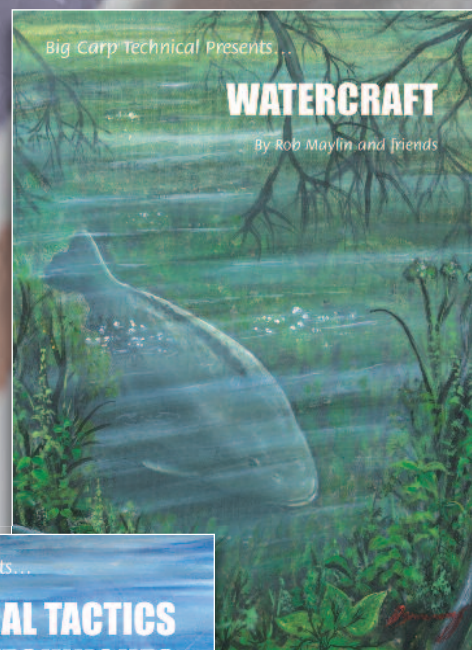
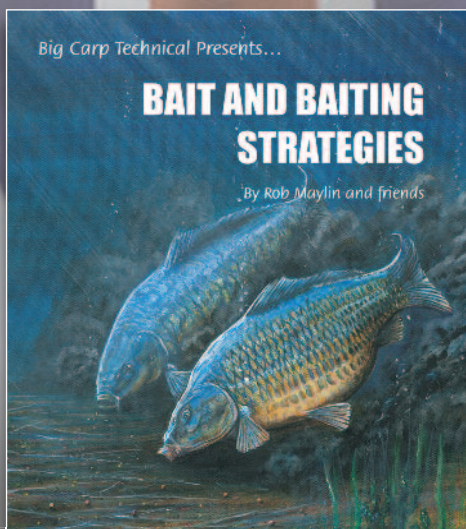
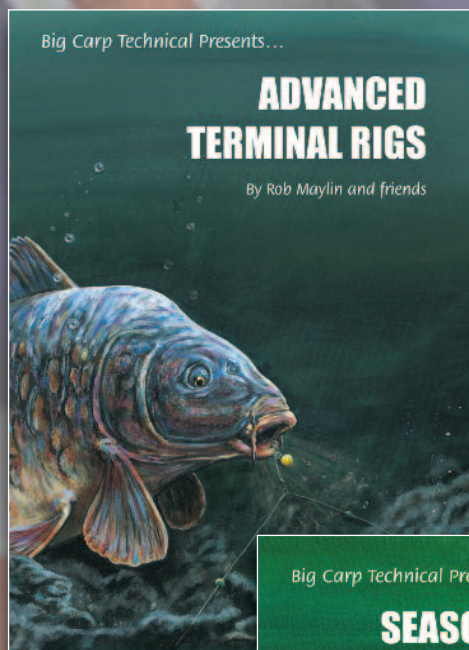
watching the water, and it was clear the fish hadn't moved.

Sometimes these fish just go where they want to be regardless of temperature, wind direction or pressure. It almost makes watercraft look senseless at times. I knew I wasn't on fish, and with matey moving out the Steps at lunchtime I just wrote the morning off so I could get my tackle in behind him and give myself the best chance I could for the next two nights. I get on well with the guy who was occupying the Steps at the time, so I just let him know my plans, dropped the gear in and had a quick cuppa before popping to the shops and chatting with the other anglers. When waiting for a swim it's always the gentlemanly thing to let them have their quality time rather than trying to crowbar them out. That's my opinion anyway.

My time had come to get in the swim, and with the fish present I didn't want to cause too much disturbance but also didn't want to just pub chuck the rods and not be fishing effectively. I got really lucky to be honest. After two or three casts I found a very hard spot in the low lying weed that really send a jolt up

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the arm as the lead crashed down to the deck. That'll do... so I introduced a couple of kilos of Cray Valley Baits Lobster and around a kilo of Carp Particles UK M&Ms mix. All the fishing there is quite short range and I have huge confidence in the Spicy Lobster as a bait; it has done me a huge amount of carp, and the M&Ms mix is made of maize and maples, which was easy to catapult over my spots with little disturbance. The other rods I cast around on short naked chods and put small spreads of bait out.

As the day rolled on and light levels dropped it became clear the fish were still present, and they started showing over the rods – it felt bob-on! I was full of anticipation as I watched them show. But then all of a sudden they started to move out over the abyss of deep water. I was a little concerned to say the least; it was strange. I felt they had spent so much time there, and then all of a sudden they pushed out... not a million miles away, but whereas they were showing in shallow water, they were now showing over 20-25ft of water. I didn't

really know what to think but held on with the hope that that they would move back in when all of a sudden the rod I baited heavily was signalling a couple of bleeps.

I looked down the slope to my rods, and the bobbin was at the top. As I made my way down the Steps the rod was now in full swing, and the clutch very slowly gave out line. Unlike last time around I felt strangely calm, very tuned in to what was going on around me. The fish had moved into the deep water and was just thumping around; it felt heavy. As it came close to the bank it hit a few reeds at the front of the swim and headed back out. After a short-lived second wind it was up and over the cord. I secured the net and had a quick look. I was buzzing; I'll be honest. I didn't care what it was; I was just ecstatic to be off the mark. I ran up the step to get my head torch and have a look at my prize. I think what happened next will stay with me forever, and even writing about it now gives me goosebumps.

As I pulled the fish over to its side I knew almost instantly which one it

was. It was the Northern Lin, the one I really wanted to catch most out of the big'uns, and at the right time of year it can do 50lb. The rest is a bit of a blur really... A couple of the lads from down the bank helped with photos and weighing. She hit the scales at 47lb 2oz and she was soon back and on her way. A sleepless night ensued. I made a few phone calls, but being quite late no one was up. I tried to sleep, but the thoughts of what had happened just played over in my mind. In a way it was mission complete after one fish... I'm not that guy this stuff happens to normally; I couldn't get my head round it, and the buzz was unreal.

So after a huge buzz I hit another low point. I did a couple of short sessions between work, but for one reason or another I was struggling to get any decent time together and had done literally a few hours fishing down there after that. I think all my time was taken up by socials and family time. I finally managed to string a few days together whilst off shift at work. I'd been keeping in



Baby Northern at 38lb.



Bream Common at 42lb 2oz.

touch, popping down from time to time and speaking to a few friends. I would like to add at this point the group of lads who fish the Manor are about as good as they come, they really are. The lake had quite a bit of water go in, and the level was really high. A lot of fish were on the field bank in the reeds, but it was a struggle to get line lay to any spots.

I thought outside the box, got some long shears, strapped my storm poles to them and cleared out an area of reeds so I could get my rods out with decent line lay to the areas I wanted to fish. I remember being down in the water and hearing fish crashing behind them, and when on the high bank huge plumes of bubbles were coming off certain spots. I had a quick lead about. I didn't want to fish too close to the reeds as this could have given me some issues, so I found spots a few rod lengths out. One rod I was particularly happy with. The lead came crashing down over a reasonably large area that I had seen heavy fizzing over as I was chopping back the swim. With traps set I just settled.



I was hopeful, but I don't think there had been a bite over the last two weeks or so. It was soon late and time to get my nut away. With fish subtly showing into dusk I was feeling good for a bite. At first light the deafening

tone of my Nev's receiver was my wake-up call. The fish was taking line at an alarming rate. I jumped into the waders and into the water.

As I made connection with the fish it was clear it had bolted up the reed

line and tucked itself in quite a way down. With steady pressure I did make a bit of headway, but after a while everything locked up. I knew the fish was still there, as I could feel the occasional knocking through the rod. I made my way down the reed line in my chesties and got above the fish. To be fair it was on the move easily, and after a game of tug-of-war it looked nearly ready for the net. As I reached for the net it took one last plunge, then the rod tip came springing back to the straight position and a huge boil showed as the carp made its dart for freedom. The big grey mirror I saw was away. My mainline had parted where it must have got damaged during the fight. Luckily I still had the top bead in my mainline so the carp was only left with a chod section to deal with. I was so close it was a savage blow after all the work I had put into getting the take. Another session was over on a huge disappointment.

Now more important things than fishing had come up, and trying to get a mortgage with my family was my main priority. Any spare time I had was spent looking at houses. It all ended up being a waste of time in the end, and our adviser had made a slight balls-up, but hey... such is life at times. So with that all cleared up it was time to get back on my fishing. I think I did a blank two-night session on my return session, but I can't fully remember. As anglers we try to forget those...

Actually this next part of the story is bittersweet, but more sweet than bitter. I rocked up after work again, so with a couple of hours to look around I didn't really see anything to go on. A swim called the End Pads was free, so I decided to get there, as again it is a swim that gives you a huge amount of scope, and it always seemed to hold a few fish. I got the sticks out and settled. I stayed up late watching the water but with very little to see.

I woke up the next morning after an eventless night, really wracking my brains for what to do. I saw a fish show in front of the Steps. One wasn't really enough for me to rush and pack up, so I watched with hawk eyes. As good friend and all-round gentleman Steve came round looking for a swim. He came and sat with me for a while. In the time he spent with me we had both now seen several shows in front



of the swim. I asked Steve where he was going, and he said he was going to finish his lap and then make a decision, but he said the Steps was a good shout. I told him that if he didn't go in there I definitely was. Luckily for me he found a few fish on the opposite bank, so as soon as I saw him unload the barrow I wound by rods in and placed them in the swim to reserve it. Knowing I could drop in and have a good idea of where to place baits, I wrapped two rods up on the distance stick and had one quick cast to check the spots were still clean. I was happy with those, so I set the third rod up on a choddy so I could cast it to fish if they started showing heavily in a certain area.

As midday came fish started showing heavily to my left in front of the Garden swim. It looked as if they were moving in my direction, so I cast the choddy to my left just on the border of my water. As I stood out in the water in my waders watching the carp show, I saw one fish in particular that could have only been one of two carp and one of the big four. It was George's or the Peach... of that I was certain. As I watched I was thinking that rod was going to go. Then I heard a series of beeps. I looked down, and it was the right hand rod that was away, the rod furthest from the showing fish. This fight was over rather quickly; the fish was ploughing about in the deep water not giving me any aggro at all. In my head I had already won this one and was wondering where to do my trophy shots. Then there was one lunge that made me up the pressure slightly and all fell slack. It's got to be one of the most random

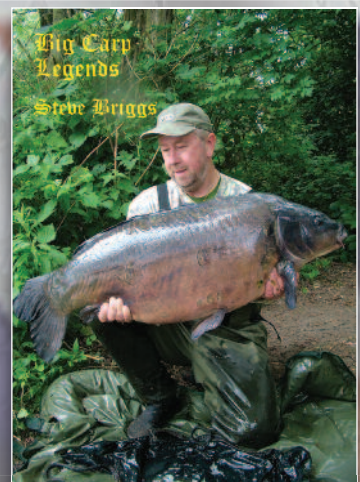
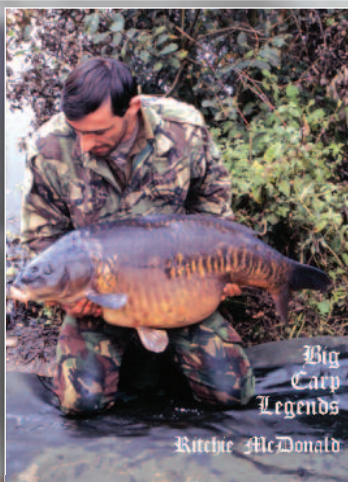
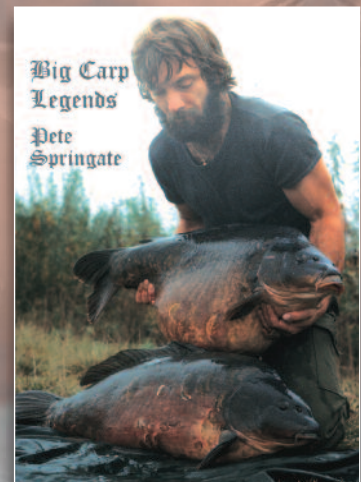
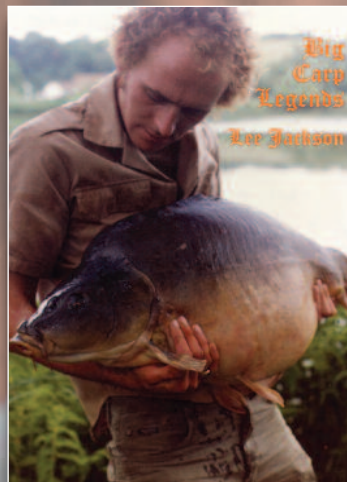
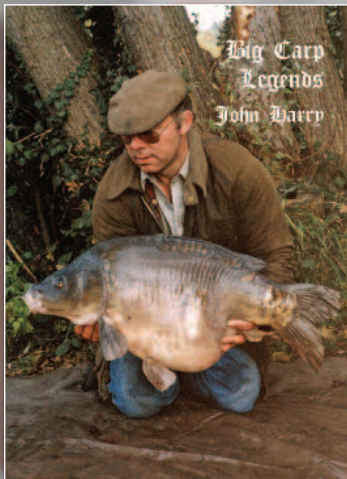
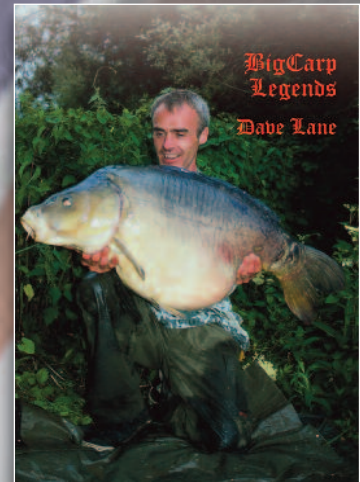
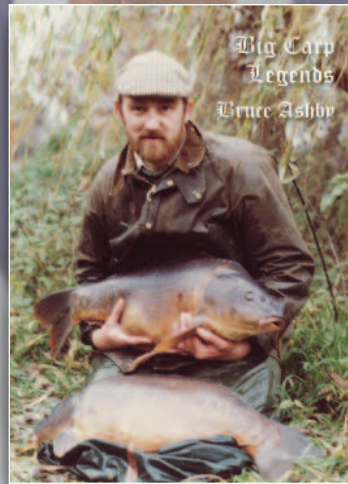
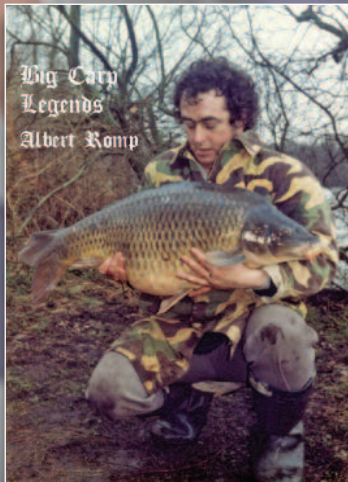
hook pulls I've suffered, and I still can't get my head round what happened.

I slammed the rod down in the margin and had a sulk in the bivvy for a few minutes. I got the rod back on the spot, and as I sat there watching the water the red mist was trying to descend over me in my Pioneer. I came very close to breaking something. Again it was another low point in my angling history. Every carp that resides in the Manor is special, and every bite is hard-earned, so to be done yet again was too sour a pill to swallow. Someone dropped in the swim to my left and for good reason. After the loss the fish definitely seemed to push up that way, but I was reluctant to move. In hindsight the guy who dropped in did me a massive favour, as slowly after he'd placed his rods they started to creep back over.

My mate James who also fishes there had popped over to see me for a chat. We were sitting down by the water at dusk when my right hand rod sprung into life again. One of the lads had heard the commotion too and was at the back of the swim. I jumped in without waders and was up to my knees. He slipped into my waders, grabbed the net and was out in the water too. This fish was very slow and very heavy. It was a dogged fight, and soon the fish hit the surface at distance. It was clearly a big carp. I walked back up the swim, guiding the carp towards the spreader block. A quick shuffle from Matt and it was in the bag. I remember him saying straight away, "That's a chunk, mate." Peering over his shoulder I could

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clearly see it was a big fish. Matty turned to me and said, "I think that's George's."

A cold shiver shot up my spine. I let the lads ID the fish while I sorted the stuff out to weigh it. I could faintly hear them saying, "Yeah, that's George's." On the scales it went 45lb 6oz – another of the A-Team. I just couldn't wrap my head around it – what a huge framed fish it was, and another one I dearly wanted to catch. I couldn't believe my luck at this point. It's not the kind of lake where it's easy to locate specific fish and angle for them; you fish where they're showing and which one takes your bait out in the deep is in the hands of the carp gods, and they had been very kind. Again I went from an all-time low to a massive high. I thank the dramas that occurred before my banking these two fish made their captures that much sweeter.

It was a couple of weeks before I next got down and I had another frustrating session. I got on the fish but just couldn't convert a bite, which can

be a running theme down the Manor at times. As a good friend says, it's all show but no go. But what happened on my most recent session as I write this piece was the making of the session of a lifetime, and one I don't think I will better in a long time, if ever.

Again I rocked up after my shift at work had ended. Before I even turned up I had an idea of where I wanted to be. The swim was occupied, but after a brief chat he informed me he would be off in an hour or two. I dropped a bucket in behind and did a lap of the lake. It had been very quiet, and I saw nothing else to go on, but I knew the swim I was waiting for had been productive of late. By the time the swim was vacant there had been a couple show in front of the swim. With darkness already in, and having never fished the swim before, I just cast short multi-rigs to the areas where I had seen them show. It was nearly 10pm by the time I got the last rod out, and I chilled out after a hard shift at work. I sat for a while and watched the water, they were on me. I just

hoped they stayed so I could find some spots in the morning.

As dawn broke over the pond I was up and ready to make the most of the session. The carp still seemed to be present, so I held back on doing the rods till around 11 o'clock. I found some lovely spots: one into a bay on my right and one out in front where I'd seen a few fish show the night before, and another down the reed line to my left that I knew had been doing a few fish. While chatting to one of the anglers who had done very well out of that swim, he informed me that bites had really dried up on the left hand side, but I thought it would be worth a shout. I baited up heavily giving each spot around 2kg of boilies. I know when the carp get in here it's possible to build a hit of fish, so with this on my mind I didn't go too light on the bait. With the spots I found I was confident to fish bottom baits, which to be fair really is my style of fishing. In fact the whole situation really suited my style of fishing – presenting bottom baits over a bed



Heart Tail at 37lb 2oz. Anyone who I spoke to regularly will tell you this is the one that was at the top of my list – another warrior and an iconic Manor fish.



of boilies on little hard spots.

I had to go get some food, as I had rushed down after work and only grabbed a quick bite for that evening, so I popped to the shop and got some grub. When I returned I got the rigs back on the spots I'd baited around 1:30pm. Not expecting any action till the evening, I sat on the bedchair and got my iPad out, but before I had a chance to pick something to watch, my right hand rod was screaming for some attention. I've got to say it was so quick I was waiting for a coot to pop up on the spot, but then the rod went into total meltdown! As I eased into the take I was met with a very heavy, very angry carp. If I hadn't seen the fish hit the surface early in the fight I would have thought I was attached to one of the Manor's large catfish. This thing was a beast! It flat-rodged me as it made a bolt for the reeds at the back of the bay. I managed to turn the fish away, and it then bolted into the car park swim opposite. It's one of, if not the, hardest fighting carp I've ever caught.

As I thought the fish was tiring it got down into the reeds to my right and all went solid. I waded down the margin to see my line caught on one, yes, one, reed stem. It's amazing how much leverage a fish can get on small obstructions. It was close enough for me to just lift the line off the stem and we were back in the battle. I saw the carp and knew which one it was, and this put the pressure on. Luckily we

were towards the end of the fight and the carp was shortly in the bag! A quick look over my shoulder to my pal and the nod was given – the Baby Northern was sat sulking in the net Buzzing! Up on the Reubens it went 38lb 12oz and another one was crossed off the list. If the session had ended here I would have been ecstatic, but it was far from over, and there was more action to be had.

My good mate and fellow member James had popped down to see me for a chat. He's a bit of a lucky charm for me to be honest – I was sat with him when I caught George's a few weeks previously. After a chat he left the swim to see Mark who was fishing the car park. He was gone a matter of seconds when my middle rod to the open water spot started peeling line. Again I was met with a very angry, heavy carp. It was much of the same – flat rods, screaming runs and another very hard-fighting carp. After gaining control of the fish it was having a thump around near the surface.

I caught a glimpse of the fish and knew straight away which one it was, Heart Tail, a Manor fish I've dreamed of long before joining and one that was top of my list, like the very top, and the one I think did me in the reeds when my mainline parted. I looked at James and said, "I know which one it is." I think his words were, "Well get it in the bloody net then." (That's a censored version for the younger readers).

One last effort from the fish to evade capture, and she was in the bag. No I don't normally do it, but I gave a little shout out – "Heart Tail!!" I'd caught bigger, and I knew it wasn't going to be forty pounds that time of year, but that fish is so stunning it's unreal. Anyone I've spoke to down there would have told you that it was the one I wanted most. Hoisted up it went 37lb 2oz – still a huge fish, and one that meant a huge amount. Not even 24 hours in and I had crossed two off my list. I was gobs-macked but loving life. It was a shame I caught the fish at night, as night shots really don't do the fish justice, but I know what she looked like, and after the action in the day I was at an all-time high.

The rest of the night and the following morning were quiet. I think the fish were moving in late morning/early afternoon and then moving out in the evening. I think I had my first bite as they moved in and my second as they moved out. More of the same over the next two days would be epic. I did exactly the same routine: I wound in at 11am, baited up, rested the swim and got them back out around 1:30. It was like clockwork as the right hand rod in the



(Top and right) The high banks and narrow pathways of the Manor really add character to the lake. It's an amazing venue, although it took me a while to get settled.

bay was away at exactly the same time. Again this was a hard-fighting carp that really did give me the runaround and was clearly a big fish. After a few big runs the carp was up for the taking, and one of the lads slipped the net under it. It's not one anyone recognised, and it went 31lb on the scales. It was just getting better and better! I was clearly on fish and it seemed to be the big'uns as well. I was anticipating the evening bite that night as well, but it didn't seem to happen. To be fair if I'd have caught one fish that session I would have been happy, so I wasn't bothered in any way shape or form. I was now into my third and final night and feeling very confident for the next day.

Well, morning was upon me, but it was different... The wind had picked up and we had rain. It was looking bob-on. Again there was no morning action, but I wasn't too fussed. Same again – I baited the spots and rested the swim. I really thought allowing the fish to move in and have a free

feed without any lines in the water was getting me a quick bite in the afternoon. I was keeping an eye on the bay when all of a sudden I spotted one of the most recognisable fish in the lake hovering over my spots. It was Stella. Now jokes had been made such as: "If you catch Stella you can leave" and "You're gonna have Stella next" because of my luck with Northern and George's. Stella really would complete the set. I watched her for a while then she disappeared in to the bay. A few seconds later my rod near where I'd spotted her pulled up tight and the tip started to wrap round. You can imagine my thought process at this point, but everything then fell slack. I'd either been done or suffered a savage liner. I waited ten or so minutes until my paranoia got the better of me.

I wound the rod in to see I hadn't been done, and I knew recasting the rod would savagely decrease my chance of a bite that afternoon. I think given the situation again I would have done the same. I needed to

know I was still fishing. Well I kind of knew that it was over for that spot after a couple of casts to get my bait placement bang-on. In all honesty I thought it was over full stop, and I was a little deflated. I didn't want to end an awesome session on a low point. I started slowly packing up so all I had to do was take the bivvy down, fold the bed chair and load the barrow. I was shattered so I had a lie down on the bed and was starting to drift off when I heard a few beeps from my middle rod. I looked down and the bobbin was at the top, but the tip was just twitching. As I slipped on my boots and made my way to the rod the bobbin was on its way down. I wasn't sure what to do, but a split second later it was back up. I lifted into it and was met again with a heavy weight.

It was a strange fight. As soon as I knew I was in, I tried to get my waders on, but it was coming back so quickly I couldn't keep a tight line to the fish long enough to put them on, so I just left my hikers on and waited



31lb – a clean and powerful Manor low thirty. These fish really are special in every way.

to see how it played out. In no time at all I had a big common, in fact THE big common in the margin ready for the net. I was around 80% sure it was The Bream. I was trying to check its eye in the water as it has a blind eye on one side, but I couldn't get the view I wanted, so I popped down the bank to grab Steve who strangely enough I was discussing the very fish with earlier that day. We got her out of the water and onto the mat. The first thing I did was check her eyes. It was confirmed that it was the Bream Common, the biggest common in the lake, and at 42lb 2oz on the scales, I was speechless. It was one of those fish I wanted to catch but just never thought I would. My goal after my time was done on the Manor was to try and catch a forty-pound common. Well, I'd better get a new plan.

Fish started showing heavily over the spot I'd just taken her from. I had packed the rod away, but I got it back out for the last half an hour, as there were so many fish there, but there was no more action. My 72 hours were up, and it was time to go home.



This was by far my best session's fishing to date. It wasn't just the size of the fish or the amount I caught but how special every fish caught is. I know I said it before, but the Manor's stock is so special, the carp are so old and every single fish has its own character and features. It truly is a dream machine, and one bite can turn a bad season round to a belter.

Now I'm under no illusion that I've sussed it down there or that I've lit

any fires. I have been very lucky with the fish I've had, but I've had a season to remember, and with the best bit still to come I'm extremely excited for the autumn and hopefully a couple more of these cracking fish. Either way this season has left me drowning in self pity and then smiling ear to ear. I really do think that bad times in between make the good times that much more special.

Be lucky, people. ■

Carpy Humour



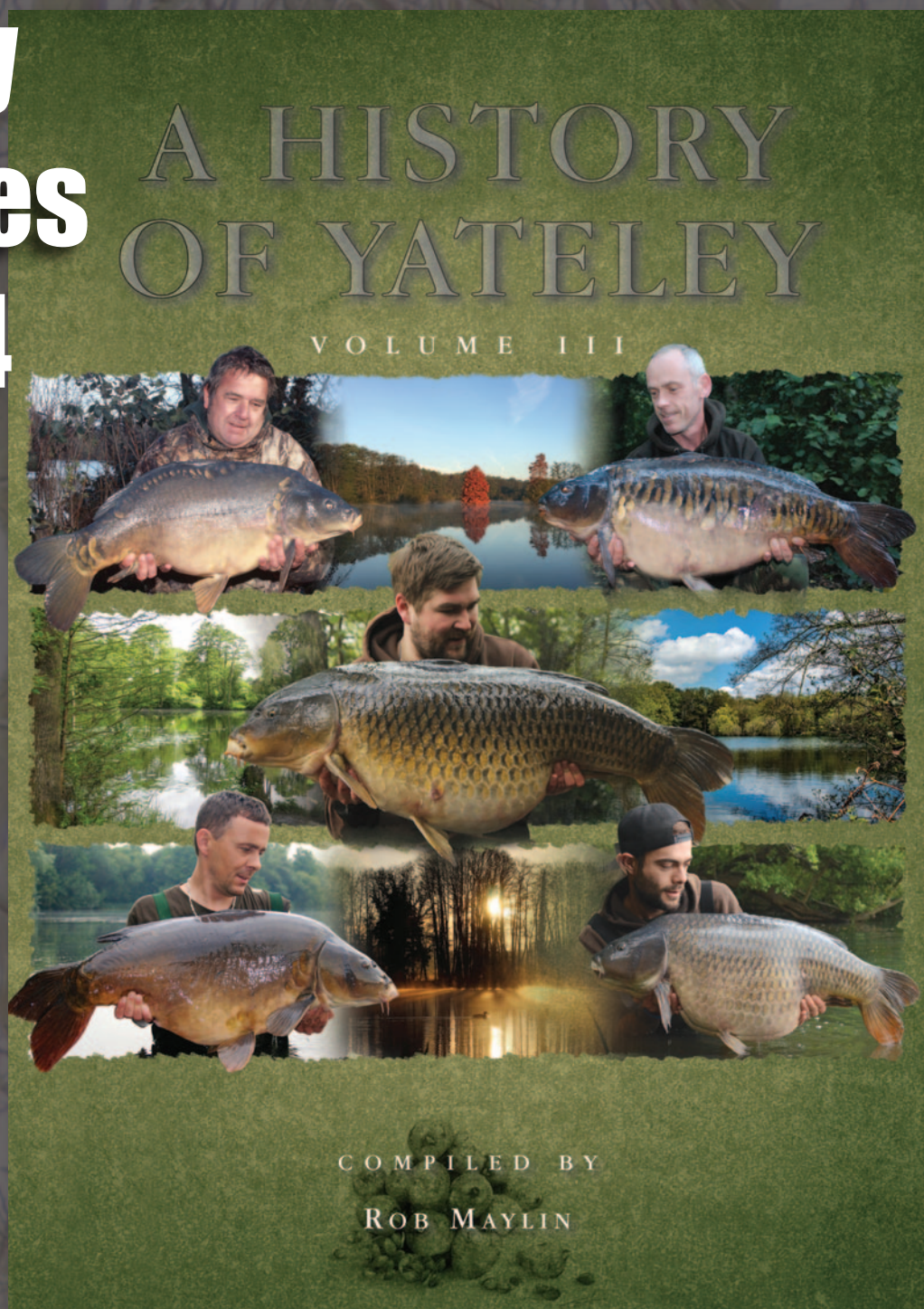
Yateley Volumes 3 and 4

In the time since the Cemex sell-off, Yateley has had a new lease of life. Although those legendary carp like Basil, Heather and their buddies are now long gone, the new stock has grown and returned Yateley to its former glory. Likewise, its banks may not now be trodden by the likes of Terry Hearn and me, but the anglers that fish Yateley now are just as passionate about the Yateley carp as we were 20 years ago.

Every lake has come on leaps and bounds in this time: The North boasts commons up to 54lb with a handful approaching 50. The Car Park too has numerous good forties. The Split Lake is a real eye-opener with a good head of big fish up to 47lb! You would never have dreamed it. The Pad Lake, South Lake and even the diddy little Horseshoe and Pump House all contain big fish. The Pad has numerous forty-pluses.

Over the other side of the road there is a similar story: multiple forties in the Match, some beasts now in the Copse and The Nursery holding fish to 47lb and maybe bigger, as its anglers keep very secret squirrel about what goes on over there. The Nursery is certainly Yateley's secret jewel in the crown.

Hence the reason for this book... It's been six



years since the first two volumes, and the changes are phenomenal, the fish huge, and only living five minutes from the complex, I felt duty bound to record the history further on these lakes, the UK's true heritage waters. The format remains much the same: the page numbers continue through the volumes. Maybe in another ten years, there will be more history to record, even perhaps a Yateley British record... who knows? Now wouldn't that be something?

I have also decided to include the Yateley lakes on the edge of the old Cemex complex, these being Little Moulsham, Mill Lane, Swan Valley and Sandhurst. Each contain their own

treasures including a couple of fifties!

Because of the sheer size of this project and to do justice to all the lakes there will once again be two volumes.

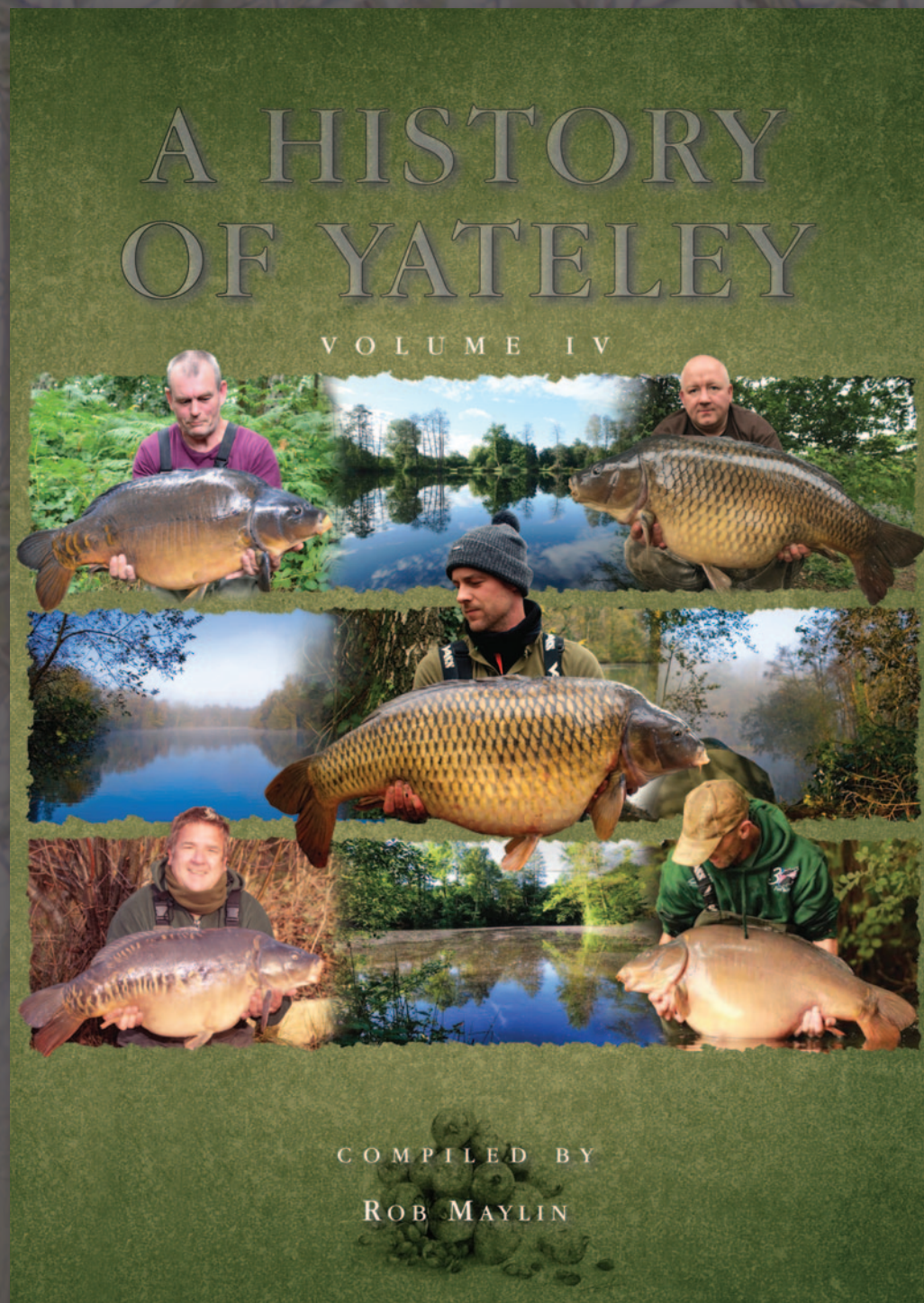
Volume 3 contains chapters on the North Lake, The Split Lake, Horseshoe and Pumphouse. The Pads Lake, Car Park, Moulsham and Mill Lane.

Volume 4 contains the chapters on The South Lake, Match Lake, Copse Lake, Nursery Lake, Sandhurst and Swan Valley.

There are some great introductory pieces from Martin Gardener, owner of Yateley West Fisheries and Ian Gray, Honorary Secretary of Farnham Angling Society, the owners of Yateley East, plus a chapter featuring the famous

Stoney and Friends MacMillan bashes each year. There are stock lists with photos of as many of the new residents as it was possible to get and chapters from the guys who fish there at present – ordinary guys with some great tales to tell of their captures on each of the lakes.

All this is combined with fantastic colour photography throughout, some amazing paintings of each lake and a host of special drawings commissioned for these volumes. These volumes are as much if not more of a work of art as the predecessors. The first two volumes were amazing and received worldwide praise... but dare I say, in my opinion, these two volumes could be even better? A massive thanks to all concerned, and long may Yateley continue! Long live the king of English carp fishing history!



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A New Season at the Park

By David Gaskin

June 1st came around, and my second season on Wellington Country Park was ready for kick-off. The spring on the lake seemed to false start, and the eagerly anticipated feed-up that we all hope will happen never really occurred. This could have been due to the fish teetering on the edge of spawning, but it not really happening. Into my first session I found myself in uncharted territory where I started off in the Little Lake. This is a small lake of around an acre or two in size where the carp, often undetected, seek refuge from the main lake's angling pressure. It contains snaggy margins, and my tactics were simply set small traps in the margins with a few handfuls of boilies along the margin to get a bite at a time. This method was rewarded when a typical first light bite resulted in a 46lb ghostie known as the Two-Tone Ghostie. This completed the set of A-Team ghosties, an achievement I was more than happy

(Top) Looking through the branches.
(Below) Two-tone ghostie.



with, but it was now time to try and go after the big mirrors!

My fishing in June and July was limited because although it was the summer holidays for students like me, I had to use this time to work to be able to put a bit of money aside in the expectation of rejoining next year. However, I was able to do the odd overnighter here and there to satisfy

the addiction. Throughout this time I was consistently winkling a few out, and by the middle of August I had caught 13 fish, which was very pleasing. Unbelievably, amongst these captures there were no mirrors. I was certainly starting to scratch my head as to why I couldn't get through to leviathan mirror carp. It even crossed my mind that I was giving off some





kind of pheromones that the mirror carp didn't like. It's amazing what carp fishing can put your mind through sometimes!

Anyway, I had planned to ease up the workload towards the end of August and into September to be able to put some proper time in on the bank before going back to university, and it's at this time my fortunes began to change. I had a three-night session planned, and I well and truly had the buzz. I was up until midnight sorting the gear out and tying rigs ready to leave at 4:30am sharp to get at the gate for the 6am start. Arriving at the lake it wasn't very busy, which was lovely, but after chatting to a few fellow anglers it appeared that nothing had been caught in the last few days, so I had no idea where to start when thinking about where these stealthy Welly carp were hiding. The lake is around 35 acres in size and holds roughly 120 carp, so locating fish with a ratio of about four per acre can be very tricky, especially as these

**(Left) Bringing the two-tone ashore.
(Below) The pick of the bunch from
the commons – 37lbs.**

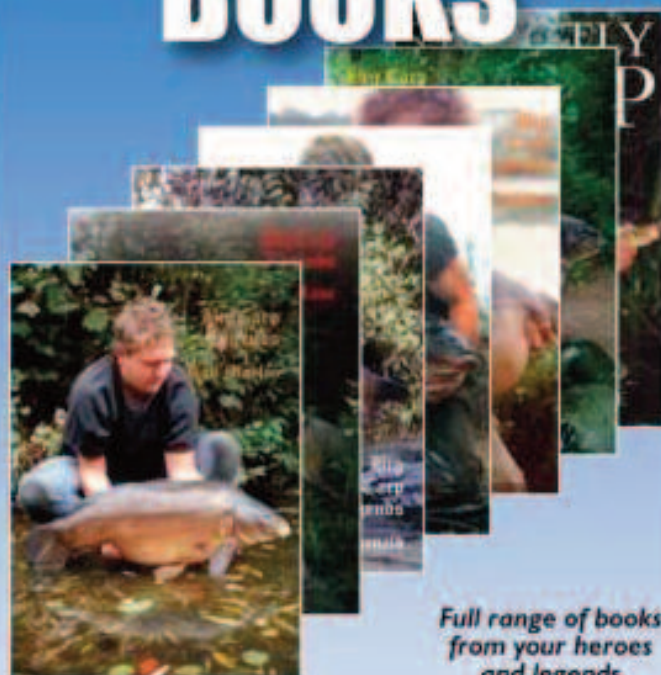


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43lb 4oz mirror.

carp aren't too keen on showing themselves, whereas other lakes they typically do at first light.

After a few laps around the lake and a few hours had passed, I was becoming a bit frustrated at not seeing even a slight sign of activity. Then I saw what I was looking for: carp, and feeding ones at that! At first I saw the fizzing in the margin of the snags, then after a few more minutes of careful observation I saw a tail swirl create a vortex that was far too big to be a tench, so I thought that would do nicely. Fortunately these were located in the margin of the snags, and I had a few boilies in my pocket. I broke a few up and gently tossed them into the margin, and to my amazement the carp homed in on them and started feeding in no more than 18 inches of water with their tails literally waving at me above the surface. It was quite a spectacle, and an experience I'd never had before on my short time on Welly. I now had a plan and was ready to get angling... I decided to bait up three obvious spots along the snag

infested margin with half a kilo of chopped Activ-8 boilies but actually position the rigs off the baited areas to try and outwit a big mirror. After all, these fish have seen it all before and been heavily pressured by very capable anglers in the past.

I got lucky with my casts as each rod went into position perfectly first time (which never normally happens), so I had done all I could as well as it could have been done, and it was now time to play the waiting game. The snags swim is notorious for day bites, so I questioned my tactics when I hadn't received any action such as liners throughout the day but decided to do the night in case they were drifting in and out of the small bay. At around midnight my right hand rod close to where I had previously seen the fish fizzing registered a couple of bleeps. They're back, I thought to myself, and ten minutes later I was connected to a carp. After a fairly short scrap I was finally rewarded with a mirror carp and a good one at that. On the scales it went 43lb 4oz so

I was over the moon at finally getting a mirror this season, and it was even sweeter being 40-plus.

I didn't take the chance of a recast to snags in the dark, so instead I rebaited the spot with another half a kilo of Activ-8 boilies and chops with a view to recasting at first light. I was awake as dawn broke, and as soon as it was light enough to see the spot I could make out more activity. A closer look with the binoculars revealed more fizzing, and without hesitation I hoped for the best and cast the rig onto it. Again with the carp gods smiling down on me it went into position first time, which was key to giving it the best chance of not spooking the carp that were present in the area. All of about seven minutes went by before the recast rod was away again. My initial reaction was that the fish had done me because it went slack, but I wound down quickly, and when no more than 10yds out it felt like I had hooked the bottom of the lake. In fact I was still attached to a brute, but it had just swum straight towards me!

After another drama free battle another mirror was in the net, except this time it looked bigger than the previous one. The sheer weight when I lifted it out of the water pricked the hairs up on my skin because I was sure I had one of the A-Team. I had to go and get help to weigh it accurately, and doing so revealed the weight at 50lb 8oz, a new PB and my first UK 50!

I persevered with the same tactics for another night in the swim, but the action had dried up so a move was on the cards for the final night. I didn't move far because I had heard a couple of fish in the early hours in a different corner of the bay, and in hindsight the commotion in the snags may have pushed any fish that were there out into other parts of the bay. I settled for the Laurie's Mate swim and decided to fish one-bite tactics, incorporating snowman rigs with a PVA bag of crushed boilies to likely looking areas, one of which was the corner of an island.

On my last morning of the session I had a very tenchy bite from the island, but after picking up the rod I felt the

thud of an angry carp. This one gave me the run-around, and ten yards out glowing like giant lightbulb with fins I could see it my old mate of a ghostie, but a fair sized one at that! I didn't recognise it as one I'd previously caught, and after lifting her up on the scales it spun round to 42lb. This was my fifth Welly ghostie over 40lbs, which is slightly outrageous (in a good way). Someone must have had a clearout of their garden pond at some point! That was the last fish of the session, and it was one I shan't be forgetting in a hurry! Three fish for a combined weight of 135lb is borderline ridiculous, but what's even more ridiculous is that it's possible to better it at this phenomenal venue.

As you can imagine I was very eager to get down and carry on the big mirror form, but in truth I was brought back to reality with a three-night blank. I went from fishing like hero to fishing like a numpty and didn't come remotely close to catching a fish. It was now that dreaded time of year when I had to go back to uni, and time was at a premium once again, but I was still able to get some

angling in at weekends. It was now October time, and I was thundering down the M4 to the lake after finishing the week's lectures. I had been keeping tabs on the goings-on at the lake throughout the day and had a rough idea of where I needed to be, but as with the best laid plans that area was stitched up, and I had to settle for an unfavoured swim with the idea of a 6am move to get into a swim which was in the area of the carp presence. I put my bombsite of a barrow in the Bush Swim the next morning as I knew the chap was going to be leaving, and because upon my arrival at the lake I had seen a very large fish show out at range in the area that was accessible from that swim. I was ready for action once again and decided to fan the three rods, consisting of snowman rigs, at around 120yds to roughly the area that I'd seen the big fish show. I also sailed out a kilo of 18mm Activ-8 freebies at this range between the three rods with the use of a throwing stick to get a good scattering of bait to hopefully get the fish moving between the rods.



The Clean Fish at 50lb 8oz.



42lb ghostie.

It wasn't until 24 hours later that my right hand Delkim let out a couple of bleeps and the bobbin hesitantly lifted. Fishing at this range this amount of movement on the bobbin was more than enough to persuade me to pick up the rod, and I had a fish on. It kited left on the tight line, and then after about ten seconds it all

came to a halt. I wasn't aware of any snags out in open water, so I was a bit perplexed at what was happening. Jamie, one of the bailiffs, was on hand and immediately started to prep the boat and grabbed a couple of lifejackets just in case it was necessary. I slightly increased the pressure and could feel the dreaded grating on the

line, at which point I decided to ease up and go out in the boat rather than keep pulling and risk snapping the line, leaving a rig in the fish and possibly worse, leaving it tethered to the unknown obstacle.

Lifejackets on, and there was still no movement on the rod as we slowly made our way out in the boat to the point where the line was snagged. I was pretty sure it was 1-0 to Mr. Carp and I had been done. Out in the boat we used the landing handle in the fashion of a match fishing disgorger to wrap round the line, leading it down the line to the lakebed to feel what it was caught up on. After a few nudges at different angles the obstruction broke free and emerged as a twig and a mussel shell entwined with a tangle of my line! I went about retrieving the remaining line when I felt an almighty tug in my hand, the fish was still on and I found myself in battle with the carp using an unorthodox hand-lining method. Jamie quickly reassembled the net in the event of some miracle the line held up and the hook didn't pull.

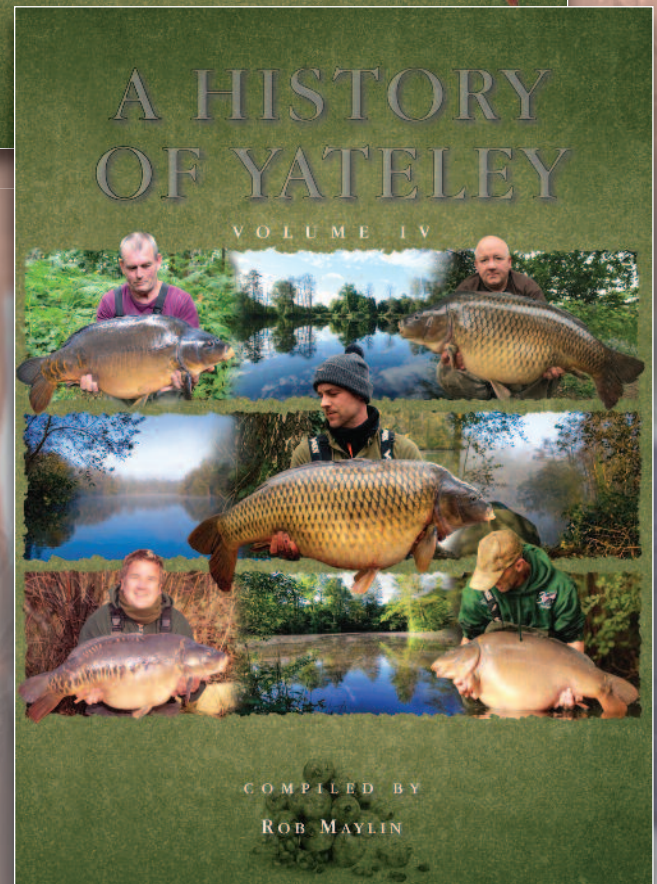
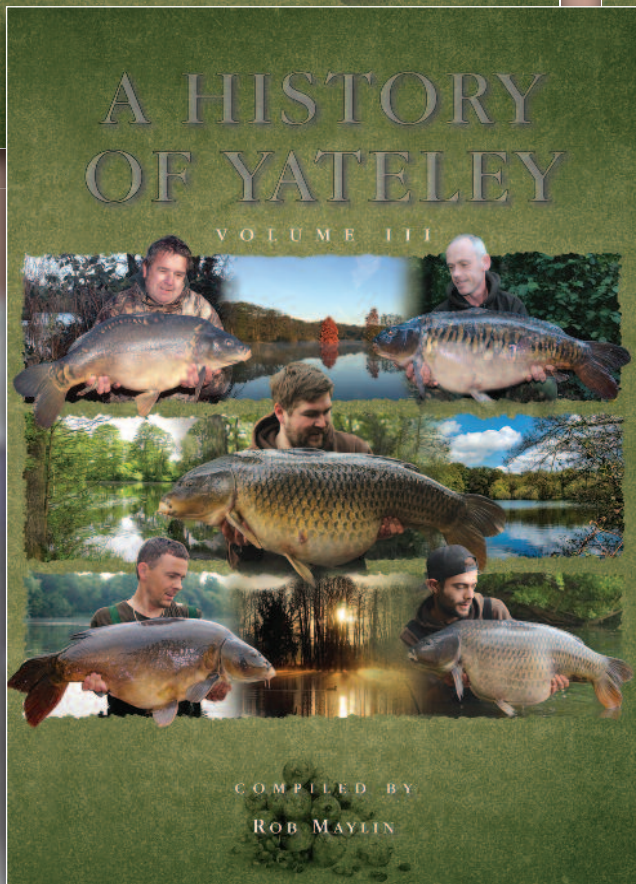
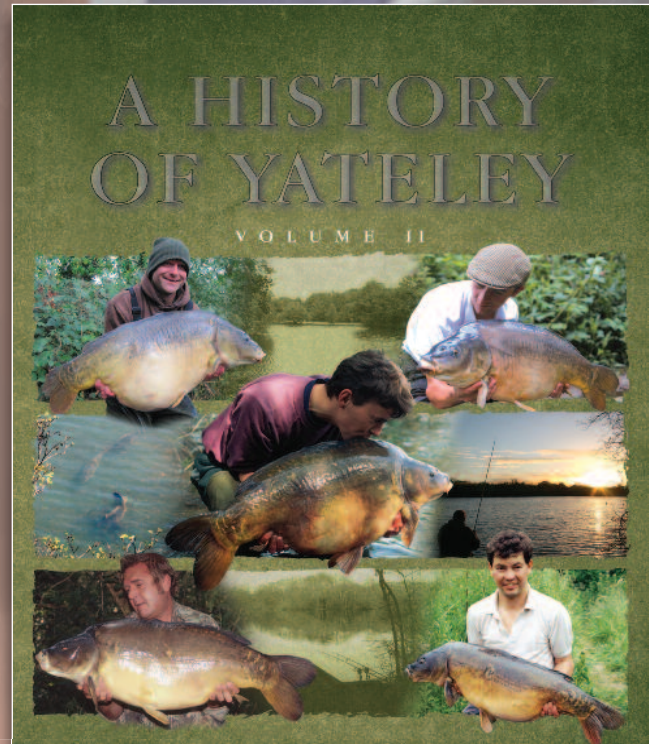
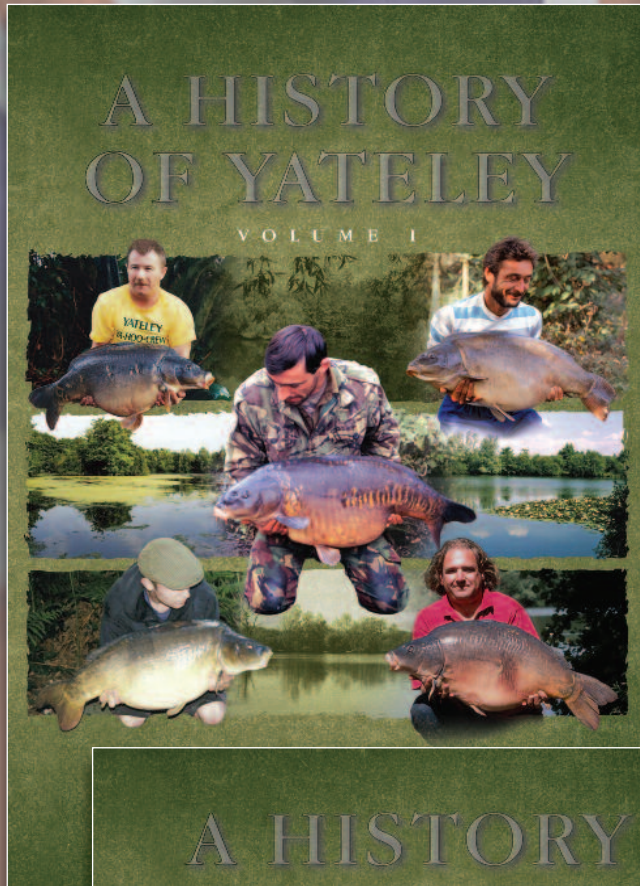
A minute or so later the fish sur-



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The Big Sutton at 49lb 2oz.

faced no more than ten feet away, and on its flank I saw a lone, giant mirror scale. There was only one possible candidate that this fish could have been, and that was one of the lake's gems known as the Big Sutton. Still playing this fish on the classic hand-

line method it was fortunate that we were doing it in a boat, because it seemed to absorb the lunges of the carp, giving us a chance to keep it on. A window of opportunity came, and I gently pulled the fish up with Jamie poised at the net ready to scoop. In

she went first time along with a loud "Yes!" of relief. I held the net with a huge smile as Jamie rowed us back knowing the prize was a rare visitor to the bank and potentially a 50lb'er! By now a small crowd of other anglers had gathered in my swim due to the drama unfolding in front of everyone in the middle of the lake. As with all of the members on the lake, they all helped sort the weighing and photography stuff out whilst I looked after the fish in the water. It looked huge in the net, and it was confirmed when the scales read 49lb 2oz... another mirror... another big mirror... My luck had definitely changed, and I was on cloud nine.

I couldn't get back down to the lake until the following week, which happened to coincide with half term. However, I couldn't use this week off to fish, as I was heading home to work for a few days to replenish my finances so I could eat proper food instead of rice and peas – the joys of student life! I was travelling from Bristol to Sussex so a pit-stop on the Friday night at Welly for an overnighter seemed like a fine idea. I



Mussel snag and line.

managed to get to the lake around lunchtime to find it unsurprisingly busy, being at the beginning of the weekend, so I opted to tuck myself away in swim that controls a deep corner that I had previously observed fish moving in and out of in the past weeks. I hardly had any bait with me, and being a short session, I baited the rods that were all being fished at no more than 40 yards with a few catapults of 15mm Activ-8 boilies. I wasn't overly confident of a bite due to the pressure on the lake; it was more of a case of just enjoying the evening and being there with the outside chance of snaring something. At first light my lucky right hand rod was in meltdown, and before I knew it I was fighting a strong carp trying its very best to find sanctuary in the deep corner and the snaggy margin.

I slowly coaxed it along the margin, clipping branches but not giving it an inch to get in them properly. I slipped it in the net still slightly blurry eyed when to my amazement I peered in the net and saw a big, dark grey mirror staring back at me. I really couldn't believe my luck now. I had



Turtle corner.

gone from an abnormal run of commons and ghosties to a run of big mirrors, but I wasn't about to start complaining at that! On the mat I was immediately drawn to the size of the carp's wrist; it was longer than the length of my hand, and it dawned on me that I had just caught another of

Welly's finest mirrors the Thick Wristed (such an original and obvious name!). I hoisted her up in the sling, and I just had to giggle to myself – 47lb 4oz – this was incredible! As the nights draw in and the weather starts to decline, I'm hoping I can continue my good fortune. ■



The Thick Wristed at 47lb 4oz.

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