MARCH ISSUES OF <u>BIG CARP</u> AND <u>FREE LINE</u> MAGAZINES FREE HERE www.freelinemagazine.com or www.freelinemagazine.co.uk



The Cottington Chronicles by Barry Oconnor

Day Ticket 40 by Jacko Lucy

The Magnificent Mike's Pet by Haydn Hoskins My Go-to Rig by Elliot Gray

The Park Lake by Liam Close

A Spring Surprise – February Initiation by Adam Freeborn
Christchurch by Scott Lloyd
That's Insane by Adam Rawlings
Wasing Way – Part 2 by Craig Runham
Tour De France – Part One by Clive Williams
Spotted Fin – Rob Maylin interviews Pele Johnson - Part One
Fen Drayton – My Story – Part One by Dan Bruton
Not for the Faint-hearted! by Garry Atkin
New British Record Carp Dean Fletcher talks to Rob Maylin
The Session of a Lifetime, Burghfield, Five Years On... by John Hickey
Twenty-Five Years Behind The Counter by Lee Jackson
Yateley West, the Future Martin Gardener talks to Rob Maylin – Part One
Looking Back... An Overview of Carp Tackle Developments by Mike Wilson



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Top 10 Day Ticket Carp Fisheries

| 1 | COTTINGTON |
|----|-------------------|
| 2 | LINEAR |
| 3 | CHRISTCHUCH |
| 4 | OAK LAKES FISHERY |
| 5 | BLUEBELL LAKES |
| 6 | CATCH 22 |
| 7 | SANDHURST |
| 8 | FRYERNING |
| 9 | FARLOWS LAKE |
| 10 | COOLE ACRES |

Top 10 French Holiday Destinations

| 1 | IKTUS |
|----|---------------|
| 2 | LAKE BOSSARD |
| 3 | ETANG 5 |
| 4 | RIBIERE |
| 5 | ABBEY |
| 6 | LAC ROSE |
| 7 | LAKE HERITAGE |
| 8 | DREAM LAKES |
| 9 | FISHABIL |
| 10 | JONCHERY |

Ton 10 Bait Companies

| 1 | DYNAMITE |
|----|-------------|
| 2 | NUTRABAITS |
| 3 | STICKY |
| 4 | MAINLINE |
| 6 | TARGET |
| 5 | CC MOORE |
| 7 | NASH |
| 8 | URBAN |
| 9 | DAVE MALLIN |
| 10 | OUTLAW |
| | |

Top 10 Carp Tackle Companies (Terminal)

| 1 | ESP |
|----|------------------|
| 2 | KORDA |
| 3 | SOLAR |
| 4 | JAG |
| 5 | FOX |
| 6 | THINKING ANGLERS |
| 7 | GARDNER |
| 8 | NASH |
| 9 | AVID |
| 10 | CARP ONLINE |

Top 10 Carp Tackle Companies

| 1 | DIAWA SPORTS |
|----|---------------|
| 2 | SHIMANO |
| 3 | REUBEN HEATON |
| 4 | FREE SPIRIT |
| 5 | FOX |
| 6 | TRAKKER |
| 7 | AQUA PRODUCTS |
| 8 | HARRISON |
| 9 | CENTURY |
| 10 | SONIK |

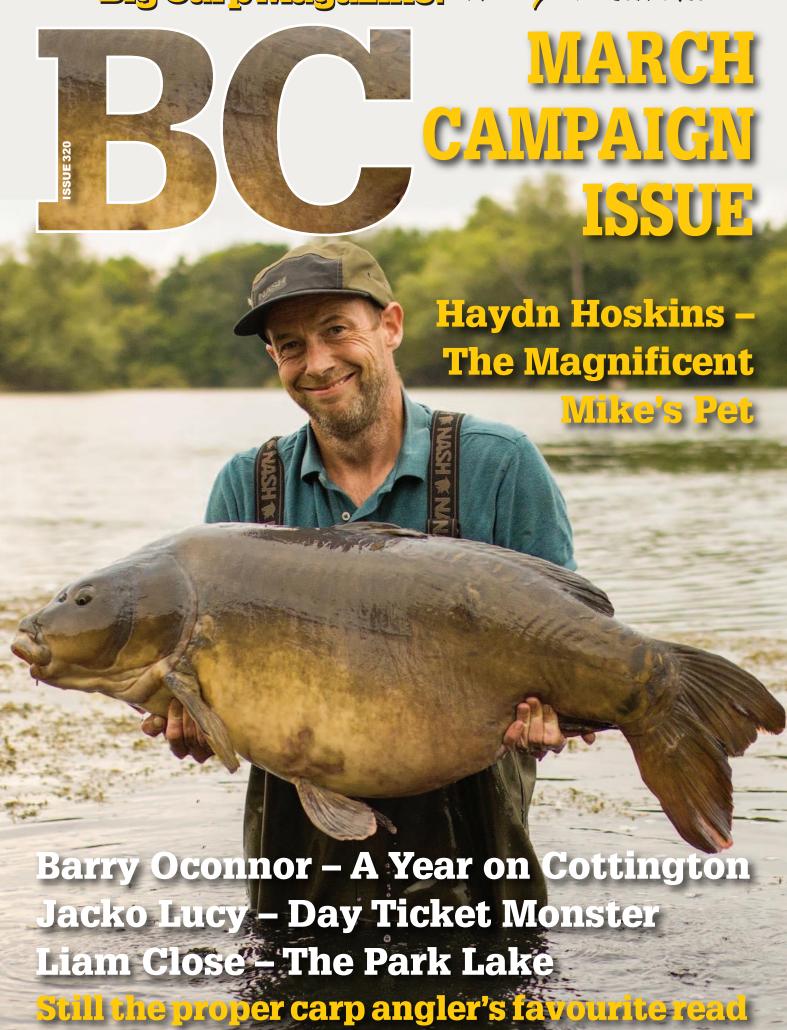
Top 10 Carp Shops

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

| toh to iconic cath marcis | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | YATELEY |
| 2 | SAVAY |
| 3 | REDMIRE |
| 4 | WRAYSBURY 4 1 1 |
| 5 | FOX POOL |
| 6 | HORTON |
| 7 | CASSIEN 2023-24 |
| 8 | LINCH HILL |
| 9 | ROACH PIT |
| 10 | IOHNSONS RAII WAY |

As voted by Big Carp readers!

Big Carp Magazine! a history of excellence







POWERUP CATCH BIG ENJOY NATURE STAY SAFE



March Campaign Issue

And we're off! OMG what a winter, so glad to see the back of that one! I cannot remember a winter where continued cold weather went on so long. From the first week of December when day time temperatures were well into the minus's right through with only the odd patchy mild spell. At last March is here, the nights are drawing out, the carp will be waking up ravenous and eager to build up their weights preparing for their yearly breeding cycle. I'm sure many of you will have been preparing for this time of the year too, prebaiting likely spots with regular reccy's to chosen venues for 'The Off'.

So, with that in mind some articles this month to get you all in the mood for the new season, in both Big Carp and Free Line, your monthly FREE digital carp journals. Top of the list is Barry Oconnor's 'A Year on Cottington', what a venue Cottington is, once again voted No.1 in our Big Carp top 10 Competition this year for UK Carp Fisheries, the fish are incredible and getting bigger every year. Barry and his son Benn have fished this venue for several years and their knowledge is unequalled. Look out too this issue for the photo feature on this prize-winning venue, showcasing just a few of its many gems.

Speaking of prize-winning venues and winners of our Top 10 competition look out too for our photo feature of our winner of The Best French Venue for the past few years, Iktus! here are just a few of the incredible carp caught this winter. You may also have seen the new 80 plus record on the front of this month's Free Line! Next up our cover story from Hayden Hoskins sent to us via social media. The one and only Mike's Pet, what a stonker!

Jacko Lucy is no stranger to Big Carp and this month he tells the story of his Day ticket Obsession, and no wonder, an incredible upper forty that graced his net finally at the end of 2022. Also, this month Liam close describes his successful campaign on the Park Lake, if this does not get you ready for the start of a new carping season nothing will. Finally, this month check out our extensive catch report section, just going to prove that lots of huge carp have been caught lately despite the weather.

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 2 free monthly carp magazines, Big Carp and Free Line, see them both here - www.freelinemagazine.com

Now I need your help! Filling 2 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 Spring 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.

Exclusive

40 **The Cottington Chronicles**

By Barry Oconnor

58 **Day Ticket 40**

By Jacko Lucy

68 **The**

Magnificent

Mike's Pet

By **Haydn Hoskins**

65 My Go-to Rig

By **Elliot Gray**

72 The Park Lake

By **Liam Close**

Big Carp
Promotions

5 **Oak Lake** Fishery



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Front Cover

Haydn Hoskins with The Magnificent Mike's Pet



News & Reviews

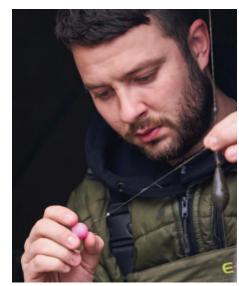
6 Shockleader

What's happening in the carp scene

26 **Tac-Tec**

Latest product reviews

- Geoff Anderson
- HayMax
- Whitby









Advertising Index

Ledlenser 2 Oak Lake Fisheries 5 Lake Serene France 9 Whitby 13 Chiltern Custom Rods Kudos 21 Vortex Baits 25 Bounty Lakes 29 Reuben Heaton 33 Cottington Lakes 37, 38 and 39 Coole Acre Lakes 43 Bountyhunter 47 Bountyhunter 51 Bountyhunter 56 and 57 Iktus 65, 66 and 67 Bountyhunter 70 and 71 Bountyhunter 75 Bountyhunter 80



Oak Lakes Fisheries



www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk

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







Brian Milton had some nice catches on the day ticket lake.



Cracking carp weighing 19lbs 5oz.



Are you doing lessons for others, lol.

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.

A selection of Oak Lakes finest













ShockLeader

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

Sir Charles Walker MP stepping down as Chair of the Angling Trust

Sir Charles Walker MP has today announced that he is stepping down as Chair of the Angling Trust due to the pressure of work in Parliament following his appointment to several important Commons committees.

He feels he can no longer do justice to his role within the Trust while sitting as a serving MP in the current 'febrile' political climate which will only become more intense as the General Election approaches.

Charles, a lifelong angler, was appointed as the unpaid Chair of the Angling Trust's Board of Directors in May 2022 after he had announced his decision to retire from Parliament at the next general election. He formally took over from outgoing Chair George Stephenson in September.

Charles has represented the Broxbourne constituency in Hertfordshire for the Conservatives since 2005 and has served in a variety of senior positions in Parliament including as Vice Chairman and Acting Chairman of the 1922 Committee of Conservative MPs. He also chairs the All Party Parliamentary Groups on Angling and Chalkstreams.

Last October he was appointed to serve on the House of Commons Standards and Privileges Committee, which polices the conduct of MPs, in addition to his roles as Chairman of the Administration Committee and as a Commissioner of the House of Commons Commission.

Sir Charles said:

"I have nothing but admiration for Jamie Cook and the excellent team at the Angling Trust and will continue to work with them, where I can, for the benefit of the sport we all love and the environment upon which it depends. The Trust is a fiercely independent organisation with a hard-earned reputation for vigorously campaigning on behalf of Britain's two million anglers and, where I can, I will do my best to ensure that fish and fishing are championed in Parliament.

"However, with an increased workload in the Commons and a hard-



fought general election looming in a politically febrile atmosphere I have come to the conclusion that I simply cannot spare the time to do justice to the role of Chair of the Angling Trust on top of everything else."

Charles added: "I will be continuing my work as Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Groups on Angling and on Chalkstreams and intend to remain fully engaged in the Trust's campaigns to protect access for anglers and creating marine sport fisheries."

Angling Trust CEO Jamie Cook added:

"I shall be sorry to see Charles step down as he is a fantastic and long-standing advocate for angling and was by far the strongest candidate for the job. He is, without question, the most passionate supporter of angling in Parliament and in 2020 Charles was instrumental in helping us persuade ministers to allow fishing to continue during the various Covid lockdowns when other sports remained banned.

"As our Chair, he has helped us overturn angling restrictions on places like the Attenborough Nature Reserve and move forward with exciting proposals for a recreational tuna fishery. However, I respect his reasons for stepping down and I'm delighted that he intends to keep working with us and remain Chair-

man of two important All Party Parliamentary Groups. He is, and will always be, a great friend to fish and fishing."

Fish Legal Chair George Graham commented:

"Anglers have for many years been lucky to benefit from Charles's support in Parliament. In his time as our Chair he has continued that work, helping us to navigate a path through some thorny issues that threatened our sport. We are sorry that his increasing parliamentary commitments mean he will not be able to continue in that role. His enthusiasm for the work we do at Fish Legal has also greatly encouraged us; I will miss working with him."

Baitcraft offer for carp anglers



Are you a carp angler? Is the cost of living going to make it difficult to buy the quantity of bait you will need in 2023? Angling Trust Trade Supporter Baitcraft Baits may just have the solution for you.

The Angling Trust congratulates Voluntary Bailiff for outstanding work



Angling Trust Regional Enforcement Manager for the South-East Dave Wilkins joined Martynas Pranaitis and Peter Bowers Davis from the Environment Agency - Kent & South London Fisheries Team on patrol at Singleton Lake in Ashford. The visit was also to recognise the outstanding work of Kevin Scobie who submitted more bailiff reports than any other volunteer in the South-East. Kevin is a bailiff at the lake and combines his duties with his role for at the Angling Trust. These patrols and reports don't go unnoticed, and everyone at the Angling Trust thanks him for his service. Anybody interested in being part of the Voluntary Bailiff Service can find out more using the link below. https://anglingtrust.net/enforcement/



Anglers Charity Auctions

After the success and the POSITIVE feedback received after the nhs ACA fish with stars event. We have been offered the Horseshoe Lake again for the weekend 12th and 13th August 2023 for an ACA Social.

£99, Plus BBO, Raffle, Angling Fun and games

Further details on Stars & Company Stands to attend to follow asap keep your eyes peeled

Any bookings can be made via Scott Rowson or Paul Meehan.

Chris Dunn. Get in ASAP to save disappointment PayPal. Anglerscharityauctions@hotmail.co.uk. \blacksquare

Barry and Benn Oconnor join Individual Baits



Ben and myself are now consultants for Individual Baits also known as Steamies. We've known Kristian for a few years now and are looking forward to working alongside him and his team. We visited the factory today and we were impressed with what we saw. We can't wait to try some of their products.

See you at the Fly Fair show!



The Angling Trust and Fishing In Wales will be at the British Fly Fair Internatinal show at the Staffordshire County Showground on February 11 & 12. If you're going to the show to pick up a bargain or two, don't forget to pop along to our stand and say hello!

Shockleader



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:



Angling Trust launches manifesto to protect salmon



The Angling Trust took the plight of Atlantic salmon to the heart of parliament today with the launch of the Salmon Angling Manifesto for England and Wales.

The launch, attended by the fisheries minister, Mark Spencer MP, called for a more coordinated approach from both the Westminster and Welsh governments to protect salmon and to take action to reverse the dramatic decline we have seen in adult salmon in our rivers.

Save on BoatLife tickets



The Boatlife 2023 show is being held at Birmingham's NEC from February 16-19 - and we've got a fantastic offer for Angling Trust members! You can purchase tickets for the event for just £10 - saving £5 on the price of a standard ticket. The Angling Trust will be at the show - so if you do visit, don't forget to say hello!

Great Fishing Prize Draw ... win a day's fishing with a star!



The Great Fishing Prize Draw is back with a bang for 2023 and there are SIX fantastic, money can't buy prizes on offer. Our legends this year are: Chris Yates and Hugh Miles, Jeremy Wade, David Seaman, Will Raison, Dave Lewis and Hywel Morgan!

A Big Thank You ... And A Goodbye

Bev Clifford has announced that she is stepping down as Manager of Carp Team England Ladies. Bev's been a huge part of the team right from the very start, firstly as a competitor and squad captain, then more recently as Manager.

A fantastic ambassador for the sport and Women's participation in particular, she will be greatly missed not just in the England camp, but throughout the world of carp fishing.

We'll let her tell you why below ... but from all of us at CTE we thank you for your service, your dedication, your help, your support, and in particular your passion.

The very, very best wishes from all of us.

A message from Bev:

After being involved with Ladies Carp Team England since its inception in 2016 and seven enjoyable years firstly as team captain and then taking over as manager it's time for me to hand the reins over. My reasons for leaving are purely selfish as I just don't have the time to commit for the level required to continue to do the job well. All roles within the England Team are voluntary and a massive drain on time and resources to everybody involved.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody that has been part of the Ladies Team over the past seven years, it's been an honour to represent our country together. A huge thank you to all that have sponsored the Team as well, especially the AIR Group for their sponsorship the past three years. An additional shout

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out to KUMU Clothing for the kit designs and branding work they have done for the Ladies Team, and to everybody that has given their time and services to support the team under my management.

The last mention is to Rob Hughes.

the overall manager of the Carp Teams. I stand in recognition for all that you've done for both the Women's and Men's team. There's nobody else I would have wanted to have managed the Ladies Team alongside and represented our country in our beloved sport.

Hosting the Women's Carp Fishing World Championships at Linear Fisheries in September last year was one of the highlights of my angling career and also my life, and on reflection now seems like the perfect time to hang up my Team England shirt.

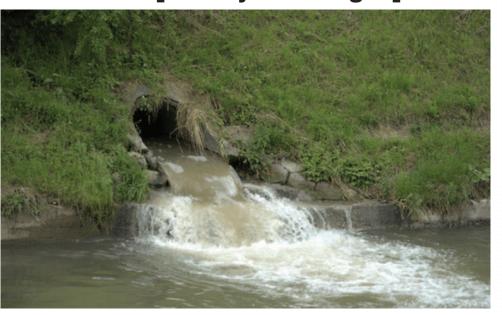
So, thank you all and I look forward to cheering on Carp Team England from the side lines going forward, I'll always be your biggest fan!







Angling Trust calls for transparency on sewage spills



The Angling Trust has called upon the Chief Executives of all the 11 major water companies in England and Wales to come clean about the length and number of sewage spills entering the rivers from their sewerage networks.

Under the Environment Act, there is an obligation on the water industry to fit monitors and publish the data in real time to enable the public to know immediately whether sewage pollution is occurring on their local river. So far, only Thames Water have complied.

Sir Charles Walker to step down as Angling Trust Chair



Sir Charles Walker MP has announced that he is stepping down as Chair of the Angling Trust due to the pressure of work in Parliament following his appointment to several important Commons committees. He feels he can no longer do justice to his role within the Trust while sitting as a serving MP in the current political climate which will only become more intense as the General Election approaches.

Charles, a lifelong angler, was appointed as the unpaid Chair of the Angling Trust's Board of Directors in May 2022. He formally took over from outgoing Chair George Stephenson in September.

Life Premier membership: Special edition version of the JW Young Classic Heritage Centrepin reel



Here at the Angling Trust, we've always tried to make membership affordable for everyone, with current adult membership starting from just £30 per year. However, we have also always offered a Life Membership option for those who can afford to front load their membership fee and help boost the funds for our essential work. Now, thanks to a partnership with one of the most historic tackle manufacturers in the world, we have an exciting new option – Life Premier Membership.

Life Premier Membership at £850 not only gives you all the existing benefits of being a member of the Angling Trust for the rest of your life, it also comes with something rather special - the first 100 people to join as Life Premier members will receive a special edition Angling Trust version of JW Young Classic Heritage Centrepin reel.

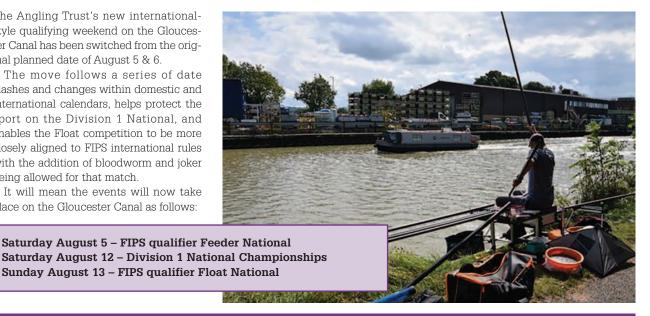


Date switch for Float and Feeder Nationals

The Angling Trust's new internationalstyle qualifying weekend on the Gloucester Canal has been switched from the original planned date of August 5 & 6.

The move follows a series of date clashes and changes within domestic and international calendars, helps protect the sport on the Division 1 National, and enables the Float competition to be more closely aligned to FIPS international rules with the addition of bloodworm and joker being allowed for that match.

It will mean the events will now take place on the Gloucester Canal as follows:



Free thermal hat worth £20 with any Zerofit baselayer

We've partnered with Japanese baselayer specialists Zerofit to offer anglers a free Thermal Bobble Hat worth £20 with any baselayer purchase from www.zerofit.co.uk. Simply enter the code FREEHAT-TRUST when checking out.

For complete insulation against freezing temperatures, the Zerofit Heatrub Ultimate Baselayer (£55) offers five times the warmth of a standard product thanks to clever 'Heat Threads' on the inside of the garment that are highly effective at keeping you toasty warm in temperatures as low as -10° Celsius.

And remember to enter FREE-HATTRUST when you checkout at www.zerofit.co.uk to receive your free Thermal Bobble Hat worth £20!



Apply now for funding to improve your fishery



There's just over one month left for clubs, fisheries, NGOs, local authorities or other anging organisations to apply for a share of £500,000 from the Environment Agency's Fisheries Improvement Programme.

Money for projects to improve habitat and facilities for anglers will be made available through the fund which comes directly from fishing licence sales. The fund can also help fisheries become more resilient to the impact of climate change.

England Squad Announcement for Home Nations Event

The squad has been announced for Carp Team England ladies forthcoming fixture at the Home Nations International on the 2-4 March.

Scotland host the event at their nominated home venue, Sunnyside 2 Lake, on the Wyreside complex near Lancaster

The rod squad pairs are as follows:
Ellen Beedham (captain) /
Theresa Biggs
Aimee Eaton / Katy Alyward
Sam Hoskins / Antonia
Bevilacqua
Captain Ellen Beedham also stands

Captain Ellen Beedham also stands in as interim Manager and making her debut is Kent's Katy Aylward. Aimee Eaton makes her first full start. Chloe Dodson Shanks will be in support.

2023 sees Scotland enter the Women's Home Nations event for the first time. It has historically been contested between England and Wales



since 2016, and more latterly as a Tri nations event involving Holland until the commencement of the Women's World Championship in 2019.

In addition to the Tri Nations Trophy England and Wales will also bat-

tle it out for the Clifford Cup, carp fishing's version of Rugby's Calcutta Cup.

More details of the event will be available across Carp Team England's Facebook page. ■

Young carpers to get chance to fish for England

England's best young carp anglers will get the opportunity to represent their country in 2023 and beyond after the sports' world governing body announced a new U22 Carp Fishing World Championships.

Carp fishing is one of the fastest growing categories within the FIPSed line up with 34 nations now registered for the senior's class, which the Outlaw Probacked Team England squad won gold medals at last September.

The women's class is growing strongly following its inclusion last year too, with England hosting the World Champs event on home soil last Summer and claiming a well-earned team silver.

Now, with the addition of a youth section – due to start this year – our younger anglers will be able to compete too.

Chair of the FIPSed Carp Fishing Technical Committee and Angling Trust Carp Team England Manager, Rob Hughes, has been the driving force behind the inclusion of both the Women's and the new U22 Youth categories.

"It's clear that carp fishing is hugely popular all around the world and, having established the hugely successful women's class a couple of years ago, the next natural step is to bring in a youth squad," said Rob.

"There are loads of talented youth anglers that love to fish in competitions but would not be able to compete for their countries under the current system. This new category will allow them to do just that and give managers the opportunity to build a talent pathway from junior through to senior international level."

The inaugural World Cup will be held as an exhibition event in France in September 2023 with a full World Championships planned for 2024, to be hosted in either Latvia or Italy.

The Angling Trust will be seeking CVs from applicants for Carp Team England U22 at the end of February with trials and assessment days planned for April – watch

this space for updates. To qualify, competitors must be under 22 years of age on the 31st of January of the year preceding the









COOL OXES

Petromax Cool Boxes are sturdy, independent ultra-passive cooling systems specially made for outdoor use. Operated using commercially available ice, cold packs or dry ice, the double-walled, void-insulated Cool Boxes keep ice cool for up to 12 days on end without electricity or a generator.

Available in three sizes and three colours, there's a Cool Box for all your outdoor adventure needs.





Baitworks catch report - Eyes on the Prize

@londongav78 kick starts the week in style with the queen of Wraysbury 1. THE LONG SUTTON at 51lb 8oz. We believe this is her only ever winter capture and her biggest weight! Gav spotted a fish show near some snags close to an island so dispatched one of our yellow Scent from Heaven pop ups close to the show. The next morning it burst into life and the rest is history. Big well done Gav from everyone at Baitworks HQ.



Big up to Daley Horner on an amazing January result fishing Cromwell Lakes. Daley said: "What a crazy session this was landing 24 fish from 25 bites with this mirror been the biggest of the hit going 43lb. I also had a few nice 30s along the way too. Plenty of Mark 1 and ISO fish did the business all week with a $sprinkling \, of \, hemp \, too \, kept \, them \, bites \, coming \, through \, some \, big$ winds and low pressures. What an amazing result for this time of year." Congratulations, Daley. #wintercarpfishing #mainlinebaits #carpfishing #fishing #bigcarp









'The Northey A Team' Baz Delderfield

Beginning his campaign on the snaggy Fenland Pit, it didn't take long for Barry to begin catching from the off. Targeting intimate, often neglected zones, Baz used stealth to his advantage, fishing light leads over spreads of boilie, looking to ambush carp as they moved around the channels between the islands. Size 4 Kamakura Choddys fished on his trademark long, combi-multis yet again proving successful as in $a \ relatively \ short period \ of angling, Baz \ ticked \ off \ many \ of the \ lake's \ A-team, topped \ with \ 'Canon' \ in \ the \ late \ summer.$ @barrydelderfi@barrydelderfielde.#KordaMindset#TeamKorda#BigCarp





Billy Kingston made the most of the recent floodwater on Lagoon, braving the mud and sub-zero conditions to bank this stunning 33-8!





rewarded in spectacular fashion with his first fish of the year! The bite came at 3.45 am as the rain lashed it down, but Bruce was soon on to the spectacular fashion with his first fish of the year! The bite came at 3.45 am as the rain lashed it down, but Bruce was soon on to the spectacular fashion with his first fish of the year! The bite came at 3.45 am as the rain lashed it down, but Bruce was soon on to the spectacular fashion with his first fish of the year! The bite came at 3.45 am as the rain lashed it down, but Bruce was soon on the special fashion with his first fish of the year! The bite came at 3.45 am as the rain lashed it down, but Bruce was soon on the special fashion with his first fish of the year! The bite came at 3.45 am as the rain lashed it down, but Bruce was soon on the special fashion with his first fish of the year! The bite came at 3.45 am as the rain lashed it down, but Bruce was soon on the properties of $the \, one-toner \, and \, before \, long \, had \, this \, exceptional \, 30lb \, 9oz \, scaly \, mirror \, in \, the \, net. \, The \, bite \, came \, to \, a \, Milky \, Malt \, pop-up \, fished \, Medusa-toner \, and \, before \, long \, had \, this \, exceptional \, 30lb \, 9oz \, scaly \, mirror \, in \, the \, net. \, The \, bite \, came \, to \, a \, Milky \, Malt \, pop-up \, fished \, Medusa-toner \, and \, before \, long \, had \, this \, exceptional \, 30lb \, 9oz \, scaly \, mirror \, in \, the \, net. \, The \, bite \, came \, to \, a \, Milky \, Malt \, pop-up \, fished \, Medusa-toner \, and \, before \, long \, had \, this \, exceptional \, 30lb \, 9oz \, scaly \, mirror \, in \, the \, net. \, The \, bite \, came \, to \, a \, Milky \, Malt \, pop-up \, fished \, Medusa-toner \, bite \, came \, to \, a \, Milky \, Malt \, pop-up \, fished \, Medusa-toner \, bite \, came \, to \, a \, Milky \, Malt \, pop-up \, fished \, Medusa-toner \, bite \, came \, to \, a \, Milky \, Malt \, pop-up \, fished \, Medusa-toner \, bite \, came \, to \, a \, Milky \, Malt \, pop-up \, fished \, Medusa-toner \, bite \, bite \, came \, to \, a \, Milky \, Malt \, pop-up \, fished \, Medusa-toner \, bite \, bite \, came \, to \, a \, Milky \, Malt \, pop-up \, fished \, Medusa-toner \, bite \, bite \, came \, bite \, bite \, bite \, came \, bite \, b$ style. #dnabaits #redefiningquality #carp #carpfishing #carpangling #carplife #carpwatch #carpangler #fishing #angling #carpy #thatscarpy #karpervissen #karpervisser #karpfenangler #karpfenangeln #carphunter #carpyshots #carpyscenes #carpyness #carpyporn #bigfish #commoncarp #mirrorcarp #bigcarp



Starting the year exactly where he left off... on the never ending roll

Tom Loraine opening his account on a new venue with this lovely chunk of a mirror known as 'Apples'. Tom's preferred soft boom hinge rig, tied using our Tungskin and Recoil hooklinks, doing the business once again. Great stuff mate! #ThinkingAnglers #Tungskin #CarpFishing #KarpfenAngeln #BigCarp



Gotta love it when a move pays off! After not feeling it in his first swim choice, Harry Keys moved to an area off the back of the wind and into some deeper water. Out went a scattering of 15mm Monster Tiger Nut boilies and didn't have to wait long before he was holding this 41lb beaut up for the camera! #dynamite #mtn



It's not very often that we see captures from Ireland, or on social media at all for that matter, so we feel very privileged to be able to share this fish from Damien McCartney, who's been using our baits to great effect over there. 'I was so wrong about the Genesis, but there was one more hoorah to go and I'm glad that I continued to use it. I had spotted a dog otter that evening, so I really wasn't feeling confident, even though I had spotted a big show over my fourth rod. I fish Dawia BR's and to this day, I fish with a drop, always, when possible, to allow the last few feet of line and leadcore to lay flat onto the deck, but still be able to fish with my baitrunner cranked tight. Well, Ryan's fish must have taken 200 yards, with no warning, the reel went into melt down. I sat up so quickly that I hit my head on the brolly centerblock, nearly knocking myself out in the process. Concussed, I proceeded to the platform and let battle commence with the most epic of carp. #genesis #activebaitsolutions #carp #ukcarp #karpfen #angling #outdoors #bigcarp #peche #carplife #carpangler





Pungent squid victim 44.7 common and lake record for Darren Rosser. top angling m8. Freezer bait and cork ball pop up hook bait giving him the 'EDGE' www.davemallinproducts.co.uk







Charlie's Mate at 55lb+!

After having a good year on Frimley Pit 4 last year, Tam Oaks recently moved over to the famous Pit 3 to make a start on her winter ticket.

After a good walk round, Tam located some Carp hanging around the islands - swim decision made! Half a kilo of @mainlinebaitsofficial Cell and Prototype boilies on each spot and a few Spombs of red maggots - giving them something she knew they struggle to resist!

That night she received the bite she was hoping for... kick starting her campaign. However, little did she know what she would go onto land would be the lakes largest resident... Charlie's Mate at an eye watering 55lb 4oz!

Tam is the first female angler to catch this amazing carp, what a way to start a campaign... let alone in the depths winter! #korda of ficial #korda #carp #carp fishing #angling #winter#winterhero

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Having received a few emails from Finlay Hills in recent weeks, it's fair to say he has been getting out there and amongst them this winter. Fishing his local syndicate lake regularly over the Xmas holidays, he has caught a Common of 34lb 1oz, a Mirror of 35lb 8oz and a host of other lovely winter carp! Regularly baiting a spot $\,$ close in the edge with handfuls of Maggots and Boilie Crumb and fishing a neat rig of a balanced bunch of Maggots over the top has proved his go-to tactic! Well done Finlay! #kordaofficial #korda #winterhero #winter #carp #carpfishing #angling #fishingtime







Tom Stokes with a standout capture from the summer of '22, his first bite from a new campaign, targeting a big Cotswold Pit, that's notoriously tricky.

Baiting a deep body of open water, the bite came at first light. 'Having just woken, I flicked the kettle on and sat by the rods, looking out to a flat calm lake, when a silver fish showed directly over my spot. This reminded me of times when I have witnessed silver fish, feeding on the bits and pieces being ripped off the bottom as a result from feeding carp. Just as I was thinking carp may be in the area, a single bleep grabbed my attention, as the Sub Braid began cutting through the water. I couldn't believe it, but I

A pristine mirror, and arguably the highlight of Tom's year. Taken on his favoured size 4 Kurv X and XT Snag Leader Booms on $conventional\,spinners.\,Pine apple\,and\,I sotonic\,flavoured\,plastic$ corn hookbaits helping keep the cray fish at bay. @tom_stokes_

#KordaMindset #TeamKorda #BigCarp







Winter Whacker for Harry!

Congratulations to Harry Collins who fished a small baited area of our Match Activated Cell Pellets in 4 and 8mm mixed with corn and Cell Stick Mix Liquid to bank this stunning mirror. He told us: "On arrival I walked the whole lake and was lucky enough to see a couple shows right on the back of the wind which to my surprise had no angling pressure so I was lucky to jump into a peg in which the shows were in front of. After setting up and having a quick lead about, I managed to find a nice gravel strip behind a weed bed which wasn't far from the activity I had seen. The fish did do the off for the first 24 hours but the 2nd morning they arrived I managed to bank this nice old 44lb 8oz mirror." Awesome, Harry. #mainlinebaits #thecell #fishing #bigcarp #carpfishing #wintercarpfishing



Gary Wood with Clover! Caught on a 48hr session from peg 3 weighing in at 48lb 2oz!



New 30 Alert

This chunky 30lb common affectionately known as 'The Royalty' was landed as part of a three fish catch by Loz East last week on a 48hr RidgeMonkey Tactics Shoot just before the big freeze on Friday. The others weighted 24lb and 20lb both lovely mirrors. Casters, Worms, Pellet and Crumbed boilie in tight clear spots close to groups of fish was the winning tactic..



The perfect way to see in the new vear-Luke Stevenson

Having hung the carp rods up over the Christmas period, only getting out down the river to do some trotting and a spot of pike fishing, I was itching to get back out and with some favourable weather forecast, I got down the lake with a plan in mind.

Targeting a body of open water, I gave them a nice hit of bait from the off, with plenty of small bits and pieces to get them grubbing and fished a whittled down bottom bait on a simple blow back rig.

Kamakura Wide Gapes with long shrink tube kickers, were set up on 10" N Trap soft links, with light leads and super slack Kontour allowing me to keep as discrete as possible. Small mesh bags of manilla crumb were hooked on, enabling a small parcel of bait around the hookbait.

By morning, it was job done, and the last biggun I wanted slipped up, a plump common and a lovely way to welcome in 2023'.

Interestingly, when using the pva bags, something Luke often does in the winter, is to use a small length of pva tape, which he uses to tie his tail rubber in place, ensuring to hold the lead in place when casting.

 $@luke_stevenson_\#KordaMindset\#TeamKorda\#BigCarp$









Mega start to the New Year for Harry Hogan

Fishing a few different venues through the winter, picking off opportunities, Harry's been able to keep the bites coming, even in the depth of winter Fishing with 12lb Kontour straight through, Harry rigs up with Hybrid Lead Clips, to simple blow back rigs, formed with 20lb Kamo coated braid, with size 4 Kamakura Wide Gapes and Medium Shrink Tube kickers. Harry proving that if you pick your venues right $and \ put \ the \ effort \ in, results \ can \ be \ had, as \ these \ lovely \ carp \ to \ 36lb \ prove! \ If \ you've \ been \ out \ catching \ like \ Harry, then \ be \ sure \ to \ send \ your \ been \ out \ catching \ like \ Harry, then \ be \ sure \ to \ send \ your \ been \ out \ catching \ like \ Harry, then \ be \ sure \ to \ send \ your \ been \ out \ catching \ like \ Harry, then \ be \ sure \ to \ send \ your \ been \ out \ catching \ like \ Harry, then \ be \ sure \ to \ send \ your \ been \ out \ catching \ like \ Harry, then \ be \ sure \ to \ send \ your \ been \ out \ catching \ like \ Harry, then \ be \ sure \ to \ send \ your \ like \ like \ Harry, then \ be \ sure \ to \ send \ your \ like \ li$ pictures to winterhero@korda.co.uk for a chance to win some mega prizes! #TeamKorda #BigCarp #WinterHero #CommonCarp #MirrorCarp #Fishing #catchandrelease



A new Wood Lake record

Jim Shelley has continued to get amongst some of Royston's finest despite the colder weather. The biggest of which being this absolute unit which weighed in at 37lb 14oz, a new Wood Lake record. #NashTackle #NashBait #NashLakes #NashLakesRoyston



"Scale on the Shoulder" at 33lb 6oz from Carthagena Main Lake. It's safe to say Terry Frank's first fish of 2023 was a belter. Blowback rigs comprising of size 4 Ape-X Straight Point Hooks, a rig ring and a kicker, tied on with 25lb Rock Bottom Soft Coated Hooklink. #RidgeMonkey #Fishing #Fish #Outdoors

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Innovate Baits catch report

Some lovely pics sent in from Innovate rod Simon and what a great winter he is having on his Beds pit. In between the lake freezing over, he $has \, managed \, to \, bank \, some \, gems \, to \, over \, 37lb+. \, As \, usual \, Simon \, was \, putting \, his \, faith \, in \, the \, Apocalypse \, Big \, fish \, readymades. \, The \, continuous \, faith \, in \, the \, Apocalypse \, Big \, fish \, readymades \, faith \, in \, the \, Apocalypse \, Big \, fish \, readymades \, faith \, in \, the \, Apocalypse \, Big \, fish \, readymades \, faith \, in \, the \, Apocalypse \, Big \, fish \, readymades \, faith \, in \, the \, Apocalypse \, Big \, fish \, readymades \, faith \, fa$ $A pocaly pse \ is \ a \ 40\% \ fish \ meal \ and \ contains \ no \ milks \ but \ plenty \ of \ good \ and \ proper \ stuff \ to \ keep \ those \ fish \ feeding \ all \ year \ round. \ Great$ angling as usual Simon. #legendarycarpbaits #onceinagenerationcarpbaits #apocalypse

Who else follows the moon phases? Peter Topham recently did and was hugely rewarded





Turned up at my north west syndicate lake Friday night at 10 o'clock didn't want to miss out on the full moon and mega low pressure, so put two rods on one spot and the third rod on a rover fishing a bag. The first run was the bag rod which had the new test bait tipped with plastic corn, this was a mid-double mirror so changed over to 2 rods on pva bags, one the test bait and the other on cwgb take 4 wafter in yellow. Saturday night and the Cwgb was away, this time. it was a 31lb 1oz mirror, she is the biggest mirror in the lake. Great angling Peter, solid bags certainly are a fantastic method once mastered.

#testbait #newbait #pvabag #solidbag #angler #fisherman #fullmoon #dtbaits



Congratulations to Jack Meyer on his first fish from his first session of the year fishing the mighty Wellington Country Park. Jack banked this 45lb 8oz mirror fishing off the back of a strong SW wind. He told us: "On the 2nd night of my 48 hour trip I had a few beeps on my margin rod and a slow tighten up of the bobbin. I felt the line between my fingers and with the "ping" of the line I knew I was in! A sluggish fight and into the net she went. I used a baiting spoon with a small amount of 10mm Cell and Cell Stick Mix Liquid and five 15mm chopped boilies with a chopped Cell hookbait on the hair was enough to trick her." Top angling, Jack.



30lb-plus of Grenville's finest for Jack Lamb. Just check out those scales! Nailed on a 12mm Pink Hit N Run over a bed of crushed, chopped and whole Source boilies glugged in the new Shrimp Extract from a windy corner of the lake.



'Roach Head' Oscar Thornton





Daiwa consultant Jack Meyer kicked off 2023 with a 45lb Wellington Country Park mirror carp.

Jack explained "I've been lucky enough to catch every session down welly this season. I did think going mid Jan with the lake only having done I believe 5 carp since beginning of December that more then likely a blank was going to be on the cards. Well positioned traps in a quiet bay with little to know disturbance and i had no intentions on moving them for the 48 hour trip. Not long been in bed on my 2nd night when a slow tightening on my right $hand\,rod.\,I\,then\,felt\,the\,line\,between\,my\,fingers\,and\,I\,knew\,I\,had\,a$ fish on! A very slow fight and into the net I knew I had landed my first 40 of 2023! 45lb 8oz of a proper typical classic welly mirror! Small handful of 10mm cell and chopped 15mm cell on half a chop blow back rig was enough to seal the deal!" Well done Jack



There was no better way to kick off the New Year, than when Oscar landed 'Roach Head' at a massive 50lb+. A New Year's Day bite he'll Oscar, and he continued this tactic well into the winter months. Small size 8 Choddys holding firm, with Dark Matter Boom and Hybrid Lead Clips.

@oscarthornton2#KordaMindset#TeamKorda#BigCarp









Jason Dowling got in touch following a few nights on his syndicate, during this months period of mild weather. Setting up in the teeth of a south westerly, he went on to land 15 Carp, including 2 30's and a fish called Apollo at 42lb 10oz and a new PB! "I'm absolutely blown away and what away to start the year". 12mm Pop-Ups over crumb, hemp and maize all soaked in loads of liquids, was the winning baiting approach, he then fished Wide Gape Spinners over the top! An incredible session. #kordaofficial #korda #winterhero #carp #angling #fishingtime













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...



What A Peach!

Tom Clover with a belting winter capture of The Peach at 43lb 4oz! Recaptures aren't always what we want, but Tom went on to catch her three times all on the Manilla; some fish just can't resist it! #StickyBaits #Manilla



'Phone Book' Oscar Thornton

Decided I was going to come back and have another go for the autumn as there's so many incredible carp swimming about in this place! Seriously didn't except the big one to be sulking in my net after just my second night back.

Didn't do anything crazy, just hung it out for as long as I could after seeing some cloudy water and fizzing which was unmistakably carp.

Moved into a swim for a couple hours, chucked two bags at it and just like that, I've got 50.8 of carp sat in the net. So so happy to have put her in the album! Insane carp, crazy long with a head like a labrador!' Small solids, Supernatural links and Kamakura Wide Gapes doing it for Oscar. @oscarthornton2

#KordaMindset #TeamKorda #BigCarp

Darrell Peck is off to a scaly start to 2023!

I took a little break from fishing through December, but with the festivities behind us, and decent mild spell leading into the full moon I knew the Bayeswater carp would be stirring. Throughout the course of 3 nights, I never saw a single sign, but completely out the blue on the second morning I received a take that resulted in The Big Fully weighing a healthy 37lbs! Fishing with a 15mm Salty Squid pop ups mounted to a Naked Stiff Hinge Rig fished directly on 12lb Kontour mainline.

Size 4 Kamakura Wide Gape X Hooks 1 inch, 20lb Mouth trap chod section

5 inch 20lb Hybrid Stiff booms

Fished over two Spombs of @mainlinebaitsofficial 10mm Cell! @darrellpecky@carpfix.tv#kordaofficial#korda#carp #fishing #2023 #carpfishing #mainlinebaits





Urban extraordinaire Jonny Dodge managed to bag these two lovely mirrors from his local pit a few weeks back. Both caught on 14mm bottom baits over a lightly baited area with a mixture of crumb and whole 14mm Nutcracker and Tuna and Garlic. Available now at www.urbanbait.co.uk and all good tackle retailers

#UrbanBait #TerryDempsey #FullyLoaded #Nutcracker #RedSpicyFish #TunaAndGarlic #StrawberryNutcracker #Hookbaits #Boilie #FishingBait #CarpFishing #Fishing #FishingLife #Carp #BigCarp #Angling #Angler #CarpLife #CarpAngling #CatchAndRelease

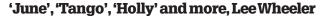


Catch Reports... Catch Reports... Shockleader









Following on from an incredible 2021 on Carthagena, Lee hit the ground running in 2022, again, giving his all on the tricky Lea Valley Pit. With one fish in mind, he tailored his approach, in an allout pursuit for 'June'.

Repeating on some of the lake's A-team, he began to think if 'June' would ever come, then during a trip in the height of summer, after three moves, he found 'June' in a weedy corner, where she swam $confidently\,between\,the\,banks\,of\,weed, looking\,game\,on\,for\,a\,feed.$ $His \, trusted \, balanced \, tiger \, nut \, rig \, was \, lowered \, onto \, a \, clean \, patch,$ as he text his mates saying it was going to happen. The following morning, just as daylight broke, 'June' slipped up.

Size 4 Wide Gape X's on 'El Gray' rigs getting the job done - Ending an incredible spell of angling for Lee.

@leewheeler97

#KordaMindset#TeamKorda#BigCarp























Marcus Wetzl managed to bank 9 whilst fishing a 48hr session on Bayeswater dayticket lake last week. Marcus banked a 37lb 12oz mirror, a 36lb 8oz mirror, 6 mid to high 20's and a 15lber. Well done mate, good angling and thanks for the photos.

40lb Winter Common for Oscar Thornton

Before the year was out, Oscar was keen to get out for one last trip so headed to his local syndicate, geared with the maggot for a night's fishing. Taking his time to make camp, Oscar watched the water in hope of seeing a show, but with nothing to go on, he settled for an area with past winter form, fishing to a deep zone in the open water he'd had plenty of success in

winters past. Three blow-back/flipper style rigs were deployed with small pop-ups topped with 35 red maggot. The rods were all placed on the same gravel patch, where he gave them 15 large spombs of maggot. By morning, he'd taken 3, topped by a mega



43lb common on his wanted list! Super slack Kontour was fished to 5ft Tight Weave Kable Leadcore leaders, Hybrid Lead Clips and 4oz leads. 9-inch N Trap soft links were fish to size 4 Kamakura Wide Gape X hooks, with shrink tube kickers helping turn the hook. Oscar ties his hair to the shank of his hook using a simple overhand knot, creating less clutter than a piece of silicone, yet still trapping the hair in place, helping flip the hook and forcing the hookpoint to catch hold in the bottom lip. @oscarthornton #KordaMindset #TeamKorda #BigCarp

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 $Embarking on a small club \ lake \ close \ to \ work, there \ was one fish \ that \ Scott \ Sweetman fancied. \ Planning \ to \ spend \ the \ early \ spring \ on \ the \ water, Scott \ began \ the \ overnighters \ in \ early \ winter, \ quickly \ establishing \ his \ way \ round \ the \ pond \ and \ on \ his \ ninth \ night, \ fished \ to \ a \ clean \ patch \ close \ to \ a \ plateau, \ baiting \ with \ a \ spread \ of \ Krill, \ fishing \ two \ IO2D \ Rigs \ over \ the \ top \ with \ match \ the \ hatch, \ snowman \ hookbaits. \ A \ mid-twenty \ slipped \ up \ just \ before \ midnight \ then \ an \ hour \ before \ first \ light, \ it \ was \ over. \ At \ 43lb+, \ the \ big \ girl \ was \ Scott's.$

Size 6 Kamakura Wide Gape X's were fished on his newly favoured D Rigs, with a small section of silicone positioned down the shank, extending the 'D' giving the bait and hook plenty of movement.

A welcome bite on a cold March night, setting the spring up nicely. An insight into Scott's campaign and fishing in general can be followed on his Mindset Film, 'Carp Fishing On Limited Time', available now on Korda YouTube.

Catch Reports... Catch Reports... Shockleader







Three of the best to kick off February!

Mark Watkins made a flying start to February on his syndicate, landing a trio of belting fish over the course of a two-night session. As well as two breath-taking mirrors of 29lb 15oz and 29lb 6oz, Mark capped off the trip with a 33lb 3oz lump, with all three coming over a bed of mixed-sized, pre-soaked Bug

Mark said: "After turning up to my syndicate water, I had a walk around the lake to see what I could find, but after not seeing anything, I decided to go on the end of the wind.

"After a good lead around, I managed to find a couple of good spots at 33 wraps. One was in around 22ft of water the other around 16ft. As light was starting to fade, I decided to go on the deeper spot on the left, fishing all three rods over a silty bottom. I put about 10 Midi Spombs over the top consisting of whole 8mm and 12mm Bug boilies. I had pre-soaked some of the $12 mm\,Bug\,boilies\,in\,the\,Bug\,Liquid\,Food, Liver\,Extract\,and\,Hot$ Hemp Oil to lock in those flavours. I then crushed up the presoaked 12-millers in my hands to get all those attractors out and added them to the 8-millers.







A recent day ticket session on busy Sandmartin lake on the bluebell complex ends with some impressive fish for Luke Vallory: 35lb Common; 27lb Mirror and 26lb Mirror. Equipment used: TX ultra rods paired with Aero Technium reels. #shimano #shimanofishing #tribal #carpfishing

"The first night was unproductive, so I decided to change spots to the 16ft one with about 20 Spombs over the top. Within a couple of hours, I was into my first fish, a nice fully scaled mirror weighing in at 29lb 6oz on a hinge stiff rig with a 15mm PB pop-up.

"Whilst I was getting the fish ready to photograph, I was in again with another stunning scaly one at 29lb 15oz, this one falling a combi slip-D rig with a Bug Half Tone wafter. I was over the moon at catching a couple in quick succession for this time of year and was not expecting any more. However, a couple of hours before darkness my rod was away again with the biggest fish of the trip, another stunning mirror of 33lb 3oz.

'Although I had no more fish, I couldn't have been happier getting a few bites in these winter months, which just goes to show the fish can't resist the pulling power of The Bug!"







A New Month, Another 50!

Roger Bacon has had another brilliant result after visiting Grenville again, this time the odds were stacked against him weather wise with sub-zero conditions and mega high pressures that we have been getting.

That didn't stop him landing this fantastic trio of carp though, topped by a huge 50lb 4oz mirror and backed up nicely with a 36lb mirror and 32lb scaly!

That's two fifties already this year, what a start to 2023. Great stuff Roger, epic result.

Carp Fishing # Fox International # Winter Fishing # Winter Carp#WinterCollection #MirrorCarp #BigCarp #BC #Carp #CarpAngling





Edward Kingsbury catch report

A cracking start to the year for Edward Kingsbury over on the Bluebell Complex, landing 3 mega ones and topping the session off with a Pb at 44lb on the nose!

Choosing to fish Sandmartin, Ed headed straight for the middle of the lake, fishing 20 wraps to a clean area and loaded the spot with 3 kilos of Mannila crumb, pellet, hemp and corn. The action didn't take long in coming, which goes to show even in these colder temperatures if you get the location right, they are certainly willing to feed.

Great result; well done Ed! #StickyBaits #Manilla



Owen Flack catch report

Just packing up, when the right-hand rod busted off resulting in an epic scrap which I finally won!! 39.4oz Thanks Jim Chisnall and Ben for the photos.



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In this issue:

- Geoff Anderson
- HayMax
- Whitby



We celebrate the 25th anniversary with a special Black Edition



Raptor has never been seen in a black disguise before. We have sold enough Raptor jackets to promise you something unique. Historically, we have had a complaint rate of less than 0.5 % in the past 25 years. Regardless of the water column pressure, the choice of materials and construction has proven that nothing works better in real life than the the way we have designed Raptor. It is not without reason that Raptor is named after a predatory dinosaur. A species that developed and perfected its skills, and ended at the top of the food chain as the ultimate hunter. Similarly, the Raptor jacket's evolution has resulted in a perfection of its features. A jacket design where waterproofness, strength, and mobility are united in a crispness of simplicity. For this reason, the style has always attracted beginners as well as pro guides.

How Anglers Can Stave Off the Sneezes

Angling should be an enjoyable and peaceful pursuit, but if you have hay fever it's anything but. Pollen from the grass on riverbanks, fields, verges and lawns is the main culprit and it affects around 95% of sufferers, causing unpleasant symptoms such as sneezing, sniffling and watery eyes.

However, help is at hand in the form of HayMax organic drug-free allergen barrier balm, which is perfect for angling as it is non-drowsy...

A great way to reduce the severity of your hay fever symptoms is to reduce the amount of grass pollen entering your body.

Everyone can tolerate a certain amount of pollen in their body without reaction. But once this amount is exceeded – known as the trigger level – hay fever symptoms will start to occur.

HayMax organic drug-free allergen barrier balms work by stopping grass and other pollens getting into the body. And they're perfect for anglers because they're drug-free with no drowsy side-effects so won't spoil your enjoyment.

HayMax is easy to use; simply

apply a small amount around the rim of the nostrils and bones of the eyes before going out fishing or outdoors, and as necessary during the day.

HayMax has been proven in independent studies to trap all types of pollen, as well as dust and pet allergens, before they enter the body [1], [2]. An independent study by NPARU* found that when applied around the rim of the nostrils, HayMax trapped over one third of pollen grains [2].

In an independent survey by Allergy UK, the leading national charity providing support, advice and information for those living with allergic disease, 80% of respondents said that HayMax worked for hay fever [3]. Many people report that HayMax works straight away, and in the same survey, 94% of participants found HayMax quick to be effective. 44% said that it worked immediately and a further 35% said that it worked within an hour or two.

Previously in July 2014, almost eight out of ten survey respondents said the balm helped some or all of their hay fever symptoms [4].

HayMax can also be used whilst

driving and operating machinery, and will not adversely affect your performance at work, school, during exams or while taking part in sporting or fitness activities.

It has been used successfully by two Olympic athletes, with many doctors in the media regularly talking about it. HayMax has attained The Allergy Friendly Product Award from Allergy UK, awarded to products that are potentially of benefit to people affected by allergy, asthma, or sensitivity and are unlikely to cause a reaction

It is 100% natural, certified organic by the Soil Association and carries the Vegetarian Society Approved vegetarian trademark. In all, HayMax products have gained over 50 awards from various consumer and trade bodies and organisations.

HayMax organic drug-free allergen barrier balms have a rrp of £8.49 per pot and are available from independent chemists, pharmacists and health stores, Holland & Barrett, Booths, Ocado, selected Superdrug and Boots, on 01525 406600 and from www.haymax.biz.



Whitby launches handy new multipurpose pocket knife for everyday carry

Whitby Knives, specialist in durable and dependable products for over 60 years, has expanded its range of multipurpose pocket knives suitable for legal everyday carry in the UK. With four essential tools, the company has added the Whitby KENT+ EDC knife to its collection.

An ideal compact multipurpose

pocket knife for a wide range of tasks in the home and on the move, the handy KENT+ is based on the brand's bestselling Kent range. It features the range's popular dual colour handle design with the addition of four essential devices ideal for tackling a range of everyday tasks.

Weighing just 108g, so users can

carry it around with ease, the KENT+EDC features a 5.7cm (8.7cm closed length) plain blade knife with finger hole made from tough, corrosion resistant 12CR27 steel. In addition, it offers a handy flat head screwdriver, scissors and a Phillips screwdriver with cap lifter. Ideal for those who like to be prepared wherever they go, the KENT+ EDC comes is available in a choice of five eye-catching colours: Lava Orange (pictured), Carbon Fibre Pattern, Cactus Green, Black Pakka-

Priced at £29.95, the Whitby KENT+EDC is available to purchase now from www.berryuseful.co.uk. A Whitby Kent+ black nylon sheath with a handy 1.75" belt loop can be purchased separately for £2.95.

Yates and Hugh Miles!

wood and Olive Wood.

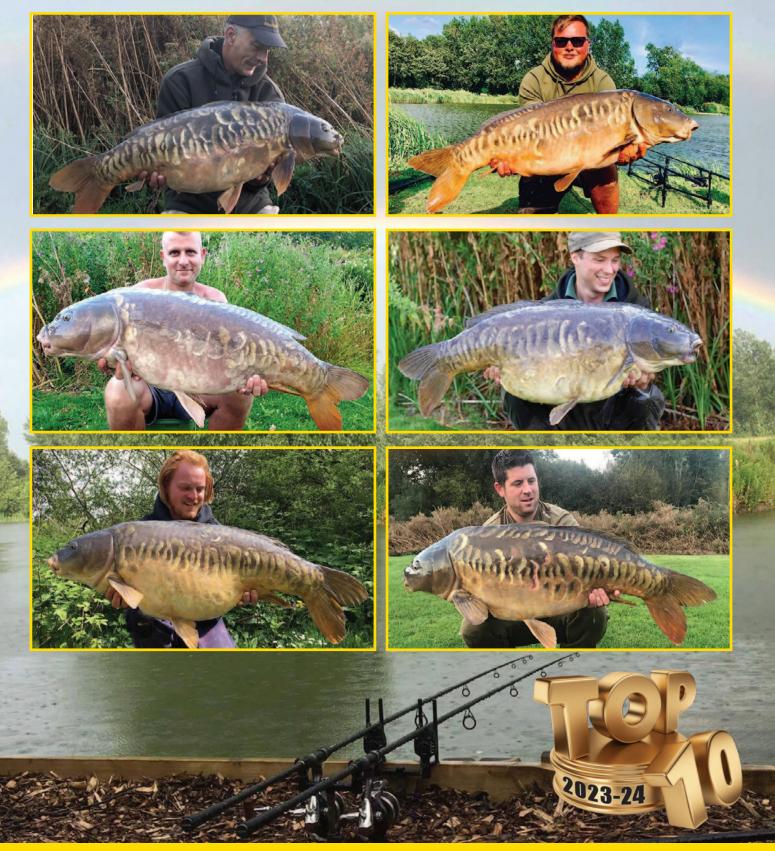




The date in July '23 will be agreed between the prize winner, Hugh and Chris and will be a relaxing day of traditional fishing for Tench, crucians and carp in deepest Dorset, with Chris's storytelling and Sue's famous cake washed down with Chris's Kelly Kettle tea.

Tickets are just £5 - buy yours at anglingtrust.net/the-great-fishing-prize-draw-2023

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The Cottington Chronicles

By Barry Oconnor

haven't written an article about Cottington's Lake Pepper for about a year now mainly due to the fact that we do a lot of filming on there. So, I thought I'd go back over the last year and take a look at what we caught. Although we do go to other lakes our hearts are at Cottington and we like spending as much time as we can on there. It's a great venue to fish. There are many big carp in Pepper Lake including loads of twenties and thirties and of course several forties. The carp are mostly stunning big plated ones that can go to high weights. The fishing on Pepper can at times be soul destroying and on other occasions seem fairly easy, but if you get your tactics right the rewards will come

I'll start this article by taking us back to December 2021 when Ben and I were in one of the winter series of matches that we run on Cottington Pepper. Only nine pairs can take part in these matches which makes it so exciting. The weather was atrocious with strong winds and heavy rain. Nevertheless, all the competitors were up for it. We came out third in the draw and chose what we thought would be a very good swim given the weather conditions. The on and off rain and wind battered us throughout the competition but we still managed to catch. In fact, we had three carp including a stunning 42lb Mirror. This was enough to secure first place.

Staying with December we had

another trip to Pepper not long after the match. Ben went in to one of his favored swims and so did I. Our preferred bait at Cottington is Banoffee flavoured boilies. In our experience a lot of bait is not needed on Pepper. In fact, we only take a kilo each on each trip and sometimes come home with some. Some anglers have caught over big beds of bait but this is not the norm on Pepper. We like to keep it to a minimum. Our rigs have been time tested at Cottington and have served us well over the years. By rigs I mean bottom bait or pop-up rigs. Although a picture speaks a thousand words, I'll explain the construction of our rigs. Firstly, we take a length coated braid, strip off about four inches of coating and tie a small hair loop in



41lb 8oz, December 2021.

The Cottington Chronicles **Exclusive**



42lb winter Elitez, December 2021.



43lb 6ozz, December 2021.



42lb 6oz Winter Elite, February 2022.



25lb 10oz Winter Elite, February 2022.



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37lb 5oz, April 2022.



41lb 11oz, April 2022.

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 $32 lb\, 4 oz\, Floater\, Bailifs,\, May\, 2022.$



34lb 2oz, Bailifs floater May 2022.



34lb 6oz,Bailifs floater May 2022.



34lb 7oz, Bailifs floater May 2022.

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34lb 12oz, Bailifs floater May 2022.



35lb 10oz, Bailifs floater May 2022



37lb 4oz, Bailifs floater May 2022.



39lb 4oz, Bailifs floater May 2022.







These mixers work a treat.

Simple but affective.

one end. A size four Deception DX Curve micro barb hook is then placed on the hooklink. Before tying the knot, a boilie is placed on the hair loop. The hooklink is then pulled through the eye of the hook until the boilie just touches the bend of the hook. The hook is now tied on using a knotless knot. A small piece of silicone tube is threaded onto the hooklink and over the eye of the hook. This is to trap the line opposite the point of the hook. A piece of shrink tube is also threaded onto the hooklink and onto the eye of the hook. If you have stripped enough coating off there should now be about an inch of braid coming out of the shrink tube with the rest coated. This can now be steamed to form an angle on the hook. Trim the hooklink so that it is about five inches long. This can now be tied to the swivel. We use snap links in our fishing so we tie a loop on the end of the hooklink to accommodate this. The session was a successful one which saw us both catch a forty. Ben had a 41lb 8oz Mirror and I had a 43lb 6oz Mirror. Both

carp were stunning in their winter colours.

A couple of trips in January 2022 resulted in four twenties being caught. It was interesting to note that we fished from four different swims on these two trips in the middle of winter with pleasing results. The February winter weather was much the same as January cold, wet and windy. Another match had been planned for February and once again we were battling eight other pairs on New Pepper. We ended up in the same swim we had in the December match. We had four carp three of which were doubles and the other one was a 42lb 6oz Mirror. Unfortunately, this was not enough to secure first place. We came second with 87lb 15oz. The winners had 98lb. Eleven pound separated us but it was a good match and we were happy with the

We didn't get to Cottington in March but managed to get back there in April. The weather was fine for April but the fishing was hard. Ben

caught a beautiful Mirror weighing in at 37lb 5oz and I had a stunning Mirror of 41lb 11oz. Two bites and two carp landed. I've spoken about our rigs and bait so it might now be a good time to talk about the pva we use at this stage. Castaway pva is our chosen pva supplier. Their products are excellent and we use nothing else. We've been using it for a long time now. It's worth noting that if you have any problems when tying off solid pva bags, Castaway sell pva cable ties. It's much easier using the cable ties than trying to tie the bag off with string or tape. They also have two types of solid bags. One is quick melt and the other is slow melt. The slow melt is good for deeper water. The quick melt is good for winter use. Both are very robust when filling them. We fill them with many different items such as pellets, sweetcorn, ground boilies, hemp etc. The bag then has a liberal dosing with liquids such as flavours, oils, dips etc. We never cast a bait out without attaching a web pva bag or stick. The only

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'.

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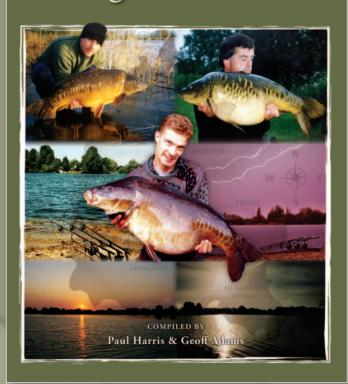
We have brilliant chapters on Newlands from Ginger Robinson and Milton Pools from Stuart Rothwell. Danny Aplin has written about his time on Linch Hill which will just blow you away! His pictures alone are worth purchasing this book.

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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32lb 5oz Bailifs floater May 2022.



35lb 3oz, Bailifs floater June 2022.

The Cottington Chronicles **Exclusive**



35lb 6oz, Bailifs floater June 2022.



 $31lb\,9oz, Bailifs\,floater\,June\,2022.$



These make tying solid bags a lot easier.



A selection of hooks we've used.

Tubing is a must on Cottington Lakes.

time we don't is when we are zig or floater fishing.

May soon arrived and we had a couple of sessions booked on Pepper. May in our opinion is when the carp are waking from their torpid winter state. The carp are on the lookout for food and can be very hungry. This is also a time when floater fishing is in the thoughts of many anglers. We were no different. Being allowed to fish the bailiffs swim we booked two weekend sessions on there one after the other. As we'd doubled up in the swim, we were only allowed to use one rod each as per Cottington's rules. We were happy to do this because we wanted to give it a good go at floater fishing for the carp. We hadn't planned to fish at night. At least we'd get some sleep if it did get a bit hectic

Everything was in place and not being in too much of a hurry to start, we sat having a coffee and chatting about the session ahead. While having the coffee we kept catapulting out mixers to see if we could get the carp to take them. We couldn't see any carp but that doesn't mean they're not there. First one took a mixer then two. It was now obvious that some carp had arrived in the swim and

were taking the mixers. Now most anglers would be buzzing to get started but not Ben and me. We kept feeding them and waited until the carp were taking the mixers confidently.

Once the carp were in a feeding frenzy only then did we cast out our floater rigs. The floater rods were made up twelve pound mainline tied to a Nash Bolt Machine float. Attached to the other side of the float was a twelve pound Double Strength hooklink. We made the hooklink five feet long. This was tied to a Deception size 10 wide gape hook. For hookbaits we were using beige coloured foam.

By now the carp were feeding hungrily so now was the time for us to cast out. Within a few seconds we were both hooked in to a carp each. As we played them we tried not to let our lines cross. Ben coaxed his carp to one side of the swim and me with mine to the other side. A bit of a battle ensued for both of us. Surface caught carp can really give a good account of themselves as they try to free themselves of the hook. As they neared us we could see they were a couple of good carp. Eventually they came to our respective nets and Ben's was a big Mirror. Ben's carp went 39.2 and

mine went 22.6. What a good start! The first two fish of the session and one was a big Mirror. After photographing them and getting them back Ben was quickly in to another one. After a bit of a tussle Ben guided it over the net and it was a Common at 25.6. We continued putting out more mixers to keep the carp occupied and it worked. I had Big Scale at 40.6 and what a fight it gave me. It went a bit quiet for a while so we took the time to make something to eat and reflect on what we'd caught. It wasn't until the next day that we had more takes. Throughout the day we had three more carp. Ben had a 25.6 Mirror and I had a 19.0 Mirror followed by a big Linear at 38.2. That was the final carp of the session. We'd had seven carp including one forty, two thirties, three twenties and one double. As I said we had booked a couple of sessions and we would be back next weekend and we couldn't

We arrived back at Cottington on a hot sunny day to resume our floater fishing. Out went some mixers and while we waited for the fish to find them we set up our gear. As we watched the water first one carp and then another took one. Ben was the



37lb 9oz, Bailifs floater June 2022.

first to hook into one of them. It was a 32.4 Mirror. This was followed by a double take again. Both Ben and I had one on at the same time as we'd had in the first session. We managed to get them in without too much trouble. Bens was a 35.12 Mirror and mine was a 35.2 Mirror. What a brace of carp. It didn't stop there as Ben was quickly into another one that went 32.4. It was the Cut Tail Common. I followed that with a 21.6 Common. As the evening approached the carp became active again and were steadily taking the floaters. Ben had two carp in quick succession. A 34.0 Common and a 32.0 Common. I followed with a 34.0 Mirror. This was turning into an amazing session, one of those red letter days where everything goes right. As dark settled we reeled in and ordered a Chinese meal. We sat gabbing about the session and eventually went to bed. As we said we didn't fish at night although I'm sure if we had we would of caught some more.

First light and we were up and ready to start. Out went a load of floaters and we waited for the carp to respond. It didn't take long and we

carried on where we left off the night before. Ben had the first take of the day and after a bit of a battle a 34.14 Mirror came to the net. The carp had now moved from the left of the swim to the right side of the swim which was where I was situated. They had mostly been in front of Ben but that had now changed. My first carp of the day was Common of 20.0 followed by another Common of 27.8. Again, we had a bit of a lull for a few hours but eventually the carp returned and I was in again. This time it was a Common of 28.2. Ben was struggling on his side of the swim so I let him cast. into my water. I cast further right because the wind was blowing the floaters into my swim and beyond. I had a violent take and the carp darted to Ben's side of the swim. Ben reeled in so I could have a free reign playing this fish. It went here there and everywhere but I managed to coax it to the net. It was a good Mirror. The scales settled at 37.10.

I was well pleased with it. One more carp came to me as we were packing up. It was a Common of 17.0. Fourteen carp in this session was phenomenal. Nine thirties, four twenties and one double. It was a good job we were going home as we were now out of floaters. This was a session to remember. We were booked on again in a few weeks and we couldn't wait.

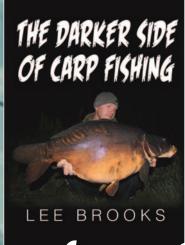
That session took an age to come round but we were as eager as ever to get back on Pepper. The session didn't turn out as we'd hoped. In fact, it fished very hard but nevertheless we had winkled out three carp. Ben had a Mirrors of 32.10 and 20.0 and I had a Mirror of 27.0. Not a great session but we still caught.

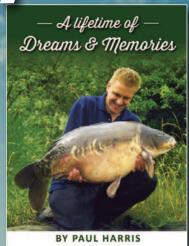
Over the three sessions we had a remarkable twenty four carp including one forty, twelve thirties, nine twenties and two doubles. These floater fishing sessions turned out to be blinders. Floater fishing can be tiring because of the concentration required. That's why we only fished during the day. Can we repeat these sessions? Who knows but we will give it a good go next year. In the meantime, tight lines!

If you would like to fish Pepper or any of the lakes at Cottington please go to their website at cottingtonlakes.co.uk for information on how to

Warm Away the Col





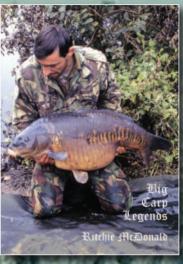




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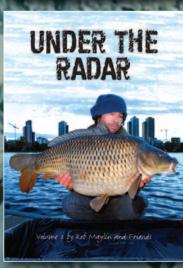


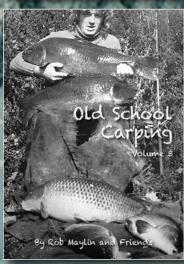








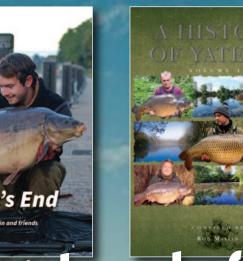






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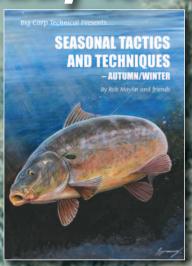


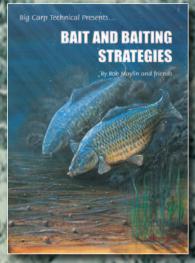


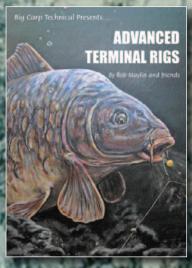


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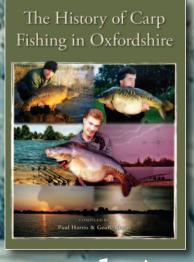


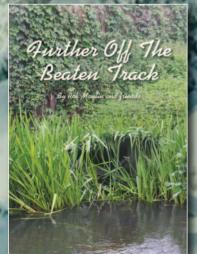


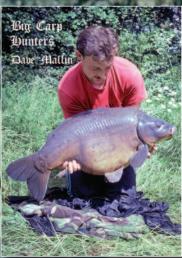












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've been fishing this lake on and off for a few years now for the big girl. Mostly in the autumn/winter months. I had a year or two away from it fishing in Yateley and come back at the end of the spring this year.

I always fish the same swim peg 4, I seem to always do alright out of this swim. First night back on the lake I had a 22+ mirror known as white tips. Buzzing to have one on my first night back on the lake I ended up having 18/20 fish in maybe 10 nights.

I pulled off when two of my mates had the big girl at 46 and ounces and 47. I didn't really fish anywhere in the summer months. Not a fan of fishing for them when they are spawned out.

I came back the end of October. All my fishing is overnighters at the moment. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday are my fishing nights. Baiting heavily, I had a few tench and small commons, after a couple weeks of baiting and not really get into the bigger ones, a big weather front came in, massive winds, loads of rain and double figure at night.

I was meant to be on for 3



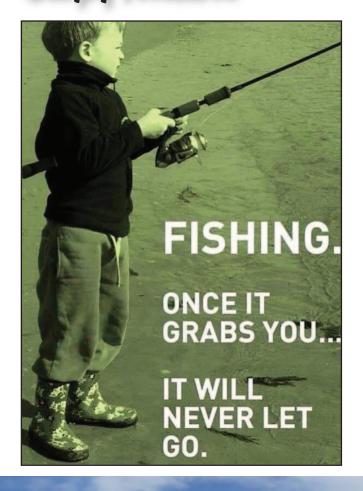


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overnighters. I got down Monday 2nd November about 3ish, got the rods out but didn't put any bait out until dark as its coot heaven on this lake. About 9pm my left-hand rod rips off in the pouring rain and 50mph winds, the worst I've ever played a fish in!

I netted it, a little common, I took a couple photos and slipped him back.

I debated getting the rod back out (I'm glad I did). Got into some dry clothes. Put the rod back out on the money. At about 3am I got one bleep. Then a on toner. I hit the same rod which went before.

It flat rodded me about 80 to 100 yards out. I couldn't stop it! I' looked at my reel to check how much line I had left as it was taking that much! It had never done that before. The fish turned so I gained a little bit then she went again for another 20/30 yards and kiting right.

She finally stopped and I started to gain line. I was pumping her in. I saw her by the net, my legs went like jelly! I knew it was her! I was made up. 47lb bang on. Finally, she was mine.

Proper made up. The best feeling, working so hard to catch her and

finally seeing her in the back of the net unreal. A 40/50-year-old carp and biggest in the lake scar 47lb.

12mm Nash Scopex squid wafter tipped with a tiny piece of corn. Nash Scopex squid boilie, pellet and big dogs only tiger nuts in the mix,

glugged with Citruz glug done the trick in the end.

I went back down a week later for my usual 3 overnighters because the spot of rocking. My rod was out 5 minutes when a 30lb 8oz mirror was in the net! Get in there!!



My Go-to Rig

By Elliot Gray

've built up a lot of confidence in this rig, having used it now for many years on a variety of waters, from tricky intimate UK waters, to huge public lakes across Europe.

Centred around a size 4 Kamakura Wide Gape X, I use a section of Medium Shrink Tube, fished linealigner style on a fairly short length of N Trap (semi stiff).

A number 4 shot positioned just before the shrink tube, not only

ensures the hooklink is pinned to the lakebed but helps turn that hook home. I use this set up regardless of if I'm fishing a bottom bait, wafter or pop up.

A small section of Dark Matter Putty along the hooklink again, helps keep things pinned to the deck, with a section of shrink tube steamed in position, acting as an anti-tangle sleeve.

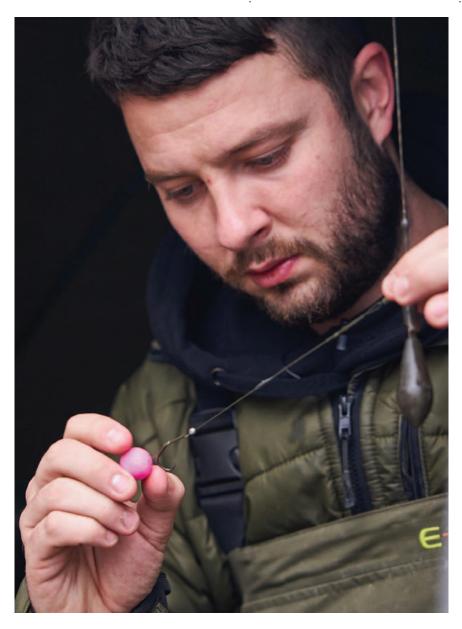
I find shrink tubing just that bit more discrete and neater than an

actual anti-tangle sleeve.

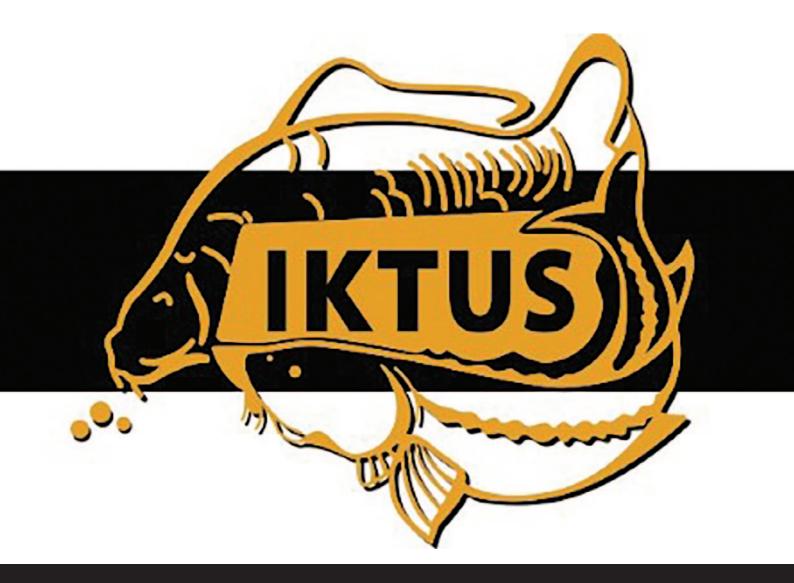
I favour using the heaviest lead I can get away with, yet always consider stealth when getting rods in place. Tight Weave Leadcore and a Sub Braid mainline would be my chosen components to complete the rig.

Elliott will usually fish this rig with his ever-faithful Scent From Hell hookbait, coated in Pink Squid Goo for maximum attraction.

@elliottgray #KordaMindset #TeamKorda #BigCarp. ■







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The Magnificent Wike's Pet

by Haydn Hoskins

he Magnificent MIKES PET at 49lb from the Magical @rk_leisure Wraysbury 1 North. After fishing a night in another swim and catching a Tench (again) I knew I had to move. Back to a swim I've been baiting quite heavily and there were carp about. As I stood there dithering over whether to move swim or not, I received a sign! A massive carp wallows in the deep margins to my right, clearly looking for food. It appeared to notice me and circled away. That sign was enough for me to move, there was a big girl, a VERY big girl in the area!

Back in the swim I've been baiting and I finally get the rods on the spots. I thought I'd put out an bucket of bait over each rod hoping for a night time or early morning bite. So it was, a mix of @officialnashbait small seed mix, Scopex squid hemp, 12 mm Scopex squid boilies and Scopex squid flake, despatched to the area. Just an hour later and one of my rods tears off and completely flat rods me as I lift the rod. Calmly, I get the fish under control and walk slowly back towards my waders. Waders on, net in hand and I'm out in the beach in the beached margins playing a strong feeling fish. As it comes closer I notice the big shoulders, then the width! I knew

straight away it was one of the big girls. Turns out to be the biggest in the pond at 49lb this time around. There is a little more to the story but it's safe to say that this carp had my name on it and I'm absolutely blown away.

BIG love to @domwinfieldcarptickler for reeling and, coming to do the pics and sharing in the moment.

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The Magnificent Mike's Pet Exclusive





Yateley Volumes

3 and 4

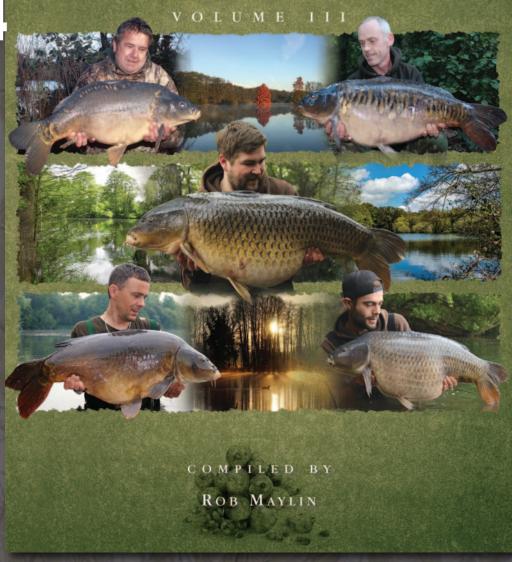
n the time since the Cemex sell-off, Yateley has had a new lease of life. Although those legendary carp like Bazil, Heather and their buddies are now long gone, the new stock has grown and returned Yateley to its former glory. Likewise, its banks may not now be trodden by the likes of Terry Hearn and 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



HISTORY

YATELEY

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!

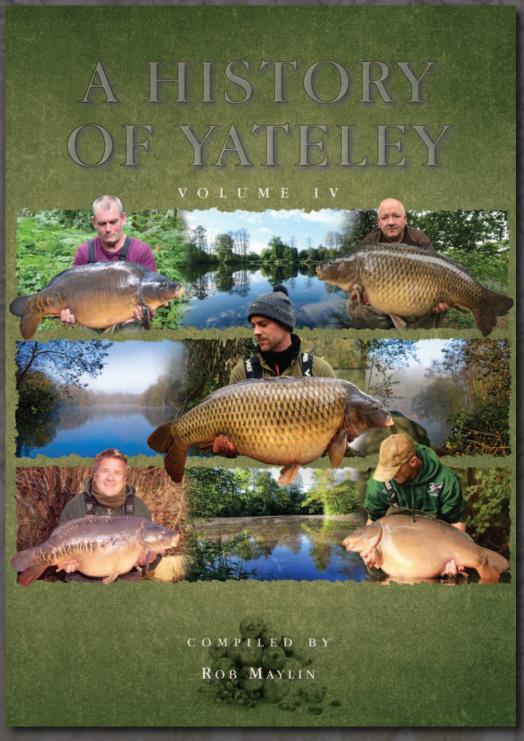
Because of the sheer size of this project and to do justice to all the lakes there will once again be two volumes.

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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The Park Lake

By Liam Close

The lake

he Park Lake is local to me. Seeing the fish grow in recent years had sparked my interest. With the price of fuel and having a busy life with work and family, etc, it was the perfect gap filler to get my fix throughout the summer months. The lake is fairly shallow and is around 17 acres in size. It's your typical park lake with lots of public and bird life. It also went through a spell this year of been very weedy. As I'm sure many of you know fishing this type of venue comes with its challenges.

The lake has seen a fair bit if attention in recent years so the fish are certainly clued up. That said, it does have a healthy stock of fish, made up of different strains of mirrors and com-

mons. The A team compromises of The Big Common, The Big lin, The Zip Linear, The Long Common, The Glass Common as well as few other named fish most of which are 30lb plus at the right time of year. There are also a couple of commons that very rarely see the bank ,that are seen but only occasionally get caught.

Although by modern standards the fish aren't huge, there are some special ones and for a midlands park lake, they are definitely not to be sniffed at. The majority of the bigger fish were from a stocking in the early nineties, and they were not particularly young fish then. These fish were from a water that seeded many midlands lakes and some of those fish went on to become some of the finest the midlands have ever produced. Most of which are now sadly long gone. So,

these particular fish that inhabit the park are some of the last of the old guard.

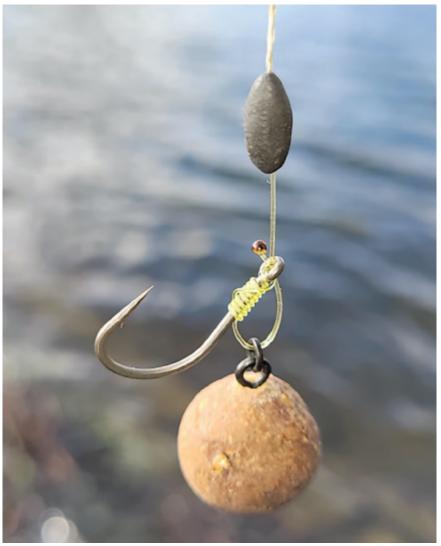
The start

I started on the lake properly in May this year, just doing few hours here and there. I had caught some of the lake's originals many years ago at much lower weights and some of the originals I caught are sadly long gone. A lot has changed since the last time I fished it, best part of a decade ago.

The night ticket did not begin until the start of the June. My day time fishing is very limited, so it was handy been local to do short sessions. I did manage a few fish during these short day sessions including one of the sought-after originals known as the Glass Common. It's quite a rare visitor – maybe one or two captures a year.



The glass common.



The reverse combi rig

I'd also managed to get a fish known as the Crisp Packet Common. I was pleased to be getting amongst a few, including some of the A team early on.

I managed few other fish during some short sessions. The lake was starting to get weedy now and the night ticket was about to begin so I could now fish it a little more regularly and be there at more productive first light hours.

The Night Ticket

I received my ticket at the beginning of June and the lake was now chocked with blanket weed. I very much prefer to use bottom bait on this lake, but was forced onto popups, fished on reverse combi rigs helicopter style in an attempt to get some sort of decent presentation in the thick blanket weed. The tactics worked and I was catching most nights, but it was frustrating.

It was quite unusual for the lake to be chocked with blanket weed and I felt the severity was making the fishing far more difficult than it would have been any other year. The odd loss was certainly adding to the frustration. I couldn't complain too much though, as I was catching my fair share. I knew if I could keep being consistent, a better fish would turn

The loses were playing on my mind though, as I felt that I lost some better fish, as did other lads and I know we always think the worse when we lose fish, but the originals were power houses and although some of the losses wouldn't have been the better fish, I do feel some of them definitely were.

The lake fished quite well and throughout the summer months, I had some good short sessions. Catching multiple fish at times. August was

now upon us, and pretty much all the A team were due. As I said we did suspect some of them were been lost in the weed. With the severity of the weed, sadly losses were inevitable and there was no access to a boat of any kind – it really was frustrating at times. What we didn't know was, that August was going to be a special month for me especially, and the lake was going to give up some of its most special prizes. The weed situation was also going to change hugely in the coming weeks.

August

The summer was flying by and the long days were noticeably drawing-in. We were having some really good conditions and August has always been kind to me over the years. It seems to me August is now the feed up time. The second day of August saw me being able to fish a over nighter and a day session. I had to drop my daughter off at school. So I was going to pack up and leave the lake briefly before returning for a day session.

I had four fish through the night on what we call the Bream pegs, but they were all doubles. There are a few doubles in this lake but to have four doubles in a row, is a little unlucky. So I decided to move swims on my return. My thinking been I was on a group of small fish and with the good conditions the bigger fish were possibly elsewhere. I just had to find them.

By the time I'd got back to the lake and done a lap, spoke to the lads fishing there and got the rods back out, it was around mid-day. I'd moved up the other end of the lake to the previous night after seeing a show between the bridges while speaking to my mate. The rods had been out a couple of hours and I was on the phone to my old mate Nige.

The left hand rod went into absolute melt down, and after a crazy powerful battle that I commentated all the way through on the phone to Nige. The Zip Lin rolled into the mesh. A truly stunning carp, a relic from yester-year. A very sought after fish that rarely sees the bank these days.

The Zip was just the start I needed to August. Finally, another one of the A team had slipped up – only its second capture in almost two years.

I managed a couple more overnighters and a few more fish to

Exclusive The Park Lake



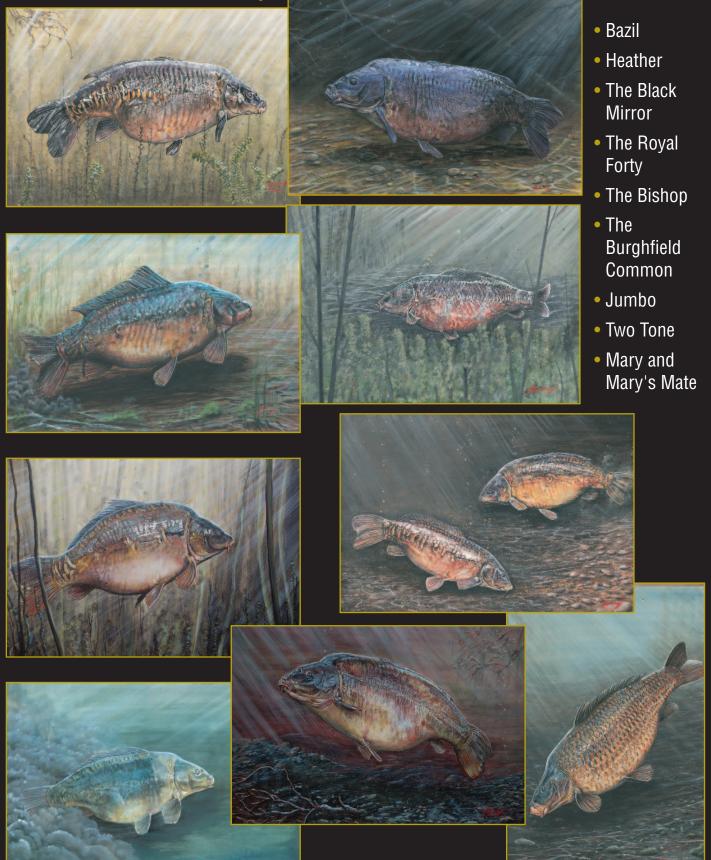
One of many caught on the overnighters, one of the better ones that didn't get away in the thick weed.



The zip linear.

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Exclusive The Park Lake

mid-twenties. During this time, we had some big winds which had shifted the majority of the weed up one end. I've never seen such a fast transformation. Areas that were completely chocked the week before were now completely clear. It was now game on. I could now go back to my favoured bottom bait presentation and lead clip, and the few losses I was suffering from now on, would be absolutely minimal. It was now 17th of August and the stars were about to align.

The stars align

Another long four days of work was over and I had some bait that needed to be used up. I had just received a fresh batch and I needed the freezer space. I know some of the lads think I was pre baiting flat out. This was not the case though. I only pre baited a hand full of times. The night of the 16th of August was one of these times. Now one of the biggest mistakes people make on this lake, is bait during the day. Problem is with the shallow nature of the lake and the number of birds present that it's a pointless exercise.

Baiting in day light hours is just a complete waste of time. Baiting has to take place at night. I turned up just after dark on the 16th and spread out a few kilo of boilie. Now this was a risk as it was Thursday and baiting on a Thursday to arrive on a Friday evening is risky for obvious reasons. The peg and area I baited aren't exactly neglected, so I needed some luck on my side to say the least. To be honest I just thought the bait needed using and it was better out in the lake than taking up precious freezer space. I could have put it into a neglected area of the lake but with conditions I knew that particular swim was the place to be. Sometimes you just make you choice and take chances. I did drive away thinking chances are, somebody else was going to benefit from my little baiting trip.

I landed at the lake at around half seven the next evening. Pulling up in the parking spot, the number of cars parked told me I was going to struggle to even get on the bank I'd baited, let alone the swim. As I turned the corner onto the lake, I couldn't help but smile as the person occupying the pre-baited swim was a day angler

and I knew he would be packing up shortly. After a quick chat he said they had been showing and I seen a few myself. Slowly matey started to pack away. I was really thinking that the stars are aligning and something special was going to happen. The wind was blowing a big south-westerly straight into the swim. It just looked absolutely perfect. I managed to get the rods out just on dark. The spots were baited with a couple of kilo of bait. A mixture of 18 and 15 mm baits with match hatch bottom baits and five bait stringers fished on simple blow back rigs over the top.

It wasn't long before I had an upper double mirror followed by a midtwenty common. By mid night I'd had three and lost one. I had a couple more fish in quick succession at around 2am, a twenty and an upper double. I sorted the rods out and put another hit of bait out. Around two kilo was spread over the three rods. Just before first light the left hand rod was away once again. From the off, I knew this was a better fish. It took a lot of line and felt heavy throughout the fight. After around ten minutes the fish was ready. I looked in the net



The big common.



The big common (other side).



The big lin.



The mid twenty common that put the pictures of the two bigguns on hold a few minutes longer. They really do come in all shapes and sizes in the park lake.

and the big common was lying amongst the mesh looking absolutely stunning. First light was only half hour away, so I retained it and went to my mate Myles on the next swim.

Just as I was telling Myles that I had the Big Common the middle rod was away. I sprinted back to my peg with the receiver in overdrive as I ran. Once again battle commenced and once again it felt like a big'un. Another strong battle out in the waves was underway. Every time I got the fish near the net, it would go on another crazy run. Eventually it was under control and was in the net. I couldn't quite believe what I was looking at, The Big Linear was in the folds of the mesh. The two biggest fish in the lake within less than half hour.

What a night this was turning into, I had had the two biggest fish in the lake. The lads had gathered for weighing and photos. I was half way to the retainers to fetch the common when the middle rod was away once again. The Park Lake isn't the hardest lake in the World, but this really was ridicu-

lous. Another mid-twenty common was in the net. We sorted that one and finally got the common and linear weighed and graphed.

The common went 37lb 8oz and the linear went 36lb odd. As I've said, not big by today's standards, but they are truly special old carp from a midlands park lake. They certainly are not common in this neck of the woods.

I managed to catch a few more that morning before I packed up. In all I managed ten fish that night which is a crazy result, especially having the two biggest fish in the lake in such quick succession. The stars really did align that session. Everything came together. Sometimes it is just meant to be.

I managed few more quick overnighters throughout August. I know a quick overnighter is now a term often used by some to describe a 24 hour session. These night sessions involved arriving at 11pm and pack up at 7am. I don't knoiw a better way to describe them. I was just nicking any little time I had between work and parent duties.

I managed another twelve fish in those few short sessions. A real mixture of size and shapes both mirrors and commons. Really enjoyable fishing.

There were two fish that I really wanted catch before leaving the lake. One being the Long Common and another beeing a very rarely caught common that as far as I know has only done one capture. I knew the Long Common was due though, as it usually does a couple of captures a year. It was definitely one of the rarer visitors, but it was catchable.

The Long Common

As I mentioned, the Long Common, compared to some of the other fish, was a bit of a rarer visitor. Usually, one or two captures a year. It was now early September and I decided last minute to do an overnighter. I arrived at the lake around midnight but I had been walking the lake a little previous days and I knew the fish were hanging around a slightly neglected area. It's a small isolated area behind an island. The fish do get there in num-



Te Long Common 31lb.

bers at times, especially when we get a bit of rain. There's an outflow pole, and the fish really like in there when the pipe has been flowing. This was one of those times. As I set up, the fish were showing in the bay. It's an area better suited to two rods really, but with showing in different spots. I couldn't help myself but put three rods out and settle in. It wasn't long before the left rod was away, resulting in an upper double. Throughout the

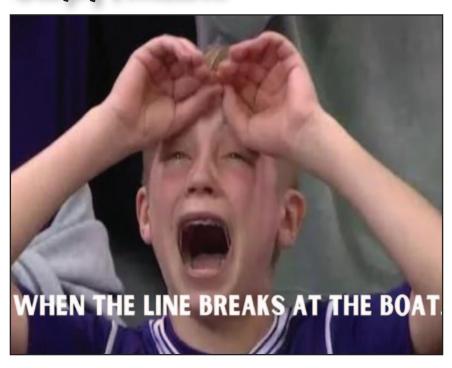
night I managed a few more up to around mid-twenty. Just on first light, the middle rod signalled a screaming take. Once again as soon as struck, I knew it was a better fish. The big fish in this lake just take off across the lake, so you just know when it's a better one

Eventually after another big battle I could see a good common. I suspected which one it was as soon I had seen it hit the surface. A quick check of its tail confirmed. The Long Common was mine.

That pretty much marked the end of time on the lake for the time been. There's plenty of fish to still have a go at that are going the right way and will eventually replace the old guard that rule the lake for now. I hope they do for a long time to come, but the A team are old fish now and won't live forever. But there are some real nice fish to take their place in the future. With it been local, I will keep an eye on it as the years go on and maybe return for another go in the future. For now though, I've just started fishing another special park lake for some real old ones. Hopefully I can get amongst some of them in the near future. Good luck everyone.

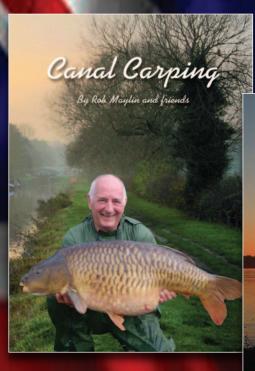
Tight lines , keep 'em bent, Liam Close – (Facebook Liam JC Angler) ■

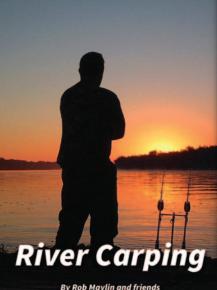
Carpy Humour



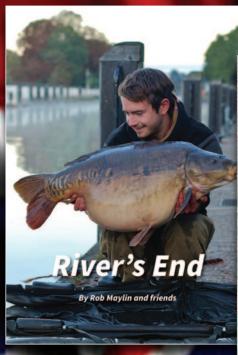
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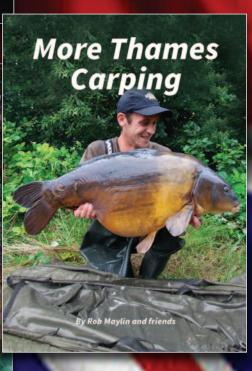












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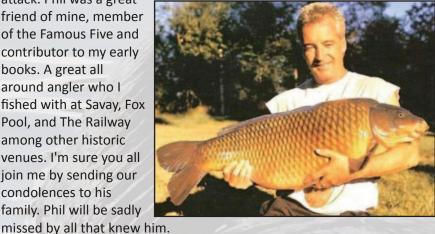


Also available this month, Big Carp Issue 320. Miss it and miss out!

Sadly, we say good bye to two more of carp fishing's great anglers

It is with much sadness that I have to report the passing of two absolute legends in the world of carp angling. Both unfortunately very much before their time. I'm sure most of you will already be aware that Phil Harper passed away just before Christmas and was buried in January close to his home in Tiptree, Essex. Phil had a bad bout of Covid just before Christmas and he was found dead after having a suspected heart

attack. Phil was a great friend of mine, member of the Famous Five and contributor to my early books. A great all around angler who I fished with at Savay, Fox Pool, and The Railway among other historic venues. I'm sure you all join me by sending our condolences to his family. Phil will be sadly



Then in January Paul Forward announced on the social media that he had been battling Motor Neurone Disease for some months, we were all in shock. A few weeks later he lost his fight and once again social media was flooded with people paying respect to this lovely man, Paul was a gentleman, articulate, intelligent, funny and a great angler and writer. Paul had a regular column in Carp World and was also featured in his good friend Dave Lane's books. It's hard to express in mere words how much these guys meant to the carp fishing fraternity. To say they were



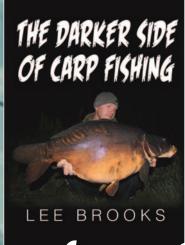
loved would not be an over-statement. Our condolences go out to Pauls family. Two of carp anglings true lends, taken as I said, well before their time. RIP Paul and Phil, that carp lake in heaven has two more swims taken up by two of the best. God bless them!

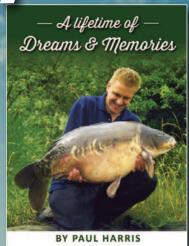


| Carp Chat Carpy News |
|---|
| Carp Scene Reviews12 |
| ARTICLES |
| A Spring Surprise – February Initiation by Adam Freeborn |
| Christchurch by Scott Lloyd |
| That's Insane by Adam Rawlings32 |
| Wasing Way – Part 2 by Craig Runham34 |
| Tour De France – Part One by Clive Williams42 |
| Spotted Fin – <i>Rob Maylin interviews Pele Johnson</i> - Part One48 |
| Fen Drayton – My Story – Part One by Dan Bruton |
| Not for the Faint-hearted! by Garry Atkin60 |
| New British Record Carp Dean Fletcher talks to Rob Maylin64 |
| The Session of a Lifetime, Burghfield, Five Years On by John Hickey72 |
| Twenty-Five Years Behind The Counter – Part One – The Tackle Box, |
| Sutton-at-Hone by Lee Jackson |
| Yateley West, the Future Martin Gardener talks to Rob Maylin – Part One88 |
| Looking Back An Overview of Carp Tackle Developments Since |
| the 1950s by Mike Wilson94 |

Warm Away the Col





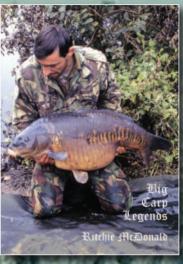




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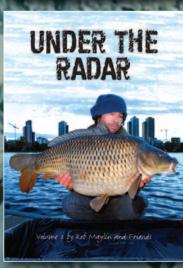


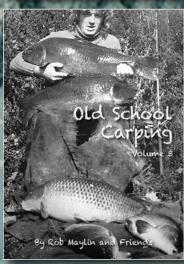








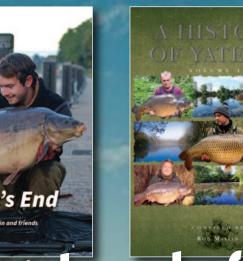






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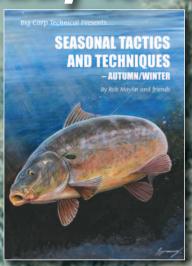


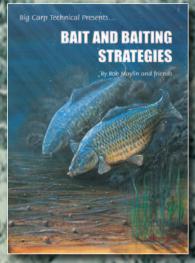


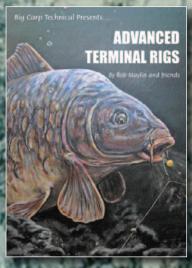


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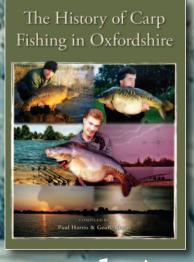


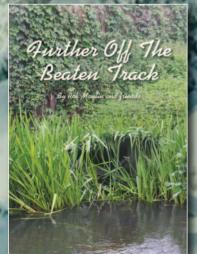


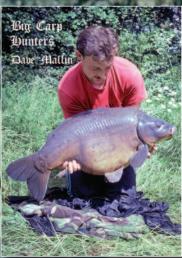












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Urgent request for help from Midlands Carpers

Dear Big Carp readers,

The team at the Midlands Carpers have been asked to organise a fundraising event for the 4 young boys that sadly lost their lives while playing on the ice at Babbsmill lake, Soli-

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 Babbsmill 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 "Babbsmill 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







PAUL RODRIGUEZ

CARP CHAT

Ree line





Les line CARP CHAT

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

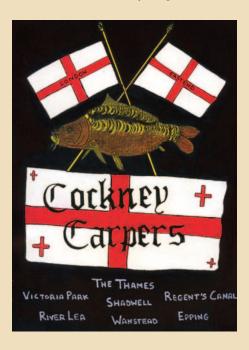


their new year with a bang. Apparently the most popular geezer at the nudist colony is the man who can carry a cup of tea or coffee in each hand and a dozen ring doughnuts. I think it was Phil Harper who told me that one once. Though I don't know how he would know such a thing.

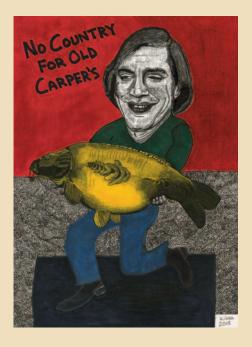
The things on TV these days. I just found an origami porn channel, but it's paper view only. Sideways Sally caught me one day watching a porn channel. So I quickly turned over to a fishing channel. On her way out she said, "You should stay on the porn

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 'Spooner'. Though I enjoy watching both shows, I wouldn't let Ali blindfold 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









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...

Lee line CARP CHAT

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.

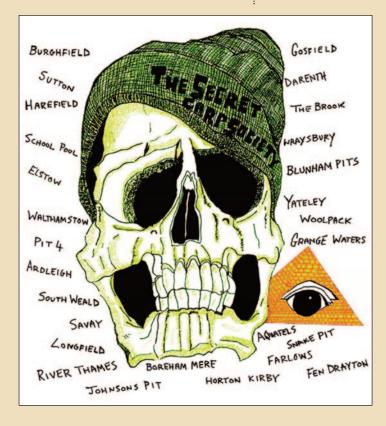
While once walking down the river Lea. On a very eerie dark, and misty Friday night. Looking like a perfect night for Jack the Kipper. I heard a lady shout out from some nearby bushes. Five pounds to blow the baldie man's flute. I thought to myself



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.

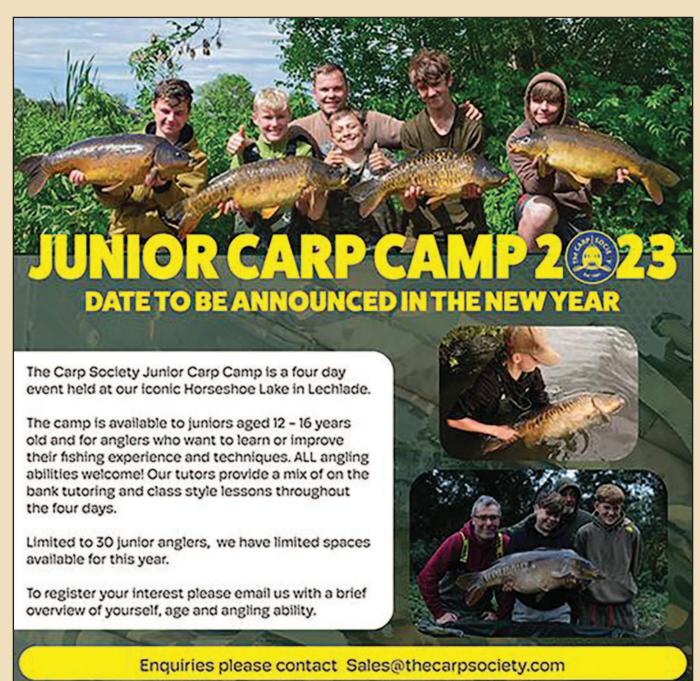
Have it large! Doctor Kibble (Kibsee). ■





CARP CHAT





Carpy Humour







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.

Wide-Fit Ladies Wellington Boots

Over 25% of women have calves too large for traditional Wellington boots.

Wide calf welly specialists Jileon have just launched a brand new purple version of their groundbreaking ladies' boot in response to a Facebook vote by fans.

Fashionable and versatile, this new addition can be worn in summer and winter with all kinds of outfits.

With 26% of women having a calf size too large for regular Wellington boots, Jileon have created a stylish range for ladies who don't want to compromise on comfort and style. They are the widest fitting wellies in the UK.

Jileon's extra wide fit wellies feature a brilliantly simple expanding insert making them a comfortable fit for ladies with calf sizes from 45-53cm. They also come with a thick padded insole for more comfort.

Perfect for a long walk in the country, or for shouting on the side of a sports field, Jileon Purple Wellies combine practicality with style for the plus size woman.

Jileon Extra Wide Fit Purple Wellies are available in sizes 4-8 from www.jileon.com

About Jileon:

Launched in 2006, Jileon are a family run business, focused on providing a range of high quality wide calf and funky wellies at a good price, backed by exceptional customer service. Website: www.jileon.com







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 replacement 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/ragebroadheads/ 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 mar-

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.

(NASDAO 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, Nockturnal® 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.feradvne.com.

Carpy Humour



Lee line CARP SCENE







Carpy Humour



Ezmar – technical design with the natural benefits of wool

 $\label{thm:eq:combining} \textbf{Ezmar2+lined shirt jacket-Combining a technical design with the natural benefits of merino wool.}$

Ezmar2+ is a wool shirt jacket inspired by the Nordic living.

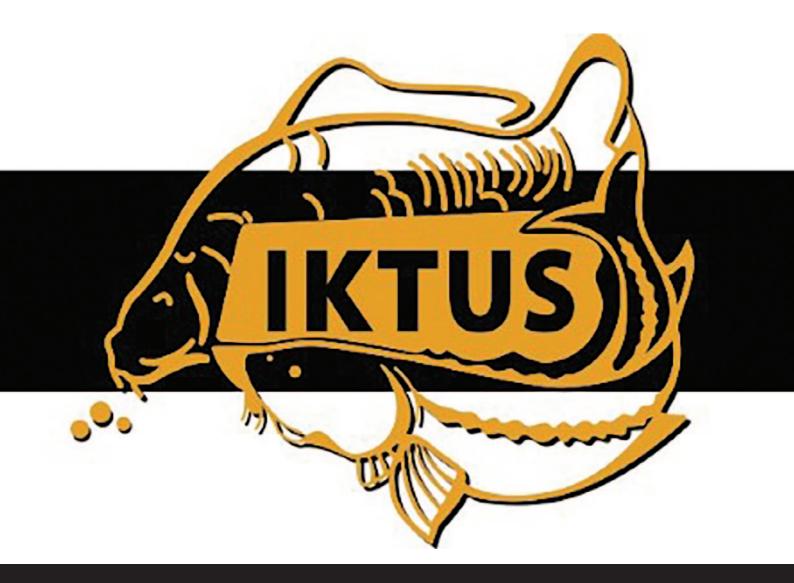
Ezmar2+ represents solid experience in what you demand as an outdoor enthusiast whether you decide to use it for a walk in town or when working you way to the fish of your dreams. Ezmar2+ can be used as a middle layer under your fishing jacket.











FISHING RESORT



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RESORT Ction at Iktus



G DESTINATION - BIG CARP TOP 10 AWARDS 2022-2023















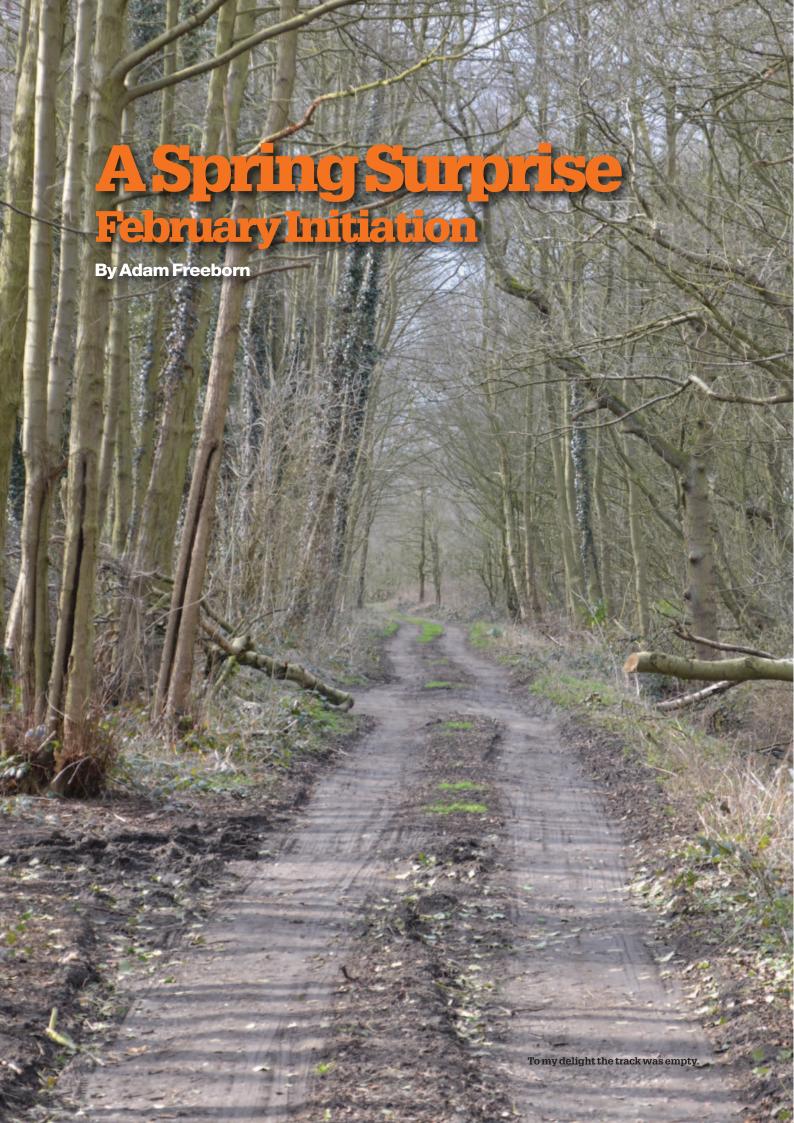












A Spring Surprise February Initiation

lee (ine)

o it was the middle of February, freezing winds and torrential rain, and I was longing for the start of the new season. The thoughts of carp relocating themselves after a winter hidden static in the depths of their damp home is enough for any angler like me to become a 24-hour carp thinking machine. The lake at which my all my thoughts were aimed was a weedy Lincolnshire pit, known for its beautiful English carp, and one in particular that had caught my eye.

Now I didn't get much fishing in during the bleaker months this particular year, as most of the time I was at work earning extra pennies in order to keep everybody happy including myself, thus allowing me more of a free roll come early spring. I could have been interpreted as a fair weather angler, but this was my situation, and a balance between the two contrasting lifestyles was needed in order to prevail.

With no bank time planned for the near future the next best thing was to prepare for the forthcoming season, and on top of list was bait. The year



before a good friend of mine started rolling baits. Everybody has to start somewhere, but over the year his company has grown, with some of his produce accounting for some illustrious carp. So after a few long conversations with Lee (AKA Trusty Baits) I decided to meet up with him at his bait-making workshop. As I walked

down the driveway, which led to the workshop, I could smell those scintillating aromas leaking out, sending me into a carp dreamland. We spent the next few hours discussing all things bait, and after inhaling a plethora of flavours and inspecting the crustaceans within the centre of the parted boilie, on numerous occasions





Ree fine A Spring Surprise February Initiation



may I add, I decided on devoting my season to the 'Crab'. The lead time was going to be a few weeks, so I decided to have a thorough sort of all my tools, giving everything a good clean up and upgrading certain items that warranted it.

A few weeks later...

I got the phone call off Lee letting me know my bait was rolled and awaiting collection. I picked up a fresh batch of the Crab, which was in need of some development in order to be considered superior enough to be slid upon the hair. The 'development' process is nothing special or secret, just the general soaking and curing, which many anglers do nowadays in order to give their chosen hookbait that extra appeal. With the freezer brimming and glug pots oozing attraction it was now just a waiting game, sitting on my hands until the next stage of the crusade was upon me.

Introducing bait from early March was my plan, into a select few areas of the lake I knew. I didn't heap it in by any means, but more of a steady influx on a regular basis. So when the time came to thrust my rigs out onto the desired spots the bait was entrenched and I could sit back with morale high. Until then...

Early March...

So there I was trundling down the ever so bumpy track that led to the weedy pit. With some old school indie tunes bellowing from the car on ¾ volume nothing was going to dampen my spirits. By the time I pulled the handbrake up next to the first Boards the car was stinking of the Crab. I was





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ee Line A Spring Surprise February Initiation



so excited; the carp were going to have their first dose. The lake still looked decimated, with bare trees and large expanses of open water. Fresh air was in abundance as I had good walk round the barren lake, before releasing the Crab into the system. Having fished the lake very lightly the season before, I knew where I wanted to be from the outset. By this I don't mean just one peg, but a number of different spots around the lake. Although one peg known as the Cabin was predominately in my mind, this was for a number of reasons: 1. I had my success last year hear, and 2. The big girls are known to get caught from here more often than not. I introduced around 4kg spread over a handful of spots, then repeated this process every other day until time permitted me to angle for these magnificent fish. The lake holds some fantastic carp, but the one fish in particular that had caught my eye was known as One Pec. The fish in guestion was unmistakeable - big framed, large sloped head and orangey flanks.

I had become obsessed with One Pec, repeatedly looking at old photos of her from times gone by, and was willing to go to any length in order to see this fish grace my palms.

Late March

Finally, the time came, the car was loaded, and I was on my way to the lake. The 30-minute journey seemed like two hours, and before long I was trudging through the sludgy paths that line the lake's banks. After a brisk walk round and not seeing a great deal, I settled in the prebaited spot. In all fairness not much happened that night other than a good old chinwag with a fellow member, and I consumed copious amounts of Yorkshire tea. With the brolly packed down and just the rods left I received a slow take, which resulted in a stockie around the 12lb mark. Anyhow it was first blood on the Crab, and I went home a happy man.

Days later

The new members were due to

start on 1st April, and we all know what happens then don't we? With this in mind I decided to up the amount of prebaiting prior to my next session, which was an expertly planned five-nighter leading up to Fool's Day, probably my last chance of fishing the lake at its quietist.

I had a very close call during one of these baiting trips too. I found myself hovered over one of my primed areas with a rake in one hand and a bucket full of the Crab in the other, when to my dismay a big white transit came trundling down the track. I immediately looked for cover and settled in behind the Norfolk reeds close by, in a very troublesome position. Things got worse: the van pulled up in my primed swim, got out and had a good look for around five minutes, which seemed like 30. How he didn't see me and my tools I don't know, but he didn't, and he carried on down the track. I then quickly finished the job and climbed out of the water with a slight grin and achy knees.

Having not seen many people fish-



The fish I went on to catch after One Pec.





FREE LINE MAGAZINE

e Line A Spring Surprise February Initiation



ing during these prepping trips, I was more than hopeful no one would be angling in my chosen area. I arrived at the lake oozing with passion and confidence ahead of my proposed fivenighter. Gingerly I turned the code into the lock of gate, which led to the weedy pit. I peered down the track in hope of it being free, and to my delight it was.

Setting up that night was a delight, knowing how favourable everything had gone; all I needed was three banging drops and a brew. With all this complete to a very satisfactory level my spirit couldn't have been greater. No sooner had I begun to doze than the middle rod had pulled up tight, and after a lengthy battle I had one of the old original commons moping in the net. I was buzzing. After getting a few shots of the common I liberated him back where he belongs. Pitch-black conditions were present as I fizzed the rod back out to the best of my ability, and I sensed this was the start of something special. Before long my wake up alarm was buzzing away, and dawn was about to break. Everything looked spot-on, but no action was forthcoming, and the sun soon reached its highest point without a murmur from the alarms. I decided to rest the swim for a few hours that afternoon, allowing me to walk to the far bank and strategically apply some more bait.

With dusk approaching, I set about laying my traps for the night. I waited for a break in the wind and got my rods in prime position yet again. I stayed up until midnight that night, thinking feeding time may be similar to the night previous, but nothing did occur, so I retreated to my bag with my alarm set for dawn once again.

This time I was awoken by the best of alarms, the middle rod signalling a few bleeps. I quickly stepped out the brolly as the bobbing slowly descended to floor in not so dramatic a fashion. Without further ado I wound down the rod expecting a bream-like sensation, but to my delight, my initial thoughts were completely wrong... I was greeted

with a solid resistance, which generated a healthy bend in the carbon. The sound of my phone alarm began to bellow from within the brolly, which signalled the start of dawn. Meanwhile the fish I was attached to stayed out at range for a short period, plodding in the depths, before making a charge for the bank on which I was stood.

Quickly I retrieved the mono in order to keep in contact with the fish. As it approached the marginal shelf it seemed to change gear and exert more pressure on the carbon, moving its way to the Norfolk reeds close in to my right. More pressure was applied, and as it turned away it broke the surface. I couldn't believe it; I was 90% sure it was One Pec. Everything was running smoothly until that point, but then my legs then turned to jelly, and my head was up in the clouds. I quickly recomposed myself and played the carp as if my life depended on it. After an epic marginal battle the carp took two big gulps of air, and for sure it was she, the one I had dreamed

A Spring Surprise February Initiation

ree (ine)

about. I then slipped the net under her without any more dramas. I took a big deep breath as I peered over the net, and she was mine, a true spring surprise! It's hard to describe my feeling at the moment, but let's just say emotions were high! I put her in the retention sling for a short period as I made a couple of phone calls to my angling companions to let them know the good news.

By this time the light had broken, and I noticed an angler a few swims down. It turned out to be Jon the bailiff. I kindly asked him to do the honours for me, and he obliged without hesitation. We hoisted her up on the scales and settled on 33lb 8oz. We then took a few lovely shots of her in the morning sun looking magnificent before releasing her back home. As I stood in the clear margins watching her waddle away it was a feeling like no other, a moment to savour. A good shake of the hand from Jon quickly followed before he departed back to his chosen swim.

After all the excitement and eupho-



ria I sat on the edge of the bed chair and began to think about what happens next. I did have a ticket on a new water further afield due to start the month after, but the thought of four weeks with no angling wasn't an option. After careful consideration I decided to stay angling on the weedy pit.

The four weeks soon passed, and to be honest I just went through the motions on there. I'd put that much effort in the previous week, and to

have my target in the bag nothing seemed to be driving me on. Having said that, I did go on to catch quite a few more beautiful carp in this time, but all I was thinking about was the new water and my next big adventure.

The new adventure went better than I ever could have imagined too, having some lovely times and even lovelier carp grace my net. But I suppose we will leave them for another time, so until then, keep enjoying it.



The date in July '23 will be agreed between the prize winner, Hugh and Chris and will be a relaxing day of traditional fishing for Tench, crucians and carp in deepest Dorset, with Chris's storytelling and Sue's famous cake washed down with Chris's Kelly Kettle tea.

Tickets are just £5 - buy yours at anglingtrust.net/the-great-fishing-prize-draw-2023

Yateley Volumes

3 and 4

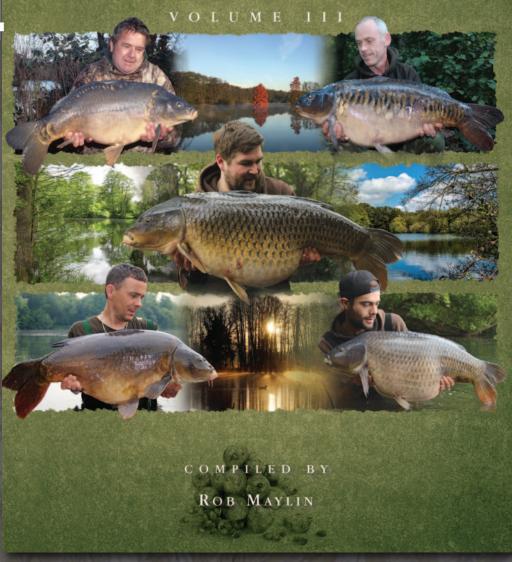
n the time since the Cemex sell-off, Yateley has had a new lease of life. Although those legendary carp like Bazil, Heather and their buddies are now long gone, the new stock has grown and returned Yateley to its former glory. Likewise, its banks may not now be trodden by the likes of Terry Hearn and 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



HISTORY

YATELEY

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!

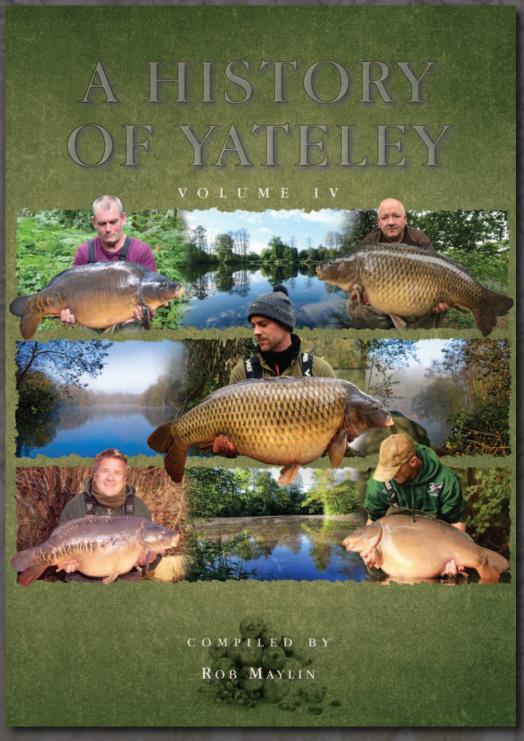
Because of the sheer size of this project and to do justice to all the lakes there will once again be two volumes.

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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Christchurch

By Scott Lloyd

fter my target fish was caught over on Stoneacres I thought it beat to leave it a while before I started back on there again. I already had a session planned, so I decided to fish one of the other lakes on the complex, Christchurch.

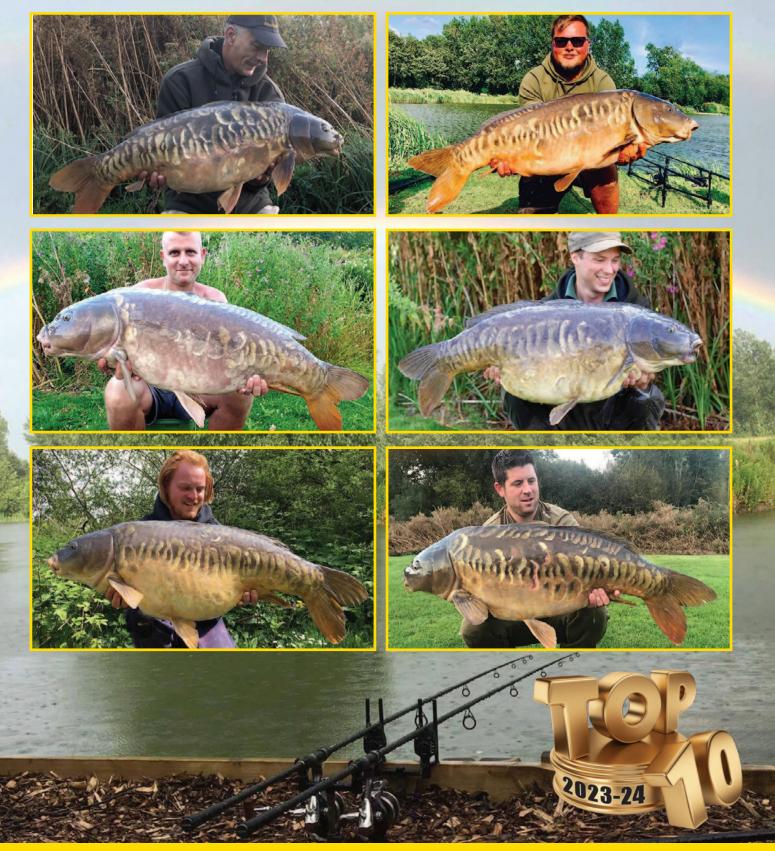
The week leading up to the session I kept in touch with what was going on over there, and Nick the bailiff informed me it was fishing very slow, and very little had even been seen never mind caught!

I knew this was a common thing on Christchurch after spawning, and it usually lasts for about three or four weeks. I got myself down there anyway, undeterred. I had a couple of walks around in the morning and ended up dropping in a swim known as Peg 3, one of my preferred swims on the lake, especially after my friend Jake fishing opposite told me there were fish showing short in front of the swim before I got down.

I clipped two rods up nice and short to a silt gully that runs parallel across the front of the swim and fished them tight together with just five Spombs of bait over the top. Rather than fill it in I fished for a bite at a time. The tactic paid off the next morning, and I landed a stunning 30lb 8oz Christchurch mirror. I moved to the point, using the same tactics and had a 30lb 6oz in the night.



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That's Insane

By Adam Rawlings

t all started with having to work in Surrey on Thursday 10th December 2015, so I got all the fishing stuff sorted out on the 9th after work. I set off to Surrey, and when I got to work I was told it was going to be a late day. This boy was not happy, but it is what it is. I was finally on my way home from Surrey at 18:00, and I got home at 20:30, loaded the car and set off to meet my pal at Rockford for a weekend catch-up, not knowing what was going to happen that week-

I had pulled off Rockford because I'd had some repeat captures of some of the stock so left to try a new lake. Not having much time, the 12 nights I did fish were uneventful other then a couple of finicky pick-ups. So I went off to see if I could have a winter fish off a lake that I knew very well and had done very well on. Nothing that $\ensuremath{\mathrm{I}}$ knew had been out, or so I was hearing from other lads that fish it, and it was not very busy... ideal!

I got to Rocky ay 22:30, set up camp, and my mate was about 30 minutes behind me. I got in to a peg with a lot of water in front of it and cast two single hookbaits long and 200 put baits over the third. Nothing happened that night, but I had good sleep when we finally got all sorted out by about 2:30. Friday morning I woke up at first light and saw two fish show and heard three in the night. "They're moving." I said to my mate... "They're feeding, pal! It's on!" As I was pulling the rods I had a feel of the lake bottom and found new spots. So instead of going to the normal spots at 187 yards it was closer for a change. I put one rod on that clean, hard spot with 5kg of mixed 16 and 20mm Krill frozen baits, and then the other two rods with 2.5 of mixed baits on each

At 1.30 I heard "beep, beep, beep!"

I ran over to the rods and the latching light went off. I sat and had a fag and said in my head, "If it doesn't go again I'll go back to sleep..." Again it went "beep, beep" so I ran over and then it pulled out of the clip. I lifted into it, and it was grating a lot with a little "tap-tap" of something on the end. Then it was just collecting more and more weed on the way in. After 20 minutes I finally saw this weedbed. Not knowing what was in there, I saw a little bit of colour, so I put the rod down and pulled the lot in by the leadcore. I lifted the net up so it was all safe and got my mate Ryan from next door. I said I'd put the tea on and then we can sort it out. So after a tea and a fag and still not knowing what was in the net full of weed, I started to pull it all out. Ryan said, "It's a grey one." I said, "It's bigger than I thought!"

I was still pulling the weed off then the fish moved and rolled over. I

> pulled a little more weed and saw the scale... "Oh my god! Ha ha ha! It's Single! It's Single! She is going to be huge!" After unhooking her in the net, I rolled her up and put her on the mat. Then up she went onto the scales. They were bouncing all over, but finally we settled on 59lb 6oz, which smashed my PB! Oh my god! That's insane. I sat up all night with excitement and then 12 people came down for photos and to enjoy this moment of insanity. What a time it was with GoPro footage and lots of photos, and then back she went to a wet world of dreams. A big shout goes out for all the text messages, photos, videos and the lads that were there. Also thanks to Sticky Baits for all they do ... spot on! Thanks, peeps.



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(Above) Taking the strain of the mirror – a moment I will never forget. (Below) At thirty-nine pounds and eight ounces its length was simply immense. Also it was a new PB

Charity Is Rewarding

t was around end of May that a friend, Andrew Smith, and I placed a bid in a charity auction to win a forty-eight hour session on Cranwells, the syndicate at Wasing and home to the Parrot, Britain's biggest mirror. We bid with a worthy amount, and two weeks later we received confirmation that we had outbid everyone and had won the ticket. We decided to book our forty-eight hour session in the middle of November. We decided to go later on in the year as the place would be quieter and the fish would be in peak condition. Some people thought we were mental booking on so late! I still had the other lake at Wasing to think about.

It was soon mid-November and our trip to Cranwells was coming up. We were both overexcited about having the chance, no matter how slim, of taming the Parrot. We were like kids at Christmas in the weeks running up to using our forty-eight hours. We were hatching a plan before we had even seen the place. The syndicate at Cranwells has a long waiting list. I have waited years for my name to come up, and I am still a little while away from getting a ticket for the exclusive lake. Just fishing a lake that

contains a fish over sixty pounds would be an honour. It was an experience not to be missed, that's for sure.

The alarm went off at 6.30am the morning of our trip. As I turned off the alarm I noticed I had a message from Bernie Loftus claiming he had caught his target fish in the shape of the Parrot, and at over sixty-four pounds too. He asked when would I be down and could I do the photos. I shot out of bed and messaged Smithy what we were about to witness. He was excited and thought at first I was joking. We were about to witness a sixtyfour pound mirror, the biggest mirror known in Britain. We both met up on the track to Cranwells and headed off in search of Bernie. I grabbed a few beers from the fridge, as I knew this was worth celebrating. Clutching some ice-cold beers we headed for a swim named Lawns and were soon met with the beaming face of Bernie. It was true - it was job done for him. Well done, Bernie. After a beer each we decided it was time to do the photos. I must add it was a privilege to take photos of such an immense fish and for a top guy such as Bernie.

After the immense beast was returned, we set about walking the lake, but after two laps we had nothing to go at. We had seen one fish





show whilst sitting with Bernie. The lake was fairly busy, so as Bernie had been fishing the lake for a while we asked him what his best opinion was. He was off in a few hours so we should jump in behind him is what his reply was. To be fair it looked a good option, as we hadn't seen anything else anywhere to go on.

Bernie vacated the swim and wished us good luck, leaving us to set up and set about getting the rods out. Smithy opted for the right hand side and could fish to where the fish showed in the morning. The depth in this area was only 3ft, and with swans aplenty he searched for a slightly deeper area a bit further out. Eventually he settled on an area of 6ft past the weed beds. I found a nice silty area at around sixty yards' range and put two rods there over around a kilo of Cell. I knew the Cranwells fish loved the Cell, as the lake had seen plenty of it. My third rod was fished to the edge of the island to the right in around 5ft of water.

The first evening drew in, and it was looking like there'd be a frost by morning... hardly great conditions. We sat up late into the night listening for signs of fish. Around 2am a show at around 90 yards was noted. It was in front of my side, closer to the island than where I was currently positioned. We decided to get a few hours' kip and awoke just after first light, nothing having happened during the early hours. We decided around lunchtime to do another lap and see if we could find the fish's whereabouts. Unfortunately after a lap we still had nothing to go on. The wind was strengthening and the clouds were gathering; it looked like the sky was filling with a payload of rain. We decided to stay where we were.

I decided to inspect the area where the fish had showed the previous night. I sent the marker flying towards the island within a few feet and feel it down through the water. The rod tip thumped down on a clear bottom and a drag back was met with a firm, silty, smooth area. I popped the marker up in 8ft of water precisely where the show was the previous evening. I decided to change rigs, as there was a strong crosswind, and change to stiff rigs made up of Hybrid Soft Silt in 20lb, a choddy section of 25lbs with a size 6 choddy hook and a four-ounce led. I needed a heavy lead to punch through the crosswind to the spot of around 90 yards. After a few attempts the lead sailed through the air and hit the clip, landing with a heavy thump onto the clean bottom. I decided to put all three along the same area, and with the use of the stick I baited with around two to three kilos of Cell. I opted to fish different coloured cork ball pop-ups on each rod. I had recently got a selection of Mark Dean's Koda Pops in the Cell range. The left rod had a standard Cell pop-up on, the middle a white and the right a dull pink.

I was brimming with confidence that evening and prayed we would catch one of Cranwells' finest by lunchtime the next day. After the long night the previous night we decided to get an early night. As I lay in bed to the sound of the trees bending and creaking, the strong winds ruffling the surface, the moon illuminating the dark surface and glistening like a million diamonds, I drifted into a deep

I awoke in a mad panic with the bivvy illuminated by a white light and the shrill of a Delkim in full tone. I headed out into the darkness following the illumination of the white LED light coming from the middle rod. I could make out the line out the clip and the spool clicking slowly. I lifted the rod into the rain-filled air and was instantly forced to give line as a powerful fish bid for freedom out in the



The most stunning creature I have ever held, and at thirty-nine pounds and eight ounces it simply blew me away.

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The smile says it all - the other side of the stunning Cranwells mirror.

depths. I knew already I was connected to a decent fish so called to Smithy for assistance. He was soon by my side helping me get into the chesties. We were both in a mad panic and half asleep at this point. After trying to put the chesties on the wrong way round we got there in the end. I crashed down into the shallow margins throwing the net in front of me as I went. The power of the fish was mind-blowing; each run leaving me with no doubt I was connected to a decent fish

As the fish neared the net I flicked on my red LED on my head torch, and instantly in front of me through the white-capped waves I could see an incredibly long common. I was seriously nervous at this point, my heart trying to escape my chest. I could see this would be the biggest common I had ever caught just from the first glimpse through the waves. The runs began to slow, and the fish rose through the water and glided into the net first time. I peered into the net at an extremely long common that looked to be around the forty-pound mark. I turned to the awaiting Smithy and told him, to his disbelief. I asked him the time. It was 4.45am, and with

first light looming we decided to sling it up until the morning. We recorded a weight of thirty-nine pounds and eight ounces, a new UK PB by over four pounds. I was made up that's for sure. The rod was soon back out into the darkness first time. It hit the clip and a thump was felt on the tip. I decided not to put any more bait in, as I knew there was still plenty out there

An hour or so later it was away again, and this time after a short battle, an angry male fish of just over twenty-five pounds turned out to be the culprit. I couldn't believe how lucky I had been. Dawn broke to what can only be described as a miserable winter-like morning - the rain was battering the outside world, and the wind was still relentless as it had been during the night. After a brew I gave Dan a call to help out with the photos, as he is rather good with the camera. He would pop in on the way to work in around twenty minutes top bloke. Smithy popped his head round the bivvy with his mug in his hand, and luckily the kettle had just boiled. We sat there in the confines of the bivvy going over the night's dramas whilst sipping the first tea of the day when out the blue the right rod was away with the bobbin jammed against the alarm and the spool spin-

I headed out into the rain, mud underfoot, and plucked the bent rod from the rests. Instantly a decent fish began to empty my spool along the front of the island. The fish headed out into open water, and I felt in control from my position on the bank. The fish on the other end had other ideas though, changing direction completely and heading towards danger. I donned the chesties and jumped down into the water to help improve the angle. This had little effect, and the fish went on yet another powerful run, heading down into a bay and out of sight around a reed bed. I pulled and held on hard as much as I dared. Finally the fish stopped, and I began gaining line. The fish, still out of view, rounded the corner into the bay. I kept thinking it would be a miracle if I landed the fish. The Kontour fluoro held strong and did me proud. I had pushed the line beyond its limit, and it had been up to the harsh conditions. Just as I thought it was over, the fish shot out from the corner and was soon I front of me.





A proper woodcarving.

As if I wasn't already a nervous wreck it decided to show me a glimpse of its frame with scales illuminated all over its flank. I could see it was something a tad special that I was connected to. Every time I thought it was beaten it would simply turn and power off on a powerful run. I really wanted the scaly creature in the folds of my net, and with each run getting slower I knew I was winning. Before long with the leadcore rising and with a final scoop of the outstretched net she was mine.

Literally just as I gave a shout, Dan appeared round the corner. He didn't know what to think. Smithy and I were like school kids at this point, laughing and giggling at what had just happened. As I peered into the net, staring back at me was the prettiest carp I am likely to ever catch. The colours were simply amazing; it seemed although the carp was showing its early winter colours. All over the fish were apple sliced scales - it was certainly an impressive creature that was for sure.

As I lifted the creature on to the mat we were all convinced the fish was over the forty-pound mark, but as the needle on the scales settled we all read a weight of thirty-nine pounds

and eight ounces, the exact weight of the common still residing within the sling. After admiring the fish for a few moments we set about doing the photos. The fish behaved amazingly well... I guess it was tired out after the powerful fight. The photos couldn't have come out better - both the common and the mirror were in immaculate condition. Well I guess the saying "give a little, get a lot" came true for me that trip. It's certainly a trip I won't forget about in a long time. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Wasing estate and head fisheries manager Mark Hibbs for his kindness in organising our dated slot.

Winter Hauling

After the trip to Cranwells I was starting to think about what to do for the winter, as December was upon us and the cold weather was certainly rearing its ugly head once more. I decided the best option would be to give Shalford a go. With its depths I was sure of some winter action. I decided to team up with Mike Patrick and keep the bait going in throughout the coldest months to keep them moving. The first trip in December was bitterly cold with the coldest night of the year on the way. The forecast before leaving warned of temperatures as low as minus six in rural areas. I packed all the essentials to keep warm and headed to the lake.

It was a dreary day as I pulled into the car park. As I unlocked the padlock the cold northerly that was forecasted was correct, and I could feel the wind biting into my face. I headed straight round to the far bank and to the back of the wind. I settled into a swim known as Sandbags and began putting the bivvy up to shelter from the elements. Shortly after getting everything except the rods sorted, good friend Mike turned up and decided on plotting next door in a swim called Xenon's. Both swims let us command the main body of water and gave us depths ranging from thirteen feet to over twenty-two feet. We both felt from this area we would stand the best chance of a coldwater bite. I came armed with a small fortune's worth of red maggots, as on the previous trip I had witnessed a serious amount of fizzing over the silt. I'm sure this was because of the bloodworm; the red maggots being the closest I could get to mimic the natural food larder.

After a few casts with the marker I had located two nice looking areas. I



decided to fish two maggot rods and Spomb around three pints of the red wrigglers over the area. The area I had chosen was on the back of a plateau in fifteen feet of water. This was a nice silty area I had seen them fizzing over a number of times. Both rods had rigs tied Medusa style with size 6 Wide Gape X hooks, a pattern in which I had the utmost trust. Each rod was fished with a large bag of red maggots clipped on and sent the forty or so yards to the spot. The other rods were fished to the back of a gravelly area around fifty yards. Again this was an area where I had recently observed fish feeding.

I had been sent some of the new Heli-Safes pre-release to try out and give our honest opinion and feedback. These were a very clever invention and one of the biggest breakthroughs in lead dropping arrangements. I fished the other two rods on naked choddy set ups with the use of the Heli-Safes and hoped to test them in the coming twenty-four hours. The lake had not done a bite for some time so I didn't hold my breath for some

action. I fished cork balls rolled by Mark Dean in a Cell flavour. I had so much confidence in these baits after the Cranwells success using them for the first time. I opted for the white and the pink ones and flicked the rods out past the marker ten yards apart. Both fell through the water, meeting the bottom with soft drops. I then proceeded to scatter around a kilo of washed-out Cell over the top of the two rods.

With the rods out it was time for a much-needed brew or five. My hands were like ice blocks, and I was grateful for the shelter of the bivvy. That evening as the sky went clear we cooked up a massive curry to keep us warm. Even with the winter gear on it was still bitterly cold. By 6pm the outside world was in a sheet of ice, and the thermometer read minus one already. Sometimes I question my sanity when I go fishing in the winter. We called it an early night by 8pm and retreated to our bivvies for the night. It was bitterly cold at first in the sleeping bag, but soon enough I had warmed up and drifted off into a deep, cold sleep.

I awoke just before first night. Not surprisingly I had had no action. I could see the heavy white frost entering the bivvy doorway as I reached for the kettle. The water in the kettle was clunking with ice blocks. I fired up the ever-reliable Primus and soon the bivvy warmed up. As I sipped on my first brew of the day I peered out watching the flat inky looking surface, the moon reflecting on the unrippled surface. The lake and the surrounding fields were silent. You could have heard a pin drop; it was certainly atmospheric, that's for sure. Just as the sky began to brighten I took Mike a brew. I crunched my way along the crisp grass clutching a couple of brews. It was no surprise that he had nothing to report either. I passed him his tea and scurried back of to the warmth of the stove in the bivvy. The thermometer read minus four degrees, but I wasn't shocked to see it that low

Join us in next month's where Craig continues his exploits on Wasing. \blacksquare



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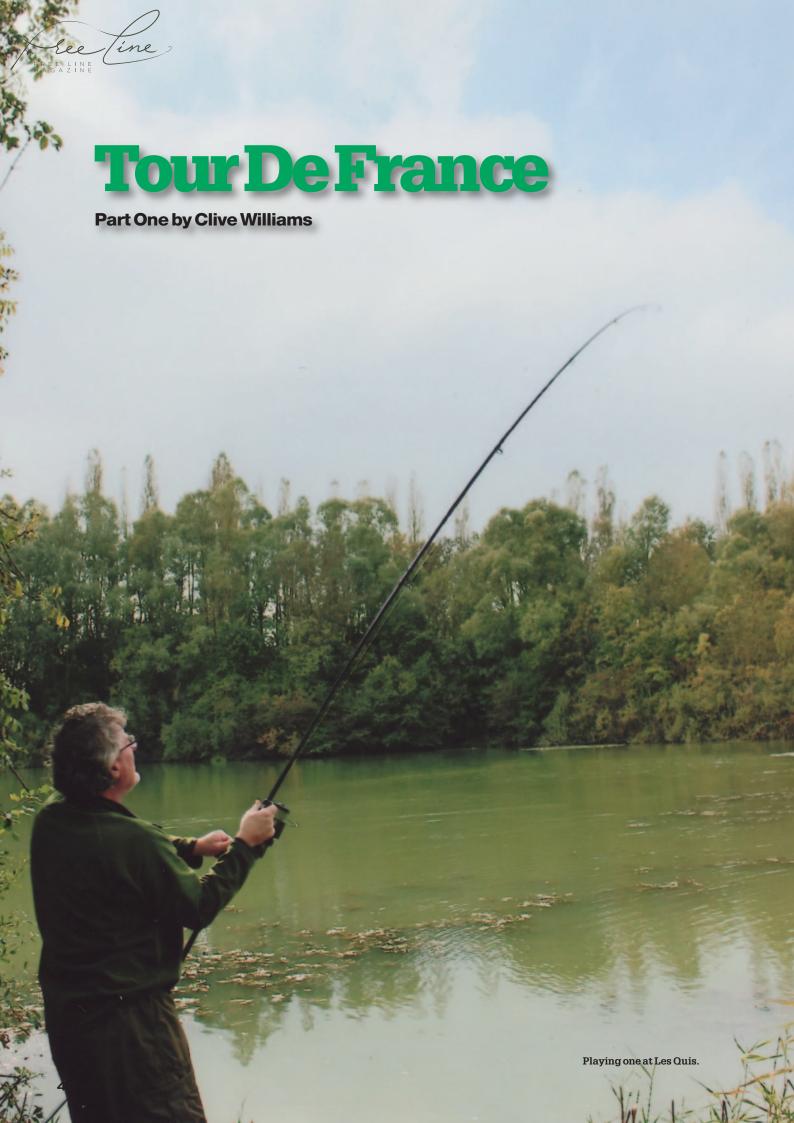




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back to the winter of 1979 to discover why so many UK carp anglers cross the 26-mile English channel to go fishing for holiday carp. In October of that year a French angler by the name of Jean Baudier set the early carp pioneers buzzing with excitement when he landed a huge mirror scaling just over 57lb from a massive manmade reservoir in the south of the country.

Lac de Saint Cassien was discovered

This iconic carp destination was the eye-opener to what today is a vast array of hundreds of commercial carp fisheries that are in operation right across this fabulous country. In the early 80s English carpers started to make what in those days were unheard of journeys of hundreds of miles of driving to wet a line. Kevin Maddocks and Paul Regent were probably the first English carpers to make the 600 or so mile trip and bank Cassien fish over 30lb, and on sweetcorn. In 1985 Max Cottis became the first British angler to land a fish over 60lb when he netted a monster weighing 68lb 8oz. This stunning mirror went on to grow even bigger when Kevin Ellis eclipsed that weight when he landed it at a staggering 76lb, but sadly this great big mirror passed away sometime later. Nevertheless these fish were the real eye



openers to what was swimming around and waiting to be caught by those brave enough to make the journey

My first French rendezvous was made in the summer of 1989, again it was "at the time" a much talked about public water that had caught my eye when I made the two-day drive to the River Lot at the tiny picturesque village of Cabanac, which sits in the beautiful southern department of Aveyron. Within ten minutes of chucking a bait out I was playing a hard fighting common of around 12lb, which set the tone for me. I loved it; it was wild, rugged, adventurous and stunning fishing. I was hooked! Since

that first adventure, which they are to me, I have slung my hook in over 20 different French waters including six different rivers.

These two iconic waters are still home to some fantastically huge carp today, but its fair to say they are not visited as much as in those early days, as we now have a massive choice of commercial waters on which to dangle.

I did manage a Cassien trip in 1992 when I went with my good mate Jaffa (Mick Redford). In all honesty neither of us had a clue what we were doing. Fishing with 15lb mono was a mistake; I had two bites and lost them both on some underwater boulders, and Jaffa did the same. Even though, we still had a great time and vowed to return one day, which we both did some ten years later. In fact we went three times in 12 months, flying down when the night fishing had been banned and being looked after by Geoff Cartwright and Paul Roberts who ran their PG trips to Cassien from a nearby campsite where they had a couple of mobile homes. It was brilliant... Because the night fishing had been stopped and the guard de pêche were on regular patrols we almost had the entire lake to ourselves. We fished many different swims in the north and west arms, and although we never got amongst the real big-



(Top) Me in Swim Point Three, Cassien. (Left) Playing one at North Arm, Cassien. e line Tour De France



gies we bagged a good number of fish to over 33lb and had an absolutely fantastic three trips doing what we wanted. As dark arrived we would be picked up by Geoff or Paul and head back to the campsite for a shower, a meal in the onsite restaurant and fin-

ish off with a belly full of cold beers. Those PG trips were bloody brilliant. As I write this, in September 2015, the night fishing at Cassien is again banned, so I would imagine that any day-only fishing could be very productive indeed.

Around the back end of the 1992 summer I was day fishing at the great Savay Lake. I had got to know a good few of the syndicate members on both the Toad and Loony rotas during my last couple of day only seasons at the lake, and it was two loonies who asked me if I was interested in going to France to fish a lake that they (Terry O'Brian (Tob) and Bernie Stamp) had just bought the rights to fish. A couple of weeks later I found myself casting into the unknown on what today is the fabulous Les Quis Old Lake. I went for four days with Albert Romp, and although I never caught any carp, Albert managed to land, if I remember, two twenties and a mirror weighing just over 30lb. In fact he netted the big'un twice in a matter of days, which was not a good sign where numbers of carp were concerned.

On our last morning Tob and Bernie turned up to see how we were getting on. Don't forget, in those days we never had mobile phones. It was obvious that the carp stocks were low, but it was also obvious that this lovely looking water of 12 or so acres had loads and loads of features that would make it a great carp fishery. Over the winter of '92, I made the 245-mile journey from Calais to fish the Old Lake with Tob and Bernie on numerous occasions. They had a plan to cre-

(Top) Cassien common. (Below left) River Lot. (Below) Trips leaflet.







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Time Tour De France

ate a fishery full of huge carp that UK anglers would want to fish. At the time I thought they were both barking mad, but having free trips to fish in France was alright by me, and we did have some great laughs along the way. At times we would stand by the fence that separated the Old Lake from the lake next door, which was controlled by the local Elf fishing club. We used to wonder if any carp were living in its depths. We never at any time saw another angler on the banks of the Elf Lake.

Some twenty-plus years later, Tob and Bern's plan has well and truly come to fruition.

Les Quis is today a four-lake complex with all the modern day facilities anybody could want. Most importantly it's home to stacks of monster commons and mirrors that have thrived in these well-managed lakes. I was pre-

sent when the first lorry loads of German mirrors were introduced to the Old Lake around the February freeze of '93, and it's nice to see that today many have graced the bank to upper 50s. If the vision of those early pioneers to the likes of Lake Cassien made anglers aware of just what was possible in terms of carping in France,

(Top) My first French fish, River Lot common at 12lb. (Right) River Seine at Gravon. (Below) Seine mirror.





Bernie Stamp opened up a whole new ballgame of first class travel to what is today a minefield of commercial carp venues up and down this lake filled country.

Every carping scenario is now catered for, from drive and survive for yourself or a whole group of anglers to luxury farmhouses, gites with swimming pools, small private pools to huge sheets of water... we are spoilt for choice.

During the early 90s I also spent a good few trips exploring both the River Seine and River Yonne around the Montereau-Fault-Yonne area. This part of the Ile de France region south east of Paris is littered with

Tour De France





scores of gravel pits and miles of winding stretches of river and backwaters, and they nearly all contain carp. I say nearly because I once spent three nights on a pit close to the Seine only to find out later that the carp had been removed. No wonder I thought it was quiet.

Some of the better areas for getting the odd bite or two were the Seine at La Tombe, Gravon and a very picturesque stretch around the sleepy village of Jaulnes. The Yonne was good around Cannes Écluse and Missy-sur-Yonne, although all these areas and others were very hit and miss. Very seldom did I spot any carp on my daily driveabouts; however

(Top) Bob Baker and me on the River Yonne.

(Right) Lots of venues to choose from. (Below) Les Quis Bay Lake. when darkness fell it was a whole new world. Every living creature on land and water made an appearance, from wild boar to hundreds of extremely noisy frogs to the odd carp crashing. I knew within a few hours of darkness if I had any chance of a bite or two; the carp were very nomadic, and no spots were the same two nights running except when you blanked of course. And there were many blank hours indeed.

I loved the thrill of not knowing what was going to pick up my bait. Sometimes I would get plagued by hoards of bream or chub, and one night on the Yonne I landed a huge golden rudd on two boilies. As I was with Albert at the time, and he was upstream about a mile away, I simply





slid it back without giving it a thought, but it must have been all of 4lbs. Other times it went carp mad, and very occasionally I would be up all night dealing with action from very wild and angry carp.

My best night's fishing was in the La Tombe area when I had single toners on all three of my rods. I even turned the buzzers off and just waited for the bait runner to rip off, which it did nine times on that memorable night.

By first light I had not slept a wink, was soaking wet, not through rain, and I had landed six stunning Seine carp up to 39lb. Out of the three I lost one was just unstoppable, so god knows how big that was.

■ See next month for part 2



Spotted Fin

Rob Maylin interviews Pele Johnson - Part One

ob: I have something a bit special for you this month... I am sitting in the offices, not many weeks before Christmas, with a new company, Spotted Fin, who you are going to see loads about soon. Before I get started on the interview with the Managing Director, Pele, I just wanted to give you a brief history of how I found myself here today. I had an email in the summer from Catherine, the Marketing and PR Manager for Spotted Fin, inviting me to talk to an angling company from its inception through to launch and beyond. Something I had never done before. And it's a company with many differences. They are going to be very, very big in this country and no doubt abroad, and it is a privilege for me to be here today at the beginning of a totally new venture.

I came down in the summer for an afternoon in the delightful company of Pele and Catherine, hearing all about the new company and their plans for the future, and I left feeling like something very special was about to take place. Well, a couple of months down the line, here I am in the offices above their state of the art bait making facility and warehouse. We are only a couple of months away from the launch of Spotted Fin. I am going to pass you over in a moment to Pele, who is going to tell you about this new company and just why they are so different. I am sure you have heard enough of my voice over the years, so what is it all about Pele? Why a new bait and tackle company, what are the products going to be, and what can we expect from Spotted

Pele: Thank you, Rob. Let us start at the beginning. The first time I went fishing I was eight years old and went to the local canal, from that point I have had a passion for angling ever since. I joined the British Army at the age of sixteen and continued to enjoy the sport through my service, right through to adulthood when I was running large technology organisations in London. I have always enjoyed making my own baits as many of your loyal readers do, and having gone through the trial and error stages to finally unlocking my own baits potential and seeing the results, makes it all worthwhile. I have spent many wasted hours on experimental baits, but then that pales in to insignificance when you get the satisfaction of clearing a lake on the successful ones that were made. I then studied fish anatomy to explore exactly what nutrients fish needed to be healthy and maintain and even gain weight, it also included me studying nutrition and physical training after leaving army service. Combining these two areas with my passion for the sport and my experience in bait making is what led me to being in this role!

It has seemed to me even after decades of angling the industry remains a little stagnant with little innovation but much imitation. Nothing much new or exciting has been really happening with exception of some great new ideas in the market place from companies such as Ridge Monkey. After many discussions and strategy plans with investors it was





Martin Woodhouse, Jones Pit, 31lb 6oz.



Martin Woodhouse, Jones Pit, 34lb 12oz.

e line Spotted Fin

decided that there was a way to do things differently, and that was the inception of Spotted Fin. We believe there are many crossovers in angling, for example match fishing to carp fishing as a start and other disciplines like sea fishing where variations of modified circle hooks are now an accepted pattern in some very successful companies product lines within carp fishing.

We want to explore ideas from outside of carp fishing that have been slowly trickling through to our sport to designing and making high quality baits that are long term high quality products and not a cheaply rolled imported product, re-labeled as the next best thing. We will be selling ingredients to people to make their own unique baits and to companies that need help buying in bulk quantities. We want to empower the angler with quality products and competitively bring them to market, so that is one angle. The other angle is the baits themselves, showing people how we do it, and how we put together what is now commonly called in the industry, a HNV bait and/or long term bait, then providing the right tackle that draws all of this together. The underlying theme for us is not just focused solely on carp fishing, but also the sphere of match fishing as well as that is a huge part of the sport. There are so many opportunities between the two different aspects of fishing that we can help bridge the gap on. We want to make the most of that; we want to draw people in from our development of ground baits we will launch later this year in the match sector and we can then adapt, for example, stick mixes and so on. And I am not just talking about grinding pellets up with some maize meal and hemp. We really look deeply into the nutritional requirements of the fish being targeted and build quality fresh baits.

There is a real opportunity to do this in the market. We are excited about bringing innovation to the industry. We have lots of exciting plans in the pipeline. We are new, different and innovative. We are bringing all this together under the banner of Spotted Fin, 'Fishing from every angle.' We want to build a brand where people can really feel like they are being treated like a member of the family, rather than us exploiting



anglers through pricing and profit.

We also want to do things right. We are registered and audited by the government to handle animal byproducts, which means we have to be licensed and able to track a single animal by-product from its origin. Whether from the south China sea, Norway or down the road in Hertfordshire, right through to a single boilie or liquid sitting in someone's fridge that they have purchased from us. This is an EU requirement and all bait company's using animal by-products such as fishmeal's for example have to comply and must go through this process and be inspected every 3 months. We want our customers to feel comfortable that we know exactly what is in the bait product and where it comes from if there were to be any issues. Any customer should be happy that they know what is in their bait is legal, of the right quality and has traceability of the ingredients. Not only that, but we have strict health and safety rules and we have installed modern, high capacity air filtering systems in our labs to ensure our staff are kept safe by removing any particles from the air they breathe. Its again about principles, working correctly, and this whole ethos goes right through the company into our sourcing capability and our bait making.

Also one of our goals is to encourage more youngsters into the sport, they are the future of fishing and they are also the customer of the future. We plan to sponsor a junior team and give them a structured career ladder to climb by then moving into our senior teams and taking part in competitions etc. We will also be looking at supporting female angling as well as sponsoring ladies teams and individuals, whether it be carp fishing teams or Team England match fishing

■ See next month for part 2.

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'.

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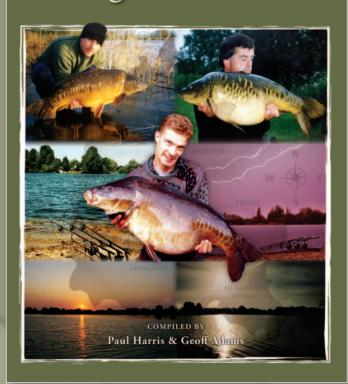
We have brilliant chapters on Newlands from Ginger Robinson and Milton Pools from Stuart Rothwell. Danny Aplin has written about his time on Linch Hill which will just blow you away! His pictures alone are worth purchasing this book.

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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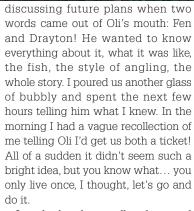
'm guessing most of you will have heard of Fen Drayton, which is sometimes referred to as a 90-acre Cambridgeshire pit. It's a large, unforgiving, windswept and fascinating lake, home to some of the most amazing carp the country has ever produced. So let me take you right back to the beginning in 2000. I'd finally passed my driving test, and while fishing a very small, local syndicate, news had surfaced of a previously uncaught 48lb linear. The guy that told me knew it had been caught from Fen. He also knew the chap that had the lease and gladly gave me his phone number. Being young is quite blissful really; I rang up without any thought, got a ticket pretty much straight away and made the 40minute drive to this place called Fen Drayton. I was making a step from 1.5 acres to 90 acres. What could possibly go wrong?

That very first visit was insane. 90 acres was bloody massive - a big, square mass of water with a tiny island in the middle and windsurfers chipping about all over the pit. There were a few guys fishing, and I met up with the syndicate leader to sort out my ticket and pay my money. Anyway, it began there, and I couldn't have thrown myself further into the deep end if I tried. I started to obtain the necessary kit (including a boat), and it all felt very alien. I didn't have a clue what I was doing. I did however meet some cracking fellas, and I wasn't alone in feeling daunted by this



incredible piece of water. So much so that after about 20-odd nights I admitted to myself that this was too much, and I decided I needed to gain experience elsewhere before tackling such difficult water. During those 20 nights I had not witnessed another carp capture nor heard of one. This was big league, and I simply wasn't ready.

Let's move forward to a very cold winters' night in late 2007. It was actually a night of celebration on the banks of an Essex lake where my good pal Oli and I had cracked open a bottle of champagne, toasting the capture of his first UK 40lb'er and my first French 60lb'er! The last 12 months had been superb for both of us, and during the evening we were



I made the phone call and secured the tickets to start from the 1st of January 2008. We paid a little extra for that privilege but we wanted to get started ASAP and watch this magnificent piece of water wake from its winter slumber. We didn't want to miss anything; it would give us an opportunity to obtain all the kit we needed and get to grips with it all before the fish were ready.

Those first few nights were amazing; the pair of us would sit there watching the water and discuss at length everything we were finding out about Fen. The odd article we'd found, old stories and of course all of the pictures we could find. The most insane looking carp I'd ever seen from Fen was a fish named Marcus's. It was so unique. It had that classical old English shape to it and amazing scale pattern. The image had always been etched in my brain, and I always used to say it was the fish I most wanted to catch, but what of the myths that were swimming under the surface? Fen at the time was unique



e fine Fen Drayton – My Story

in the fact that the myths had been very real and seen by people who knew what they were talking about. It had of course produced the 48lb linear, which was first thought to have been unknown but in fact had been caught at mid-30 a few years previously. Then there were the two that hadn't been caught: the famous Stripy Common and the not so famous mirror, which I believe was known as the Big Scaly. Both were huge; in fact a very good angler that was fishing the lake at the time felt both could be British record contenders, and he himself had caught a UK 60. As you can imagine, sitting on the banks of Fen knowing those fish could well be in front of us was almost too much to comprehend.

I had this vision, a dream, that one night I would get a take in stormy conditions, rocking around in the boat in the middle of Fen battling with the colossal stripy common, wondering what it would feel like to slip the net under it, a fish that had never been banked, which could rock the record and the carp world in general. The reality of that ever happening was, of course slim to none, but that was my dream, my fuel, my passion, and my drive.

2008

OK, let's get back to real life! We went through January and February and pretty much hadn't seen a soul. All the boat kit had been obtained, long bank sticks, H-block markers and anything else that would make life easier for us. More importantly we could have a good look at all the features Fen had to offer and figure out the depths using an echo sounder. It gave us a huge head start. We didn't



do this while others were fishing or chances were presenting themselves. One thing that struck me was how barren the lake was; there was no weed anywhere, just a sandy bottom with odd bits of gravel and huge features. When Fen was dug it had four access roads, which divided the lake into quarters. These roads were like huge bars, and we were convinced carp would use them. We looked at each guarter and some were more featured than others. There were big, flat areas and also egg box type areas, which at the time got very confusing!

It had been a pretty cold winter, and even in March it felt way too early, but towards the end of the month people started turning up, and Fen was no longer just ours. We still hadn't seen any definite carp, but we had seen things in the corner of our eyes and ripples that only carp could make. It was good to start meeting people. I'm sure they thought we were bonkers when we said we'd already completed a dozen nights! At the end of April news was starting to filter through to us that the first few carp had been caught, which lit our fires even more. Psychologically, the carp became catchable; we just needed to apply ourselves better and get on top of them on a more regular basis. It was going to require a different mentality to what I was used to. I know it sounds obvious, but the fundamental issue of keeping eyes on the water was the be-all and end-all, getting up before first light, going to bed after last light and moving if I needed to. It was knackering, and I was giving it my all. The whole logistics of fishing a big pit on limited time with an inflatable boat was enough of an effort, let alone anything else. Pumping the boat up on arrival, deflating on leaving, it took longer to do everything, and if it was blowing a hefty wind it took ten times longer to get rods placed.

However, there was light at the end of the tunnel. One morning just on first light I was sat on the edge of the boat with a steaming mug of tea. It was one of those stereotypical mornings with light mist rolling off the surface, and there it was, a dark shape to my left out long... then another, and another. They were slowly making their way towards me; this could be my first chance of the season. I kept eyes peeled, and after seeing around ten shows it went quiet, and they never quite made it over to where my





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e fine Fen Drayton – My Story

baits were placed. Oli was fishing a few hundred yards away and was planning to head home early until I told him what I'd seen. He moved down to my left and we went out late morning in the boat together to investigate what the fish had been showing over. It turns out we were right about them using the roadways.

Oli and I placed some rigs on top, and we both sat there all afternoon with anticipation. I wasn't happy with a couple of my rigs. I was about to replace a rig when I heard a short, sharp shrill of a Delkim. My receiver was in the boat with me so it wasn't mine. I presumed Oli had kicked his rods being in a very tight peg so I carried on with what I was doing. A few minutes later I heard him shout, "I've got one!" Obviously I thought he was on a wind-up, but as I looked over he was in the margin up to his nuts with a rod in one hand and a net in the other. He'd only gone and done the unthinkable. It was the pinnacle in this crazy challenge we'd set ourselves. All of a sudden they became catchable to us, and although the fish



hadn't fallen to my rods, I was buzzing in a big way. Oli was overwhelmed, and it was such an honour to have been there with him, taking his photographs and then celebrating in the evening with him. The carp was off the scale, a proper Fen scattered linear which we went on to name the Boss Lin.

Confidence levels were now sitting in a much more favourable place, and we kept fishing to the best of our ability, trying to get on showing carp. I did find it quite difficult due to this particular time of the year when the fish would show on first light, but I



Upper double common.

Fen Drayton – My Story

FREE LINE INE

would always arrive for my overnighter in the afternoon. So I'd be trying to guess where carp might turn up, and at first light the next morning I'd usually see at least one carp, which was never where my baits were placed. Being a weekend angler the lake would always be fairly busy. That show would either be in somebody else's water or I'd need to move and drop a line to the area, only fishing for a few hours before heading back home. I found using the boat very challenging; I couldn't seem to approach an area with finesse and get away with dropping a line without spooking the carp. Not only that, but another scenario of seeing a fish bosh out 600 yards away... how would I know I was even dropping lines anywhere near where they'd been showing?

I needed a lucky break and a change of luck, but as with all things in life, we have to make our own. August had snuck up on me, and after much deliberation I decided to try to fish without using the boat to drop lines. I felt I was getting nowhere second guessing where to place rigs, and just being out in the boat was probably doing way more harm than good. If there were any carp about the boat would be spooking them off. I'd been keeping an eye on the weather during my working week, and a big southwesterly was due to set in on the Thursday, so I booked the Friday off work and got to Fen on Thursday afternoon. It was flat calm. Bloody typical! I placed myself in a peg that the big wind was due to come into but not directly; I didn't think it'd be



wise being on the end of a gale force beast. I flicked rods out just for the hell of them being out for the night and set my alarm for the early hours, hoping the wind would start to kick off. It didn't and I had that sinking feeling that I'd booked a day off work for nothing.

Friday morning arrived with a very slight breeze, and I got an excited phone call from Oli. He was gunning his way to the lake saying the wind was due in within the hour. He wasn't wrong! Like flicking a switch it began. I brought all the rods in, rebaited them and fanned them out from 30 yards to 80 yards in an attempt to cover water where I felt carp would move through while trav-

elling on the wind. The weed was pretty savage in places, so although I wasn't using the boat for dropping lines, I had it with me inflated in the slim chance I'd ever get a bite from this rock hard pit and have a weeded fish.

One of the rods was placed directly on top of a large weedbed that I'd seen from the boat many times. Using chod rigs had given me the opportunity to place baits in areas of thick weed knowing that it'd be presented 100%. The sun was shining and the wind was really pushing now. I stood watching the water for hours, and every gust was making me strain to keep my balance, yet I'd seen nothing. I was starving hungry and my body needed a break. Oli had turned up and was setting up a few pegs down. I hid in the bivvy for ten minutes scoffing a packet of crisps when the left hand rod placed over the weedbed absolutely tore off! I'll never forget seeing the red Delkim light flashing ten to the dozen and just thinking how surreal it was that this was really happening!

A few of the guys had said that the bites on Fen were savage, but this was ridiculous! I almost froze watching the spool spin faster than I'd ever seen before. Gingerly I picked the rod up and gently cupped the spool to try and slow it down before engaging in battle. What the hell? I was attached to a Fen carp, a real Fen carp, and it was pulling hard! I think I tried to



 $Atmospheric\,Oli\,and\,me.$

Ree fine Fen Drayton – My Story

shout to Oli, but the wind was kicking off. I was alone, and this was all on me. Looking back it was the only way I would have ever wanted it... until it weeded me up. The beasty run it had been on, flat rodding me, must have meant it had jet propelled itself into a weedbed, and nothing would shift it. I kept the rod on a tight line, and it was singing a loud tune in the wind almost to the point of aggravating me. Think, Dan, think... A minute of deep thought brought me to one, and only one, conclusion. I'd need to go out in the boat. My dream had always been going out in the boat in stormy windy conditions attached to a monster, but now I wished I'd never asked for it! It was white horses, but I had no option. I threw the net into the boat; I could see the life jacket, but I needed to slip the waders on up to my thighs first. Without even thinking, I leant back to grab them, and the extra pressure on the rod suddenly produced a pop. Noooooo, please don't tell me I've just lost this fish! My heart sank, but within a split second the rod hooped round again! Oh man, how can so

many different emotions go through a guy within a couple of minutes?

I could feel the fish thumping on the end of the line, but it felt different; it most certainly had a ball of weed attached to it, but this was a huge blessing. I slowly yet powerfully pumped the whole lot towards me, and once I'd got it moving the wind was giving it some acceleration. Next thing I knew it appeared in the crystal clear water of the margin. The wind pushed it towards a reed bed, and I tried to scoop the whole lot up but missed due to the reeds. I gave it one more pull, thrust the net under it with force and lifted as hard as I could until everything was safely in the net. I can't remember what I shouted, but I screamed at the top of my voice, propped the net on the boat and slumped myself on the side of the boat, absolutely shattered yet ecstatic!

I peered into the net, pulling the weed out and saw these huge scales on a big mirror. It was Marcus's; it had to be I couldn't think of another fish it could be but it looked a little

too big. I'm not sure if I rang Oli; everything became a blur, but the next thing I knew he and another mate, Steve, were stood there behind me asking what I'd got. This is where everything went totally insane. Steve peered into the net and said, "That's not Marcus's mate; that's the Client." I looked back into the net, and there he was, the most gorgeous looking creature I'd ever laid eyes on. Between us, we weighed and photographed the beast, and I remember absorbing my eyes into his perfectly formed and seamless body and all those scales. There were literally hundreds of them. Was it a linear? Was it fully scaled? What was it? All I knew is it was the Client, and there wasn't another fish I'd ever seen that looked like him. I could have died and gone to heaven. I'd got my first Fen carp after about 30-35 nights' angling, and what a fish to do it with. Oli and I sunk far too many beers that night, and I remember watching the wind settle as the evening turned into night. I was absolutely buzzing.

See next month for part 2.

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Not for the Faint-hearted!

t was the summer of 2012, and I had been fishing Dark Park regularly since the start of 2010. I had caught my share of fish, but I was starting to lose a bit heart with the place. I had been getting consistent action catching some big fish, but I was disappointed with the look of the carp I was catching... There is a right mix of strains on the Dark Park, and I had been catching a few of the undesirables. Truth is I had probably been a bit spoilt over the previous years travelling to Oxford and Cambridge for the most part of my fishing.

The Dark Park is big, ancient estate lake, 31/2 miles around its circumference, lots of out of bounds areas, and the weed on there would have to be seen to be believed during the summer months -80% of the lake will resemble a football pitch. By the time the trust open the gates to anglers on June 16th most of it is unfishable! Add to this the fact it's a day only fishing from 7am until dark with 24hour security, and you get the gist of just how demanding the place can be. It is not for the faint-hearted!

One particular Sunday in the summer of 2012 I turned up to a busy

anglers' car park at around 9am with a fuzzy head from a night out on the lash with lads the night before. I loaded the barrow and headed off round to an area I had caught from on my previous visit the weekend before. as a couple of good swims round there were free. I tied Pip the carp dog to the barrow, put the chesties on and waded up the meadow in search of fish. The snags were devoid of fish, and the marginal the water was gin clear, a sure sign they were not in this area.

I got out a few hundred yards up the reeds and climbed the willow that overlooks the back of an island and the sunken ship. Nothing was there except a few big bream and a scabby pike, so feeling despondent I carried on walking along the Terrace, behind another island and onto the church area. There, in a narrow section of the lake in only 3ft of water, surrounded by droves of dog walkers, bike riders and general public enjoying their Sunday strolls was a group of big fish ripping the bottom up only 30 yards from the busy bank! Now I had a bit of a problem, as my kit was half a mile away... So I had another half-mile walk/run back to the van where I





e fine Not for the Faint-hearted!





would have to unload the barrow back into the van and drive a good mile to the other end of the lake, reload the barrow and make another ¼-mile dash to where I had found the fish. All this whilst hoping no one else had clocked them, and there were plenty of keen eyes! Luck was on my side, and there was no one in the area other than a Labrador retrieving his stick!

The fish were still there and feeding with gusto! Now I had to get a rig in amongst them with as little disturbance as possible. The fish were just off the back of a little dot island in only 2-3ft of water, so I tied on a fresh chod with shaking hands, slid the beads and rig up to the top of the leader and waded out to the island. I cast the small lead well past the fish and quickly skipped the rig back across the surface and dropped it right in amongst the coloured water. I

could do no more without causing disturbance, so happy with that I popped the rod on the buzzer, set up the net and sat back on the bench, wiped the sweat from my face and had a big gulp of water.

The next thing I knew the water in front of me erupted, and the buzzer went into meltdown. After the initial 30-yard run, the fight was pretty uneventful with the fish covered in weed.

I gingerly waded out with the net whilst a crowd of passers-by gave me a clap and a small cheer as I netted what turned out to be the best looking fish I have ever set my eyes on – a real rare one! I only knew of a couple of previous captures, and it's one that never puts itself on show. To catch it mid-morning on a sunny Sunday in the shallowest part of the lake seems crazy, but I guess sometimes we just get lucky!



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ednesday the 13th January 2016 was a very special day for Hampshire angler Dean Fletcher, a good friend of mine who I have fished with over a number of years at Dinton Pastures. Dean was to rewrite the records books with a new British record carp, a fish known as the Parrot, or the Wasing Linear, at a new British record weight of 68lbs 1oz.

This fish beats the existing record held by Oz Holness since 2008. Oz was the last angler to hold the British record with the fish known as Two-Tone from Conningbrook from Ashford in Kent. Oz's record catch







weighed 67lbs 8oz. Two-Tone was a carp that held the record on numerous occasions with great anglers such as Lee Jackson, Gary Bayes and of course Oz himself. Oz was quick to be onto the phone to his great friend Dean, and this was what Oz had to say about the new record: "Just got off the phone to my mate Dean Fletcher who's has had such a very special moment in his angling life, a massive buzz. I'm sharing in that positivity and passion... lovely times ahoy... well done, mate!"

The social media was soon alight with tales of a new record. Obviously Facebook being what it is, giving a free licence to people to say what they want, there were guite a few negative comments about this fish. Was it English? What about its mouth? Would it count as a British record? Most of you out there would know that I have championed this fish over a number of years. It is a fish that I really wanted to see as the new record. It is a beautiful fish, and it epitomises everything that a true English fish should look like. Its history is legitimate and well documented. It's a long, dark, scaly mirror, a fitting replacement for Two-Tone as the new British record. But not only that but the fella that caught it, Dean, is a true gentleman of the sport. He doesn't have a bad word to say about anybody and keeps well away from Facebook. He's a family man with a full-time job who devotes as much of his spare time to his passion as possible. Anyway, I phoned Dean the next day on Thursday 14th January and this is a tape of our conversation:

e fine New British Record Carp





Rob: Hi, Dean! Congratulations, mate! Well done! A new British record! I bet you are on cloud nine, aren't vou?

Dean: To be honest, Rob, it hasn't really sunk in yet. It is all a bit of blur. Yes, mate, I am well pleased obviously - a fantastic fish and one I really wanted to catch. To be honest, Rob, I was feeling a little despondent about my carp fishing. I have done most things around the area we live, but when my ticket for Wasing came up, I knew that I had to go for it. I had to get down there and spend as much time as possible. So I fished throughout the autumn and the winter down at Wasing just doing overnight sessions before work. Anytime I could get down there, I did. Normally I am pike fishing in winter, but I just had to catch that fish. There are some good anglers fishing Wasing this year; some really good ones including anglers like Terry Hearn. I could never compete with the time that Terry does, so I just thought, well, he is going to catch it, and I will have to catch it after him. I was certain that Terry would catch this fish before me. In fact, bizarrely, this is the first week that Terry hasn't been down there. I bet he is kicking himself now. I am very, very pleased to have caught this fish, and of course I will send you a few words and pictures for Big Carp,

Rob: Thanks, Dean. You are a true gentleman; you really are. I really couldn't be more pleased for you,

mate. There are a lot of anglers out there who get jealous of people's catches, but I have never been one of those anglers. I have always been pleased about what other people catch. To me it is anglers against the fish. I couldn't be more pleased for you catching this one. Also it is one of the fish that I would like to catch myself. If there was ever an opportunity of a ticket, it would be one fish that I wouldn't mind going for. It is that one fish since the death of fish like Bazil, the Black Mirror and Heather that has given me that buzz, and it will be a fish that goes down in the record books. Of course it will probably be caught again at a British record weight. We don't know that for certain, but like Two-Tone it could give a lot of people that record before it goes to that great carp lake in the

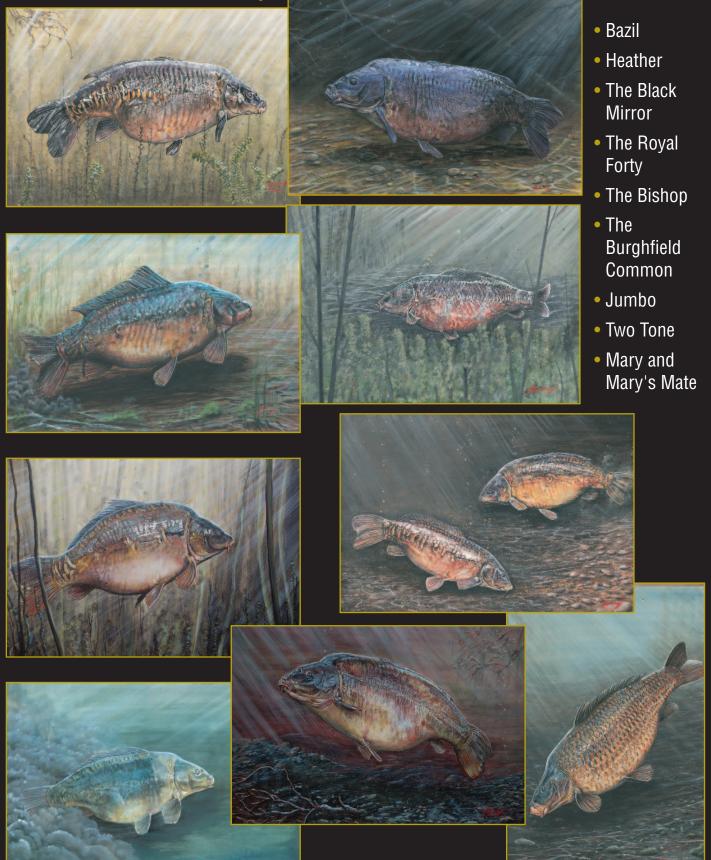
All I am saying to you Dean is enjoy the moment; it is your moment now, your moment at the top, the highest echelon, the ultimate feeling in carp fishing. In anybody's life the record changes hands only a few times, and to be lucky enough for it to be you, that is a fantastic achievement. Well done Dean! I look forward to sharing it with the readers of Big Carp in our 25th Anniversary edition next month. I have just spoken to Nigel Botherway who has the excellent Fisherman's Blues radio show and arranged for Dean to go on the show and be interviewed about his record. If you miss it you can always go online and hear the recording. I will be with Nigel discussing the 25th Anniversary of Big Carp magazine the following week. Likewise if you miss it you can listen to our conversation on the Internet after the event.

Transcript of Fisherman's **Blues on Radio Talk Sport** with Nigel Botherway and Dean Fletcher on 17th January 2016

Nigel Botherway: It is no secret that most anglers are prone to exaggerate, as today's opener suggested, but one of my favourite fishing books as a youngster was Dick Walker's 'No Need to Lie'. And that title applies to Dean Fletcher, who followed in Walker's legendary footsteps by catching a British record carp last week, 64 years on and 24lbs heavier than Clarissa caught by Walker at

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e Line New British Record Carp

Redmire Pool in 1952. Dean upped the bar to 68lbs 1oz with a fish known as the Parrot from the Wasing estate in Berkshire. I fished with Dean in France about 25 years ago; it is hard to believe now, but back in those days we were happy catching thirties or secretly hoping for a forty. Here to give you a blow-by-blow account of the capture is the man himself, Dean Fletcher, who upped the record to 68lbs 1oz when he caught the big mirror known as the Parrot from the Wasing estate last week. Morning to you, Dean. Has it sunk in yet?

Dean Fletcher: No it hasn't, Nigel. It is all a bit surreal at the moment. The phone hasn't stopped ringing every five minutes. The Parrot is the fish I was after, but for it to be the British record is amazing.

Nigel Botherway: When you were trying to catch it, did it cross your mind... did you dare dream... that it might be the record?

Dean Fletcher: No, not really. I had a good idea, and it has taken me three seasons. I only fish one night a week. I own my own greengrocer's business, and my main concern was, was it still going to be alive?

Nigel Botherway: It looks in great health. I saw a clip of you with it, and it is a cracking looking fish as well

Dean Fletcherr: Yes, and because we had such a nice winter, it carried on feeding, and suddenly the fish that we were feeding were up in weight. Then Terry Hearn caught one; he had





a big fish and that was down in weight, so we were thinking maybe not. I have slowly worked my way through the stock, and that was the last one I needed of all the big fish in the lake, and it just came together

Nigel Botherway: Fantastic result, and it is a quite a weight. In all the years fishing at Lac du Der you never dreamed of catching a 60pounder did you? You caught thirties and dreamt about forties. Things have changed.

Dean Fletcher: Yes, they have. What about your mat at Chantecoq? That mat used to be horrendous.

Nigel Botherway: I thought of that this summer - a wooden platform with your bivvy on, pegged out and creature comforts. That Chantecoq used to be horrendous, didn't it? What was your secret, now that you have caught it? Can you give any of our listeners any advice?

Dean Fletcher: Well I knew that these big fish were very catchable in the winter. Before I went on the Wasing Estate I used to pike fish a lot in the winter; I'd put my carp rod away after Christmas and go pike fishing. But I have just carried on for the last three years. Every time I have had invitations to fish here there and everywhere, I said, "No, I get one night a week, so I will go and fish Wasing and catch the Parrot."

Nigel Botherway: Well done! I was thinking also if you don't catch in the winter, if you are there when it is fishing badly, so when it does switch on, you are in tune with the water and can take advantage of it.

Dean Fletcher: I am always a great believer that the fish know when it is going to get cold. They have a little feed up before the cold weather hits, and it was very cold the night I caught it. I thought at three o'clock that afternoon, and during the night, that the lake might be frozen the next day, and it just all fell into place. I turned up, and saw that the swim that I had fished the week before was taken, so I stood chatting to two anglers and saw some fish just stick their heads out on the shallows. So I moved up to that swim, and the person who was in swim that I fancied had caught a 24. I wasn't that far from him, and where I had seen the fish is where I caught the Parrot, but he had seen it three days before trying to jump out of the water. It's such a big fish it is hard to miss it. So I knew that I was in the right area and we were the only two on the lake.

Nigel Botherway: It is interesting that you say that you were in the shallows, because in the olden days they used to tell you to fish in deep water, but is doesn't necessarily apply, does it?

Dean Fletcher: No... The fish had



been in the shallows pretty much all winter, and I had been introducing my bait every time I got a chance. I used a friend of mine's bait, Pete Reagan. When I phoned him to tell him what I had caught, he was fishing Norfolk Broads, and he said he was dancing around in the car park. He thought no one could see him because he was in the dark, but then he realised he had his head torch on.

Nigel Botherway: I love it! People would have wondered what was going on. You told me that your mate caught the Parrot twelve years ago at, was it, 37lbs?

Dean Fletcher: Yes, a friend of mine, we call him Babel, from work, from the fruit market, he had caught it at 37lbs 12 years ago. It was a lovely place... My best mate Roy Allen and I were fishing Dinton Pastures at the time, so I said to Roy, "That sounds good," and he said, "Yeah, let's put our names down on that list." So we put our names down on the waiting list. It took us seven years to get in, and while I was on the waiting list, that fish just got bigger and bigger, and I

was phoning, saying. "How long have we been on the waiting list now?"

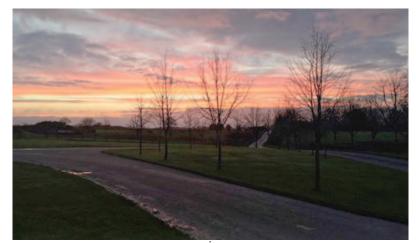
Nigel Botherway: Good things come to those who wait. The other nice thing about it is that previous record holder Oz Holness was the first on the phone to you as well, wasn't he? Two-Tone was the previous

record from Conningbrook, and that is sadly no longer with us. It was caught seven times between 2001-2008 getting bigger and bigger and bigger. Oz Holness was the last one to catch it at 67lbs 8oz back in 2008.

Dean Fletcher: He phoned me in the morning, congratulating me. He is



e Line New British Record Carp



a lovely bloke; I know him through my friend, Pete, and he phoned me up to congratulate me and told me off for stealing his record. It was a lovely chat – smashing fella.

Nigel Botherway: That is lovely, and you know what? I am sad because I had a look online. I was thinking there is so much more history to the carp records that just about any other coarse fish. In my head, everyone thinks that the original was Walker's catch from Redmire but I knew that Bob Richards had caught a 30 from Redmire before. The benchmark in my mind was that 26lb mirror from the Mapeley reservoir, because there is a story of that on the door of the loo at Redmire. But I looked up the original first record, which was 1902, and it was a common carp of 17lbs 8oz from Boxby Pond. Then you have 20lbs mirror from 1916 from Chestnut reservoir, then a 21lbs 10oz from Warren Pond in 1926, and then you go to Buckley at Mapeley and Rob Richards and Dick Walker. Then the rest you can probably reel off - the Bishop, which was never recognised as a record at 51lbs 8oz for Chris Yates. In theory Ritchie MacDonald beat it, but it was smaller, and he didn't claim it because of that. Then you had the Scaly One from Mid-Northants, which was caught twice, once at 53lbs and once at 55lbs by Booby Porter and Alex White, and then the next one of course was Terry Hearn, who you just mentioned, catching Mary at Wraysbury at 55lbs.

Dean Fletcher: It's mad - you never expect to catch the record. When I caught it, Lee was stood there with me, and he helped me put my chest waders on because the fish had a long line and there was a dead tree to the left. I had to get in the water to

give it some side strain to stop it going in there, and when it finally got into the net, I saw the scale on the side of it and I knew it could be one of two fish - either the Floppy-Tailed Linear or the Parrot. After looking at it intently I said, "It's the Parrot!" and after jumping around, screaming and running around the swim we went to weigh it I thought, that doesn't half look big, because when my mate Roy Allen caught in the spring, it was 62lbs, and I was there to take the pictures for him. When we weighed it we put the bank sticks through the scales and onto our shoulders, and I said to him, "You'd better read the weight out." He was reading it and he said, "You'd better look at this!" I said, "What? Can't you read it?" and he

said, "No, come and have a look at it." I can't repeat exactly what I said!

Nigel Botherway: Yes, I can imagine.

Dean Fletcher: When I looked at it, I said that it was over 68lbs, and he said to me, "Yeah, that's what I am reading!" Then I realised that it was a record, and it still hasn't sunk it you know. My mate Roy Allen came straight from work. He is really clever with the camera, and he came over and did the photographs for us, and the Wasing lot from the Wasing Estate turned up to take the weight on their digital scales as well.

Nigel Botherway: That's fantastic, Dean. Many congratulations! You are getting me excited just sharing it with me now on another cold Sunday morning, but it's a thoroughly deserved fish. I am absolutely delighted for you. Thanks for joining us this morning and sharing it with our listeners. I wonder what is going to land in your landing net next, but you can dine on that one for a while

Dean Fletcher: That's made up for Chelsea's poor season.

(Both laugh out loud).

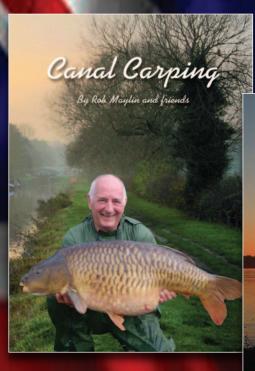
Nigel Botherway: Nothing makes up for that. Cheers, Dean. Many, many

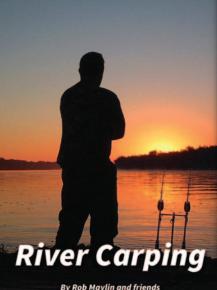
Dean Fletcher: Thank you. Cheers.



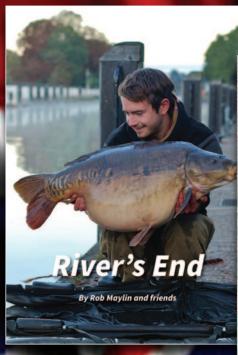
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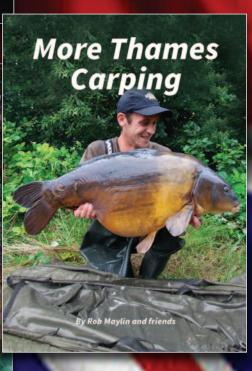












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The Session of a Lifetime, Burghfield, Five Years On...

By John Hickey

he session actually started at the end of a session the week before. I was fishing three quarters of the way down towards Hodder's point in the channel that opened up into Weedy Bay, and my mate Dave was fishing a swim behind me over the bank into Snag Bay. I had a small common of 18lb 4oz, and that is all we had between us. Dave was up and gone early on the Sunday, so I packed up around 11am and made my way back along the ridge. The path takes a sharp right turn, but I could see, through the trees and undergrowth, a small swim at the back of Weedy Bay where the lake continued down to the dogleg.

I put the barrow down and decided to have a closer look. It was so overgrown, the only way in being from the Oak Tree swim behind. Once in the

swim, it looked "carpy" with a small island to the left, a bay in between, and the long island to the right. Any fish going down to the dogleg would have to pass this spot, so it was back to the barrow to get what bait I had left and back to the swim. I put all I had left into three areas: just in front of the island to the left went the Winter Peach, the bay between the two islands had a spread of Scopex Spice, and the Chocolate Orange went to a spot in front of the island to the right - all Perfection Groundbaits boilies in 15mm. I put in total about 1kg of bait out, which isn't a lot, but people who know me know I am not one for feeding the fish with loads of bait. I have never prebaited before either, as it's always a gamble, but I knew this swim hadn't been visited for a long while. Job done, and it was back to the barrow for the long push to the

Thursday finally arrived... Working four 12-hour days Monday to Thursday meant I had three days' fishing. The car was already loaded, and at 6pm, I was off for the trek up the M3 and A33 to Burghfield, all the while thinking about getting to the lake. I opened the gate to the car park at about 7.20. No cars – result! The barrow was duly loaded for the long push, and I was pretty much sprinting to start.

Anyone that has done that push knows wit doesn't lost long but I

Anyone that has done that push knows - it doesn't last long, but I eventually arrived on top of the ridge that led to Hodder's point. I could see the swim was as I had left it just four days previously. I unloaded the barrow, got all the gear into the swim, and that's when I realised just how small it was, but I got it all in and got the rods out onto the areas I'd baited earlier. All went down with that satisfying "donk" accompanied by just 20 freebies. The light was fading fast, so dinner was cooked. The nights were starting to get chilly, so to save weight, I took no sleeping bag, but it was on with the thermal suit, a final brew, and head down.

Friday morning arrived after an action-free night, and it was on with the kettle for the first of many brews, and fresh baits were put on. I was fishing snowman rigs, coupled with the shocker rig on all three spots, a tactic that I still fish with even now. That method saw me catch 76 carp in one season on the Match Lake at Yateley, so I stuck with what I had confidence in. I had already banked a 38lb 7oz out of Bailiff's the previous month, so no reason to change. Breakfast was soon cooked and eaten. The day was warming so the thermal suit was removed, feet up and on with the radio. The day passed uneventfully, and dinner was cooked,



The Session of a Lifetime, Burghfield, Five Years On...





fresh baits put on and I was ready for the night.

Just before 8pm the right hand rod ripped off. Using the shocker rig certainly gave some zero to ballistic runs. The fish was heading down towards the dogleg, and after a short scrap, it was in the landing net. It was dark, so it was on with the head torch for a look at what was in the net. It was a nice looking mirror, which was duly hoisted out onto the unhooking mat, photos done, weighed at 24lb 15oz, and back into its watery home. I put new baits on, and put them back out onto the spot with ten more freebies. Then it was on with the kettle and thermal suit and feet up. Now was this due to prebaiting, I wondered? The rest of the evening and night remained quiet.

Saturday morning duly arrived, and the bivvy was damp from the dew. The stove was lit, kettle on, followed by breakfast, rigs checked and fresh baits mounted and back on the spots. Then it was feet up and football on the radio... God, I love fishing! Sometime early in the afternoon, I heard what sounded like a dog running towards the swim from behind. I was expecting to see the bailiff with his dog, but I didn't. What arrived in the

swim were two of the biggest mink I have ever seen. They stopped at the water's edge, right next to the rods, obviously playing. What they must have thought of a grown man kneeling on a bedchair telling them to "Go forth and multiply" but not in so many words, god only knows. They just looked at me in amazement, with me looking at them in horror. Splosh! In they went and swam across to the island on the right. My heart was going mental; you don't argue with mink unless you like your fingers bitten!

I decided to check the baits, put fresh ones on and then it was on with the kettle, as I needed a brew. I had just cooked dinner and had it on the plate when at 6pm, the middle bobbin cracked up against the rod, coupled with what sounded like a pig had fallen in, and then followed by the monotone of the Delkim. It was down with the plate, grab the rod and clamp down on the spool. Whatever it was, it was heavy and trying to get round the back of the island. I had no choice but to lean into it and let the 3lb Prodigy+ do its work. Success! I had managed to turn it and get it my side of the island. I lifted the left hand rod off its rest and dropped the tip down the marginal shelf to reduce the chance of a tangle. After a long battle of it swimming round in a circle, I managed to get its head up. I could see it was a mirror – a big mirror. The net was dropped into the margins ready, and after a five-minute close quarter tussle, it was in the net. I paid out some slack and put the rod up against the bivvy.

Now as this was a small swim with a big fish. I reeled the other two rods in, got it all out of the way, and I hoisted the fish up onto the landing net. Yep, it was big! It was duly unhooked and weighed, and at 40lb 8oz it was my first UK forty. I rang my mate Dave, who wasn't fishing, but he was on the lash, so no chance of photos then. So I did self takes, and fortunately the fish behaved without a single tail slap or any hysterics. The photos were checked and back it went. Chuffed doesn't come close to how I was feeling! The left and right hand rods were quickly back out on the spots, and I was eating what was now a cold dinner at the same time as putting fresh baits on the middle rod, when the right hand rod roared off. It had only been out for 15 minutes, after another protracted scrap, it was in the net. It was now dark, so on with



The Session of a Lifetime, Burghfield, Five Years On...



the head torch to see another mirror, which was again weighed and photographed at 30lb 9oz. I couldn't believe my luck! New baits went on, and the middle and right hand rods were back out on the spots. I finally finished my dinner, made a fresh brew, put the thermal suit on and put my feet up. I was grinning like a Cheshire cat; I'd had a 20, a 40 and a 30 in one weekend, and I was looking at the piccies, reliving it all. Was it down to prebaiting though? I didn't care.

It was getting late, about 11pm, when the stillness of the night was interrupted by the middle bobbin cracking into the butt of the rod again, and another big splosh came from between the islands. I was on the rod in a flash, clamping down on the spool. Like the mirror, it tried to get round the back of the island, and again, I had no option but to hang on and steer it my way. It felt heavy, very

heavy, and luckily, I had it my side of the island. It was kiting left, so the left hand rod tip was again dispatched to the bottom of the marginal shelf with the reel up against the Delkim, quickly followed by the landing net. All the time the fish was kiting left with a heavy plod. To the left of the swim was an overhanging tree and Weedy Bay... I had no choice - if it got round the corner, it was gone, so the tip of the rod was down into the lake, wind down, and hold on.

I could feel it kicking with its tail, and then I could see that it was under the tree. The water was rocking in what little light there was. The rod did its job, and the fish turned towards me. The rod was coming back, so I lifted it slowly. I could see the tip was facing straight down. It was under the rod and above the landing net shit or bust time! I scooped the net up, and it was in. I was shaking! The net was hooked over the Delkim, line paid off, and then head torch time. I still hadn't actually seen the fish. I flicked the torch on and looked down. I plainly remember the words that left my mouth when I saw what was laying in the net: "*** me! It's the Burghfield Common."

I stood there in awe of its sheer size and length. It was a pure golden colour from the head torch, and my brain went into meltdown. I was at the lake, alone, with one of the most sought after carp in my net. I pulled myself together, bit the line, and got the other two rods in and out of the way. The swim was too small for photos with this fish, so the camera, tripod and water bucket were all moved into the Oak Tree swim.

The landing net arms were removed and rolled up, and it was one big heave onto the unhooking mat, as it was heavy - very, very heavy. It filled it! I unravelled the net, got the hook and rig all out of the way. The

The Session of a Lifetime, Burghfield, Five Years On...

ree line

weigh sling was immersed and put on the scales, and all was zeroed. I got the fish into the sling and on the scales, which read 53lb 10oz. I was ecstatic, but still had photos to do, so all was put back onto the unhooking mat and secured.

After a quick walk over the bank into the Oak Tree swim, I had the camera set on the tripod on custom mode to take ten photos. All were done, in one round of ten on each side, and one in the middle of me picking it up after turning it round. That fish could have trashed me if it had decided to kick off, but it didn't, and it's a magical memory. It is one big fish, very long, with perfect manners. It was wetted and reweighed at 53lb 10oz again, and then it was time to return it to its watery home for the

next fortunate angler. I took my shoes and socks off, put the fish in the weigh sling and walked into the margins with it. I undid the sling and lowered it all into the lake. The sling was gotten out of the way, and I held the fish by its tail. I could feel it tense, so let it go, and with a single flick of its tail, out it went. I was able to follow it with the head torch for about six metres before it just swam down into the depths of Weedy Bay, no fuss, no bow wave... it was back where it belonged.

I sat at the base of the oak tree, looking out into Weedy Bay. All was silent, there was nobody to witness the event, just me, and as you can gather, I do not sack fish. Each to their own, but I always put the safety of fish first, hence a good camera. I use

a Canon S5IS, which has a flip-round screen and the facility to do custom mode on self-takes. You programme how many you want it to take, and you can view the shot after each one, to get the positioning right.

I picked everything up and returned to the swim, walking on cloud nine. The left and right hand rods went back on the spots, middle rod was retied, new baits on, and I just flicked it out. Then it was on with the kettle and out with the mobile phone. I sent a simple text to my mates Dave and Alan: "The Burghfield Common weighs 53lb 10oz." Needless to say, it was a sleepless night. I didn't care – four fish and my UK PB was broken twice in the space of five hours... and I had caught the Burghfield common! Happy, happy days!





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Part One - The Tackle Box, Sutton-at-Hone by Lee Jackson

suppose it's every person's dream to make a living out of their hobby, in other words, to actually wake up in the morning and look forward to going to work as opposed to begrudgingly going due to the necessity of having to pay the bills and support a family. Although when growing up I'd had a good education at primary and then grammar school level, when I left at the age of 16, unlike a lot of the other boys who went on to be architects, surveyors, electricians and suchlike, all I'd actually got myself qualified as was an ability to fish for and successfully catch carp!

Since around the age of thirteen I'd had a Saturday job in a clothing shop in Deptford High Street, so on leaving school my first 'make do' full time job was working in their warehouse in the Old Kent Road. It was whilst working for Carter's that I met someone that was to become a lifelong friend and now brother-in-law, and due to a chance conversation, led to me earning double what I was earning at Carter's, working half the hours I had been, and therefore having plenty of free time for carp fishing without interfering too much with family life. Colin had been the delivery

driver for Carter's prior to me working there and had left to drive a dustcart for Southwark Borough Council. I can remember our conversation like it was yesterday. It was around midday, and Colin popped into the warehouse for a chat prior to going fishing. I couldn't believe it; I still had another five hours to work, and Colin was finished and earned twice as much as

Consequently a couple of days later saw me down at Southwark town hall having a medical for a job as a dustman. I vividly remember the medical also, not that there was much to remember... A pretty young nurse looked me up and down without so much as touching me or asking any questions and then said, "You'll do. You can start tomorrow if you want!" One obstacle I had to then contend with was breaking the news to my mum. She'd always told people that I was going to be an architect, a solicitor or something like that; a refuse collection specialist didn't quite have the same ring to it, and her pride was hurt as a result. Such is life... The 'bins' kept me in excellent physical shape for the next 14 years, and because the work was carried out on a 'job and knock' basis, it enabled me



to get away from work early and go carp fishing for the afternoon/ evening. Get away early was an understatement: on 'fishing days', because by now Colin was the driver of the dustcart that I was on, we'd drive out of the depot at 7.30am, and I was often on my way to Darenth by 9am, with strict instructions to save him a swim of course.

As well as the dustman job, I was still doing a part time Saturday job, although by now with a camping company, Camping International, who were initially based in the New Kent Road before moving to their current premises at Gillingham in Kent, which was near to where I then lived. On non-fishing days it was often necessary to stock up on a few fishing bits on my way home from Southwark, and by doing a few excursions was able to visit a number of tackle shops if the previous one visited didn't have what I wanted in stock. First port of call was always what since first starting fishing was my regular tackle shop, Ken Briggs's shop in Loampit Vale, Lewisham. In actual fact I was often called upon by Ken to



lee (ine)

help him out with the ordering of carp baits and tackle, because as predominantly a match orientated tackle shop, Ken didn't have much of a clue what the carp boys wanted. Being a bit mischievous, I always made sure to order plenty of Rod Hutchinson's Monster Crab flavour and Shellfish Sense Appeal; the reason being that I often used these myself, and also that they would make his shop smell really nice! From Ken's I'd sometimes go in the Rod and Line up the road, Eltham Angling, Gentry's in Welling, Toyes Tackle in Bexleyheath, The Rod Rest in Dartford, a sea fishing shop in Slade Green, Bob Morris's shop, and a relatively new shop that had opened up in the village of Sutton-at-Hone, which was near to all the lakes and run by a couple of keen brothers, Gary and Kevin Peet, with help from their mum. Avis.

After a while The Tackle Box became my main tackle shop, not only because being in the heart of the Darenth Valley, the hotbed for carp fishing at the time, there was always a carpy atmosphere and certain 'buzz' about it, but also because they always seemed to have what I wanted to buy in stock, a philosophy that The Tackle Box still has to this day. At the time there were very few shops throughout the country that specialised in carp fishing; in fact the only ones that spring to mind were Simpsons of Turnford and Alan Brown in Hitchin. both of which were in Hertfordshire, The Carp Cellar in Watford run by Lloyd Bent, a shop run by Rob Heald up in the Sheffield area and perhaps Middlesex Angling, Harefield Tackle and Leslie's of Luton. There were other shops that 'played at it' of course, but because of the amount of other types of angling that they catered for, they couldn't really be termed as a 'carp shop'

Then things started to get a bit strained with her indoors, because Camping International now wanted me to work every Sunday also, which although we needed the money, meant that she and our three young children would hardly ever see me. Thinking about it now, like so many carp anglers past and present, I was a really selfish so-and-so back then and put carp and carp fishing before my family, and everything else come to that. So be it though; I've got to accept the things I cannot change,



Words of advice from a young Gary and Kevin Peet.

the upside being that eventually carp fishing would pay the bills and feed the family, and my three kids would be very proud of their dad, or so they tell me.

On the strength of the camping shop issue, I decided to approach Gary and Kevin and ask if they needed a Saturday boy. Not only would I be enthusiastically working in a trade that I was interested in and that I knew a lot about opposed to selling caravan awnings, trailer tents and portable toilets etc, but I was also confident that I could help build up their business due to my experience in most things carp fishing, and also due to the fact that I had worked in retail since the age of thirteen. Gary and Kevin said yes, and I started work there the following Saturday, fairly soon finding out that although I knew a lot about carp fishing and carp baits, I knew absolutely nothing about cleaning maggots and also that pinkies weren't coloured ones!

I took to working in The Tackle Box like a duck takes to water and enjoyed every minute of it. It has to be said though that some people's perception of working in a fishing tackle shop is that it's all about standing around and drinking tea and coffee all day long and talking fishing... Wrong! There is always something needing to be done. Although there were often social gatherings of the likes of The Darenth Fat Boys, The Sutton Elite and Sufferers, the Streeter brothers and clan and many other friends and fellow carp anglers, it was important to distance yourself from the gather-





ings in order to top up shelves and for the till to go 'kerching' fairly regularly so that the business thrived and sur-

One of the biggest pains in the arse was dealing with the sea anglers and their lugworm orders. Digging lugworm is very much dependent on nature, and as no human power has control over the weather conditions or the amount or size of the worms that are there for the digging, anglers could sometimes be a bit disappointed at the size of the worms or that sometimes they had to be cut down by a score or two so that there was enough to go round. It was the end of the world for some people, and some could turn quite nasty. I remember one occasion when our lug digger got stranded on a sandbar out at sea because the boat that was supposed to be picking him up had broken down. Remember there were no mobile phones back in those days, so the digger had no way of contacting anybody. There he was, up to his waist in water, praying to God with a



fear of drowning, and blokes jumping about and screaming at him when he got back to the shop and trying to explain how the lugworm had managed to make their way back down to the seabed! So un-understanding some people.

After a couple of months of working part time for The Tackle Box and enjoying every minute of it, I was suddenly faced with having to make some massive decisions with regard to my future employment status. The then government imposed regulations on most if not all borough councils, that they would have to put in tenders and bid against private companies in order to retain or gain contracts to continue with the services that had always been under council control, including refuse collection. In the case of Southwark Borough Council, they were faced with the reality of having to drastically shrink the workforce in order to put in a competitive bid against the private companies. I can remember being quite annoyed about this at the time, because in past similar circumstances the cutbacks were always imposed on the likes of the dustmen and road sweepers. Would not a fairer and more sensible money saving option have been for Southwark to close down two of their town halls? I mean, why did they need three town halls in the first place?

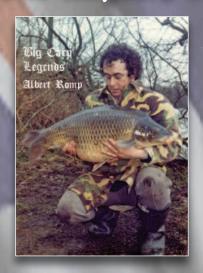
To cut a long story short, Southwark offered voluntary redundancy, and I did a runner with my eight grand with the prospect of having a mortgage, other bills to pay, three young kids and a wife to feed, and no job! Fortunately I wasn't out of work for very long, as Gary and Kevin offered me a full-time position working in The Tackle Box, an offer that I will always be grateful for and that I accepted straight away. Again this decision created a bit of friction with her indoors, because now, if I wasn't fishing, I was indoors tying rigs, making bait, regularly talking on the phone about fishing, reading and writing about fishing, and now I'd be working in fishing also, so now she'd well and truly become a fishing widow. This sort of puts an extra meaning to the term full-time carp angler doesn't it? More like full-time selfish bastard! I loved it though and looked forward to going to work every day. Not only that, where before my fishing was restricted to short afternoon/evening sessions after work, now I could fish short sessions on waters near to the shop before work and after work, and travel further afield to fish for a whole day on my Thursday day off.

As I said earlier, The Tackle Box always had a bit of a 'buzz' about it, mainly because of its close proximity to top carp venues such as the Darenth complex, the DDAPS and Leisure Sport Sutton-at-Hone lakes, Horton Kirby and Brooklands Lake, Dartford. Every single day saw some sort of in-depth bait, rig or suchlike conversation going on, and a lot of innovative ideas were initially spawned from that little shop. In particular, and as far as we are aware, this is where the highly acclaimed and much used 'knotless knot' originated, a simple knot that went on to be the most commonly used knot in the world for tying on a hook and formulating a 'hair rig' all in one go.

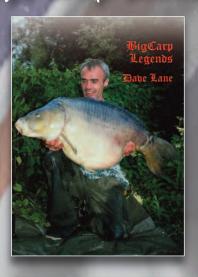
As far I know there were a number of other firsts that originated from The Tackle Box. Not a lot of people will remember this, but there was a time when Kevin Nash Tackle offered a range of pike tackle, and for our own fishing we used one of his pike floats that had flights on as a marker float, which was definitely the first marker float with flights that I personally had ever seen in use. Another possible first was when, due to my experience and interest in bait, I brought out a couple of top quality boilie base mixes that were exclusive to The Tackle Box, namely the Fishy Mix and the Seed Mix Supreme. As was normal, we sold it in 1kg bags, and I

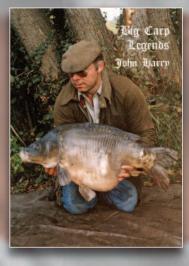
BIG CARP LEGENDS SERIES

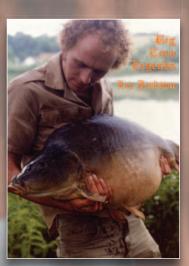
The anglers that shaped todays carp scene



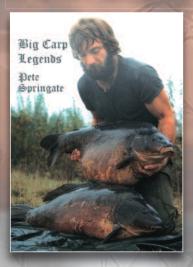


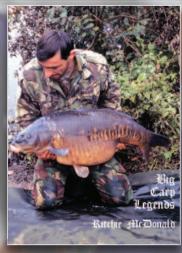


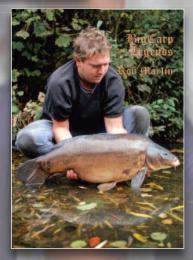














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decided that in order to be different, it'd be a good idea to offer it in a bulk 10kg size, but opposed to a bag, sell it in a bucket so that the angler could store it easily and had a bucket to use for other fishing uses. Again, this was the first time that I'd heard of bulk bait being sold in a bucket; nowadays most bait companies do it.

Incidentally, boilies made from the Seed Mix Supreme accounted for the first ever 40lb-plus from Savay Lake, caught by Max Cottis. I can still remember the winning combination: Seed Mix Supreme with Rod Hutchinson's Leaf Spice flavour, RH1 essential oil and Regular Sense Appeal... Funny that, not a great deal different than what some of the top baits are nowadays! Another massive exclusive for us, which still remains so today, is Ming Oil. Being honest and without exaggerating in any way, I personally would rate Ming Oil as one of the most effective attractors of all time. And not only is it only effective for carp; it has proven to be effective for practically any fish that swims, whether it be in freshwater, saltwater or for tropical species as far afield as Thailand. The story of how Ming Oil got its name in the first place has to be told, although I must first apologise for making it sound a bit crude. When we first came up with it and were trying to think of a name for it, a long-time friend of mine and friend of the shop came in, sniffed the bottle and exclaimed, "Cor, that's f****g horrible, smells like a dirty old $m^{****}!$ " Well we knocked a letter off of the end of what he said and that's how it got its name, Premier Baits had Crunt Oil, and we had Ming Oil!

As well as our own exclusive base mixes, we stocked base mixes, bait ingredients and attractors etc from most of the major players in the bait world at the time, a far cry from what it's like nowadays where new bait companies are springing up on an almost daily basis, and every single one of them selling the most effective bait in the world. The choice of readymade boilies available was nothing like it is nowadays either; in fact when I first started working for the shop, all I can remember us offering was the Richworth range of frozen boilies, and how they've stood the test of time, eh? To this day there is not a single bait out there that has been as effective as a frozen Rich-



Motley crew.

worth Tutti, and in most cases there still isn't!

On the tackle front the choice was miniscule in comparison to what's available nowadays - a good job really because our little shop was absolutely crammed to the hilt as it was, and with only a garage at the back of the shop and a small bait room for storage, it was usually very difficult to find and make space for back up stock. We managed though; the shop was like an Aladdin's cave, and it was like an army assault course to get to the stock... all good fun. On the rod front the most prestigious and sought after range that we stocked was the Sportex Carbon Kevlars, which were supplied to us by Tony Fordham of Davenport and Fordham fame, the most popular models being the legendary 12ft 2.25lb, especially so the 'Python' version that was built to my spec, and the 13ft 3lb 'Infinity', which at the time was one the best casting rods available. A bit later on we got involved in doing our own versions of other popular rods, the Daiwa Amorphous and the Les Quis rod, designed as the ideal rod for use on the then up-and-coming and now famous English controlled fishery in France.

On the reel front, the Seaspin Shimano Baitrunner 3500 and 4500s were just starting to become popular, taking over as 'the' carp reel to have, and following on from the likes of the ABU Cardinal 55s and 57s. So-called big pit reels were yet to be recognised, although I do think the term big pit was, and still is, misleading, as it gives the immediate impression that you can cast further with them, which isn't necessarily the case. That said however, following us having a look at a Japanese Shimano catalogue, and with a lot of commitment, we were able to exclusively sell the Power Aero 6000 GT, fully converted with a baitrunner cap on the front and a converted smaller handle, both of these conversions we also made available for the Shimano Biomaster and Aerlex as well as Daiwa SS 3000s and Tournament 5000 Ts.

Looking back, and without wishing to blow our own trumpet, with these and a lot of other of our own little exclusives. The Tackle Box led the way for others to follow, which unfortunately sometimes caused a little bit of ill feeling on our part. As far as bedchairs were concerned, I can only remember there being two versions at the time: the Fox Standard and the Fox Supa Deluxe, the latter costing twice as much a similar quality bed-



Shop dog Rosie.

lee (ine)



June 15th party time.

chair nowadays, and that you had to lace on the mattress yourself, although we used to get part time lads to lace them up all ready to go so that it was an advantage for the customer to buy from us. Brollies and bivvies offered adequate protection from the elements although were nowhere near as big or 'palatial' as what they are now. At the time most carp anglers were used to having to 'rough it' a lot more than they do now, and as a consequence, shelters such as the Nash Oval Brolly and Profile were the most popular type of shelter that they used, with the tent type of bivvies such as the Rod Hutchinson Apotheosis only really being popular with carp anglers who were venturing abroad. One shelter that was very popular was the Wavelock brolly conversion that was made by Scruffy Bob, and it's highly unlikely that you'd wander around almost any lake in the southeast of England without seeing one furnishing its banks. Bob was an

absolute master with a sewing machine, whether you wanted mini sides, full sides or just the ends of your brolly reinforced Bob could do it, and with masterful perfection.

I haven't got a lot to say about bite alarms except that they occasionally go beep, and nothing's changed, they still do. The main difference with bite alarms now and back then is the cost: bite alarms that you now pay a tenner for, you'd have to pay at least five times as much as that back then.

Luggage has got a bit out of hand in comparison to what it was back then, although again, it's now better quality and cheaper to buy than it was. Back then a rucksack or carryall was basically an empty shell that you stuffed your tackle into, slung it onto your back or over your shoulder and then went on a route march. Nowadays you've got a bag for a bag for a bag that you sling on your electric barrow and drive round the lake, is it any wonder that there are now a lot

more obese carp anglers about than there used to be? Mind you, you've often got to be a bit of a bodybuilder also nowadays to get your tackle to your swim... Everything has got unnecessarily so much bigger than it used to be, and once you've put your bedchair, sleeping bag, unhooking mat and bivvy onto your barrow, there's hardly any room left for anything else.

Back then there was a closed season, which was actually a really busy time at the shop, going off to trade shows to the see all the new gear on offer and then finding room to store it all once it got delivered, heads down filling out fishing licences, and at the same time, trying to be accommodating to the extra amount of anglers that visited the shop for a bit of a social because they couldn't go fishing. At any one time you could see the Darenth Fat Boys, the Sutton Elite and Sufferers, the Streeter Brothers and many more all in the shop at the same time. It was uncontrollable bedlam at times, especially so if we had loads of work that needed doing. I wouldn't swap these times for the world though; it made for a wonderful atmosphere, was highly entertaining, often very educational as most of these guys were excellent anglers, and at the end of the day, all the work eventually got done.

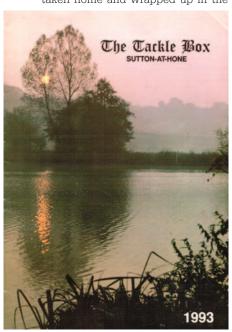
Our June 15th socials/party were legendary, as the shop used to provide food and drinks and stay open late to accommodate the anglers that were set up on the local lakes in readiness for the midnight kick off. Everyone was welcome, although it has to be said, not everybody got back to their swims in a fit state, and the residents of the little village of Suttonat-Hone must've been wondering what was going on that night, the streets littered with a load of vagrants all camouflaged up or dressed in green! June 16th in comparison was an anticlimax and very placid, not that I was normally in the shop that day, and no prizes for guessing where I was! This was a long time before mobile phones or social media such as Facebook etc, but even so, news of catches (or not) used to slowly filter back to the shop. Some bits of news used to filter back really quickly however, like unwelcome news of somebody breaking a rod or having trouble with the line or suchlike that they had



Show time.

bought from us the week before. It has got to be said, most issues were down to 'angler error' opposed to a fault with the tackle. I mean, how does a rod break in the butt casting a 2oz lead have nothing to do with the size 9 footprint on it?

After a while, as well as shop custom, the mail order side of our business started to really grow, which was also responsible for spreading the shop's name and reputation. Most of the time it was my job to design and draw up the shop adverts, adverts that most of the time were formulated by writing the instructions on bits of paper, sticking them onto an A4 sheet and then faxing it off to the publisher, which sort of puts a whole new meaning to the term cut and paste, doesn't it? Regular adverts were placed in the monthlies such as Coarse Fisherman, Carpworld and this mag (Big Carp), as well as less regular publications such as The Carp Society and CAA mags. The phone by now started to ring more and more with people placing orders, and the postman became even more laden with envelopes containing cheques for orders by post. In comparison to what it became in later years, our mail order service was fairly prehistoric back then. We didn't have a computer, so there was no such thing as a customer database, and as opposed to the carriers and Royal Mail picking the parcels up off of us, they had to be taken home and wrapped up in the



Our first catalogue - we'd created a monster.



Our famous Three Bums advert.

evening and then taken to them the following morning.

A few years after this our business rose to a different level and we produced our first annual catalogue... 1993 was the year we created a monster! Suddenly things changed from us having to ring up and try to get an account with some of the big, major, new and up-and-coming tackle and bait companies to them ringing us up and wanting to get their gear into our little shop. Not only that, but some of the companies were coming to us for our input and advice on new products they were working on and thinking of bringing out. One such visitor to the shop that springs to mind is Danny Fairbrass. He came in to show us some leads that he had made and was thinking of selling but went out with his tail between his legs when

we told him that his moulds were

Without wishing to blow our own trumpet, The Tackle Box were responsible for putting the little village of Sutton-at-Hone onto the map of the world. Royal Mail and Parcel Force now picked up from us, and we was now their biggest account in the Dartford area. Some young German fella opened up a new tackle shop in Bavaria called something like Engelsporten Sutton-at-Hone, because he thought that Sutton-at-Hone meant we're 'the bollocks'!

On the fishing front, and despite working in The Tackle Box, which was what I imagined would be like working in the stock exchange, I still managed to get out and do a bit on a fairly regular basis, as did the guvnors Gary and Kevin and the rest of the

staff that had recently joined us. It was important to walk the walk as well as talk the talk. Most of us did short sessions before and after work as well as overnighters, and our own bait and rig making was usually done on mornings before work when we weren't fishing. Thinking about it now, I've absolutely no idea how we used to fit it all in – young, energetic and full of enthusiasm I suppose.

Another thing we got heavily involved with was doing a stand at the main UK carp shows, and boy, did we put some effort into it! Our stands were usually bigger than our shop! Carp Society shows at the Queensway Hall in Dunstable and at Wembley, and CAA shows, wherever, we always turned up in a great big lorry whose fully laden contents had taken a week to prepare, organise and load, and the highlight being the boilie fight with the Richworth lads at the end of the show. All good fun, and back in the days when shows were shows and people went to them to see the on-stage entertainment,

opposed to the glorified tackle shows/boot sales that they are nowadays with a little room in the corner for the entertainment. Watch this space - things might change!

Such was the success of our first catalogue that we were almost forced to produce one every year; it was expected from us. The little shop was now bursting at the seams. For storage we'd rented a big nearby unit that was full up too, the shop and mail order business had grown out of all proportion, and we desperately needed a move to a much bigger premises else we all die. By now we

were in a computer age and a big business that needed to take a more professional approach. Well they say it takes women to sort out things properly, and Gary and Kevin's partners joined the business - Jackie to organise the accounts, wages and the money side of the business and Kevin's wife Ruth to design and run the mail order side of things in order for it to run more efficiently.

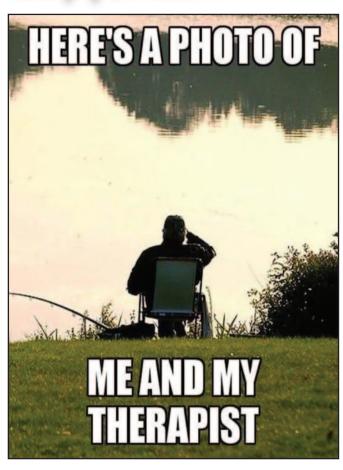
1999 and a bold but exciting move to Dartford... lest we forget you, Sutton-at-Hone.

Next month Part 2 - The Tackle Box. Dartford.



1999 and Dartford bound.

Carpy Humour













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Yateley West, the Future

Martin Gardener talks to Rob Maylin - Part One

Yateley West, the Future

n early 2012, Mexican cement giants Cemex decided to disband their inherited fishing section. Over the past fifty years they had accumulated over one hundred fisheries in the hands of their Ready Mix Concrete Leisure Sport Angling section. This was an incredible shock to the carp world. We were all worried about our fisheries, but more importantly about our fish; what if these waters got into the wrong hands? Could some unscrupulous development company purchase the land and through some backward handshake get permission to build a housing estate over our legendary carp venue? A complex that in most people's opinion is the number one venue in the UK is the Yateley complex. Very luckily it fell into the hands of a gentleman called Martin Gardener, and I am here today in early September 2015 to record a feature for my upcoming 25th anniversary issue about the whys, the wheres and the what ifs regarding the purchase of the number one carp fishing complex this country has ever known. The fish: Bazil, Heather, Jumbo, Arthur are all now long gone of course, but what of



the future for Yateley West? Who are the new named fish on this complex? Well I am here today to find out just that, and also hopefully Martin will supply us with a few photos of these new fish to start our history books. Without further ado I will introduce Martin Gardner.

Rob: So I suppose the first question is, Martin, how did you hear that this place was up for sale in the first place?

Martin: When Cemex announced

The Split Lake is one of the most picturesque on the complex. (Below) Car Park 30lb-plus common.

publicly that they were going to sell their fishing properties, initially I knew it was possible for me to buy a lake of my own, but I wondered if I really wanted to mix business with pleasure in this way, because from a business point of view it is not something I particularly need to do. I love my fishing, and that it is a complete



Line Yateley West, the Future

break from everything else. It was something to think about for a while, and in the end I thought I would go and look at Fox Pool because I live near High Wycombe and that was the closest water on offer to me. I had never seen it, which is surprising, because I have looked at lakes up that way and fished a couple of them in the past.

When I went for a walk round, I absolutely fell in love with Fox Pool and started a process of negotiation with Cemex's agent with a view to making an offer there. Eventually, I did make an offer, which was a very high offer and got quite excited about the likely outcome of me buying that lovely set of lakes. However, I was amazed to find that I had been outbid. I was in second place, and was told that if the first place offer did not perform they would come back to me. In actual fact the lake was bought by a guy called Simon Hancock, a very

(Right) Essential otter fencing. (Below) Car Park's big common,

nice guy who I get on very well with, and I wish him all the best there. I have to say that I was really quite upset at not being successful with the bidding there to the point that I was quite embarrassed at how upset I was over not buying this lake. By that time I had fallen in love with it, and not having anywhere set for fishing in the summer, I had one of the last remaining tickets that year. I was fishing on there, and you start to have a relationship with it as an angler - not just the idea of buying it - so I was really unusually upset about it.

Then Cemex announced that everything was sold apart from Yateley. Yateley had been on the market as a whole, all the lakes together at a very high asking price, and now it was all going to be separated into lots. My initial reaction was "no thanks"; I had done enough of this and had spent a little bit of money on my negotiations over Fox Pool, which hadn't turned out to be successful. My initial reaction was no, let's just forget it and carry on having fishing just as a hobby, but then speaking to





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Car Park's Puffy Cheeks at 40lb 8oz.



 $Car\,Park's\,slate\,grey\,common\,at\,41lb\,8oz.$

Yateley West, the Future





a friend of mine I said, "No, let's go and have a look." So we came and had a look at both sides of the road. I had only ever walked over this side once before, although I did fish the Match and the Copse in 1990, and I immediately started thinking perhaps I could do something here.

My first plan was to try and buy the North Lake with the right of access over the track and just have that on its own, thinking that was all my budget would run to. But as things went on it became clear that something more was possible, and Cemex preferred to sell this side of the road in a number of lots, which meant that this lot would be four lakes together, and

that's what I eventually ended up with – North Lake, Split Lake, Pads Lake, the Car Park and the stretch of Blackwater. Originally we were going to have the Tree Lakes as well, but Farnham got those in the end. Once the deal was decided on, we decided how to carve the fence line, and in fact it has worked very well. If you walk to the Tree Lake complex it is all there like a sort of natural moat as it were from the Farnham guys on the other side. I couldn't have been more amazed, and I am still a bit in shock now that I own these lakes that I have read and dreamt about for so long. It is absolutely remarkable.

Rob: So let's take a step back for a



moment... You put your bid in for Yateley on this side of the road and it turned out to be the best four lakes, let's be honest, and eventually you heard from them that your bid had been accepted.

Martin: Yes, I had a surveyor that I have used for many years who negotiated with me to buy this side of the road, and yes, I got the news, and I was absolutely shocked and gobsmacked. And then I thought, I have to come over here and say, "Hi, everybody, it's me" and win some hearts and minds. If I was one of the punters I would be thinking, "Who is coming and what is he all about?" People are naturally cautious in the first instance, aren't they? People were thinking, Christ, what is he going to do? In terms of my business background it has nothing to do with fishing. When I come through the gates it is a mixture of hats really. I mean, on the one hand I have put a lot of money in here; I have to make a return, and that is a fact, but from an angler's point of view I am asking what I would want if I were a punter?

Having spent a fair amount of years behind rods I have a clear idea of what syndicate members want. Everyone down here is singing from the same hymn sheet, really - bailiffs as well – it is a very agreeable place to be between the blokes, I have to say. The 125 members over the three lakes haven't had any serious falling outs over the last three years but there has been a lot for me to learn, especially in year one. Anyone who is managing a fishery will already know and probably laugh when they hear it, but the first thing you have to learn is that most of it is not about managing a fishery; it is about managing people. Fortunately, I don't mind doing that, and I probably don't make a bad job of it. I seem to be getting on with everybody down here. Not everybody likes the boss in any sphere of life, but I think we all get on, and there is a very good sense of community here. With the name of Yateley and all the history that comes with that, you also get an huge amount of goodwill, and that has been amazing. Some of the hours some guys have been putting in here to help out has been fantastic.

■ See next month for part 2. ■

(Top) A Car Park common on the mat. (Left) The front end of a Car Park common.



Looking Back.

An Overview of Carp Tackle Developments Since the 1950s By Mike Wilson

t the recent Carp Society Show at Sandown, Tim Paisley and I were discussing not just how much shows had grown since our Dunstable days, but also the tremendous growth in both carp fishing and the tackle available.

Casting my mind back to my early years I recall we had a very limited amount of tackle available.

The rods that were initially available were whole cane butt and middle joints with split cane tops. Dick Walker's design of split cane MKIV rods were only available to the lucky few who could afford their high cost of £10.10s (which would be the equivalent of around £283 today). I could only afford one MKIV Carp plus a lighter MKIV Avon for all my fishing; which wasn't just limited to carp when I first started in 1958.

Today those rods, highly collectable by the (in vogue) 'traditionalists' have rather limited production and are now very expensive. Many buy second hand rods from eBay and refurbish them.

Some of the manufacturers of rods in the early 60s did away with the split cane top, opting for the cheaper solid fibreglass tops. This early glass led to the development of hollow glass rods, which, being much lighter than cane and virtually indestructible, were very good and became used universally, with many still being used to this day.

Again there was limited produc-



tion, as the cost of the glass cloth, mandrels and ovens to cure the resin in the cloth, created a product which was expensive not only to produce, but also for the tackle shops to stock in any great numbers. To overcome this 'blanks' were bought in by the tackle shops with handles, rings etc., added by either the shops or custom built by the anglers themselves. Each rod therefore became unique depending on what was commercially available, and, again, they are much sought after today. The initial development of carbon rods began (as described on the Angling Heritage Site http://www.anglingheritage. org/p-8882-the-birth-of-a-rod.aspx) in 1964 when Hardy of Alnwick invited the Moncrieff Rod Development Company (MRDC), consisting of Leslie Moncrieff, Fred Buller, Richard Walker and Fred J. Taylor, to act as consultants.

The carbon fibre manufacturing process, originally developed at the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE) at Farnborough, Hampshire was patented by the UK Ministry of Defence, and subsequently licensed to Rolls-Royce (who were already making carbon fibre), Morganite, and Courtaulds leading to it being used in aeronautics, aerospace, boats, racing cars and, of course, the manufacture of golf club handles and fishing rods!

Having watched a TV programme called 'From Strength to Strength' (a bit like an early version of Dragons Den), which invited suggestions for the use of the newly developed carbon fibre, Dick Walker and Jim Hardy were quick to take advantage of this opportunity. They approached the RAE and in 1968 Leslie Phillips (RAE) agreed to work with them on prototype fishing rods made from carbon fibre reinforced plastic.

Hardy's (working with the RAE) continued this development at their Fibatube factory, and in 1971 a patent (GB1351732) was granted to Dick Walker, W Hardy and Leslie Phillips (RAE). Their first carbon rods were available from the 1976 catalogue. They had competitors of course, but



(Top) Pre-warlines. (Left) Early fake worm pre-war.

Looking Back ... Lee fine

many showed flaws in their early production until the late 70s/early 80s when carbon fibre became more readily available, and carbon fibre rods achieved the quality we know today. Although lighter than glass, some early rods were rather stiff, and it took a while before carbon became universally accepted. Today you would be hard put to find rods that aren't made of carbon, and whilst high quality rods are still being made in the UK, the bulk of them are made in the Far East for cost reasons. One key advance has been the development of very light carbon fly rods. Some of my friends are using these rods for carp, which, in their experienced hands, are achieving remarkable results.

Other materials have also been used in the manufacture of fishing rods... Most will have heard of rods made of boron (graphite), a highstrength, lightweight material. These were first manufactured in 1971 around the same time as the emergence of the carbon fibre rod, but appear to have disappeared from major commercial production around the mid 80s as anglers found them very brittle. Kevlar®, a super-strong plastic used in body armour, was released for commercial use at about the same time, and rods containing Kevlar continue to be manufactured today, although they can be very expensive. I cannot go into detail on the more modern rod developments, as not being involved in the current scene I'm not au fait with the latest developments.

Changes in rod lengths are also interesting to review. In the 1950/60s we mainly used 10ft rods. However 11ft rods became popular in the early





70s when it was identified that you could gain greater control of a fish with a longer rod. Today there seems to be demand for even longer 12ft and 13ft rods with tests curves going up from 1½lbs to 2½lbs and 3lbs-plus. This increase is due to much greater casting distances, heavier leads and a major increase in the size of carp available both in the UK and overseas where, in some cases, fish may be encountered up to 100lbs. With different rings and handles these rods also become very usable for bass fishing on the coast.

Reels have also followed suit. The very limited range available in the 1950s and 60s was quite poor. The 'line eating' French Mitchell 300 commonly available was joined by J Young's Ambidex range until the Swedish firm of ABU bought out the 'two tone' 66/67 and later the very popular Cardinal 55 and associated models, 57, 54 etc. and the cheaper versions 155, 154 etc. The exceptional quality of ABU fixed spool reels, many of which are still going strong some 20 years later and showing little wear, sadly declined when production left Sweden for the Far East. Slowly both Diawa and Shimano took over Abu's top slot.

In 1986 the major change was when Shimano brought out the Sea

(Above) Early split cane rods. (Below left) Early fake wasp.

Spin with its free spool 'baitrunner' facility. The fashion for long distance casting (up to 200 yards) meant that a lot of reels would be unsuitable for the task. Therefore, size needed to increase and spools had to hold lines up to around 15lbs with large tapered spools to help distance and superior line lay. During the 60's and 70's there were quite a few other reels available, however, due to plastic and aluminium gears and bearings, these didn't last long in normal coarse fishing let alone the rigors of carp fishing with exceptional sized fish. During a walk around tackle shops and shows today you will see a multitude of reels, and all are well made and totally suitable for the novice carp angler until experience and the necessary funds are available for the latest tackle

It would be remiss of me not to mention centre pin reels used by some traditionalist anglers. Where distance isn't an issue it can be quite exciting playing a big carp on such reels, and many say they appear to have greater control over the fish after its initial run. Although some are quite expensive, especially early models, a very serviceable reel can be puree fine Looking Back...

chased for around £50. Personally, I would always go for a secondhand 'Speedia' 'Trudex' or 'Rapidex' in good condition.

Whilst the development of quality rods and reels was going on, rod rings (line guides) were also improving. Early rods had wire rings made of mild steel, which were comparatively soft. The addition of chrome, either as surface plating or within the steel itself gave some degree of hardness to help counteract the abrasive action on the line. Some manufacturers used agate or similar materials, which reduced friction mainly as tip or butt rings and helped against line wear. During the 70s silicone carbide (carborundum) was used as the inner liner on strong titanium frames. Being a sintered material, the silicone carbide liners are brittle and don't suffer ill treatment. Wear both to the rings and line is virtually eliminated.

From the 50s hooks were, or appeared to be, at the bottom of tackle shops' lists. Allcock model Perfects were about the best available. Rarer still were the ones with the brazed eye, which were always difficult to obtain. In the early 60s we were limited mainly to Goldstrikes, which, whilst strong, seemed overthick and heavy in the wire. Speedbarbs were okay for the smaller carp, but, due to their propensity of snapping at the bend, somewhat dangerous where good fish were encountered! Without a doubt the most popular was Au Lion D'or (No. 1534). They appeared reliable, and I personally have never had a problem with them, but I do know some anglers disliked them

Jack Hilton, in his search for a decent strong carp hook, experimented and used cut down low water salmon hooks, using a small blob of



solder to stop the line slipping off the end. It was around this time that Partridge produced a range of hooks for the specialist angler and the mighty Drennan, with their extensive range, many of which remain firm favourites today. There are a large number of hooks available today with all major tackle companies offering a wide range and all with chemically etched points, which, in most cases, negate the requirement of hook sharpening, a common practice as recent as the

Mustad, possibly the oldest and





largest hook makers in the world, have even recently brought out the BBS (Blow Back System) Ultrapoint Carp Hook. This hook has a welded wire loop incorporating a sliding ring. I will be watching with interest to see if these catch on.

I won't mention baits, as there are a multitude of boilies each claimed to be better than their competition. Even the list of particles has grown to such an extent that the modern carp angler has a vast array at his disposal. Even plastic baits have become popular of late. This is mainly due to the reduction of attention by small fish and recent influx of signal crayfish from the USA. However, this is not a new phenomenon. Way back in 1896 Morris Carswell's catalogue had pages of fake baits such as frogs, beetles, mice, crickets, grasshoppers, various flies and maggots made from gutta-percha (early rubber).

In the early days there weren't the range of bivvies or specialist chairs they simply didn't exist! Intrepid anglers used umbrellas draped with either plastic or canvas thrown over them to provide a degree of protection from weather. They hunkered down in layers of clothing in sleeping bags on either sun loungers or army style camp beds. All of these makeshift systems are a far cry from the wide range of bivvies, clothing, bedchairs and other equipment available to the modern angler keeping them dry, warm and protected for weeks or even months! Send Marketing Brolly Camp was probably the first commercial bivvy, and Gareth

(Top) Very early frog. (Above) Mitchell pre-1954 half bale arm. (Left) Allcock model perfect with brazed.

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Lee line Looking Back...

Watkins in an article on bivvies in 2008 covers the development in much greater detail (http://anglinglines. com/blog/readers-query-bivvy/).

Maurice Ingham invented the first rather crude bite alarm in 1949, and whilst there were a few different designs by individual carp anglers, it wasn't until 1953 that Dick Walker came up with his rather clever design, which he christened 'The Bedlam Mk9'. Dick's design was taken up by his friend Jack Opie, owner of Metal Pressings Ltd, who produced it commercially as the 'Heron'. The Heron became very popular and was produced for a good many years. However, it wasn't without its problems, due to the oxidation of the electrical contacts and many early Carp anglers made their own modifications to improve reliability. The late 70's into the early 80's were a watershed with 'Dellareed' developing and marketing 'The Optonic' which was based on a totally different concept. A breaker wheel 'broke' a

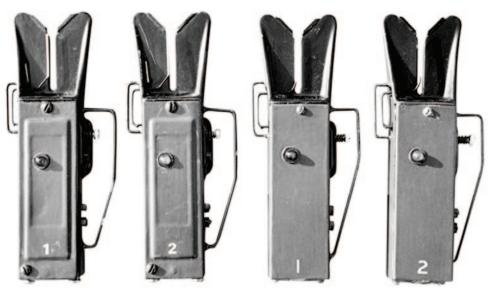


Nº10 S.W.G. brass wire cadmium plated + BEDLAM Mk. IX Nº225.WG. Nickel-silver IN USE wire -(Antenna) Soldered Contact ring gap Metal body adjuster cadmium plated -Soldered Guard strip to prevent ///Line Flat G.P.O. Adjuster line catching relayunder adjuster contacts cornel Soldered Socket 2-pin socket Bank stick Twin flex to COVER ON WITH COVER OFF buzzer ends in plug BUZZER BOX Contains small buzzer Socket (plug from rod-rest and 4½ volt flat battery Size 4"x3"x2" approximately goes here) Switch

light beam sensor inside, which caused the unit to buzz and a light shone. I was fortunate to be given a pair by Malcolm Winkworth.

Because of my style of fishing I needed something far more sensitive and initially replaced the 'breaker' wheel with a milk bottle top with more blades. This solved part of my problem, but if I got a short pull the light only blinked, and I didn't always know which rod had the bite. I was at Thorpe Park for a meeting with Jack Ashford (Leisure Sport Manager) to discuss the stocking of Yateley Lakes when I had a chance meeting with one of his bailiffs, a young fellow called John Newman, who had popped in with a radio he had repaired for Jack. John did contract work for Sony, and I explained that I needed the Optonic light to stay on for up to ten seconds. John said that was easy to resolve and invited me over to fish for barbel outside his flat in Sunbury. Within half an hour John had the light staying on for about eight seconds. He called it a latching light. I used the alarm for about 18 months before phoning Frank Sams at Dellareed, initially to arrange an advert for Carp Fisher, but I also told

(Top) Original herons with version of Bedlam IX. (Left) Dick's design Bedlam IX



him what I had done and how it had helped me catch many dozens of (Savay) carp. Within a month Frank had the modification in production.

A couple of enterprising carp men, Del Romang and Les Banford, were carrying out various other modifications on Optics. This resulted in an injunction by Dellareed to stop this. Del, not to be outdone, designed his own bite alarm using a totally different system using a very sensitive Piezo system in their Delkim alarm, and slowly this took over the bite alarm market. Today there are many different bite alarm systems, the bulk of which very serviceable, with only a

few cheap versions, which I don't believe are worth spending money on. An interesting article on various bite alarm developments can be found in a 2012 article on Bankside Banter Carp & Coarse Fishing Forum http://banksidebanter.proboards.com/thread/261/brief-history-bite-alarms

Major developments in fishing lines began with the invention of nylon by scientists at the Du Pont Laboratories in the USA, and Du Pont started marketing nylon monofilament fishing lines for the American market in 1939. However in the UK it wasn't until after the war and into the 50s that Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd (ICI)

launched the UK equivalent called Luron. Luron was the trade name for fishing casts and lines made from nylon monofilament by ICI. ICI initially promoted it to anglers in 1951 in a book called 'Luron Fishing Lines for Angling' and later in 1958 promoted their new monofilament fishing line – Luron2 in a book called 'ANGLING WITH LURON II'.

By the 60s there were quite a few manufacturers and distributors, but samples I still have all seem to be quite wiry; however, this may be due to their age. But it is interesting to note that USA Du Pont nylon fishing line is also reported to have been very stiff and wiry with it taking



(Top left) MVW modified herons. (Above) First optonic with latching light added. (Below left) Modern plastic baits.

two decades before a product was developed that eventually matched the very popular American (braided) Dacron. Sylcast, Maxima and now Sensor were always very reliable compared to pre-stretched Platil, which many found unreliable. I personally used Sylcast until I was able to get hold of Berkley XL (extra limp), which, in my experience is the softest line. Today there is a plethora of lines, and one has to be subjective as to the best. They are all very good indeed including some of the cheapest. A scroll through the various carp angling sites will enlarge on the confusion on this subject with each suggesting the best, irrespective of marketing hype.

I feel it best I don't comment on braid, fluoro lines, baitboats, spods etc. as I have limited knowledge, having only looked briefly at various developments over the recent past. The development of all areas of fishing tackle over the past 60-plus years has been fascinating to watch, and one never knows what will come on the market next.



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