

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



Pin Scale featuring Darrell Peck

The Winter Campaign featuring Scott Sweetman

In The Edge by Ryan Gibson

Canal Carpining and The Big Ghosty by John Morgan

The Poacher's Paradise by Levi Rees

Farlows by Daniel Daneshi

Beneath the Flight Path Part two by Keith Jenkins

The Highs and Lows by Matt Hart (Urban Bait)

A Year in the Medway Valley by Paul Banes

Short Session Success by Nick Onslow (Urban Bait)

Two Months and Eight PBs by Chris Thrupp (FFC Bait)

Twenty-Five Years Behind the Counter Part Two

– The Tackle Box, Dartford by Lee Jackson



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BIG CARP

Top Tens!

Top 10 Day Ticket Carp Fisheries

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2	LINEAR
3	CHRISTCHURCH
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

Top 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

Top 10 Iconic Carp Waters

1	YATELEY
2	SAVAY
3	REDMIRE
4	WRAYSBURY
5	FOX POOL
6	HORTON
7	CASSIEN
8	LINCH HILL
9	ROACH PIT
10	JOHNSONS RAILWAY



As voted by Big Carp readers!

Big Carp Magazine! *a history of excellence*

BC
ISSUE 323

**NEW
SEASON
SPECIAL**



**Darrell Peck – Pin Scale Nailed
John Morgan – Canal Carping
Levi Rees – Poacher's Paradise
Ryan Gibson – Fishing in The Edge**

Still the proper carp angler's favourite read



Black Swan Lake Premium Carp Fishing Pommiers North France



Black Swan Lake

We used the knowledge we gathered from years of carp fishing passion to create our own fishing spot. In the first place, we enjoy staying in this green oasis ourselves, but we want to share our favourite spot with like-minded people.

Located 300 meters away from the banks of the River Aisne, near the village of Pommiers, the lake is located in a green domain of 4 hectares and includes a water surface of 2.5 hectares. The lake owes its name to the pair of black swans that live there. As nature lovers, we chose to organise the domain and the lake with respect for fauna and flora. It is the ideal place for private fishing and nature experience.



The Fish

The lake has been out of use for about 5 years. It is an old gravel pit that was rarely fished in the past. We started off by making an inventory of the stock. We discovered that some beautiful old fish were swimming around in the lake, including some characterful mirror carps and some beautiful dark common carps. There are also a few monster grass carps that weigh over thirty kg (68-70lbs).

In the spring of 2021, Cyriel decided to release some of his own fish on Black Swan Lake. He released 30 fully scaled mirror carps, common carps and some heavily scaled mirror carps weighing between 8-10kg. As icing on the cake, ten koi were released as well, speaking of real targets! Finally, in the autumn of 2021, 200 extra fish were added to the lake. A highly varied mix of mirror and common carps weighing between 13-30 kg was released. These additions were carefully hand-selected from several ponds at various fish farms and provided the lake with a fantastic fish population, including a lot of thirties, forties and fifties (30-40-50-60lbs). Overall, there are about 250 fish weighing between 10 and 30 kilos (20-70 lbs). There is almost no bream or tench on Black Swan Lake, nor any dwarf catfish. There is a nice pike stock.



Very limited availability for 2023

Taking bookings now for 2024 and 2025


Interested in knowing more?

Take a look at our website and social media

Black Swan Lake

Contact us now – Email: Catchme@blackswanlake.eu

Web: blackswanlake.eu

 See us on Facebook



New Season Special

I have a fantastic New Season Special for you this month with articles from well-known anglers and some not so well known. To be honest, it's not the line-up I had planned for June. Since the river season opens on the 16th, along with quite a few syndicates by the way. I had planned a River Thames special but although quite a few offered to write articles, to-date only about half of them have sent them in. Some are still writing, but I fear some will not write simply because they struggle writing. It's a shame really because we can proof read any stories and put them in reasonable English. I have seen the photos of these Thames beauties but many will never see our pages. I will still do the Thames Special but it will have to wait until a few more stories come in. If you have a 'Thames Tale' to tell, please email it to info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk and leave the rest to us.

However, as I said we have a fantastic line up this month. Kicking off with our cover story featuring Big Carp hunter Darrell Peck. Darrell is one of carp fishing's nicest guys, an incredible angler who has not let the fame go to his head. What he hasn't caught is not worth catching, both here and overseas and if you have not read his books then you have missed out. Recently he has been targeting Bayeswater. His target the incredible Pin Scale, a massive pristine common. No easy feat, but only a matter of time for this ultra-consistent angler. Read on...

Also this issue, another consistent catcher Ryan Gibson returns to the pages of Big Carp. This time with a piece about one of my own favourite personal carp fishing styles 'fishing in the edge' and by the number of carp in this article it's a method that Ryan has certainly got the measure of.

The canal season is upon us and I have been saving this article for the occasion. Canals are one of the most popular carp fishing venues, but we get very few canal carp fishing articles, so I was particularly pleased when John Morgan's turned up. John has been concentrating on his local canal in pursuit of a big ghosty. A ghost story with a happy ending. I'll just leave that there.

Next up, a new comer to Big Carp, with the first of several articles from Levi Rees. Levi gave me a call a few weeks ago asking if I needed any articles?, In particular did I need any guesting articles? I'm sure I don't have to tell you my reply? It's been a while since I did an 'Off The Beaten Track' issue. They were very popular with our readers. Everyone loves to see uncaught or unnamed monsters and the tales of covert carp fishing we published 10 years ago, are still being talked about to this day. Levi's first offering aptly named 'Poachers Paradise,' does exactly what it says on the tin.

Have you got a guesting story to tell? If I get enough, I could do an 'Off The Beaten Track' issue. Email your stories to info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk. I will see you again next month!

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

Now I need your help! Filling two magazines each month means I need twice as many articles, some people say they want to write, but never do. If you have had a successful session, 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 summer 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

30 Pin Scale
Featuring **Darrell Peck**

36 The Winter Campaign
Featuring **Scott Sweetman**

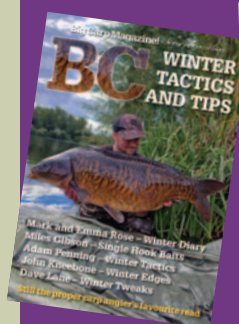
40 In The Edge
By **Ryan Gibson**

60 Canal Carp fishing and The Big Ghosty
By **John Morgan**

72 The Poacher's Paradise
By **Levi Rees**

Big Carp Promotions

39 Oak Lake Fishery



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Front Cover
Darrell Peck with
Pin Scale at 52lb.



News & Reviews

6 **Shockleader**
What's happening in
the carp scene

24 **Tac-Tec**
Latest product reviews

- Nite Watches
- HayMax
- Nite Watches
- Carplounge
- Whitby - Leatherman



Advertising Index

Black Swan Lake 2 Chiltern Custom Rods 5 HeyMax 9 Lake Serene France 15 Aqua Lilium 22 and 23 CarpLounge 27
Whitby - Leatherman 29 Bountherhunter 34 and 35 Oak Lake Fisheries 39 Reuben Heaton 43 IKTUS 47 Bountyhunter 53
Coole Acre Lakes 57 Bountyhunter 63 Bountyhunter 67 Cottingham Lakes 75 Bountyhunter 80

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ShockLeader

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

New children's book **Fishing for Rainbows** shows girls they can fish too

A keen amateur fisherman has dedicated his new children's book to his sister, saying fishing is for everyone.

Writer and performer Oliver Sykes said when he was growing up in rural north Derbyshire in the early 2000s, only the boys in his family were taken fishing.

Oliver, 33, regularly fished throughout his childhood along with his male cousins and brothers. But whilst single dad Chris often took his four older boys out to catch their dinner in the River Dane, near Chapel-en-le-Frith, Derbyshire, younger sisters Amber and Jordanna remained at home with babysitters.

Oliver's new book for children, called *Fishing for Rainbows*, features a female hero who saves the day and proves wholeheartedly that girls can fish too.

In the fully illustrated story, which is suitable for children aged 7-12, Kezia Boswell and her twin brothers Duke and Danior are growing up in a single dad family after the death of their mum.

While her brothers regularly fish with their dad, 12-year-old Kezia stays at home, cooking and cleaning, until one day she is called upon to prove



Oliver Sykes, author of *Fishing For Rainbows*.

what she can really do with a fishing rod. The girl's bible - given to her by her mum - is a fictitious book called *Fishing Made Easy* by expert Agatha Poole.

The book, Oliver's second, is illus-

trated by Georgina Reynolds, and published by Manchester Metropolitan University and writing/outreach organisation Stories of Care. Five hundred copies will be gifted to children from low income, single-parent and care-experienced backgrounds.

And even though the book has not yet been published, children's theatre network Big Imaginations has already commissioned Oliver to produce a one-person show based on the story. Directed by award-winning poet Dominic Berry, AKA Dommy B, and supported by Z-Arts, Touchstones, Wild Rumpus and Arts Council England, the show will tour in 2024.

Oliver said: "Fishing has always been a big part of my life. I have strong and happy memories of river fishing for perch, pike and carp around Derbyshire, in Buxton, Chapel-en-le-Frith and Combs.

"It was Dad's way of entertaining us, alongside getting us a cheap meal, as we had very little money when I was growing up with five siblings in a single-parent family. It was also Dad's



Oliver Sykes photo credit Dawn Kilner.

way of teaching us about an important part of our Romany heritage, which he was keen to share with us.

"Perhaps it never crossed Dad's mind that the girls, who were younger than the boys, might want to come too! Or perhaps he thought that, being younger, they would get bored, make noise and scare away the fish? I don't think Jordanna, the youngest, was that bothered and she probably had better things to do with her time, but my sister Amber has told me that she always felt left out.

"At the time, I never really thought about it. It wasn't until years later when she told me how sad it made her, that I felt bad and wanted to do something about it.

"I wrote this story for her and for all girls who know they can do more."

Oliver continued to fish as he grew older, enjoying deep sea fishing further afield in Scarborough, Anglesey and Mallorca. But he once almost found himself on the wrong side of the law.

He said: "Me and my mate found what we thought was the most amazing fishing spot, but unfortunately it turned out to be a trout farm! We got a proper telling off by the owner, who

accused us of poaching."

Oliver Sykes will be touring Greater Manchester libraries 7-9 June 2023, as part of the Festival of Libraries, with a free children's show based on Fishing For Rainbows.

You can buy the book at oliver-sykes.com for £7.99

Praise for Fishing for Rainbows 'Brilliant!' Anthony McGowan, Carnegie-award-winning author of

The Truth of Things and Lark

'A charming, playful picture book, accompanied by evocative illustrations, which deals with big themes (family legacy, perseverance, grief) woven beautifully through descriptive storytelling.' E. L. Norry, author of Amber Undercover and Son of the Circus.

Sara Teiger, Freelance PR, 07711804692 www.stpr.co.uk ■



Oliver Sykes, author of children's book Fishing For Rainbows, with his dog Luna.



Happy 80th birthday Zyg from all at Big Carp

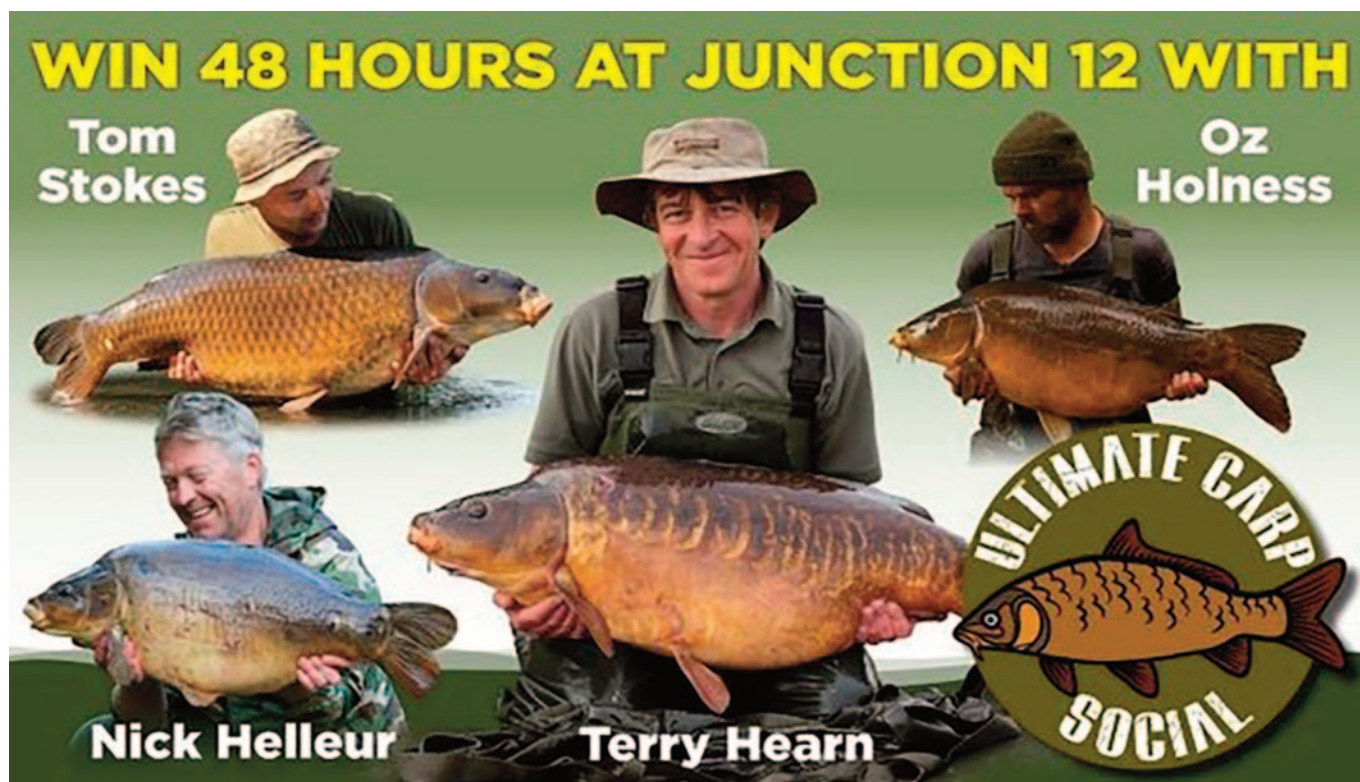
Don't forget to get yours now!





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:



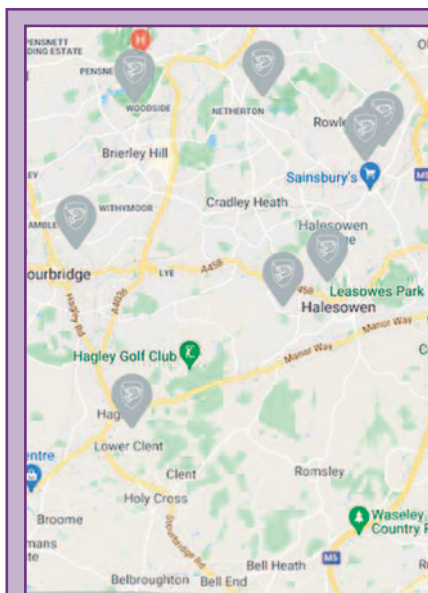
Ultimate Carp Social 2023 ... win 48 hours fishing with Terry Hearn, Oz Holness, Tom Stokes and Nick Helleur

Terry Hearn, Oz Holness, Tom Stokes and Nick Helleur have generously donated their time to give four lucky winners the ultimate carp session.

The four prize winners will have exclusive access to Reading and District Angling Association's Junction 12 carp lake on Friday 9th to Sunday 11th June 2023. The 15-acre lake is reported to hold up to 500 carp with 12 known 40lb+ fish present.

In addition, our winners will enjoy takeaway curry by the bank courtesy of Reading and District Angling Association on Friday 9th and a social BBQ on Saturday 10th courtesy of Fink Food Fishing. These are great opportunities for everyone to get together, meet one another and ask questions of the other anglers.

Tickets for a chance to win are just £5 and all proceeds from the draw will be used to continue our fight for fish and fishing. ■



All your fishing info on one map!

Looking for somewhere to go fishing? The Angling Trust Find Fishing Info map features hundreds of venues for you to explore, including how to get there and permit details. You can also search for information on clubs, tackle shops and coaches - and if you are planning to fish a river you can check on the latest river level. There's also a facility to submit a new entry or amend an existing listing. ■

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BOOTH'S
THE GOOD GROCERS

Boots

*80% said HayMax works, 134 of 166 respondents, Allergy UK survey, 2016.

[†]Proven to trap over 1/3 of pollen, plus dust and pet allergens, National Pollen & Aerobiology Research Unit, 2012.

Funding available to help control invasive species

The Angling Improvement Fund (AIF) is seeking applications for funding towards projects involved in tackling the spread of invasive non-native species and measures to increase biosecurity at angling venues.

The AIF is administered by the Angling Trust and is just one of the ways the Environment Agency is reinvesting income from fishing licence sales in projects which benefit anglers across England.

Applications for up to £5,000 funding are invited from clubs, fisheries and other angling-related organisations. A total budget of £75,000 is being made available for this round and the closing date is 26th May. ■



The Angling Trust

We are a not for profit organisation, representing anglers, fighting for fish, fishing and the environment. We are recognised by the Government as the National Governing Body for angling in England and partner with Visit Wales and Natural Resources Wales to promote Fishing in Wales. We are a member-based organisation made up of anglers of all disciplines providing a united front to represent, grow and protect our sport. By becoming a member of the Angling Trust you are helping to protect the waterways you fish in and the fish which live within them, ensuring their health and protection for future generations. ■

Applications for Chair close Friday, 12th May



The Angling Trust is inviting applications for the position of Chair who will work with government, quasi-government departments and regulatory bodies to promote, protect and develop the sport of angling.

The new Chair will have an interest in the political and environmental issues around angling and will be committed to improving the state of the environment and the UK's water bodies.

With over two million anglers in England, this is an exciting opportunity to Chair the sport's National Governing Body and take an active role in an effective and agile environmental NGO within a single role.

Legitimate and reasonable out of pocket expenses may be claimed, with a time commitment of approximately three days a month including 15 meetings per year. Applications must be submitted by 4pm on Friday, 12th May. ■

Anglers take part in big clean-ups on rivers and lakes



Over 350 bags of rubbish, 25 tyres, an avocado toilet and an abandoned sign saying 'Cleaning in Progress' were among items removed from the banks of rivers and lakes during two 'Big Litter Picks' organised by the Angling Trust and Nash Tackle and supported by dozens of anglers.

The litter picks were in support of Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean initiative and took place at the River Irwell in Bury, Greater Manchester, and Leybourne Lakes Country Park in Kent.

The Angling Trust's Anglers Against Litter campaign, sponsored by Shimano, has already provided litter picking kits to more than 60 angling clubs who carry out regular litter collections throughout the year, with more kits being delivered to clubs in coming months. ■



Up to £1 million available for sea angling infrastructure

Up to £1 million in funding is available for projects to improve recreational fishing infrastructure, facilities and access via the government's UK Seafood Fund Infrastructure Scheme.

Projects are funded on a match-funding basis with the amount of funding dependent on the registration status of the applicant. Applicants can apply for a minimum of £10,000 and a maximum of £100,000. The closing date is 19th June.

Examples of projects that are fundable include piers, harbours and other onshore sea fishing areas; slipways, berths and moorings for boat angling; docking for pontoons and floating walkways; paths to access sea fishing areas; and facilities such as toilets and disabled access in onshore sea fishing areas and in angling clubs. ■

Water company given six months to end sewage litter pollution of Cumbrian river after Fish Legal steps in



The Environment Agency has given United Utilities six months to install the necessary infrastructure to prevent sewage litter from being discharged unlawfully into the River Kent in Cumbria from an overflow at its Kendal Wastewater Treatment Works.

A screen to prevent items such as wet wipes and sanitary towels from entering the highly protected Special Area of Conservation designated river is one of the conditions of the water company's permit for the Kendal treatment works. The screen currently installed by the water company falls below the required standard set out in its permit. The fact that United Utilities are in breach of its permit was only disclosed by the EA in response to inquiries made by Fish Legal acting for the Kent (Westmorland) Angling Association.

United Utilities is currently subject to an ongoing criminal investigation into potential widespread breaches of its wastewater treatment works permits. ■

Get 10% discount on this new match fishing publication



Tom Scholey won the individual prize at the Team Commercial National last weekend at Lindholme Lakes. So who better to unlock the secrets of fishing these venues!

This new special publication lifts the lid on the tactics required to win on commercials. Tom is a former editor of Match Fishing magazine, and the Commercial Match Fishing Handbook is the essential guide to the tackle, baits and tactics needed to win.

Click the link below and Angling Trust members will receive an automatic 10% discount on the bookazine at checkout! ■



Beyond Wild Isles: The story of filming wild Atlantic salmon



The Missing Salmon Alliance have invited anglers to join them for an evening in conversation with Silverback Films producer Chris Howard and renowned film maker Richard Davies to discover the story behind the filming of wild Atlantic salmon for Wild Isles, the recent BBC One wildlife series presented by Sir David Attenborough.

Hosted by Jonathon Muir from the Atlantic Salmon Trust, in conversation with Chris Howard and Richard Davies, the online event will take place on Thursday 18th May from 8pm-9pm.

The public can sign up to the event online for free, with an optional donation to the Missing Salmon Alliance, to hear from the team behind BBC Wild Isles who brought the story of salmon decline to a mass television audience. ■

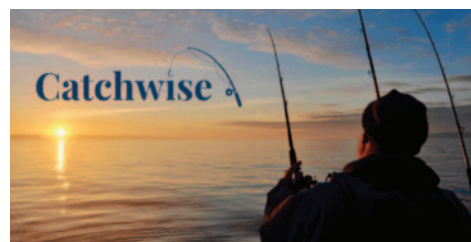
Drennan Barnsley Blacks win historic treble



There is no stopping Drennan Barnsley Blacks at the moment as they added to an already bulging trophy cabinet with a third victory in as many years at the Angling Trust Team Commercial National.

The squad – who also claimed a trio of Winter League final victories in February – made short work of this 23-team, 230 angler contest at the prolific Lindholme Lakes complex near Doncaster.

Barnsley's score sheet saw them card two section wins and a host of solid back up scores for a 27-point total. That put them ahead of runners up Clowne Angling Supplies on 41 and third placed Daiwa Tackle & Bates with 49. ■



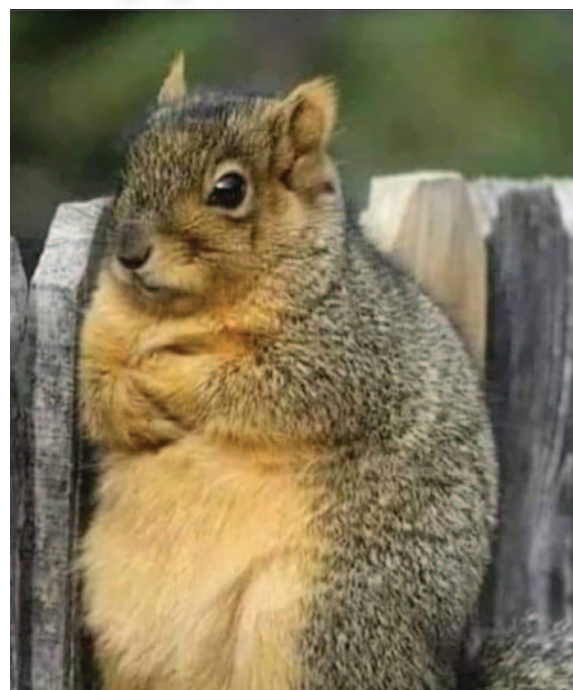
Join the Catchwise Virtual Forum for charter boats

The Angling Trust, Substance and Cefas would like to invite the charter boat community to our online webinar about the Catchwise project and how you can get involved.

Catchwise is an exciting new survey of sea angling taking place across England and Wales in 2023 and 2024. As part of the project, we are looking to connect with the UK charter boat community and gain feedback and insight into our data collection.

Please join us for our webinar and Q&A session on Tuesday, 9th May (7.30pm-8.30pm) where you will have the opportunity to network with others and be able to have your say on how sea angling data should be collected. ■

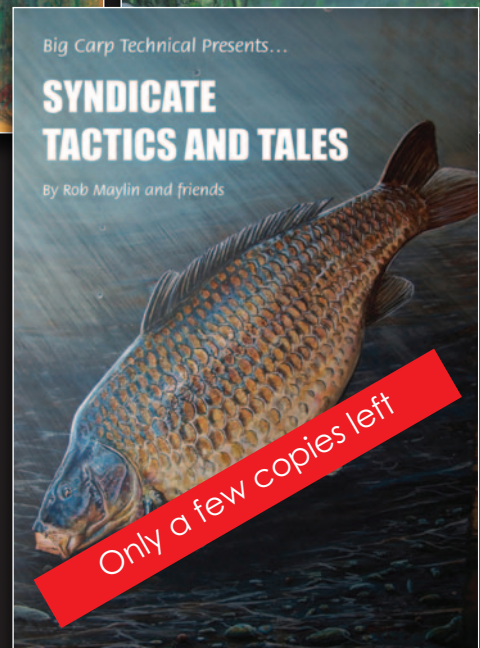
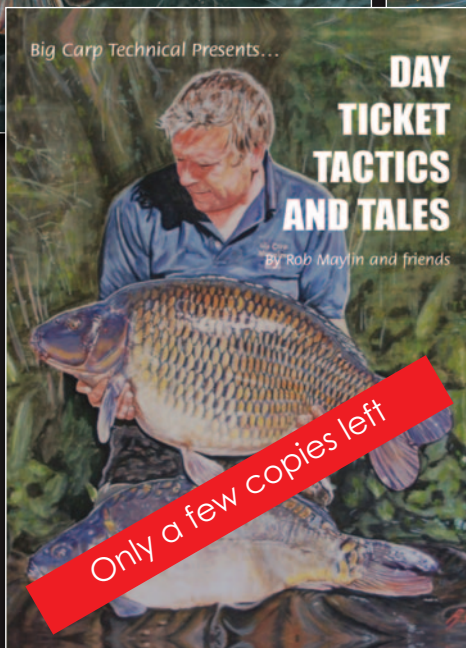
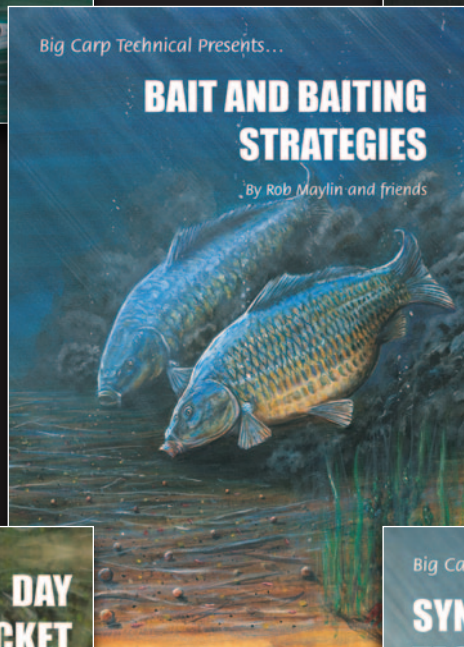
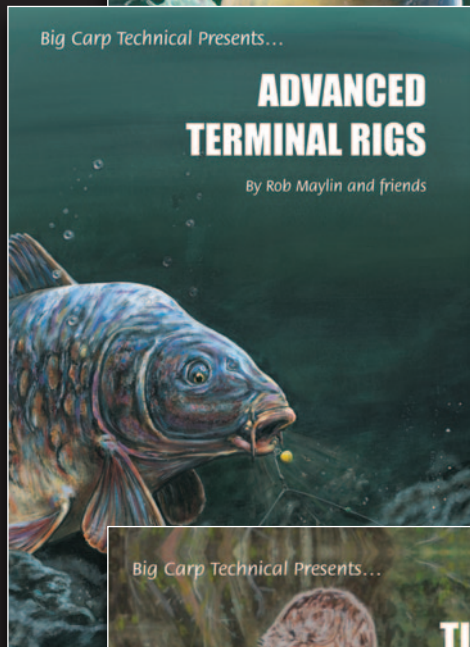
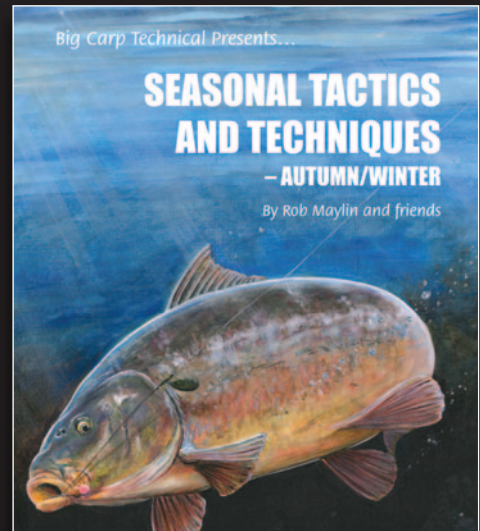
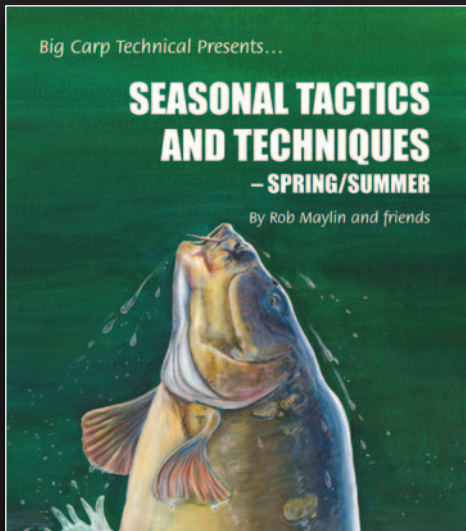
Carpy Humour



When you were to be picked up at 6.00am to go fishing, and it's now 6.01am.

THE TECHNICAL SERIES

The carp anglers bible unlocks the path to consistent catching



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www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk

Everyone's welcome

Dartford & District Angling & Preservation Society (DDAPS) are proud to announce the return of a local family favorite - Our youth float fishing fun day.



EVENT INCLUDES

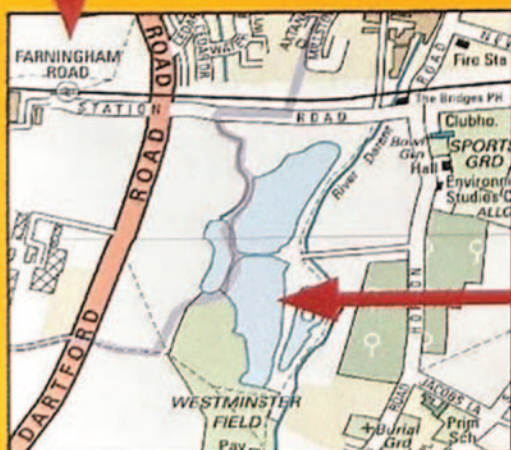
- Live angling displays.
- Awards for The Tackle Box Angler of the Day, The Coaches Award and Fish of the Day.
- Kent Police.
- Medical services.
- Hot refreshments.
- Giant raffle with great prizes.

10 minute walk from Farningham Road station.

No need to pre-book, simply register on the day.

ON THE DAY

- Equipment and tuition is **FREE** and in the interest of fairness will be issued on a first come first served basis.
- If young guests bring their own tackle they will only be permitted to float fish.
- This is a private venue and as such we regret that no dogs are allowed.
- Anti social behavior will not be accepted.
- Please take your litter home or use the bins provided.
- Limited car parking available.
- Please bring suitable clothing/sun protection for the prevailing weather conditions.



For further details contact:

Andy on 07385 607933

(Lines open 9am - 6pm, 7 days a week from Monday 12 June 2023)

We are here

Horton Kirby Lakes Fishery

Horton Road, Horton Kirby, Kent DA4 9AX

D.D.A.P.S WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE TACKLE BOX AND KENT POLICE FOR ALL OF THEIR KIND SUPPORT





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...



Adam Francis catch report

Pawprint & Neptune...right time, right place! A special brace of carp for Adam Francis from a popular zone on Carthagera, that just cannot be ignored when it's free. A handful of Manilla Active spread over an interception point worked wonders, as Adam went on to land several carp in quick succession, with this incredible brace being amongst them.



Adam Short catch report

Big up to Adam Short on the capture of this stunning linear from Dintons Black Swan Lake. He told us: "Black Swans been extremely slow to get going this year but the fish are starting to show more positive signs to eat. Going in with a couple handfuls of crushed Cell, hemp and rock salt on each rod spreading them out on different spots looking to get a bite at a time I managed a couple bites. Unfortunately, 1 pulled the hook but managed to land the other, an amazing fish known as the 'Floppy Tail' weighing 44lb 8oz." Well done, Adam.



Andy Belcher catch report

38lb 4oz Mirror caught on KLS Bait F1 mix Using size 6 KLS Canine Wide Gape hook using our Brown Buffalo Coated hook link in 25lb with KLS Below Zero 45lb leadcore brown and all this was attached to our Fluorocarbon mainline Houdini in 20lb.



A UK 50! for Sam Ashman

Sam Ashman, take a bow, that it one truly incredible carp. 'Bullnose' from Carthagera's Brook Lake at a whopping 54lb!



John Pope catch report

Just had this 41lb 8oz mirror along with a high double and still got 24 hours to have some more.



April Chiverton catch report

Setting up on the back off a cold north west wind, after plumbing around, I found a few nice deep silty areas, where I spoded out 3kg off Dave Mallins pungent squid, after 24 hours into my session, I had a steady take, resulting in this 40.8 mirror!



Ben Samari catch report

Congratulations to Ben Samari who was absolutely buzzing after returning to his local syndicate. He told us: "First bite 2nd time back down the syndicate and off to a flyer with this brute of a common weighing in at 43lb 1oz what a way to kick off the spring. I started off with the mk1 but after seeing a lot of anglers and lake owner introducing dark pellets, I wanted something darker to put out so I went with the Link and boy did it pay off." Well done, Ben.



Massive 92lb 14oz northern brace! for Daniel Patrick

"Lost for words" where the only words Daniel Patrick Healy was able to muster to describe his captures of the venue's biggest mirror and the biggest common just hours apart up at Clear Water Fisheries in the North West. Fishing the venue's impressive syndicate water, Keer Lake, it all began with the capture of Moonscale at 47lb, which was followed the next morning by the Big Common at a new top weight of 45lb 14oz. Staggeringly, these were also Daniel's two first bites of the year! How can he improve on that?! Daniel caught both fish at range over a bucket of Bug boilies and pellets, which he had smothered in Bug Hydro Spod Syrup. He then fished PB pop-ups over the top of his baited area. Congratulations, Daniel! A catch that will go down in Clear Water folklore.



Darren Willeatts catch report

Well done to Darren Willeatts on the capture of this 49lb 10oz mirror. He told us: "I arrived at the lake to get a few nights in as there was a low pressure and the lake is due to close for a couple of weeks as the season ends I decided to have a social for a few nights with a good friend my friend was already there so I popped in the swim next door I knew the spots so wasted no time getting the spot primed with a good 2kg to start of 10mm Cell loads of Cell crumb and Cream Smart Liquid and put 3 Pineapple Juice pop ups on stiff hinge rigs over the top. The next morning I had bites landing 2 fish a small immaculate fully scaled mirror of 15lb and a lovely scaly mirror just shy of 30lb then went quiet for the day I topped the spots back up with another 2kg and the following morning I had another 2 bites landing a small mirror of 16lb then my right hand rod slowly pulled up and as I lifted the rod I knew I was into a better fish and it was taking line straight away and thought like an absolute demon for half an hour every time it seemed ready to be netted it was off again lunging and taking a good 20yds of line it was an epic battle and eventually with a burning back My friend slipped it into the net an angry male VS fish called 'Boris' looking absolutely huge on the scales it went 49lb 10oz such a long fish with a ginormous paddle! Mainline doing the business as usual the big uns love it!" Happy days and a great way to end this season.



Martin Lawrence catch report

Joe with the stellar Starburst from Longreach at 46lb 12oz! When I got the call, I was buzzing, when I heard which swim, I was stressing as it's notoriously tricky for both light and decent backgrounds. After much padding about taking test shots in different locations (with her in the sack) we were ready. Joe is expert at handling monster carp in interesting ways and always gives you a 'I'm buzzing about this one' grin, so it's just a matter of getting the exposure sorted, framing it up, holding the camera still and level and waiting for the decisive moment! Settings on the Nikon D800E Sigma 50mm art lens combo was, shutter speed 1/160 sec, aperture f/6.3, ISO 500. Check out the full story and capture footage on this month's Carp Angle on YouTube.



Evan catch report

Evan's dreams came true this week when he banked Meadow's magnificent old Brown at 48-7! Simon Kenny and I arrived as he was floating around the swim buzzing his wotsits off. It was a pleasure to share the emotions of the moment! The morning sunlight was tricky, so we waited with her relaxing in the net until the clouds rolled in giving more even and less intense light. As usual, the water shots were my favourites. Using Lightroom I levelled the horizon, cropped in a bit, used the sliders to bring up exposure and shadows and finally did some selective reed removal with the healing tool. Settings on the Nikon D800E Tamron SP 35mm lens combo were shutter speed 1/200 sec, aperture f/5.6, ISO 100.



Dave Levy catch report

Dave Levy has been getting amongst it recently landing some very impressive carp. He told us: "So recently I've been getting a few by introducing about half a kilo of Cell Boilies to each spot. On my last session I had a stunning 32.8 mirror and very soon after the rod was away again with a lovely 29lb fully." Well done, Dave.



New PB for Ryan Ward

This gorgeous 46lb 9oz Mirror was hooked by Hobo team member Ryan Ward while trialling some of our new end tackle products. Stay tuned for updates.



Two thirties in 17-fish Clear Water hit for Ollie Pedley

The Clear Water complex in Carnforth is throwing up some quality fish at the moment, especially to anglers using DNA products! Kendal-based 33-year-old Ollie Pedley visited for a recent 48-hour session and rattled off 17 fish in total, including two 30-pounders. The highlights of the session were mirrors of 31lb 12oz and 30lb 6oz, which Ollie tempted from a deep-water spot using solid-bag tactics. Ollie made his bags using Crayfish Mini Mix pellets and at the business end opted for Bug Half Tones wafers on the hair.



BC323 Liam Banks catch report

I could never put into words the feeling of last night's emotions! All I can say is 3 of kingys big girls in the space of 11 hours: B bulldozer 45.4lb, Armour belly 44.2lb and Fett head 43lb. Nice one Carl Adcock on the buttons for these mega pictures.



Steve Stimson catch report

New Lake Record for Roach Pit - Saddleback has put in an early spring appearance at 58lb12oz, the lucky captor was Steve Stimson. This fish is less than 15 years old so could still go on to do bigger weights in the future.



Pungent squid beast for Scott Rowson

43lb 10oz mirror. Well done my mate good angling. Caught using pungent squid freezer bait and pop ups. www.davemallinproducts.co.uk. Get the 'EDGE' now!

EXCITING TIMES AT AQUA LILIUM



A NEW WEBSITE! DT BAIT'S COLLABORATION – AND MORE!

It has been an exciting couple of months since we last featured in the country's biggest carp magazine. So, if it's ok with you it would be a privilege to explain what's been happening. Aqua Lilium Clothing are excited to bring you, our brand-new website where you can buy all the award-winning products that you have seen throughout the last 18 months.

We have all the securities in place to make sure you are protected on any purchase and just like before, any purchase will be sent next day. Like most websites, this is a work in progress and we

are adding extra goodies to it weekly. The website will also have a video page where you can follow the Aqua Lilium team through the season, not just the highs but the lows as well.

So, what other news do we have for you? After the success of the Essex and Big One shows, we were contacted by Fenton Trewick of DT Bait Developments and asked if we would like to get together and come up with a few designs for them. I don't know why, but for some reason there always seems to be more pressure when designing for

someone else. I sat down and thought right I need to think outside the box for this one and thought what design can I come up with for one of the biggest bait companies in the UK?

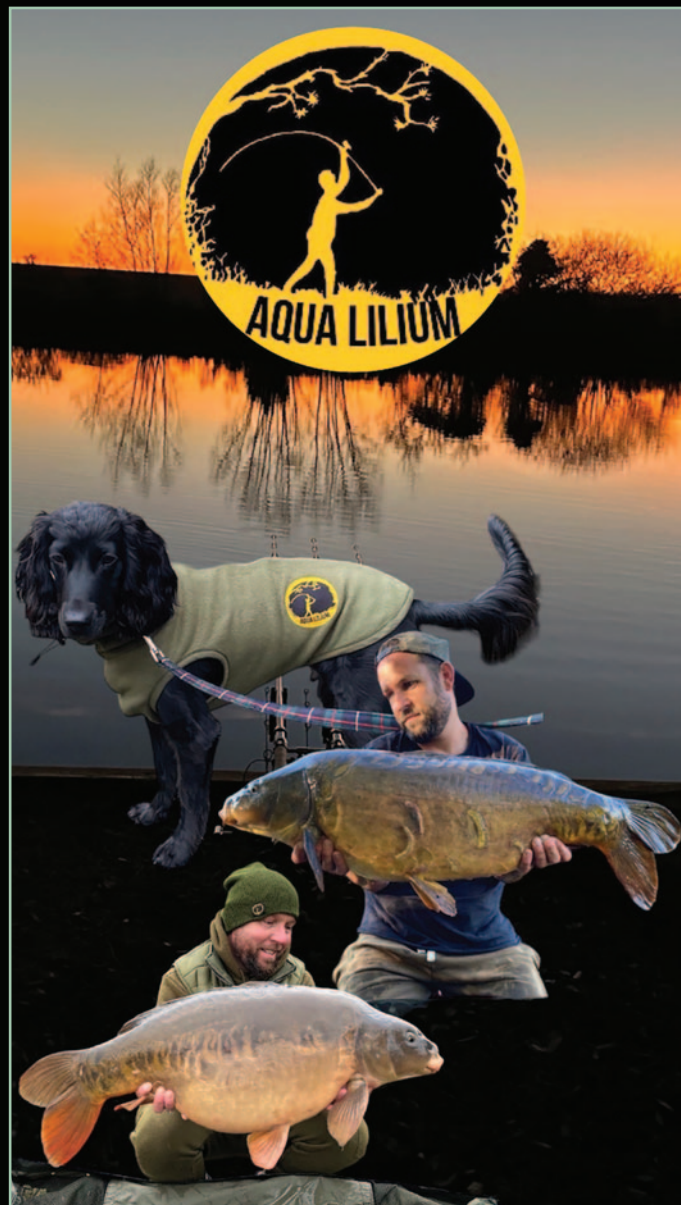
I wanted a promotional hoody that would promote some of their great products and after struggling for a day or so, I had a lightbulb moment. Who's the best at advertising the world's best products? That's it! formula 1 racing. I thought to myself and with that, I started to take inspiration from the advertising





they have on the front of their clothing. So here we have it, the DT F1 elite hoody. This also comes in a polo shirt and the usual high-quality materials we are well known for. This will be the first in a line of designs for DT, so watch this space.

We are also excited to announce we will be bringing you yet another new design, The Ghost Koi. I personally love this design and if you are into the paranormal or you have superstitions then this is definitely the design for you. You should know us by now, we love to be different and this is no exception.



Last but no means least, we also have a new baseball cap.

The cap is made in a stunning green with the flagship logo centralised to the cap. So, if you want to stand out from a crowd this will certainly do that. I want to take this opportunity to thank all our customers as without you this journey wouldn't be possible.

Our biggest goal is to bring you quality clothing at reasonable prices. As normal you can reach me through all social media but please pop over to **www.aqualiliumclothing.com**

Aqua Liliu

Aqua Liliu Clothing

We specialise in fishing clothing for you and your dog.
www.aqualiliumclothing.com

Website: www.aqua-liliu-clothing.co.uk

Email: aqualiliumclothing@hotmail.com

Tel: 07854629130

You can also reach us through our Facebook and Instagram pages.

Our monthly reviews on products currently on the market

In this issue:

- Nite Watches
- HayMax
- Nite Watches
- Carplounge
- Whitby - Leatherman

Nite Watches – Meet Megan Hine

Pushing herself through unforgiving terrain and adventures, her age-old mantra of “no pain, no pain” helps steady her, when she finds herself in tricky situations.

It's the cold places that have always captured her heart and imagination like no other environment, and -35 to -15 temperatures in whiteout conditions don't phase her.

“Other days are bluebird days, where the breathless beauty of the surrounding world captivates the senses. The warmth of the sun on the face is a welcome treat fostering the hope that the clear skies will later reveal the aurora borealis (northern lights). I felt like I was on the set of ‘stranger things.’ The sky lit green as the ribbons flowed across the night sky above, making me appreciate the mythology and folklore many indigenous cultures hold which surrounds these ethereal light shows.” ■



Horrid Hay Fever Hurting Again? Tackle the Pollen with HayMax

Hay fever can turn angling into a complete misery, as being surrounded by grass – the main trigger for hay fever – is unavoidable. However, help is at hand in the form of an organic allergen barrier balm called HayMax, which works by trapping pollen before it's hoovered up through your nose and causes unpleasant symptoms. HayMax is an organic drug-free allergen barrier balm with no drowsy side effects, so it won't go on to affect your enjoyment or performance. And its new smaller environmentally friendly pot size (though the contents remain the same, at least 5ml) means it can fit easily in the smallest of bags or pocket.

So how does it work? HayMax works as a trap for the pollen. Applied to the rim of the nostrils and the skin around the eye sockets, HayMax traps some of the pollen before it enters the body. If there is less allergen in the body, there's less for the body to react against. Less allergen – less reaction (and for some anglers, none at all!).

Is it proven? – Yes, independent

university studies have shown that HayMax traps significantly more pollen than an uncoated nostril, and traps all types of grass and tree pollen [1] and that HayMax traps over a third of pollen before it enters the body, in addition to dust and pet allergens [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 people say HayMax works [3]. And 94% of people find HayMax quick to be effective; 44% said that it worked immediately and a further 35% said that it worked within an hour or two [3].

Simply apply HayMax to your nose and eye sockets before you go out fishing. Wearing a cap or hat whilst angling will help prevent pollen getting caught in your hair and wraparound sun glasses, as well as protecting your eyes from the sun, will also help reduce the amount of pollen getting in your eyes.

There are five varieties of HayMax: Pure, Lavender, Aloe Vera, Frankincense and Kids. All 5 are equally

effective at trapping pollen. 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.

HayMax has won over 50 awards, has been used successfully by Olympic athletes, glamorous Hollywood actress, Nadine Mulkerrin posted about HayMax on Instagram and doctors in the media regularly talk about it.

So why not tackle the pollen with HayMax.

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, selected Superdrug and Boots, Ocado, online and direct on 01525 406600 and www.haymax.biz.

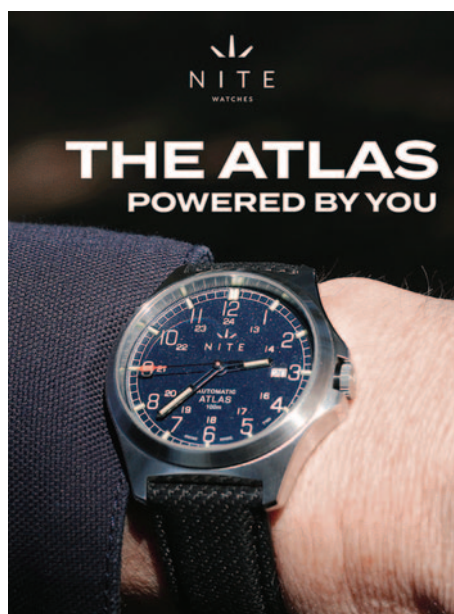


Atlas Watch Now Available

The Atlas, our first Swiss-Made Automatic field watch, is available now.

Order now whilst stock lasts.

- Sapphire Crystal ■
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- Made in Switzerland by our trusted partner. ■
- Adventure has many faces, start yours in style. ■



CARPLOUNGE FLAGSHIP UK STORE SPOT LIGHT



Situated in the infamous Carp fishing county of Essex, Carplounge opened their flagship UK store/service centre towards the end of 2020. After the UK's exit from the EU, they wanted a way for their already well-established UK customer base to continue to have easy access to their products and services.

It hasn't been without a few setbacks, though, what with Covid lockdowns at the start and a fire at the end of 2021 that all but destroyed everything they'd built up; they've certainly had their work cut out.

Their newly refurbished shop reopened at the beginning of this year and is already proving a hit. The friendly and knowledgeable staff are on hand to explain the different options available, and with the recent release of their new flagship RT7 and their long-standing RT4, there's plenty of options to choose from.

"Is the RT7 worth the monster price tag? The RT7 All-In-One is insane! If you have the cash, buy one!" customers rave about the RT7.

The shop itself is well stocked with everything Carplounge, including all ancillaries such as spirals, cams, batteries, all luggage, etc., to name but a few. For those that can't get to the store, Carplounge UK has their own dedicated UK website so online orders are dispatched within 24 hours for next day delivery.

It's not just the shop that's proving a hit with the customers; their service centre is fully operational again too. The Carplounge UK technicians offer the same level of expertise as their German teammates and are now performing UK upgrades, warranty repairs, and servicing in their own state-of-the-art on-site workshop.

"If you're still doubting whether the RT7 is the right baitboat for you, don't hesitate to send an email or book a free consultation with our product experts below," assures the Carplounge team.

They also offer hassle-free warranty repairs which are collected directly from the customer and then returned using the DHL courier service, so peace of mind if you ever have a fault with your boat. Also available on the website is a useful range of services that customers can book themselves using the link below.

You can book online:

- One hour in-store consultations where you'll be able to get expert advice to help configure a boat that fits your style of fishing.
- If you can't get to the store, you can also book a free call back appointment where Carplounge will give you call at a time of your choosing.
- With their own test lake 15 minutes from the shop you can also book a "try before you buy" RT7 lake demonstration.
- A 15-minute slot to pick your new boat up so it will be ready waiting for you and they'll even bring it out to the car for you too.

For those customers that already own a Carplounge boat it's now possible to book a 2 hour private 1 to 1 tutorial at their test lake. It's available to all owners with different levels of experience and you're guaranteed to come away knowing how to get the most from your boat. To book a tutorial, email the shop directly at shop@carplounge.co.uk

The UK store has ample free parking and is within easy reach of the M25 and only 15-20 mins from either junction 29 or 30, so getting there is very straightforward too.

As Carplounge are renowned for continuing to break new ground with what can be achieved with Bait Boat technology, if you find yourself in the market for a new bait boat then they're definitely worth a visit...you can even grab yourself a cup of their much talked about coffee:)

Carplounge UK Ltd, Unit 5 Bakers Court, Paycocke Road
Basildon, Essex SS14 3EH

Store opening times are Mon-Thu 10am-4.30pm; Fri 10am-4pm; Sat-Sun Closed



<https://www.carplounge.co.uk/info-news-support/pro-booking/>

CARPLOUNGE RT7 BAITBOAT OUR MASTERPIECE



Introducing the next Level Carplounge Baitboat! The RT7 - a game-changing product that sets a new standard for high-end baitboats and industrial rovers. As the international market leader, we are committed to continuous innovation and are proud to unveil the RT7, a next-level baitboat that is sure to revolutionize the way you fish. With its advanced features and sleek design, the RT7 is a masterpiece that will take your fishing experience to new heights.



Check out the website www.carplounge.co.uk and see them on Facebook.

Leatherman – Raptor® Response emergency shears



The perfect addition to every angler's tackle box or first aid kit are the Raptor® Response emergency shears, enabling medical professionals and everyday users alike to cut through materials with ease in an emergency situation or during routine cutting tasks. An ideal addition for the home, workplace or when on the move in the outdoors, the Leatherman Raptor® Response's compact, foldable shears glide through most materials, from clothing to bandages and thick outerwear, while the micro-serrations on the inner blade keep fabrics from slipping and binding. The tool features the time-tested shears of the brand's Raptor® family but with slimmer handle grips, while the handy ring cutter, ruler, oxygen tank wrench and pocket clip offer additional functionality. The Leatherman Raptor® Response tools are made from premium stainless steel, while the contoured handle grips are designed for comfort and ease, finished with a durable ceramic coating. Weighing 157g, the tool is available in a choice of Grey, Crimson and Navy and retails at £99.95. Along with the full Leatherman range, the Raptor® Response is covered by the brand's 25-year guarantee and is available at whitbyandco.co.uk. ■



CURL®

Inspired by Leatherman's best-selling Wave Plus, the Curl packs 15 handy tools into a compact, 4-inch toolbox, so you're ready to tackle your projects.

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Exclusive

Pin Scale

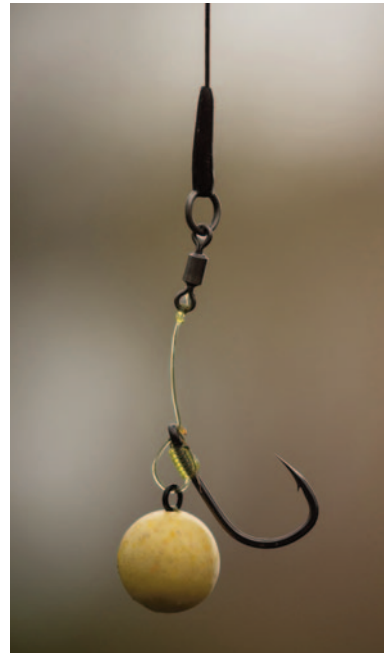
Featuring Darrell Peck

Recently I caught a 35lb mirror from Bayeswater, and as I was packing up, I am almost certain I saw the venues largest resident Pin-Scale clear the water 3 times in front of swim 2. Furthermore, this instantly reminded me of two pre spawning captures of the same fish, from the same swim. Staying wasn't an option on this occasion as I was due at the Kaizen rod launch weekend at Norton Disney... but I'd be back asap!

I returned first thing Monday morning, the lake was deserted, and I was always going in peg 2 given the option. I fished out to the area where I'd seen the fish jump, just beyond a deeper weed filled gulley and onto slightly shallow clear area in 9 feet of water. 12mm yellow Isotonic Pop Ups were deployed on stiff Hinge rigs via the bait boat, with 3 handfuls of @mainlinebaitsofficial Cell smart liquid soaked 4mm pellets, and 15x 10mm Cell boilies in each hopper.



The rest as they say is history. On the Tuesday night I landed 7 from 8 takes that included Pin-scale at 52lb, a 40lb mirror, a 32lb Fully, and a mid 20 Linear!"



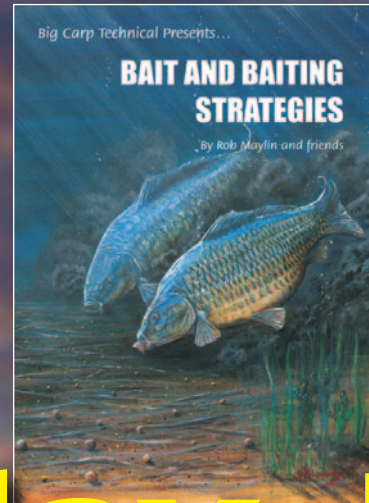
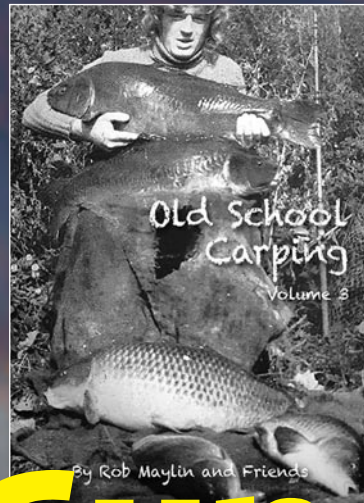
If you were doubting whether Spring had arrived, this should be your proof it's here! Incredible angling as always @darrellpecky... @carpfix Big Carp Story incoming. ■



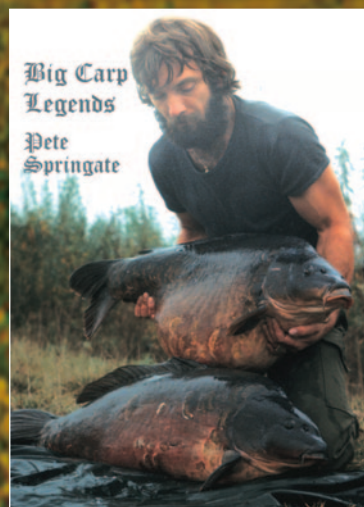
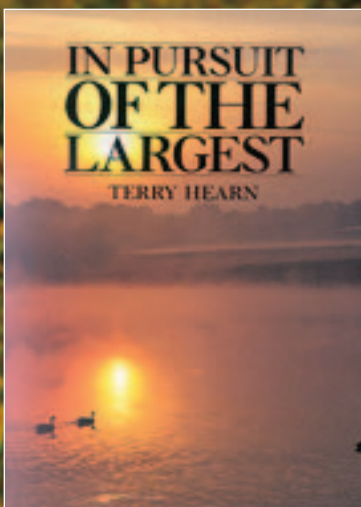
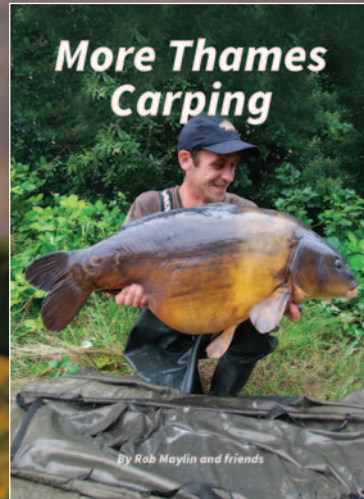




The Perfect Gift

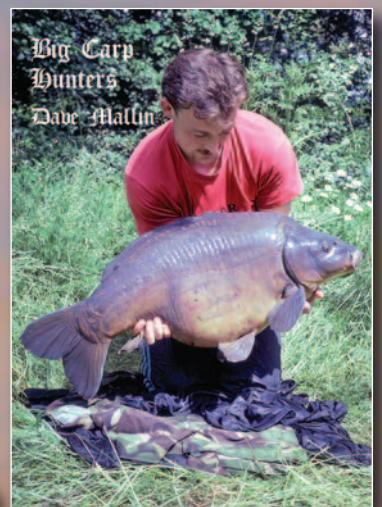
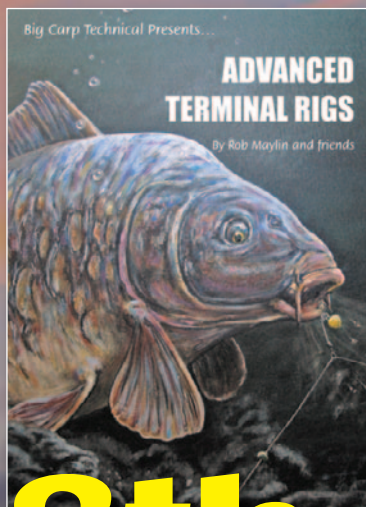


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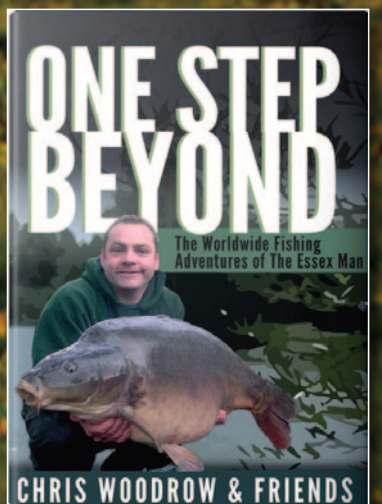
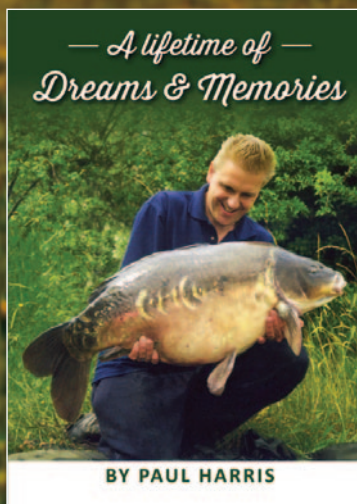
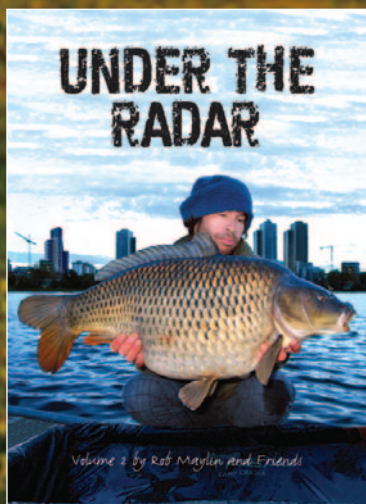
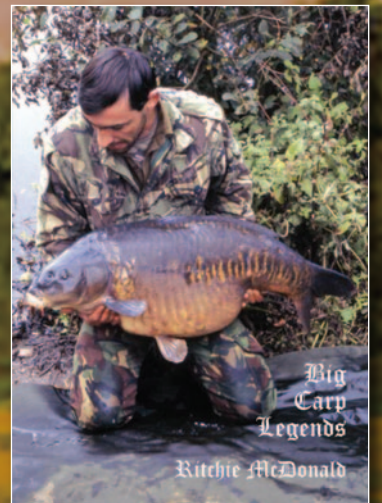
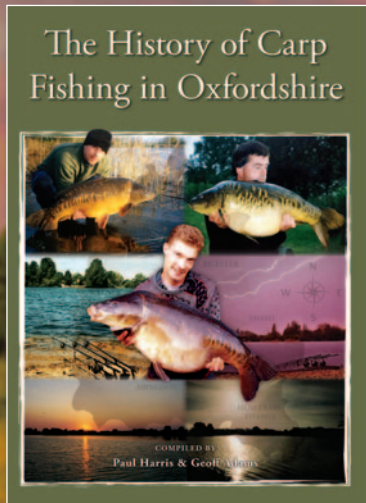


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for Father's Day



the 18th 2023



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The Winter Campaign

Featuring Scott Sweetman

Back in the winter, Scott embarked on a winter campaign on a small pit local to him, where with regular day sessions, he managed 7 x 30's, 9 x 20's as well as a couple of doubles!

The lake was a day only water and working five days a week with a family to support, Scott's time was somewhat limited. He therefore made the most of what time he had, baiting areas regularly and booking annual

leave around favourable conditions.

Small beds of hemp and boilie were as always, his go to, which he deposited in tight areas over zones he'd seen them. Favouring the neglected zones, Scott was confident other anglers would not fish over his pre-baited areas and would try to fish three days after baiting.

He fished textbook Scott style, where stealth was at the forefront of his approach. 1oz leads on Heli Safes were fished with leadcore leaders and Sub Braid mainline, allowing him to

get out with minimal disturbance yet still feel exactly what he was fishing over. Size 4 Kamakura Wide Gape X was his go to pattern, fished on a 10-inch D Rig, with a small section of silicone on the shank of the hook, extending his 'D' ever so slightly to give the bait more movement and enhance hookholds.

It was a brilliant spell of angling, proving what results can be had in the winter with consistent angling.

@scottsweetman #KordaMindset #TeamKorda #BigCarp. ■







Oak Lakes Fisheries

www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk



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



Two low doubles from the day ticket lake. Thanks for the photos, Mike Rix.



19lbs 8oz another breakfast time catch for Gary Pearman. Maybe its the smell of his breakfast that attracts them.



Day ticket lake catch report from Carlo – first trip got there about half fourish and had one within an hour, had four carp all together.



Nice wake up call for Steve Greenwood on members lake – this cracker of a carp weighing 29lbs 10oz.



Buddha is back! Both caught in a morning the common was 23lbs 10oz and the ghostie koi was 20lbs 8oz.



Photo courtesy of Colin on his first trip to Oak Lake. 15lb common.

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.

In the Edge

By Ryan Gibson

Back in the summer of 2018, I found myself without a syndicate water for the first time in over 20 years. Having caught what I was after from the lake I had been fishing, I was left in limbo a little as my name hadn't come around on any of the other venues I was waiting on. Being in this position for pretty much the first time in my angling life, other than the very early years of lakes 2 and 3 on The Woolpack, back when they were run on a day ticket basis, I wasn't too sure where I was going to go or what I was going to do. I've never been an overly big fan of crowds, which ruled out pretty much all of the better known day ticket waters in the area and with the majority of my angling being overnights

between long hours at work, I didn't want to be travelling overly far if possible. I eventually narrowed it down to a small little water that was around a 40 minute drive away, the only issue would be how busy it got through the warmer months as if there's more than two or three anglers on there, both water space and the opportunity to be active and mobile is cut down dramatically.

If memory serves me right, it was around early May that my previous ticket had ended and I arranged with one of my good mates, Adam, to have a try on a local little days only water nearby which has always provided us with plenty of sport, with numerous fish over the 20lb mark. The fishing here was always enjoyable as the vast majority of captures were no more than a rod length or two out, where

you could watch them coming in to feed on the shallow marginal shelf before it dropped off steeply into around 20 to 25 feet of water. There was an old mirror in there known as "Silver Tail" at the time, which used to go around the low to mid thirty mark and I had been a matter of inches away from catching her a couple of times in the past. She wasn't an overly pretty looking thing but with her wrinkly head and white tipped fins, she was most definitely a character and one I was lucky enough to land on this particular day at a few ounces over 33lb.

The following week saw me heading down to the other chosen lake with a night and a few hours the following morning at my disposal before I had to head off to get sorted and pick my little one up from school.



Silver Tail - 33lb 4oz.



First Common Off The Top.

Unfortunately, when I arrived there were three other anglers already on, one around the middle area of the lake and two fishing alongside each other up the near end. To give you a rough picture of what the place is like, I'd say it was no more than around 1-2 acres in size and is a very long and narrow piece of water. From one side to the other it's only around 30-35 yards and around 200-250 yards long and this area is near enough split in two around half way down by a large reed bed, which is also fringed by a thick bed of lillies. At the near end there is a shallower but very weedy area of water and down the bottom half of the lake it's rather barren and a fair bit deeper, with a quiet little bay that rarely gets fished right down the far end, which also has a large set of pads to give the carp a bit of cover and it was down this far end that I first decided to try.

With all the angling pressure up the shallow end and around the reeds, it was fairly obvious that the majority of the stock were likely to have pushed away from this area and after a couple of minutes of watching in the shadowy gloom of the high treeline sur-

rounding the lake, I began to see a few dark shapes drifting in and out of the aforementioned lily pads in front of me. With a very slight breeze pushing down into the bay, a few torn off pieces of bread were flicked out a little further up the bank and left to drift in alongside the leaves to try and keep things as quiet and undisturbed as possible and it wasn't long before they started getting picked off. I had left my barrow about 50 yards away so I slowly moved back to get the floater rod sorted. With them feeding no more than around 5 yards from the bank, there was no need for any kind of controller, so a size 6 Fox Zig & Floater hook was tied directly to my 12lb mainline and a piece of bread pinched around the shank before being underarmed out into the ripple and allowed to drift slowly down to where they were holding up. As the bread settled, I took cover behind some nearby tree branches and watched on for any movement and it was no more than around 5 minutes later that a pair of lips appeared and engulfed the hookbait. Before I really knew what was happening, the rod had hooped over in my hand and then

sprung back again just as quickly and I was left cursing my luck knowing full well that I had blown my chance for the evening in this particular area. The line was in tact and the hook was still sharp so all I could summarise was that I'd just had a poor hook hold and I traipsed rather dejectedly back towards my barrow to get things sorted for the night ahead.

The bedchair was folded out for a night under the stars and as I sat getting a couple of new rigs tied up, I could see a few fish out in front that were taking the odd stray mixer that had drifted down from the guy that was floater fishing about 70 yards further up the lake. With one of my bottom rods already baited and ready to go, I underarmed it down under some overhanging branches to my left and then grabbed the floater rod once more with the plan to stick a heavy Bolt Bubble on, cast it up to my right and then let it drift back down the centre of the lake until it got too dark to see what was happening. I watched intently as my piece of bread slowly crept on by, hoping that I'd see it disappear before the daylight did and at the end of the first drift



Jet Black Common Off The Top.



Floppy Tail at 39lb 8oz.



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First Common Over Baited Area.

through, the water erupted and my line started snaking away across the surface. This time around, the hookhold didn't fail me and within a few minutes I had a pristine little common in the net which, if memory serves me right, tipped the scales to around 22lb.

Shortly after it was returned, the bailiff popped down to collect the ticket money and as he was stood there chatting away, I could still see the odd mixer getting taken out in front. With no more than around half an hour of daylight left, I didn't want to miss the opportunity of another, so a fresh hooklink was tied up and the Bolt Bubble was sent back out for what would probably be its last run through of the evening. With my luck seeming to be well and truly in, the bread disappeared once again, which resulted in a very striking looking common that was around a pound heavier than the last. With its almost jet black flanks, contrasting dramatically against a bright orange underside, it was definitely a distinguishable one as far as commons go and once returned, my second bottom rod was dropped down the right hand margin for the night and I sat back on the bed feeling rather happy with the evenings events. Unfortunately that

following night passed uneventfully but as the gear was packed away, I was still heading off feeling satisfied with what I'd had and already looking forward to the next time I could get myself back down there.

With the May half term the following week, a trip down to London with the little one had been booked in for her birthday treat. A day spent at the Warner Brothers Studio Tour, wedged in between parts one and two of Harry Potter at the theatre was very much enjoyed by both of us, before I got my fishing head back on for the week after. It was around the middle of June and the temperatures were rather high. England were progressing nicely in the Euros which was thankfully keeping the pubs busy and the banks quiet, so I was rather happy when I next turned up in the layby alongside the lake to see it devoid of any other cars. A bucket and my polaroids were grabbed and I headed down the slope in search of a few fish. There were small groups of them spread right the way down the lake, which suggested to me that they probably hadn't been fished for at all over the past couple of days. With pretty much any carp I've ever angled for in small waters, they always tended to group up and shy away

from any kind of disturbance or angling pressure, so seeing them spread out and not on edge was an opportunity I was very much looking forward to taking advantage of. As I headed back up along the far side, moving slowly from one lot of bank-side cover to the next, I arrived back at the central reedbed where I could see a fair few carp drifting in and out from beneath the pads, so it was here that I decided to start. Back at the car, I loaded myself up with the rucksack, rod bag and bedchair and made my way back down to the chosen area.

On my arrival, I caught sight of something moving very close in, so after slowly and carefully lowering everything to the ground, I crept behind some reeds just to the left of where I could see the water moving and as I peered over the top, I couldn't believe my eyes when I realised I was standing no more than a foot or two away from one of the lakes largest two residents! The big mirror which had come to be known as "Floppy Tail" was grubbing around ever so slowly, sifting through all the leaves and detritus on the bottom to get to whatever she was after. I moved as quietly as I could back to where I had lowered my gear down to get the landing net put together, followed by



Dark Mirror Off The Top.



Floppy Tail Off The Top - 38lb 10oz.

one of my little 10ft Fox Horizons. Not wanting to have a load of end tackle being lowered in next to her, I bit off the leader and proceeded to tie a hook directly to my mainline, along with a blob of putty about a foot further back. One of my bottom baits was bitten roughly in half and side hooked as carefully as possible so that it didn't split before I attempted to move myself back into position.

I was fully expecting her to drift away whilst all of this was going on and leave me missing out but as I settled back in behind the cover of the reeds, she was still sat there filtering out whatever naturals she was after. With the moment of truth upon me and my breath well and truly held, I began to slowly lower my hookbait in, no more than a few inches in front of her nose, whilst hoping and praying that it wasn't going to be in her line of sight as it fell through the water. To my relief and amazement, it settled on the bottom and she was still undisturbed and moving towards it. With my heart near enough beating out of my chest, those last couple of inches of separation between the end of her nose and my hookbait began to dis-

appear and as I saw it fly up inside her mouth, the rod was lifted and she shook her head before powering off down to my left. A few nervous moments were had on the edge of the pads but everything held strong and after no more than a few seconds of fishing time and a short battle under the tip, she was in the folds of my landing net and I could finally breathe freely again. I left her sat resting in the net, in pretty much exactly the same spot as I had hooked her from and got my unhooking mat sorted, before zeroing the sling and getting myself organised. Once unhooked and lifted up on the scales, a weight of 39lb 8oz was registered and I was left absolutely buzzing at what had just happened. A quick phone call was made to Simon for a few photos and once he'd arrived he did me proud, as he always does. To me, there is nothing better than catching them in the edge, especially when you get to see them feeding and taking your hookbait and this was to become a regular theme for me on this particular water over the next few months and something that was very much enjoyed.

The next few weeks passed by without any further fishing time however, as we had begun the search to buy our first home, so it was around the end of July before I was next down there. From what I remember, we were right in the middle of a pretty gruelling heatwave, with temperatures hitting mid to high 30's near enough every day. Conditions were far from ideal but some bank time was very much needed to break up the monotony of work, solicitors, banks and estate agents. Settling myself back in to the same swim that I'd had the 39 from, I underarmed one rod down alongside the reeds to my right and the other was put a little bit further over towards the far side, on the outer edge of some marginal pads before I got the shelter set up for the night ahead. The resident mosquitos had become unbearable as the weather had picked up through the summer, so nights under the stars had become a thing of the past unfortunately but it was later that same night when I had my first pick up fishing over a bed of bait. This ended up being yet another pristine low 20 common at around 3am in the morn-



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First Fish On The AminoEster - 32lb 10oz.

ing and I can remember getting absolutely battered by all manner of flying insects as soon as I turned any form of light source on. With the constant bombardment of tiny fluttering wings, it was dealt with and returned as quickly as possible so I could get myself back behind the mozzie mesh before I was turned into some kind of grim fishing version of the Itchy & Scratchy Show...

I did feel like I should've been getting more action whilst fishing over bait as I had been confident I was on fish every time I'd been down but I just wasn't getting the pickups I'd have expected. With the floater fishing and stalking doing me so well during daylight hours, I was still more than happy with what I'd had however so it wasn't bothering me too much at the time and that very same day, another three fish fell to freelined bread whilst I was walking around and spotting them in and around some form of marginal cover. The first two were both stunning looking mirrors, one was a very dark fish with small patches of scales dotted along its lateral line, whereas the other had larger, singular scales spread across its flanks and these both went 24lb 14oz and 27lb 13oz respectively. The

last fish of the morning was to be an old friend but at a slightly lower weight of 38lb 10oz this time around. She did however become a new surface caught PB, so although I'm not usually a fan of recaptures, I was more than willing to let it slide this time around! Not only were they all caught off the surface, I had decided in all my wisdom that I'd do all of this whilst using a centrepin too. Seemingly as I was only fishing under the tip most of the time, I summarised that this would be the ideal venue and opportunity to cross that experience off the list and I certainly did, but I'm also pretty sure that the knuckles on my left hand have never been the same since, so that was to be the centrepins first and last outing on any form of carp rod to this very day!

I only managed one more overnighter towards the back end of that summer which resulted in a rather odd looking pug nosed mirror of just under 27lb. Unfortunately, with the lakes close proximity to the river, I'd guess the damage done to the top of its nose was probably caused by an otter grabbing hold at some point in its life but it was all healed and seemed to be doing ok for itself. With the kids' summer holidays and also

the house purchase / move now in full swing, any spare hours were spent getting things in place ready to complete the sale and once we had moved in, there was the seemingly neverending task of decorating and sorting through boxes so the carp rods got put away for a fair few months after that. The following Spring and the majority of the Summer was spent having a go for some cats on another lake around 10 minutes up the road, until I got the bug back to head out for the carp again around mid-September time. I did a couple of overnights between work without any kind of reward but I was pretty much turning up on dark and leaving just before it got light, so I was missing out on any real chance to do my favoured floater fishing or stalking, not to mention the temperatures were beginning to drop a little at night too.

During the first week of October I managed to grab a night and a few hours the following day before I had to head off around mid-afternoon and I did manage a lovely little half linear of just over 20lb that was stalked in close once again, whilst I was getting a thorough soaking from the rather miserable weather we were having at



Covid Days Only Trip.

the time. It was still bugging me that I felt I should've been having better results when fishing over bait though and my confidence in what I was doing and what I was using on that side of things had begun to fade rather dramatically heading into the Autumn. I had been with quite a reputable bait company for a fair few years but after having a chat with Tom at PureBait Concepts, I decided to give something else a go, just so I could try and settle the niggly voices in my head a little. For all I knew, they may not have been great boilie lovers over here but I hoped that trying something different over the next month or so would go some way to either confirming or denying this for me and putting my mind at ease one way or another.

A five kilo bag of AminoEster and a pot of matching cork dust pop-ups was soon dropped in to the shop and the following week I headed out with a kilo of it at my disposal and some renewed optimism for the night ahead. Arriving at about 7pm, I flicked a couple of rods out in the darkness and into the deeper water alongside the shallow plateau at the near end of

the lake before scattering a couple of handfuls of the new bait around both. The shelter was up and I got myself settled in with an alarm set on my phone for 5am the following day to get packed up and away for work. No more than an hour or two had gone by before I was away and into something that felt fairly substantial. After a short scrap I flicked the headtorch on to see a decent sized mirror laying in the net and at a weight of 32lb 10oz, I later found out it was the third biggest in the lake at the time. This obviously gave me a massive boost in confidence and the following week produced the pug nosed mirror again and the week after that I hooked into what felt like another decent fish but unfortunately that one never made it to the net after ridding itself of my rig not long after being hooked. With such a drastic upturn in fortunes, I was well and truly sold on the bait and raring to get going the following year once my pike angling had finished for the Winter.

In early March, I had my first trip out and was rewarded with a low 20 common from the same area as I had finished off in during the last 3 nights

of the Autumn and then the week after that, old Pug Nose came to see me again for a third time in about 8 months. I think it was later on that very same day that Boris gave us all the dreaded news of the first Covid lockdown so my early Spring fires had certainly been dampened somewhat. Weeks of rig tying followed and I think I did more tackle and bait prep in those couple of months than I'd ever done in my life between the end of March and early June when we were let out to play again. Obviously things were very up and down during that summer with what we could and couldn't do but when I did manage to get myself out for a day somewhere, it was always very much enjoyed. One day in particular stands out for many different reasons over at the little days only lake I mentioned at the start of this piece. Firstly because of how crazy the fishing was that day for both Simon and myself, with several double takes shared between the two of us throughout the day, but also because I was able to bring my little girl over from school once she had finished and we managed to get her off the mark with her first carp after a

couple of years of silver bashing on the float.

The next season I managed to get myself onto a small little local syndicate but I headed back down to the long and narrow day ticket water again at the end of that Summer with my good mate Adam. Having not seen the place for well over a year, I wasn't too sure what to expect when heading back, but we had a few nights ahead of us after booking some time off of work and we were looking forward to hopefully getting amongst one or two during the session. Adam had got himself some of the AminoEster too and with it all prepped up with the matching liquids, powders and a little bit of hemp oil, confidence was running high for both of us. We got down to the lake just after midday, although we had to wait until about 4pm for a couple of guys to pack away in Adams swim before we could get all set up and sorted. By about 6pm the rods were in the water, with a fair few fish showing in and around the area in front of us. We didn't have to wait overly long for our first bit of action either as later that evening, just as I was about to start cooking my tea, the right hand

rod absolutely melted away as the fish bow waved up onto the shallow water from the deeper area where it had been hooked. A short but spirited battle followed and there was soon a very respectable mirror laying in the bottom of my net which, once up on the scales, tipped them to just over the 26lb mark. Both of the rods were soon repositioned for the night after the other line had got pulled away slightly by the loose, floating weed which had risen to the surface during the fight and we went into the evening full of confidence for the night ahead.

Unfortunately, Tuesday morning arrived without any further action and the area out in front of us looked rather quiet early on, as it often does on this lake. I'd noticed that they seemed to like moving down the bottom half of the lake during the hours of darkness and into the deeper water before returning to the shallower area as the sun began to rise up over the treeline. Once late morning had arrived, there were a few starting to cruise back along the surface and up over the area in between us both and this included one of the lakes big two. I watched her for some time circling

around and then she began to drop down every now and then onto the same spot as the 26 had come from the previous evening. I was stood between the swims both Adam and I were fishing when I had a little flurry of bleeps from my right hand rod and a huge fizz rose up to the surface right over the spot. Unfortunately it was nothing more than that and I saw the big girl slowly rise up out of the cloudy water before going on her usual lap around the shallows which she had been doing over the previous hour or so.

I was just walking up to see Adam a few yards away to tell him what I'd been watching when he started waving his hands at me and shouting something or other in my direction and after taking a second or so for it to click, it became clear that I was away as my receiver that had been left down by his chair was going into meltdown! I got to the rod, fully expecting the big girl to be on the other end as I hadn't seen any others dropping down on the bait at that time but once it hit the surface, that was clearly not the case, a lovely half linear of just over 20lb was still very much welcomed however. At this



Covid Days Only Trip.



Covid Days Only Trip.



First Mirror With Adam - 26lb+.

point, there were reasonable numbers of fish out in front of me and I didn't have to wait too long for my next pick up as my left rod signalled the start of another battle. Unfortunately this one didn't end in my favour as it kited around tight down my left hand margin and buried itself in amongst some pads. Every effort was made to try and land it as I left Adam with the rod and climbed out onto a tree branch that was sticking out over the water in between me and the next swim down but after a bit of poking around with the landing net, it soon became apparent that my barbless hook had obviously been dropped in amongst the pads.

I pulled myself together and got the rod sorted out again and with a few fish still in the area, I was still confident of a little more action. It was around 4:30pm when I had a call from another one of my mates, Chris, and whilst having a chat about one thing and another, my right hand rod absolutely flew off. The phone got thrown somewhere inside the bivvy and as I tightened the clutch down, a carp of around mid to high doubles started tail walking above the shallow water! This was not something I had ever experienced with a respectable sized

carp in the past and it completely took me by surprise as it then darted back into the near margin at a considerable pace. Although it was far from being the biggest fish I had hooked this session, it was without doubt, the one that had the most go in it but after what was an absolutely manic 30 seconds or so, the hook unfortunately came adrift down in close as it buried itself in the thick bank of weed I had under my rod tips.

Feeling a bit downhearted about losing two on the trot in such a short space of time, I thought now was as good a time as ever to redo everything for the night ahead and by around 6pm both my rods and Adams rods had been freshened up and were fishing as we'd want them going into the evening. Not too long after this, Adam had his first pick up but once again, the hook came adrift as a couple of last minute lunges and head shakes under the tip proved to be the undoing of our luck and it was starting to get a bit painful coming out second best this many times in a row. Darkness soon fell and at around 8:30 my left hand rod produced a very slow and steady take. Upon lifting into it, it was clear from the outset that this was something a little more

meaningful as it made a couple of very heavy and deliberate lunges whilst kiting around to my right hand margin. After watching one of the big two all day, I was almost certain that this was the one as it slowly plodded around underneath my rod tip. As mentioned before, I had a rather large bank of thick and horrible blanket weed stretching out about 10-12 feet in front of my swim which was making the netting of fish very difficult unless I could get their heads up in the water and almost beach them up on top of it, but whatever was on the end of my line was certainly not wanting to play ball as it buried itself in amongst it. With both a barbless hook and no direct contact due to it being deep in the weed, I had the gut wrenching feeling of the rod pulling back and although I usually try to stay pretty level headed when I lose fish, this one really did hurt. Not only was it the third fish on the bounce that I had lost, but I was sure it was something special and when the big girl I had been regularly seeing over the previous 24 hours never showed herself in the area the following day, I was and still am convinced that it was her which had come adrift.

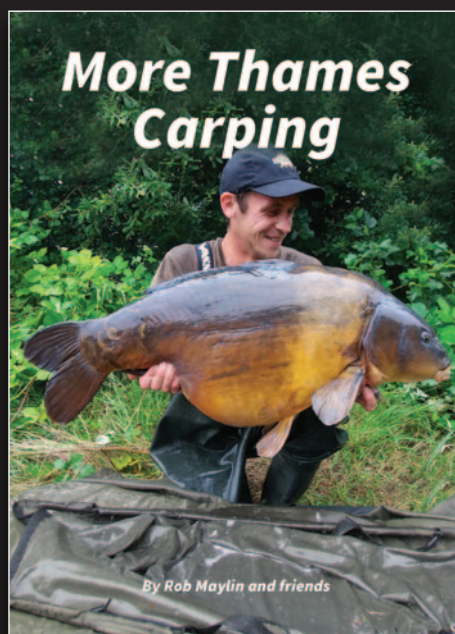
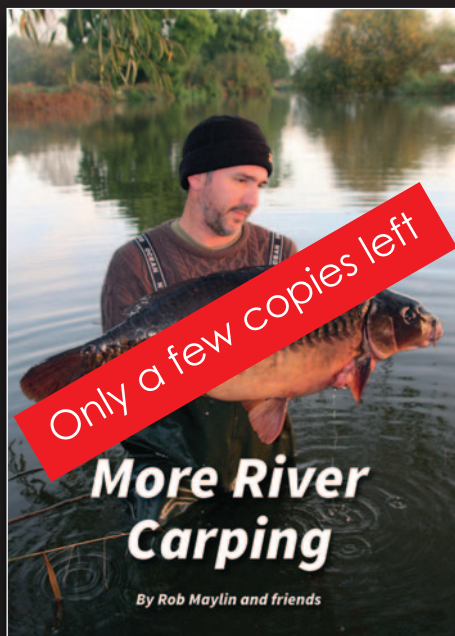
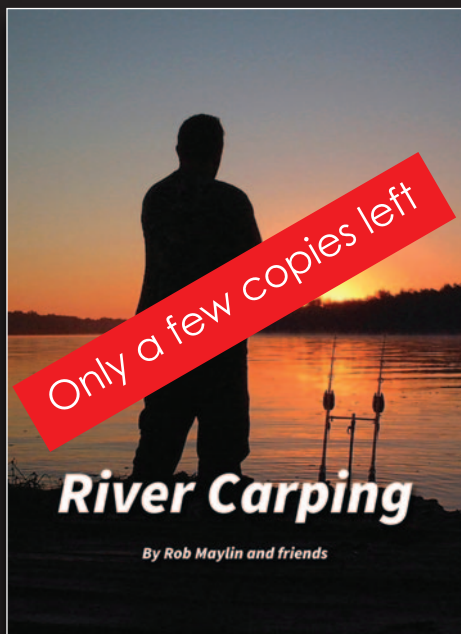
Wednesday morning was certainly



Half Linear With Adam - 20lb+.

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Front Heavy Common.

one of mixed emotions. To have hooked 6 fish between us in that first day and a half was more than we ever could've hoped for but the lost to landed ratio was definitely not a positive one. Not long after midday, Adams left hand rod fished tight to the pads on the far side pulled up tight and as he lifted into the fish and slowly walked back, the fish came out and into the open water perfectly. A few lunges down to the left followed and then a respectable looking mirror hit the surface and started edging towards the net. He started walking backwards, bringing it within inches of the net cord and it seemed almost certain that the tide had finally turned in our favour as I sunk the net down in readiness before one last flop of the its head send Adams rig flying back out of the water and our hearts were in our mouths as it slowly sank away back into the depths. That fish must have been no more than about 2 seconds away from having the mesh of his landing net safely lifted around it but instead, it turned into a fifth loss in a row between the two of us and I really couldn't believe or understand what or why this was happening.

Feeling rather beaten and our posi-

tive mindsets from the start of the week being well and truly battered, we got Adams rod recast and decided to go and have a bit of a mid afternoon lay down with the hope of waking up a bit more mentally refreshed and ready to get things back on track through the second half of the session. It was around 4pm when I was woken from my slumber by another take on my right hand rod and from the second I lifted the rod I was praying that this one would hang tight and finally break the horrible run of bad luck we'd been dealt over the previous 24 hours or so. Adam hadn't heard the take from up in his swim so when a nice looking common hit the surface, I tried in vain to reach over the weed with my landing net but ended up falling a good foot or so short of being able to get it over the cord. The fish powered away again and I kept looking and hoping that Adam would hear the disturbance but to no avail so my last and only chance was to leave the net sitting on top of the weed and try to almost beach the fish up and on top of it. The next time it hit the surface, I slowly started to walk backwards and inched it as carefully as I could over

the top of the waiting net before dropping the rod on the floor and shooting forward as quickly as my legs would take me to lift it up around the fish. Thankfully the plan went as well as I could've hoped for and I brought the net back towards me before letting it rest in a small area of clear water right down at the front of the swim. A quick message to Adam and he was soon on hand to help with the photos and all of a sudden it felt like a huge weight had been lifted and my reward was an awesome looking and very front heavy common.

After that, I got both of my rods sorted for the night and then headed up to give Adam a hand with his. We were stood there discussing a possible moving of spots for his right hand rod as there had been no activity or action in this area at all during that first 48 hours but it was a difficult one knowing where to reposition it without causing too much disturbance in the swim by casting around trying to find a new spot. After about 10 minutes of very undecided deliberation, his left hand bobbin cracked up against the underside of his rod and we were left laughing and joking at the fact that if we had made the deci-



Adams First From The Lake.



Mirror of 33lb 7oz.



Adams Last Minute Common.

sion a little sooner, that rod would've already been in and he wouldn't have been connected to whatever was on the end. Thankfully, everything continued to go to plan and within a few minutes, a lovely common just shy of 23lb was in the net and Adam had finally broken his duck on the lake. The pain of the lost fish was slowly starting to fade and Adams rods were then all recast and sorted in time for us to start cooking a bit of tea before darkness fell. I headed back down to my swim and was just about to get the stove out when I heard the faint hum of a bite alarm and upon looking down towards Adams swim, I could see him hooked into yet another fish and it was on the same rod that had been recast no more than about 10-15 minutes previous. This one turned out to be another lovely clean looking common that fell just shy of 21lb and when we finally got around to cooking our meals, the positive change in fortunes was toasted with a nice cold cider for each of us.

Half way through my bottle I had a single beep on one of my rods, followed a few seconds later by another single beep so I decided to have a

walk up to see what was going on. About half way there I heard a short flurry of indication coming from the alarm and I could see my bobbin had pulled up tight and a slight bend in my rod tip. I lifted into whatever was on the other end and it all felt very strange to begin with until Adam arrived to shed a little light on the situation and I could see a rather large ball of weed hanging on my line about 3 foot above the leader. Thankfully the fish didn't fight too hard and when it hit the surface, it was clear that it was by far the biggest of the session. With the net laying on top of the marginal weed I started inching the fish back over towards it once again but Adam couldn't quite scoop it in so the rod was dropped and a helping hand given to flop the last foot of carp into the mesh. Once on the mat and up onto the scales it registered a very respectable 33lb 7oz and I was over the moon that our fortunes had finally taken a turn for the better throughout the latter half of the day.

That night followed as uneventfully as the previous two and the next morning revealed very slim pickings as far as signs of fish out in front of us.

I was up and down looking for most of the day, but it seemed like they had finally vacated the area in favour of safer water. Adam unfortunately had to head off a day early due to a commitment back home so he started putting bits and pieces away around 4pm with a view to bringing the rods in and being away for around 6'ish. Everything had just about been packed down and we were stood having a chat behind his rods before he was due to head off when his right hand rod absolutely ripped round and amongst several boils out on the surface, he managed to slowly coax the fish he was connected to back towards us. Another lovely scraper 20 common finished off his session nicely and it went down as our 7th fish on the bank. The rest of the session passed uneventfully for myself but when you consider that we had hooked 12 fish between us during our time there out of a total stock believed to be around the 30 or so mark, we really couldn't have asked for more and it proved beyond any doubt just how much difference a really high quality bait can make to your angling. ■



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South Facing Banks

By Elliott Gray

At this time of year and into spring as the cold water begins to slowly warm up, those south facing banks and features are prime zones to target. On clear bright days, these south

facing areas are going to receive the bulk of the sun's warmth and consequently, will be the first areas to warm up.

Snags, reed lines or island margins are great areas to target and often you'll find carp hugging these sunny margins. I've caught many an early

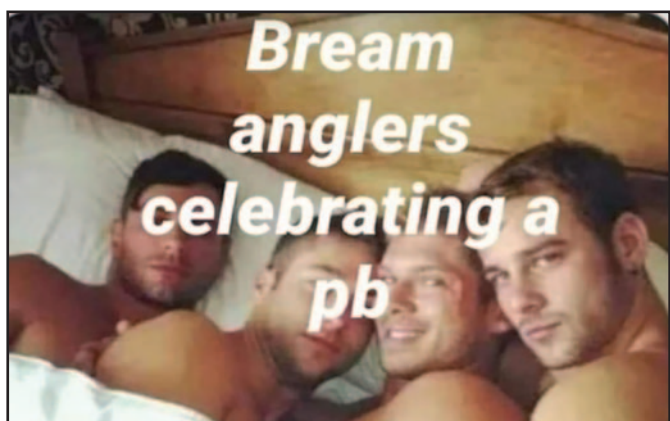
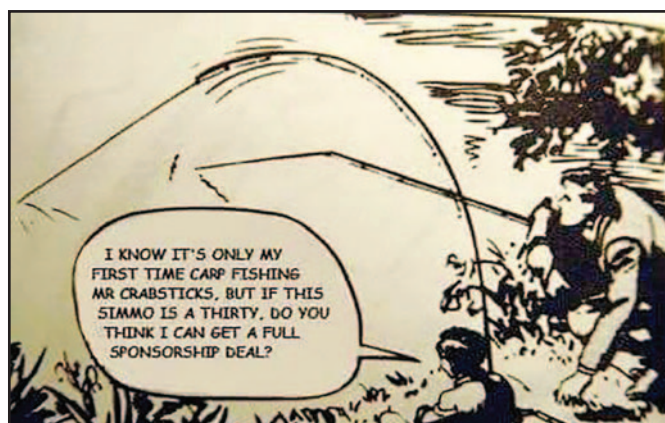
season carp from right in the edge at this time of year, so packing the Polaroids and creeping into likely zones is going to help you find them.

Single hookbaits or handfuls of bait, with bright intensified hookbaits (I favour Squid Goo on Scent From Hell wafers) are going to get you bites. ■





Carpy Humour



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A man with a short haircut, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt, is holding a large, yellowish-gold carp. He is standing on a grassy bank next to a canal. In the background, there is a canal with a narrowboat on it, and some trees and houses under a blue sky with white clouds. The man is looking down at the fish with a focused expression. The fish is held horizontally, with its head to the right and tail to the left. The fish has a yellowish-gold body with some darker spots and a prominent eye.

Canal Carping and The Big Ghosty

By John Morgan

Squeezing in by the towpath for a photo.

In a stretch of my local canal there is a rather large Ghost carp, quite possibly one of the most famous things to come out of the area I live in, in Carp fishing terms that is.

I first became aware of the Carp population many years ago when two good friends of mine asked if I fancied a few hours of surface fishing for Carp. I was rather surprised when we arrived at the local cut armed with nothing more than a loaf of bread as bait. "They are pretty easy to catch as long as you can find them," they said.

I managed one my first day, a small Ghost Carp of around five to six pounds in weight from a bit of floating crust, free lined on the far side of the canal.

Whilst fishing they told me of another Ghost Carp they had glimpsed on a rare few occasions. This elusive fish was much bigger than anything else they had seen and seemingly uninterested in anything they had thus far thrown at it.

I enjoyed a lazy few Summer

months fishing the canal on and off before I was finally able to see this mythical Carp for myself. I'd seen lots of other Carp just under the surface of the water whilst they sunbathed or lazed in the shade provided by the trees and bushes on the far bank, but nothing near the size that now greeted me that particular sun soaked evening.

I was targeting one of the many areas of Lily pads with floating bread and she was sitting at the very back of the pads, totally unmoving and totally disinterested in any of my poor feeble attempts at enticing her to feed. As my floating bread drifted in her direction. I thought to myself "how do you catch a fish that won't even eat a free offering right on its nose"

Early Days

My quest for Canal Carp was a very steep learning curve. Although I had done a lot of angling in the past, I had never really targeted carp as such. So my fishing there was never a con-

certed campaign to target a particular stretch or to catch a particular fish. More like a meander towards an unintended goal.... The more I fished the canal and the more I saw of its inhabitants, the more I dreamt of one day catching that elusive Big Ghosty. How on earth do you target a bright yellow, mid-twenty pound Ghost Carp in around a mile long stretch of muddy, silty dirty canal with the clarity of a mug of hot chocolate though.

The canal section ran next to a busy road, under bridges, alongside a pub and through an industrial estate, Containing banks of reeds, large and small patches of Lily pads, scores of overhanging trees and bushes and not to mention the multitude of ever moving narrow boats to hide under. Some were moored up for months at a time with permanent residents living in them but hundreds came and went in a constantly moving motorway, especially in the high peaks of the holiday seasons. A seemingly impossible and ever changing maze of places for any Carp to hide in and



Standard sort of stamp from the canal.



18lb common Ghosty - another canal odd un.

The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

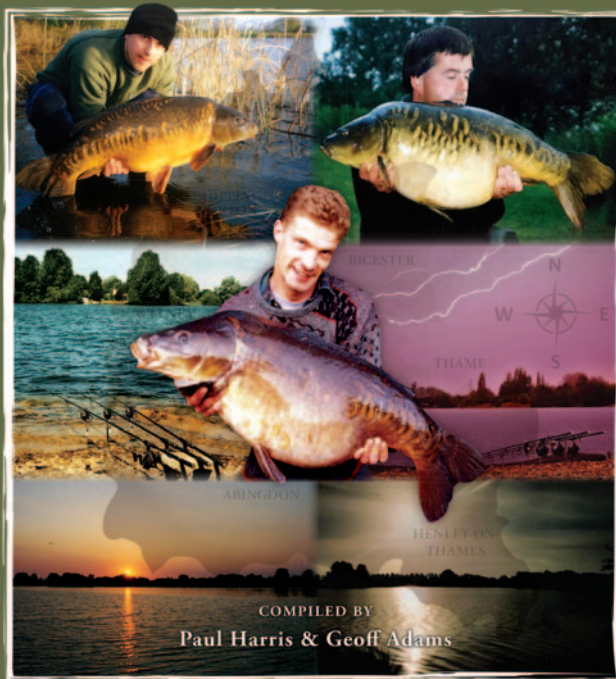
We have brilliant chapters on Newlands from Ginger Robinson and Milton Pools from Stuart Rothwell. Danny Aplin has written about his time on Linch Hill which will just blow you away! His pictures alone are worth purchasing this book.

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

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

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

The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire



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

Exclusive Canal Carping and The Big Ghosty

under. Then you have to factor in an unknown number of other Carp that also lived in any particular stretch. This made the odds of actually hooking The Big Ghosty, should you get a bite, even more remote. And to make things more interesting, in theory it could just wander through the locks if it so wished, and move into an entirely different part of the Canal... Simple really !

At the very beginning all my fishing was done with a very basic approach of walking along the towpath and free lining floating bread to any carp I saw cruising on the surface, often using the tow of the water to drift the bread into the correct position. It was great fun and resulted in the capture of lots of Carp in the early days. After a while I started to learn favoured haunts where small shoals of Carp liked to hang around on sunny days. I would start out at the bottom of the pound next to the lock gate where I would park my van and walk the entire



5lb 6oz Ghosty first Canal Carp I ever caught.



Some were just stunners.

stretch moving from one hotspot to the next looking for fish that were willing to feed. One of these such features was a large set of lily pads about three quarters the way along the section just past a large bridge. The bridge forced all the narrow boats slightly to one side of the Canal and left a 'quiet section' of water for the Lily pads to grow.

I was to catch quite a few fish from those pads in the next few Summers including my first ever 20lb Canal Carp. Back in the late 1990's this was by no means a small fish for any Canal let alone for this stretch.

After the second Summer had passed and the seasons began to turn, I was really getting into my Canal Carping. I decided I wanted to continue to fish the Canal and not just catch these fish off the top. To do this though I needed to learn how and where to target the Carp without being able to see them.

Thoughts on Location

Your basic Canal shape is a deep central section, generally around 5ft with

a marginal shelf along both the near and far sides. These vary in depth anywhere from 1ft, under the far side trees, to around 3ft deep below your feet on the towpath side. This is mostly caused by the wash and the debris left from the continual passing of the boats, going up and down the central section of the Canal.

You would think that the Carp, being a relatively large fish in shallow water would prefer the deeper central areas. I found out from trial and error that nothing couldn't be further from the truth. The Carp seem to spend their entire lives up to their gills feeding in the silt and moving from one area of cover to the next along the far bank, almost regardless of the depth of water.

I've only ever caught Canal carp from one sort of cover or another, never from the deep central section or even from the towpath margin. I soon learnt to discount these places entirely as areas to place my baits. I'm not saying it's impossible to catch from these areas, but after years of watching and catching these carp I'd

learnt that even on Canals, location, as always, was the key, and the key that fit the lock on the Canal was cover. Cover of any kind, they loved to hide.

Be it a boat's hull, a particular bush, set of pads or area of reeds. It just didn't matter as long as the fish felt safe, and after all a canal is choked full of snags to help them do exactly that.

A Focus on Bait and Rigs

Other than your basic loaf of bread in the Summer the carp seemed to prefer anything fishmeal based in regards to boilies. I believe this is down mostly to smell and close to their normal diet and natural food stuff. Water clarity in your average canal is exceptionally poor, even when the boat traffic is down to a minimum there is always a flow of some sorts stirring up the silt.

Halibut pellets with a very strong fishmeal boilie, coupled with a short 5-6" bottom bait rig, in conjunction with a 3oz flat pear lead produced the best results. I'm sure this is in relation

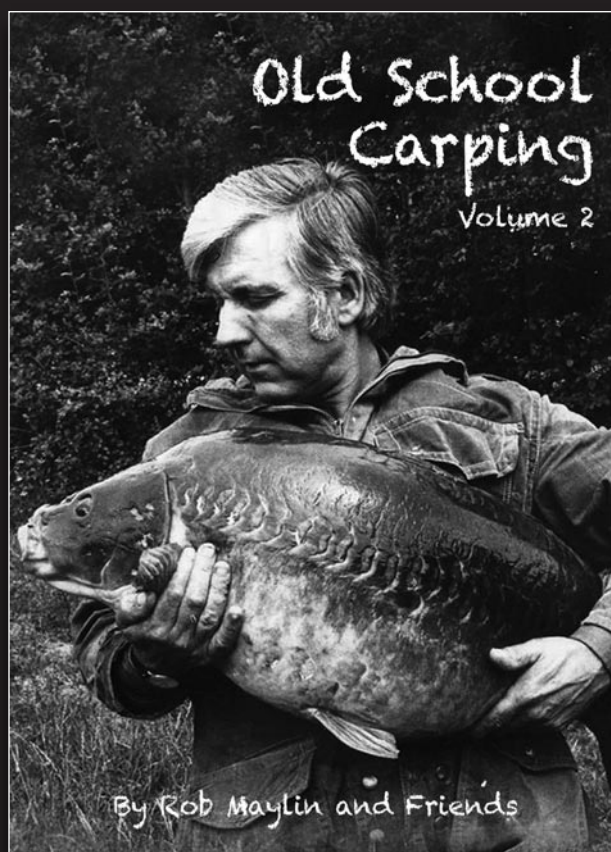
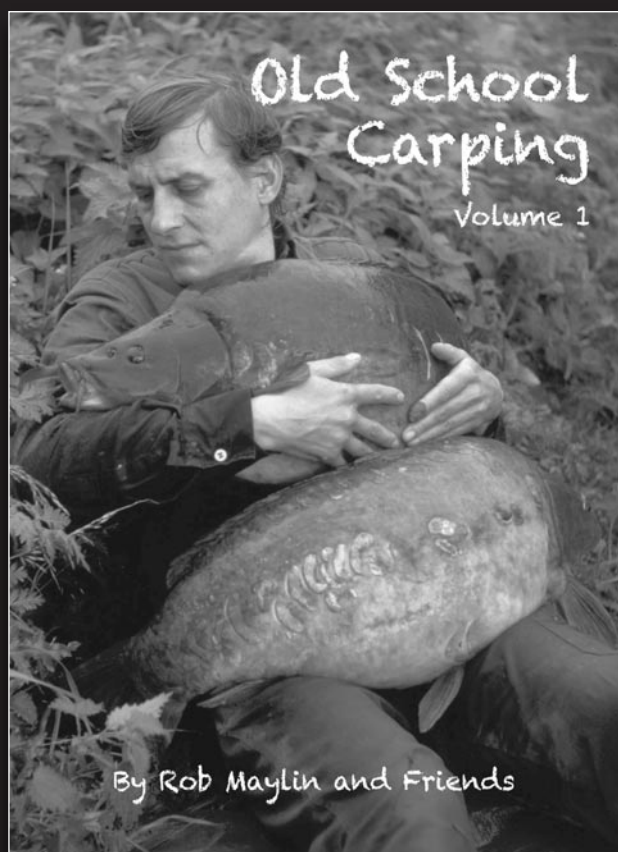


Squeezing in by the towpath for a photo.



The Big Ghosty at 24lb 8oz stuff legends are made of.

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to the carp being so attuned to sifting through the silt for the majority of the food. I would also nick a small PVA bag of pellets onto the hook to help keep it clear on the cast as the bottom of the Canal was forever littered with bags, sticks, cans etc. I once hooked and dragged in a table umbrella from a pub which must have got blown in at some point. It never ceased to amaze me the things you saw or caught whilst fishing the Canal.

However, despite the bottom of the canal being covered everywhere with deep stinking black silt and debris of all kinds, pop ups just didn't seem to work, it was bottom baits all the way.

The other trick I soon learnt was to prebait the canal. At this time virtually nobody else was fishing for these fish. You could safely prebait a spot for a week or two without anyone else

reaping your rewards.

As night fishing is not allowed on this stretch it meant all angling was confined to the daytime, which coupled with the high volume of boat traffic presented issues with bait presentation as any prebait would be washed all over the place. But if you left the prebaiting until around 7pm then your bait would sit there till the boats started up again the next morning. Further to this, all boilies were chopped in half to stop them rolling off and I always used the larger sizes of halibut pellets so they wouldn't float up and drift off at the slightest bit of movement in the water.

This led to the majority of my captures off the bottom all being in the evenings after work. It got to the point where even though I would set up on my pre baited area around five o'clock in the evening I would not

receive my first bit of action until normally after 7pm when the fish came looking for the prebait.

The fish soon knew when the bait was coming and wouldn't enter the area until the boat traffic had died right down. In the early days you could catch three or four Carp in several hours before they would do the off, or it was time to pack up. It was always great fun and a fantastic way to catch carp.

Back to the Big Ghosty

I was well into the swing of things catching by now, catching carp almost all year round, I'd managed a 20lb Canal Carp plus a huge variety of back up fish but the one that was still eluding me was, the big Ghosty.

I would often pop to the canal for a few hours without prebaiting and flick a rig out along the far margin, hooking a small bag of pellets and really just fishing for a bite and whatever came along. I would give the rods 30 - 45 mins in an area then leapfrog my rods up the canal fishing from one form of cover to another. If there were fish present you would often get a bite pretty quickly. I had favoured areas where more often than not a bite was possible in limited time.

One of these such sessions fell mid-week on a mild but blustery day in October. I had finished work early for the day and decided I'd pop to the canal and fish a particular bush that was a favourite of mine for a few hours. Rather than my usual tactics of moving my rods about to search for the fish, I would put a bit more bait than usual in and sit on it, hoping that the bait might draw some fish into the area. Or I would attract the attention of the Carp that often resided in that area anyway.

The spot was big enough for two rods so I put one at the near edge to the bush and one in the centre. A nicked bag of pellets on each hook, a few handfuls of chopped boilie over the top and I was angling.

It couldn't have been more than 30 minutes later and my left hand rod tip was hooping round with a screaming Delkim to match!

Another key point to consider with canal fishing was how you had to position your rods. The best way I



You never quite know what you are going to catch next.



A Chunky 18lb Canal Character caught on a short bottom bait rig.

Exclusive Canal Carping and The Big Ghosty



Like buses, re capture of The Big Ghosty 9 months and half a mile later.

found was to have them parallel to the bank with your line going out at right angles to the spot, so the rod tip absorbed the initial surge from the fish until you managed to grab the rod. You had to fish with a tight clutch as well or would run the risk of the fish instantly snagging you up in whatever form of cover you were fishing towards. Hence the bites from the canal carp could be incredibly violent due to the close proximity and position of your rods to your hook bait.

And this bite was no exception.

I was playing the fish as normal when it rolled over my line in the centre of the Canal. I remember seeing a great big flash of yellow and my knees started to tremble..... This was it..... The Big Ghosty was finally attached to my hook. After several years of walking, fishing, baiting, watching and hoping..... She was at the end of my line. All I could think of was "please don't fall off, please don't fall off"

To my relief I was soon scooping her up in my net and ringing one of my best mates Chris Owen who lived locally to see if he could fly down and take some photos.

As soon as I asked he knew what I'd caught. He had also fished the canal on and off in the hunt for The Big Ghosty and was made up for me when I revealed the news. "Be straight down mate" he said

Not long after we weighed her at a totally unimportant 24 pounds and 8 ounces which may not seem big by today's standards. But bearing in mind this was a very uncaught, very unusual and very much sought after prize. I couldn't have been happier. We both marvelled at her shape and size before releasing her to her unique home.

Amazingly enough I went on to catch her again the following Summer by a set of reeds approximately half a mile away from the bush I'd caught her from nine months before. She was all spawned out this time and weighted just under 20lb.

Today's Canal

I never really fished the canal much after that and still don't today, even though it is still very much on my doorstep. I have no wish to catch her again and even with how remote those odds are it just doesn't feel right even considering it.



You never quite know what you are going to catch next.

Today the canal is fished a lot, the Ghosty is still alive and kicking as far as I know. She gets caught maybe once or twice a year and has even broken the 30lb barrier. She must be at least 25-30 years old by now, a true survivor. Most likely dropped in the canal as an unwanted pond fish which had outgrown its original home.

A couple of years ago I met a builder who lived a few hours' drive away from the Canal where she lives. He not only knew of The Big Ghostie's reputation but he had actually travelled miles to come and fish for it. A very unique carp in a very challenging environment.

The fish in the canal are a lot more cautious in their feeding now than they ever were. The angling pressure, albeit still relatively light in comparison to what you may find at a day ticket for example, has taught them to be more guarded. They will now shy away from floating bread drifting over their heads often recognising when they are being fished for.

I'm sure this is the same for canals

up and down the country as the popularity in Carp fishing has exploded over the last decade. But this just means the captures require more effort and in turn give the angler even greater pleasure in a capture.

I'm glad I got to fish my local canal while it was still very much an unknown. But that's not to say there isn't the very real possibility of many surprises still lurking within the miles and miles of canal networks in our Country.

I certainly caught carp from that one stretch which I'd never seen before or have ever seen since.

If you're lacking a little bit of an adventure in your angling and don't mind a bit of a challenge. With no pre-made pegs, no known stock with a very unique set of parameters then the Canals may just be for you.

You might not catch the fish of a lifetime, size wise. But you may just catch a fish that has never seen the bank before and may never see it again.

It's certainly worth a look... ■

Exclusive

The Poachers Paradise

By Levi Rees

Tips down.

Big Fish

I first came to know of this lovely shallow and silty lake when I was a kid as its not far from my house, set in a nature reserve its surrounded by mature woodland and big fields. It held a low stock of carp I thought only maybe twenty five or so and I've been hunting them for the last few years.

It's a tricky one because there's no fishing aloud on there but it's one of those ones that nobody really looks at or talks about. I've kept my angling to a minimum, walking it regular and keeping an eye on the place with regular bait application. There's a big head of bream in the lake so I've always stuck by my boilie only approach.

I started in Covid by sleeping on my unhooking mat in a Bush with one rod tucked away down the side, I managed a few lovely ones by doing this. One of them I've turned into a bit of a friend in the end catching him numerous times, one of the smaller residents of the lake but a lovely little character.

After doing a couple of weeks in the Bush on the mat I decided to step up and start fishing it properly, after seeing the lake wasn't getting any



Fully scaled head end.

attention I was willing to be more blasé about my campaign.

I'd worked out an area where the brolly could be tucked away out of sight but I was in the prime location to intercept fish moving up and down the lake, I baited heavily with Main-lines Cell and Fibre boilie.

One evening on my way to bait up after work I saw a small group of fish on the surface, that was it for me back

in the car to get my gear from the house to do some surface fishing. After a couple of hours feeding and getting them confident I nailed one. The result being a cracking fully scaled mirror a really special one.

After having that fish off the top I started keeping a bucket with all my floater gear and my rod in the car. I was around there all the time so it made sense just incase the opportu-



Common surface capture.



Fully scaled capture.



Big common I was stalking.

BIG CARP TOP TEN

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Common off the top.



Mirror surface capture.

nity arose, and it did later that week. I'd finished work early and on having a look they were in the same place as last time soaking up the sun, it was a case of repeating the process again and before I knew it I had a lovely chunky common in the net, I was overjoyed at this capture as there wasn't many commons in the lake.

I carried on baiting and fishing my swim for a couple of weeks catching a few wildy looking commons. The spot I was fishing was absolutely tiny when I found it I must of landed on it by absolute chance because when I went out at night on the boat and found it was the size of a bucket lid, it was a lovely hard patch in amongst a load of rotten silt, thick black horrid stuff but that little patch was prestine and polished.

I'd put the rods out for the night and the Mrs popped down to see me with some food, I'd gone down the bank for a little look and when I came back she had a tench in the net!

Chuckling away she was landed with that. Quickly rigged back up and cast back out it was only minutes before the rod was away and instantly knowing this was no tench from the huge bow wave that took off across the spot. After a dogged fight where I frantically tried to dodge snags and other obstacles the fish was in the net and it was again a recapture of the fully scaled I had from off the top. I couldn't turn it down again because its such an amazing looking fish so quick photo and off she went.

The weather had changed and it had become seriously hot and sunny so I'd started walking the lake more and keeping an eye out for what I wanted which was the big common in the lake. There's a little bay around the corner from where my brolly was set up and I climbed up this tree to find the big common just sat there with a few of its mates. I'd rushed back to the car to get the floater rod and positioned my self ever so care-

fully as I flicked the rod out the float caught a branch and went straight up into the air and crashed back down spooking the fish that was there, game over on that one even after some perseverance in trying to get a feeding reaction.

The floaters were a real edge for me I was using mixers cover in bog standard sunflower oil, I didn't want the oil for attraction I only wanted it to help with the visibility and slick to combat the slight wind I was against. I always went heavy with the mixers and they always mopped them all up I'd seen myself using fifteen in a session and running out. I was always undergunned fishing off the top using my dads old Abu cardinal carp in 2lb test it was like fishing with a feeder rod, braided mainline was my go to for on the top with that zero stretch I could connect into fish instantly. They were fanatical on the top, I plugged away floater fishing some more catching some real nice mirrors along



A truly magnificent carp.



My Park Lake friend.



The lakes Big Mirror

the way but the weather had taken a turn for the worse and I went back to the brolly camp once again to carry on baiting and waiting.

Back in the brolly camp the rods were back on that small spot and there was huge patches of fizz directly on top of me, it lasted for hours they were on the feed big time on that spot and in the silt around it. I'd had the take on dark again I could tell it was a significantly better fish ripping line from the reel. Another one where I had to dodge snags and other obtrusions. My head torch had run out of charge so on netting the fish I didn't know what I'd landed. Using my rhino beam that I use for my camera I opened the fold of my net to a lovely long mirror with a triple linear sort of scale formation on each side. A truly magnificent carp.

Although this fish was of an epic description it wasn't the big common I'd been after, I felt closer than ever and I felt it could be the next bite.

I remember when watching it from the trees on that evening Floater fishing it had a massive Hoover sort of mouth with big thick white lips, it's all I could think about for a while the obsession was truly roaring.

I'd sorted an early finish from work and I shot up the lake on to the baited spots the water looked coloured and the ducks were picking little bits off the surface around the spot so I had a feel the spot had been decimated. Baiting up with another few kilos of my cell and Fibre mix it wasn't all that long until I had a take same as the last few better fish it was a screamer flying off up the lake towards some snags the fish got the better of me taking me around a Bush so I jumped into the wader and went down the margin for a better angle. After some back and forth action in the snaggy Bush the fish had come free and aimed for another snag down the other side now I was fishing braided mainline so I really put the rod into it to steer it away, after successfully playing it all the way into the net I took a look to find the big common and those big white lips in the bottom of my net. It was even better than I first thought and the buzz was real. I was in awe of this fish and to have caught it after observing it was truly amazing.

After catching the common I wanted to finish the park lake cam-

paign by catching the big mirror, I'd watched this fish on so many occasions weather it be off the top or stalking it fed different to the rest which made it a strange one.

I had some plans get cancelled on me so headed off up the park to fish just on the off chance that the mirror might be around, I remember it being a big full moon and there was a big southerly blowing up the lake. Really biblical conditions for being on the bank. I'd put the rods out and sat confident for a few hours and the rod signalled a slow take ever so gently picking up. I'd connected into this fish that was just plodding around which I found odd compared to the others I'd hooked. It held its ground and took

my around the Bush like the common, into the waders and I'd netted it all pretty simple compared to others. I shone the headtorch into my net and there it was, the big mirror I needed to finish my collection of epic carp at the park lake. The mirror signalled the end of a great campaign and loads of memories along the way. My mrs had travelled up to the lake and by this time it was 3 in the morning, she was handing with a camera after showing her what to do on previous fish, the photos went perfect was a fitting end an exceptional couple of years angling. Holding that big mirror was such a special moment. That was it for the park lake all good things must come to an end. ■



The big commons enormous Hoover!

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Also available this month,
Big Carp Issue 323
Miss it and miss out!

Festival of Carping

I have mentioned this before but thought as its June this would be a good time to remind everyone again about The Carp Societies 'Festival of Carp' coming up next month. Please try and support them.

Saturday 8th July 2023 Horse Shoe Lake

Event opens 9.30am, Free to Carp Society members (with valid card shown on entry). £5 non-members cash only payable on the gate.

Join us for this year's BIGGEST open day yet! We will be joined by some of the industry's leading brands and anglers. Featuring a sensational mix of 20+ star anglers fishing around Horseshoe Lake, Watch their demonstrations and have a chat. Sit down with the top anglers in our Rig & Bait advice centre. Relax in our Theatre of Memories featuring presentations and Q&A sessions from some of the country's most successful anglers. Get some 1-1 help and improve casting distance Or visit our trade stand area, there will be plenty to see!

Trade stands: Little Egret Press, Carp Society, CR Baits, Haulerz, DT Baits, Dobbins Bobbins, Carp Particles, Sailvay, Perchfishers, Bristol Angling

Guest angler demos – These anglers representing companies with bank side demonstrations and do not have a trade stand to sell items: Rik Johnson (Wychwood), Ed Betteridge (Prologic), Frank Warwick (Prologic), Nash Tackle Team, Simon Pomeroy (Pallatrax), Andy Murray (Keith Napier memorial), Sticky Baits (tbn), Thinking Anglers (tbn), Lee Morris (Fox), Korda (tbn), Joe Turnbull (Ridgemonkey), Loz East (Ridgemonkey), Stu Lennox, Dan Shipp (Dawia), Adam Dawes (Daiwa), Mark Holmes (Nutrabaits), Mike Payne (Nutrabaits), Jake Wildbore (Fortis Eyewear), Greg Myles (RG Baits/Heritage Ltd Edition), Chuck Backhouse (RG Baits/Heritage Ltd Edition)

Team England team trials: Rob Hughes, Bev Clifford.

Junior activities: An introduction to Angling from a team of Angling Trust Level 2 Coaches MORE INFO

Daiwa sponsored Junior Casting competition with Alfie Naylor.

Also a chance to meet other members of The Carp Society team including: Tim Paisley (new book release 'A Carp Memoir', Derek Stritton, Brian Skoyles, Greg Fletcher, Andrew Ellis (AE FISHERY MANAGEMENT), Steve Bowles, Steve Hall, Josh Boyes, Richard Seeds.



Carp Chat Carpy News6

Carp Scene Reviews24

ARTICLES

Two Months and Eight PBs *by Chris Thripp (FFC Bait)*32

Farlows *by Daniel Daneshi*40

Beneath the Flight Path Part two *by Keith Jenkins*52

Twenty-Five Years Behind the Counter Part Two

– The Tackle Box, Dartford *by Lee Jackson*62

Short Session Success *by Nick Onslow (Urban Bait)*88

The Highs and Lows *by Matt Hart (Urban Bait)*72

A Year in the Medway Valley *by Paul Banes*92

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A NEW WEBSITE! DT BAIT'S COLLABORATION – AND MORE!

It has been an exciting couple of months since we last featured in the country's biggest carp magazine. So, if it's ok with you it would be a privilege to explain what's been happening. Aqua Lilium Clothing are excited to bring you, our brand-new website where you can buy all the award-winning products that you have seen throughout the last 18 months.

We have all the securities in place to make sure you are protected on any purchase and just like before, any purchase will be sent next day. Like most websites, this is a work in progress and we

are adding extra goodies to it weekly. The website will also have a video page where you can follow the Aqua Lilium team through the season, not just the highs but the lows as well.

So, what other news do we have for you? After the success of the Essex and Big One shows, we were contacted by Fenton Trewick of DT Bait Developments and asked if we would like to get together and come up with a few designs for them. I don't know why, but for some reason there always seems to be more pressure when designing for

someone else. I sat down and thought right I need to think outside the box for this one and thought what design can I come up with for one of the biggest bait companies in the UK?

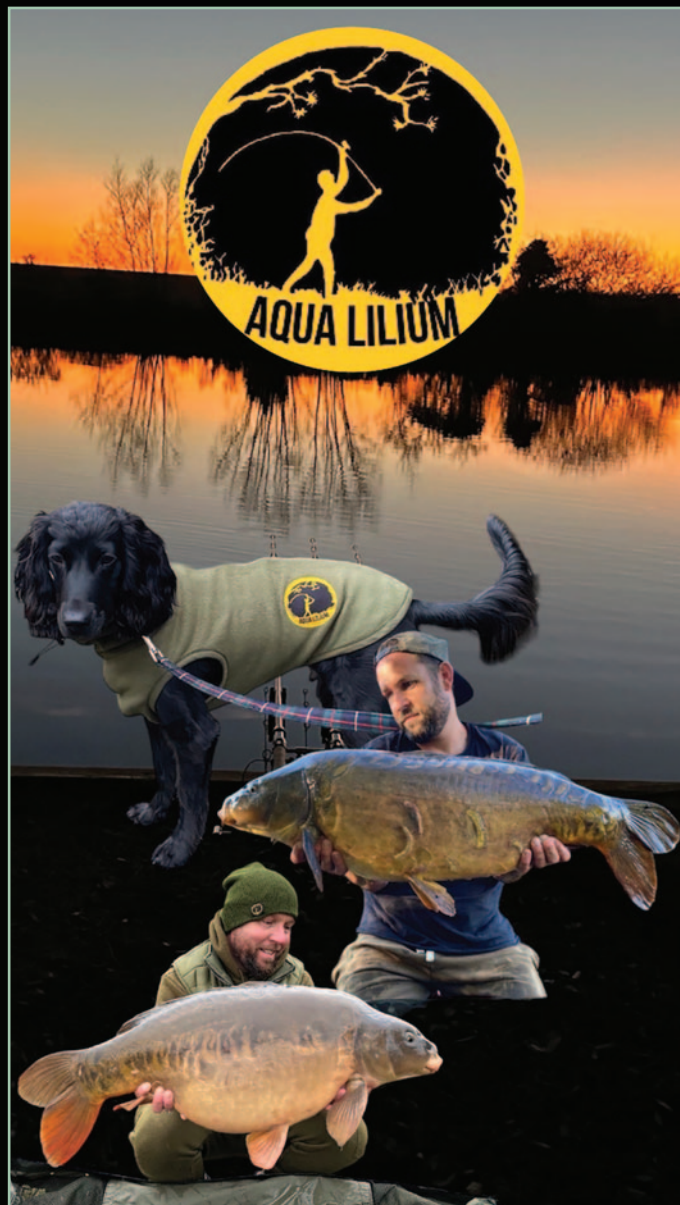
I wanted a promotional hoody that would promote some of their great products and after struggling for a day or so, I had a lightbulb moment. Who's the best at advertising the world's best products? That's it! formula 1 racing. I thought to myself and with that, I started to take inspiration from the advertising





they have on the front of their clothing. So here we have it, the DT F1 elite hoody. This also comes in a polo shirt and the usual high-quality materials we are well known for. This will be the first in a line of designs for DT, so watch this space.

We are also excited to announce we will be bringing you yet another new design, The Ghost Koi. I personally love this design and if you are into the paranormal or you have superstitions then this is definitely the design for you. You should know us by now, we love to be different and this is no exception.



Last but no means least, we also have a new baseball cap.

The cap is made in a stunning green with the flagship logo centralised to the cap. So, if you want to stand out from a crowd this will certainly do that. I want to take this opportunity to thank all our customers as without you this journey wouldn't be possible.

Our biggest goal is to bring you quality clothing at reasonable prices. As normal you can reach me through all social media but please pop over to **www.aqualiliumclothing.com**

Aqua Lilium

Aqua Liliu Clothing

We specialise in fishing clothing for you and your dog.
www.aqualiliumclothing.com

Website: www.aqua-lilium-clothing.co.uk

Email: aqualiliumclothing@hotmail.com

Tel: 07854629130

You can also reach us through our Facebook and Instagram pages.

£150,000 available as Angling Trust and Environment Agency reopen funding to help tackle fish predation

The Angling Improvement Fund (AIF) has reopened for funding towards projects tackling the impacts of predation by otters and non-migratory fish-eating birds.

The AIF is administered by the Angling Trust and is just one of the ways the Environment Agency is reinvesting income from fishing licence sales in projects which benefit anglers across England.

£150,000 of rod licence money is being made available in this latest round of funding and applications for up to £6,000 funding are invited from clubs, fisheries and other angling-related organisations. All applicants must have consulted with one of the Angling Trust's Fisheries Management Advisors (FMA) before applying and should do so as soon as possible to gain the best possible chance of getting advice before the closing date of 28 April.

Since its launch in 2015, the AIF has made over 340 separate awards to clubs and fisheries for predation projects totalling over £1.2 million. Recent projects to help protect fish stocks have included: Providing funding for otter-proof fencing on still waters. Building fish refuges and floating islands to help tackle predation by fish-eating birds such as cormorants and goosanders.



Supporting measures to control mink.

Andy Petch, Angling Improvement Fund Manager for the Angling Trust said:

"Predation of fish stocks is a major concern among anglers and poses a threat to fisheries, so I am delighted that the Environment Agency has chosen to reinvest fishing licence income in projects to help tackle these issues.

"I would encourage clubs and fisheries with waters at risk from predation to consider applying for these grants but please ensure you contact one of our Fisheries Management



Advisors beforehand. They will be able to offer expert advice and assist you with your application."

Heidi Stone, Fisheries Partnership Manager from the Environment Agency said:

"Over the years the Environment Agency has supported hundreds of clubs and fishery owners in protecting their fish stocks through the Angling Improvement Fund which is funded through fishing licence sales and offers a direct benefit to our fishing licence holders. I look forward to supporting even more projects this year.

"Income from fishing licence sales also fund Fisheries Management Advisors who are on hand to offer expert advice across the country to venues experiencing predation problems."

Funding for biosecurity and invasive non-native species projects is due to launch in April. For information about this fund please email AIFadmin@anglingtrust.net

For more information about the Angling Improvement Fund and other funding opportunities visit the Funding section of the Angling Trust website. ■

Carpy Humour





Anglers Against Cancer

proudly present the

Linear Fisheries

(St.Johns or Manor)

Fundraising Event

8th - 10th September 2023



**BIGGEST
FUNDRAISER
WINS**
A TRIP TO LES QUIS

Limited Tickets at £100 each

Hog Roast included on Saturday (£10 for non-anglers)

Bivvy City including Hog Roast £20 per person whether you stay 1, 2 or 3 nights from the Thursday.

Anglers to raise a minimum of £150 sponsorship, to be collected by the day of the Event. A full support pack will be sent once ticket purchased.



Tickets available on our web site Monday 27th February 2023 at 8pm

The AAC Mega Raffle will be drawn on Sunday 10th September after the event has finished.

Tickets on sale on our Anglers Against Cancer Auction Site (Facebook Page).

For more information visit: www.anglersagainstcancer.co.uk

CARPLOUNGE FLAGSHIP UK STORE SPOT LIGHT



Situated in the infamous Carp fishing county of Essex, Carplounge opened their flagship UK store/service centre towards the end of 2020. After the UK's exit from the EU, they wanted a way for their already well-established UK customer base to continue to have easy access to their products and services.

It hasn't been without a few setbacks, though, what with Covid lockdowns at the start and a fire at the end of 2021 that all but destroyed everything they'd built up; they've certainly had their work cut out.

Their newly refurbished shop reopened at the beginning of this year and is already proving a hit. The friendly and knowledgeable staff are on hand to explain the different options available, and with the recent release of their new flagship RT7 and their long-standing RT4, there's plenty of options to choose from.

"Is the RT7 worth the monster price tag? The RT7 All-In-One is insane! If you have the cash, buy one!" customers rave about the RT7.

The shop itself is well stocked with everything Carplounge, including all ancillaries such as spirals, cams, batteries, all luggage, etc., to name but a few. For those that can't get to the store, Carplounge UK has their own dedicated UK website so online orders are dispatched within 24 hours for next day delivery.

It's not just the shop that's proving a hit with the customers; their service centre is fully operational again too. The Carplounge UK technicians offer the same level of expertise as their German teammates and are now performing UK upgrades, warranty repairs, and servicing in their own state-of-the-art on-site workshop.

"If you're still doubting whether the RT7 is the right baitboat for you, don't hesitate to send an email or book a free consultation with our product experts below," assures the Carplounge team.

They also offer hassle-free warranty repairs which are collected directly from the customer and then returned using the DHL courier service, so peace of mind if you ever have a fault with your boat. Also available on the website is a useful range of services that customers can book themselves using the link below.

You can book online:

- One hour in-store consultations where you'll be able to get expert advice to help configure a boat that fits your style of fishing.
- If you can't get to the store, you can also book a free call back appointment where Carplounge will give you call at a time of your choosing.
- With their own test lake 15 minutes from the shop you can also book a "try before you buy" RT7 lake demonstration.
- A 15-minute slot to pick your new boat up so it will be ready waiting for you and they'll even bring it out to the car for you too.

For those customers that already own a Carplounge boat it's now possible to book a 2 hour private 1 to 1 tutorial at their test lake. It's available to all owners with different levels of experience and you're guaranteed to come away knowing how to get the most from your boat. To book a tutorial, email the shop directly at shop@carplounge.co.uk

The UK store has ample free parking and is within easy reach of the M25 and only 15-20 mins from either junction 29 or 30, so getting there is very straightforward too.

As Carplounge are renowned for continuing to break new ground with what can be achieved with Bait Boat technology, if you find yourself in the market for a new bait boat then they're definitely worth a visit...you can even grab yourself a cup of their much talked about coffee:)

Carplounge UK Ltd, Unit 5 Bakers Court, Paycocke Road
Basildon, Essex SS14 3EH

Store opening times are Mon-Thu 10am-4.30pm; Fri 10am-4pm; Sat-Sun Closed



<https://www.carplounge.co.uk/info-news-support/pro-booking/>

CARPLOUNGE RT7 BAITBOAT OUR MASTERPIECE



Introducing the next Level Carplounge Baitboat! The RT7 - a game-changing product that sets a new standard for high-end baitboats and industrial rovers. As the international market leader, we are committed to continuous innovation and are proud to unveil the RT7, a next-level baitboat that is sure to revolutionize the way you fish. With its advanced features and sleek design, the RT7 is a masterpiece that will take your fishing experience to new heights.



Check out the website www.carplounge.co.uk and see them on Facebook.

Take a Friend Fishing – Promote your TAFF incentives and your business via the TAFF Special Offers page.

Take A Friend Fishing is delighted to announce the launch of its TAFF Special Offers page, the perfect way for any fishery, club, retailer, charter or angling guide to promote their support for the TAFF initiative as well as their business.

Statement

Angling Trades Association is well aware of the importance of small businesses to the UK angling trade and that our recruitment initiatives such as Take A Friend Fishing and National Fishing Month have the ability to increase footfall for fisheries, retailers and other businesses in real time as well as building potential customers for the future.

Every year, many small businesses use Take A Friend Fishing and National Fishing Month to offer incentives to fish or shop at their venues in support of our initiatives and we think that this fantastic work should not go unnoticed.

Registration for the TAFF Spring initiative is now live along with the new TAFF Special Offers page giving anglers plenty of time to plan for the bank holiday.

To promote your supporting offer for Take A Friend Fishing, go to our "Get Involved" we site page, scroll down, fill in and send off the trade form. Alternatively, you can contact the Association via info@takeafriendfishing.co.uk for a supporters form and offers information.

Take a Friend Fishing Campaign Dates:

- Take a Friend Fishing Spring runs from Saturday 1st of April to Sunday 16th of April 2023 (inclusive)
- Take a Friend Fishing Summer with National Fishing Month runs from Saturday 29th of July to Sunday 3rd of September 2023 (inclusive)

Take a Friend Fishing Key Messages:

Take a Friend Fishing offers more opportunity than ever to get out fishing with a friend during our extended Easter and summer campaigns in 2023.

Take a Friend Fishing continues to grow in 2023 with bigger campaigns, more weekends, and more opportunity for you to go fishing and create those long-lasting friendships and memories.

Existing fishing licence holders can register for a FREE one-day fishing licence from the Environment Agency at www.takeafriendfishing.co.uk to take someone they know fishing.

A new angle for your Easter Holiday

Half terms, National and family holidays all provide opportunities for us to unwind, be with friends and interact with the environment around us. Taking a friend or family member on a fishing trip is a great way to spend time outdoors. Escaping modern life to build friendships, create lasting memories and just enjoy some time next to the water, is the ultimate in relaxation. Find out more about the TAFF initiative, what and who we are, when and where to go fishing and how to fish safely www.takeafriendfishing.co.uk/#faqs

Get Involved with Angling This Summer

To make the most of Take a Friend Fishing and National Fishing Month events during the summer holidays, between Saturday 29th of July and Sunday 3rd of September (inclusive), existing fishing licence holders can register for a FREE one-day fishing licence from the Environment Agency at www.takeafriendfishing.co.uk and introduce a friend to fishing.

Registering for a free one-day fishing licence couldn't be easier.

Simply visit www.takeafriendfishing.co.uk/register-free-friend-fishing-licence/ select the date of your fishing trip, enter some basic information about you and your friend, and away you go!

The free fishing licence will be sent with a confirmation email, so please remember to have your fishing licence and both people's email addresses plus a few other details handy when you pre-register to Take a Friend Fishing.

Notes for editors:

Take a Friend Fishing (TAFF) is an Angling Trades Association initiative run in association with the Environment Agency and supported by the Angling Trust, Canal & River Trust and many other angling organisations. Take a Friend Fishing makes it easy for an existing angler to take someone they know fishing. This work is supported by the Angling Trades Association and Environment Agency rod fishing licence income and helps to introduce thousands of people to fishing each year. Find out more at www.takeafriendfishing.co.uk

Take a Friend Fishing opens up the world of angling to people from all age groups and communities, giving the opportunity for anglers and non-anglers alike, at all levels of ability, the chance to get into fishing or back into fishing after time away.

In 2022 over 6,000 people registered to take part in Take a Friend Fishing. Now Take a Friend Fishing is back with an extended programme that gives the biggest window of opportunity yet to anglers, non-anglers and those thinking about



An angler can Take a Friend Fishing during the Easter and or summer Take a Friend Fishing campaigns - enjoy a break from everything and experience the health and wellbeing benefits of fishing - register FREE at www.takeafriendfishing.co.uk

reconnecting with the pastime they once enjoyed.

This year, we want even more people to get their backside bankside and Take a Friend Fishing to show them just how easy it is to get into angling and experience the benefits of time out in nature. To relax and engage with nature and the outdoors is a rewarding experience especially with a friend. With a free one-day fishing licence from the Environment Agency worth £6.50 (coarse and non-migratory trout) or £12.60 (salmon and sea trout).

A Collaboration for Angling

Andrew Race, Chairman of the Angling Trades Association (ATA), added "After the success of Take a Friend Fishing in 2022, I am looking forward to building momentum again in 2023 with an extended programme. Take a Friend Fishing is capable of making such a difference, not only to the long-term development of angling recruitment, but also to people's lives. Angling is a proven therapy both mentally and physically and it knows no boundaries in terms of ability, age, sex, or background.

Heidi Stone, Environment Agency Fisheries Partnerships Manager, "Fishing with family members or friends is a fantastic way to spend quality time together whilst also enjoying all that nature has to offer. Take a Friend Fishing is a brilliant campaign that allows anglers of all levels of ability to improve their skills, or simply give fishing a try – and I'm proud to again be supporting this initiative that makes this great hobby more accessible for all."

Clive Copeland, Head of Participation at the Angling Trust, said "We are delighted to be supporting Take a Friend Fishing 2023. There are several key-dates during our Spring into Fishing campaign between April and June when children and families can get out on our wonderful springtime fisheries. Take a Friend Fishing provides an incentive for existing fishing licence holding anglers to get back out on the bank again and introduce a newcomer giving us more opportunity to engage with an even wider community."

John W Ellis BSc (Hons) FIFM National Fisheries and Angling Manager Canal & River Trust, said "Canal & River Trust is delighted to be working alongside the Angling Trade Association to support the Take a Friend fishing initiative in 2023. Our Trust is responsible for looking after over 2000

miles of canal fishery and over 70 reservoirs. Over 8 million people live within 1000 metres of one of our fisheries and nearly 50% of the population within 5 miles of one. We will be encouraging members of the 250 angling clubs who rent water from us to help their club grow membership by taking a friend fishing with them for a day.'

Hashtags:

#takeafriendfishing

Social Media:

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/TakeAFriendFishingTaff

Instagram:

www.instagram.com/taff_ata

Media Contacts:

Angling Trades Association: Anna Santoro – info@anglingtradesassociation.com 0333 5779970

Environment Agency: Tom Sherwood – tom.sherwood@environment-agency.org.uk 020 302 59782

Angling Trust: James Roche – james.roche@anglingtrust.net 07791 786 251

Canal & River Trust: Ammarah Gordon – ammarah.gordon@canal-rivertrust.org.uk 0750 399 2692

Who We Are:

The Angling Trade Association (ATA) is the recognised body and voice of the UK angling trade aiming to unite the industry, promote and protect our beloved sport. Its mission statement "To promote, represent and protect the angling trade" ensures that the ATA is involved in all aspects of the angling industry. The ATA works to promote growth in the UK angling industry through long term investment and cooperation with all major stakeholders. If you are involved in the angling trade and want to contribute to that growth, take a look at www.anglingtradesassociation.com To apply for membership of ATA contact info@anglingtradesassociation.com

The Angling Trust is recognised by the Government as the National Governing Body for angling in England and a partner with Visit Wales and NRW to promote Fishing in Wales. It is a member-based organisation made up of anglers of all disciplines providing a united front to represent, grow and protect our sport. By becoming a member of the Angling Trust you are helping to protect the waterways you fish in and the fish which live in them, ensuring their health and protection for future generations. By joining, you help us to

invest in participation initiatives to introduce more people to fishing. Whether you compete in coarse, game or sea matches, on commercial or natural venues, locally, nationally, or internationally, as a member of the Angling Trust you have access to Britain's biggest and best competitions programme. To find out all about the Angling Trust visit www.anglingtrust.net

The Environment Agency works to create better places for people and wildlife and support sustainable development. We are responsible for regulating major industry and waste treatment of contaminated land water quality and resources fisheries inland river, estuary and harbour navigations conservation and ecology. We are also responsible for managing the risk of flooding from main rivers, reservoirs, estuaries, and the sea.

The Environment Agency works with businesses and other organisations to manage the use of resources, increase the resilience of people, property, and businesses to the risks of flooding and coastal erosion, protect and improving water, land, and biodiversity improve the way we work as a regulator to protect people and the environment and support sustainable growth and encourage sales of rod fishing licences. <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency>

About Close Seasons:

Understanding about close seasons, is like having the right fishing licence, it's an important and essential part of becoming an angler and just like learning the rules of any sport. 'Close seasons' are times of the year when you can't fish for some types of fish on certain types of water. For example, you cannot fish for coarse fish on any river in England and Wales on 15th March right up until 15th June. That means that the Easter Take a Friend Fishing dates coincide with the annual close season for coarse fish on rivers, so you need to consider a canal or stillwater for your fishing adventure in that period.

You might be able to fish for salmon, brown trout and rainbow trout on some rivers during the coarse fish close season on rivers using certain types of lures and baits – local fishing byelaws to check what you can do in your area and remember too that some privately owned bodies of water can have their own close seasons. If you are new to fishing and want to try it during Take a Friend

Fishing, but are confused by this, the best thing to do is ask the angler you are going with, and make sure you both understand what the close season on rivers mean – it's all explained here on the Environment Agency web site.

About Fishing Licences:

You will normally need a valid Environment Agency fishing licence if you

are aged 13 or over and fish for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel in England (except the River Tweed), Wales, and the Border Esk and its tributaries in Scotland. An annual fishing licence only costs £33.00 for up to 2 rods to fish for coarse fish & trout.

For a salmon and sea trout licence it's £86.10.

Licences are free for juniors aged 13 to 16 years of age. Concessionary, short term and three rod coarse fishing licences are also available. Visit www.gov.uk/fishing-licences/buy-a-fishing-licence to buy one online. www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk ■

Government Water Plan will fall short without money for enforcement against polluters

The Angling Trust has welcomed the publication of the Government's Plan for Water but warned that it will fall short without a reversal of the decade long programme of cuts to the Environment Agency's enforcement and pollution control budgets.

The Plan for Water which was launched today (April 4) contains mix of commitments, plans and funding, many of which have already been announced. It promises to deliver 'more investment, stronger regulation and tougher enforcement on those who pollute.'

The Environment Agency is to be given additional powers to impose unlimited fines on water companies who pollute. However, there is no mention of replacing the 56% cut in government funding for environment protection which saw EA budgets slashed in real terms from £218.8m in 2009/10 to £94.3m in 2021/22. The situation has now become so dire that last year the EA ordered pollution



control staff not to respond to Category 3 & 4 pollutions at all and the number of pollution incidents that triggered a visit has plummeted. Prosecutions for pollutions have fallen as a result to record lows - down from

nearly 800 a year in 2009 to just 17 in 2021.

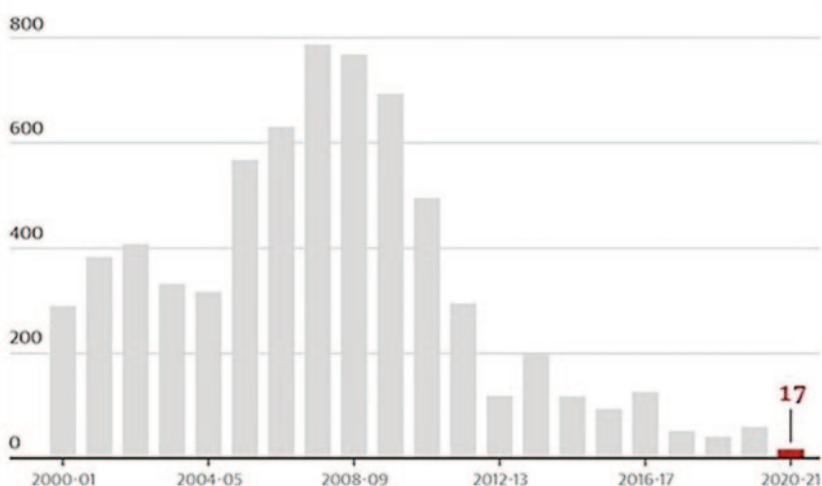
The Plan makes a number of bold promises, including to 'deliver clean and plentiful water' and the extraordinary claim that 'pollution in our rivers has significantly reduced' despite latest figures showing that during 2020 and 2021 storm overflows have discharged raw or partially treated sewage into our rivers on 760,000 separate occasions, lasting for a total period in excess of 5.7 million hours and the UK's top bathing beaches experienced 8,500 hours of sewage contamination. The number of discharges reduced slightly in 2022, which according to the Environment Agency was largely due to the drought rather than action by water companies, but storm overflows still spilled for over 1.7million hours.

However, the Plan does include a number of welcome measures that the Angling Trust have been calling for including:

- bringing forward infrastructure investment for new reservoirs,
- a ban on plastic wet wipes, and
- a new Water Restoration Fund

The number of prosecutions undertaken by the Environment Agency decreased from 768 in 2008-09 to 17 in 2020-21

Prosecutions, 2000-01 to 2020-21



Guardian graphic. Source: National Audit Office analysis of Environment Agency data. Note: Prosecutions are assigned to financial years using the 'date of action' recorded. Multiple charges against the same offender are counted individually

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CCR 42 inch Custom Compact Landing Net (complete)

All black option:

- 42 inch carbon arms with black aluminium ends.
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- Deep camo mesh.
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- Packs into 43 inch sleeve.

All this for £125.00 including postage!

Custom build option is also available for the handle to match existing rods. We can offer the whippings in any colour plus metallic trim bands, if required. Grips are available in cork, burl cork, duplon, or shrink. Several butt cap options available. Custom decals/names available.

All for £150.00 including postage.

A true custom landing net at a realistic price!



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Web: www.chilterncustomrods.com

Email: chilterncustomrods@yahoo.com

Facebook and Instagram: Chiltern custom rods

using the proceeds of fines levied on polluters to improve environmental outcomes.

Martin Salter, Head of Policy at the Angling Trust said:

"Anglers have been fighting those who treat our rivers as open sewers since we first came together to form the Angling Conservation Association in 1948. Today, as the Angling Trust and Fish Legal, we welcome the fact that years of campaigning against the twin scandals of water industry and agricultural pollution has finally forced the government to try and put together a coherent plan for water.

"We are pleased that they have responded positively to our proposal to use the fines from polluters to improve the environment rather than providing the Treasury with a back door windfall tax. However, these must represent new money and not used as an excuse to cut existing budgets for habitat improvements or river restoration.

"And if ministers are serious about delivering 'clean and plentiful water' then they better start reversing the savage cuts made to the Environment Agency's pollution control budgets so that it has the staff and resources to actually bring polluters to court. Even a five year old knows you can't impose 'unlimited fines' without first securing a prosecution."

Stuart Singleton-White, Head of Campaigns, said:

"This plan is largely based on announcements and commitments already made across a range of policy areas, drawing as it does from the duties set out in the Environment Act 2021, proposals contained within the changes being made to agricultural subsidies, and the requirements of the Storm Overflow Reduction Plan. There is little that is new, but bringing it together into one plan will help when it comes to holding the government, water companies and the regu-

lators to account.

"What is welcome is the recognition in the plan of the complexity of issues our rivers and waterways face, not only sewage, but agricultural pollution, road run-off, litter and wet wipes, chemical contamination, and the impact of ever-increasing demand and over development."

More detail is needed before we can be confident this plan will deliver the change that is vital to protect our rivers, fish, and wildlife. Both the Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Thérèse Coffey, and the Minister, the Rt Hon Rebecca Pow, have said: "We know that people across the country want to see more progress in tackling pollution. We agree." But serious questions remain as to whether this plan will deliver unless the regulators are given the funding needed to ensure actions are delivered and enforcement is carried out when it is not, or where companies and individuals continue to pollute. ■

Get Fishing Newsletter Looking for family activities? Come and Spring into Fishing!

What is Spring into Fishing?

Have-a-go at Spring into Fishing and experience fun, friendly, family fishing.

Feel how good it is to get back outdoors.

See the kids enjoy peace and quiet in nature.

Events in April May and June mean you can get a guided fishing lesson in now to be ready for your own summer full of inexpensive angling activity together.

More info about what happens at Spring into Fishing events can be found at www.anglingtrust.net/springintofishing or follow our socials.

Facebook: Get Fishing

TikTok: @getintofishing

Instagram: @getintofishing

SPRING INTO FISHING FLAGSHIP EVENTS



Anglers take part in big clean-ups on rivers and lakes **Leybourne Lakes Country Park in Kent** **River Irwell at Bury, Greater Manchester**

Over 350 bags of rubbish, 25 tyres, an avocado toilet and an abandoned sign saying 'Cleaning in Progress' were among items removed from the banks of rivers and lakes during two 'Big Litter Picks' organised by the Angling Trust and Nash Tackle and supported by dozens of anglers

The litter picks were in support of Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean initiative and took place at the River Irwell in Bury, Greater Manchester, and Leybourne Lakes Country Park in Kent

Nash celebrity carp anglers Alan Blair, Oli Davies and Julian Cundiff joined Angling Trust Environment Officers Ian Doyle (North) and Drew Chadwick (South) at the events which once again highlighted just how much anglers care about the environment

The Angling Trust's Anglers Against Litter campaign, sponsored by Shimano, has already provided litter picking kits to more than 60 angling clubs who carry out regular litter collections throughout the year,



with more kits being delivered to clubs in coming months

The Leybourne Lakes litter pick covered eight miles around nearly 200 acres of gravel pits and included volunteers from SWS Fisheries and local dog walkers

At the River Irwell litter pick, volunteers included representatives from Little Britain Anglers, Bury Council, British Canoeing, and litter collectors from Bury and Radcliffe

Ian Doyle said: "It was great to see so many people giving up their time

to make a real difference to an area of Bury that has had major issues with litter and fly-tipping

For many anglers, the place they fish is just as important as the fishing so keeping them free from pollution and litter is vitally important

"Drew Chadwick added: "These fantastic events were well supported by anglers and the local community, and their efforts have helped to improve the environment for everyone

Thank you to all who took part ■

Pictures from River Irwell and Pictures from Leybourne Lakes litter pick



Carpy Humour – The Mad Fishing World of Dr Kibble

I saw some of my old pike fishing friends the other day, Rob. Apparently, they haven't been up the Harris in years.

Saw a man at a boot sale throwing Bream fishing books at people. I couldn't figure out why at first. Then it hit me.

Breast fed carp anglers can cast further than bottled fed anglers. Was a theory I came up with in the eighties. I have always found women that breastfeed in public are so miserable though. They never smile when I take their photographs. Personally, I prefer bottled milk myself.

They say hard times are ahead, but I can remember hard times before. I once saw a homeless bloke sitting outside the gates of Darenth in the nineties. Holding a cardboard placard reading, 'No Dog, No Job, No Home'. So I chucked two quid into his cup. He said, "Thanks a lot Kibs, you just ****ed my soup right up!" Though the price of petrol is that expensive now. Even cab drivers are taking the shorter routes.

The other day I was sitting in my bivvy rubbing my man boilies, and a genie appeared. He said, "I can only grant you one wish, because times are tight". I said, "Are you from Bradford?" He said, "How do you know that?" I said, "By your accent, and I'm sure I have been in your cab before". He said, "I gave up the cab driving Kibs, petrol is far too expensive now, but what is your wish? I said, "I just want to be happy." Now I'm living in an old cottage with six dwarfs, and

working down a blimmin diamond mine.... I haven't even seen Snow White's tackle box yet.

A long suffering carp angler's wife runs into the dentist. Straight through the doors of the dental treatment room. Not even stopping at reception. Pulls off her knickers from under her skirt, leans back in the leather orthodontic chair, with either leg cocked over each arm. The Dentist says, "Excuse me love, I'm not a gynecologist!" She said, "I know that, I just want you to remove my husband's false teeth."

Every time there is a knock at the door. My dog always runs to the front door excited, wagging his tail. I don't know why, it's never for him. Though when you get older the mind gets a little forgetful at times. I left him at a lake accidentally recently for three days. When I rushed back to pick him up, you could see by his face he was fuming. Sitting in the club carpark with the right hump. He gave it to me with both barrels. He said, "You furkin idiot Kibble. You left me here on my own for three days to defend for myself. Having to drink water out of muddy puddles. Having to steal chicken feed from the local farm preventing me from suffering hours of starvation. Someone caught a forty off of the far bank, but I couldn't even be bothered to go around, and help out with the photographs. I've been so depressed I didn't even fancy sniffing another dog's ass!"

Though in the nineties I visited Doncaster in Yorkshire to check some

lakes out. They had even named a river after Derek Ritchie. The River Don. Obviously, he must have visited there himself once. Though I stayed in a posh hotel. Some of you might know of it. In a beautiful part of the world. Just on the outskirts of a place known as Carcroft. At a Premier Inn. Carcroft is known for being a bit of a tourist trap. If you are wearing expensive jewellery, you probably won't leave there still wearing it. Though sitting in the bar I'm sure it was Simon Crow with a beautiful blond lady who looked a little like Pamela Anderson. Turned out they were staying in the room next door to me. At just gone one o'clock in the morning though, it started. I could hear his headboard banging on my wall, and she was making all sorts of noises. This went on for nearly an hour. Clearly, he was having a bit of a session. I thought to myself no wonder he does marathons. I nearly gave him a round of applause for being such a stallion, and having such good stamina, but it's really difficult doing so with just one hand.

A priest once told me. That over feeding the ducks not only could send you blind, but can cause terrible arthritis in the wrists in years to come. A week later I was at a lake, and Pete Regan passed by my bivvy wearing really dark glasses, and being pulled along by a guide dog.

A geezer went to the Essex Carp Show. Turns up really late at a hotel he is staying in at Brentwood. As he runs to the front desk in the lobby. He accidentally bumps into a woman,





Black Swan Lake Premium Carp Fishing Pommiers North France



Black Swan Lake

We used the knowledge we gathered from years of carp fishing passion to create our own fishing spot. In the first place, we enjoy staying in this green oasis ourselves, but we want to share our favourite spot with like-minded people.

Located 300 meters away from the banks of the River Aisne, near the village of Pommiers, the lake is located in a green domain of 4 hectares and includes a water surface of 2.5 hectares. The lake owes its name to the pair of black swans that live there. As nature lovers, we chose to organise the domain and the lake with respect for fauna and flora. It is the ideal place for private fishing and nature experience.



The Fish

The lake has been out of use for about 5 years. It is an old gravel pit that was rarely fished in the past. We started off by making an inventory of the stock. We discovered that some beautiful old fish were swimming around in the lake, including some characterful mirror carps and some beautiful dark common carps. There are also a few monster grass carps that weigh over thirty kg (68-70lbs).

In the spring of 2021, Cyriel decided to release some of his own fish on Black Swan Lake. He released 30 fully scaled mirror carps, common carps and some heavily scaled mirror carps weighing between 8-10kg. As icing on the cake, ten koi were released as well, speaking of real targets! Finally, in the autumn of 2021, 200 extra fish were added to the lake. A highly varied mix of mirror and common carps weighing between 13-30 kg was released. These additions were carefully hand-selected from several ponds at various fish farms and provided the lake with a fantastic fish population, including a lot of thirties, forties and fifties (30-40-50-60lbs). Overall, there are about 250 fish weighing between 10 and 30 kilos (20-70 lbs). There is almost no bream or tench on Black Swan Lake, nor any dwarf catfish. There is a nice pike stock.



Very limited availability for 2023

Taking bookings now for 2024 and 2025


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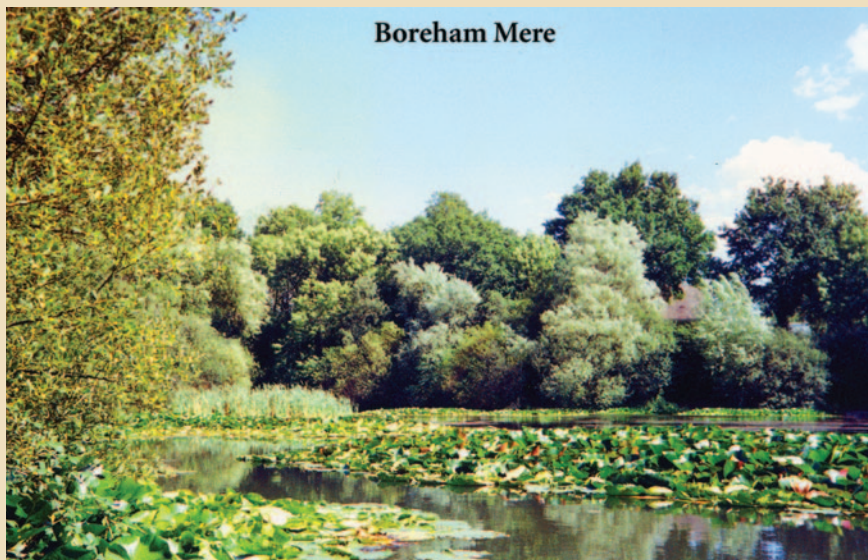
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Black Swan Lake

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Boreham Mere

and as he does his elbow hits her breast. They are both quite startled. The geezer turns to her and says, "Sorry love, if your heart is as soft as your breast, I know you'll forgive me." She replies, "If your tinky winky is as hard as your elbow, I'm in room 102."

I get asked some weird stuff at lakes sometimes. A lad said to me last week. "When you were out in Ibiza Kibs, did you ever have sex on the beach?" I didn't realise he was talking about the drink. I said, "Only once, but it wasn't much cop though, because she did one of those fanny farts. I didn't mind though, because it blew the sand off of my boilies".

A young fishing couple from Hitchin, took their ten year old son to the doctor. With some hesitation, they explained that, although their little angel appeared to be in good health, they were concerned about his rather small penis. After examining the child, the doctor confidently declared, "Just feed him pancakes. That should solve the problem." The next morning, when the boy arrived at breakfast, there was a large stack of warm pancakes in the middle of the table. The young lad said "Are they all for me Mum?" She replied with, "Just take two, the rest are for your father."

Couple of years back. I had a big party with many old carping friends. One of them said to me, "You must have some money Kibs, a gold toilet!" The idiot had shat in my old trombone.

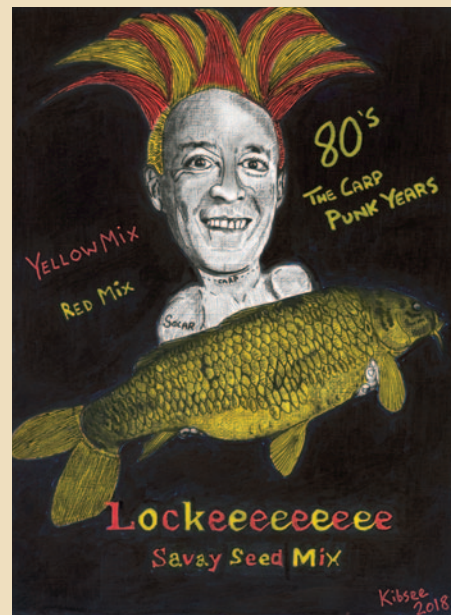
Sideways Sally is driving her car down a country road when she sees another blonde woman out in a field in a rowing boat. She can clearly see the woman rowing the boat as hard as she can to move the boat in the field. She pulls over, gets out of her car and yells "Hey, stupid! You're giv-

ing all of us blondes a bad name! If I didn't have somewhere important to be. I would swim out there and kick your ass."

I'm not happy Sideways Sally is no longer into bondage, but my hands are tied. Bondage was getting easier as we got older. Years ago I had to blindfold her. In the end I used to just hide her glasses. A young carp angler's Mum was cleaning his bedroom up when she found a load of serious bondage gear, and fetish mags. She asked her husband: "What shall we do?" Husband said, "I'm no expert, but I wouldn't spank him!"

A full time carp angler, who rarely was at home for most of the summer. His Mother said to his wife when their baby was born: "I don't mean to be rude but he doesn't look anything like my son." The daughter-in-law lifted her skirt up and said, while clearly wearing no knickers, "I don't mean to be rude either, but this is a pussy, not a photocopier."

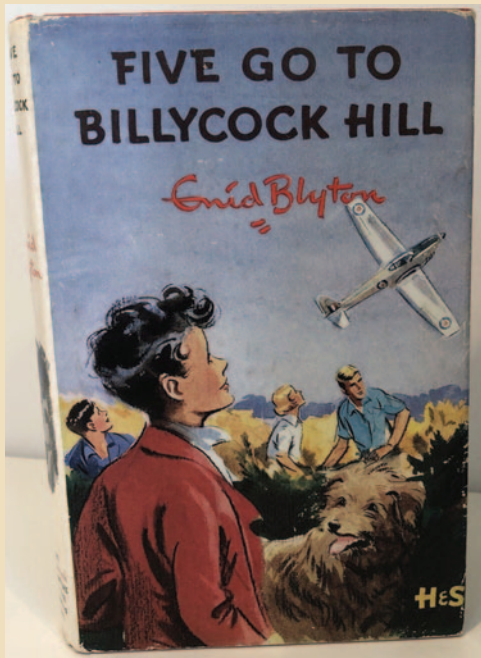
One beautiful day in Heaven, Jesus and Moses were fishing in a lake. After a while of silence, Jesus asked Moses, "Hey Moses, can you still do it? You know...Your thing'?" Moses then answered, "I don't know, let me see if I still got it!" He then stood up and drew his arms forwards, and then separated them. As soon as he did it, the lake's water divided into two and the boat fell to the dry bottom of the lake. Moses happily then said, "Ah ha! I can still do it!" Then after he closed his arms and the lake came back to normal, with the boat rising on top of it, he then asked Jesus, "So, how about you? Can you still do it, 'your thing'?" Jesus then answered, "Only one way to find out!" Jesus then stood up and jumped out of the boat, and started walking on the lake. But



after a few minutes of walking on water, he then fell into the water and started drowning. Moses, seeing this, rushed to save Jesus and get him out of the water. When Jesus was finally saved, Moses, looking confused, then asked him, "Hey, what happened? How did you fall into the water?" Jesus, still breathing faintly, then answered him, "I just remembered I've now got holes in my feet from that other day."

Some of you have asked if I still fish with my personal assistant Miss Humper. She wasn't actually my personal assistant, but back in the day we used to work for the same building firm. She used to just pop over to Aquatels lake in very windy conditions, or in the colder months in the nineties to help me erect my old Shakespeare. It was a cheap and cheerful bivvy tent, back in the day. Sometimes it was difficult to get the poles within the flaps. Especially in the winter months, without lubricant, and Miss Humper's nibble fingers. The pole would on many occasions get stuck at times, between the flaps. Miss Humper could erect anything within seconds. Though Miss Humper should not ever be confused with my old Dutch girl friend Vlinder Titshof. Who I knew from my clubbing days. Although they were both blondes, and looked very similar. They are definitely not of the same kind.

I once went out with a blind lady. She said, "You could put anything in my hands Doc, and I can tell you what it is." Started off with things like catapults, rodbands, marker float, indicator chains etc. She got all of them correct. So I then handed her my old Cobra throwing stick. I thought she'll



never get this one in a million years. She said, I've got one of these, but mine still vibrates. She said, "This has been well over used though". I said, "You can tell all that, just by touch?" She said "No, the tip stinks of fish." Clearly my Sticky Baits Krill boilies were to blame.

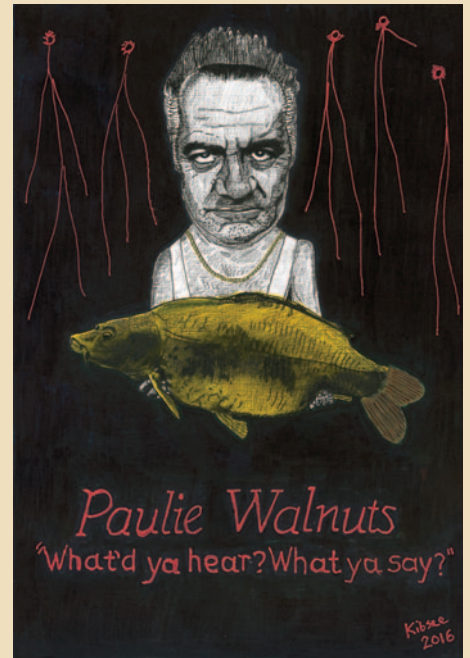
A geezer said to me last week. "What happened to your curly hair Kibble?" I haven't had any hair for nearly over 25 years now. I can still grow hair, but it only grows upwards. If I let it grow, it makes me look like the old wrestler Mick McManus on acid. Especially if I was to wear a pair of Pauline Selman's old budgie smugglers. I did once go to buy a wig from a posh shop in the Westend of London. The lady behind the counter said, "We have this type for £100, but it doesn't wash up very well. Though we have these ones, that are all around about £500 in price, which are all made of mono fibre. They all wash up really well, like real hair. Also we have this one that just came in this morning, made from the top pornstar Jelena Jensen's pubic hair for £5,000." I said, "I'll have that one please". She said, "Would you like me to wrap it?" I said, "No thank you, I'll eat it now!"

Though dogging has now become an epidemic at many carp lakes. Especially if they haven't got a lockable gate. I once had a walk around Fen Drayton lakes in Cambridgeshire. When it started to get far too dark. I made my way back to the car. In the car park there was a crowd of old blokes standing around a lit up car, holding out their camera phones. I could see a man's naked harris inside

the car, and a lady with a seat belt across her naked breasts. Then a geezer arrived wearing a head torch dressed all in green on the other side of the car to me. He said in a loud voice, "What is going on here then?" He sounded like Jim Shelley. So I shouted back, "There's life Jim, but not as we know it!" He then sat down in a collapsible green fishing chair, pulled out a thermos flask from a bag, and started eating sandwiches from a tupperware box. Though was it really Uncle Jim?

Though I blame the grey hair brigade myself. My old fishing mate Barry kept saying to his wife. Just taking the dog for a walk up the lake tonight love. Three weeks later she thought to herself. We haven't got a dog though. She was never the brightest torch, in the tackle bag. One year, she asked him what he wanted for Christmas. He said surprise me love, get me some new tackle. Christmas morning came, and Barry started undoing his presents from her. Nash Lube, handcuffs, Wip, a blow up doll, and cowboy chaps. Clearly she'd been to a totally different type of tackle shop. Though I can't go into those bondage shops in Soho anymore. The smell of rubber gives me flashbacks, of when I was serving my bivvy gimp apprenticeship in the eighties.

An old man is fishing at a lake when a frog approaches him. The frog says "If you kiss me, I'll turn into a beautiful woman and fall in love with you." The old geezer is amazed. He



picks up the frog, stuffs him in his pocket and heads off for home. On the drive home, the frog starts squirming and making a fuss, so the man takes the frog out of his pocket. The frog says "Hey, did you not hear what I said? Just kiss me, and you'll have the woman of your dreams!" The old man replies "I'm 80 years old. I'd much rather have a talking frog."

Years ago in Big Carp magazine there was a photograph reading Ali Hamidi's goat herding masterclass. Sent in by Ty of 'Big Fish Tackle'. For some reason, many thought I'd sent it in. I would never mislead people like that. The only Shepherd I know is Lockeeeee.

Lockeeeee once asked me if I wanted to go on a double date in the nineties. I said I don't mind going on a double date, but only if it doesn't involve shearing anything.

Three brothers from Dartford in Kent own a sheep, which suddenly dies. The sheep being almost a part of their family, and a major income source for the family, the three brothers become very heartbroken and decide to commit suicide in the nearby river. So they approach the river and are almost about to jump in when a fairy comes out of the river. Fairy said, "If any one of you is able to satisfy me sexually, I'll bring the sheep back from the dead." Brother one takes her into the woods and comes back with her after one hour. The fairy says she's not impressed. Brother two takes her into the nearby woods and comes back with her after 3 hours. The fairy says she's still not impressed. Now brother three takes

her into the woods and comes back with her the next day after almost 24 hours. The fairy, clearly exhausted and almost dead, says to the other two brothers, "I'm giving your sheep back. Your brother is just insane. I haven't seen such sexual stamina in my life before." One of the brothers replies with, "How do you think the sheep died?" Though the moral of that story is. Clearly the fairy had never stayed a night in a Premier Inn with Crowley.

Two of my favourite fishing books have to be Tiger Bay, and Fox Pool. I loved the 'Famous Five' section also. Clearly nothing to do with Enid Blyton. Though my first Enid Blyton book was 'Five Go To Billycock Hill'. That was like treasure in my school days. Though Mr Maylin and Co must be part of the carping old boy network now. Though I don't know if any of them will receive a knighthood from Prince Charles. Some of these old boys have got big old boys on them though. I once heard a rumour Steve Alcott was laying naked on a beach somewhere in the Indian Ocean, and after a few sherbets, and popping a viagra. He decided for a laugh, after a new stiff rig popped up. He'd paint his waggler in red and white stripes, and put an isotope on the tip of it. He fell asleep under the sun. Causing in the dark of night a pirate ship to crash into some nearby rocks, confusing Steve's tinkly winkly for a lighthouse. The Captain wasn't too happy, but it put a smile on Tinkerbell's face. ONLY A RUMOUR THOUGH !

I saw that Adam Penning did a short article in Big Carp recently. I don't think I've ever met him at a lake before. Though I have some old Korda

DVD's with him giving some blinding advice on them. Always been a big fan of his short vids. Though I was at a fancy dress party years ago in deepest Essex. Around the mid nineties. Where the theme was Venetian type wear only. Most of the women were wearing Columbina, or Gatto cat like masks. Some even wore the Arlecchino Harlequin-like mask. I was wearing a Scaramuccia, or as some would say a Scaramouche mask. Not to be confused with a Dottore Peste mask. I don't mean to sound like an expert. Though you weren't allowed to reveal your real identity at the party. Though there was a cheeky chappy there full of joyfulness. Wearing blue stockings on his legs. I always wondered if it was Adam himself. I don't know why he was wearing a batman's mask and

outfit though. Clearly he'd been sent the wrong invite that month. Super heroes fancy dress wear was the month earlier. Though I've never ever bumped into him on any lakes in the years to come. To even ask him, if it was him. Small world though isn't it!

Though life is full of dilemmas. While typing this I was thinking to myself should I have a Bacardi, and coke, or a Kraken and coke, or Havana and coke. Or mix all three together with coke. Or go for a Auchenstoshan malt scotch whisky with lemon juice, and honey. Or go for a Laphroaig with ginger ale. Though my old fishing mate Pete loves a Bishop's Finger. I said to him, that's probably why you were in that church choir for over fifteen years.

Tight Braids, and Trousers! Kibsee (Steve 'Doctor' Kibble)

The coarse fish #CloseSeason started in the 15th March, meaning it's illegal to fish for coarse fish in rivers until 15 June inclusive. Our Fisheries Officer Matt Buck explains why the close season is so important Learn more: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/close-season-for-coarse-fishing-begins-in-time-for-first-day-of-spring>



CWCUK needs your support



Need the support of All AAC Members, plenty of places left on St. Johns at our Main Event – Plenty of items still for sale on our website, and so far, poor response to our Raffle Ticket Sales – REMEMBER WHY WE DO THIS. We get so much support from Fishing companies, Tackle Companies and Bait Companies who donate some fantastic Raffle Prizes, amazing support from Fishery Owners in the UK, France and Thailand. WE DO THIS TO RAISE FUNDS FOR CWCUK Could this be the last year we exist! Hopefully not.

Get Fishing Fund helps improve mental health, low self-esteem and get hundreds of kids outdoors

A special fund for fishing run by angling's NGB and the Environment Agency has helped thousands of people of all ages and from diverse communities enjoy the positive health and wellbeing effects that come from simply casting a line and spending time by water.

When the Environment Agency and Angling Trust launched its latest 'Get Fishing Fund' in late 2022 the response was incredible - over 250 applications were made for a share of the £200,000 funding pot. With money provided from the licence bought by anyone who goes freshwater fishing in England and Wales, this is an ingenious way for a sport that ranks alongside football and swimming for having the most active participants, to reinvest in its own future.

The Get Fishing Fund saw applications not only from its own community of angling clubs and venues, many charities and schools came forward too and helped swell the numbers proposing to create more opportunities to go fishing. These were eventually whittled down to 113 successful applicants and included some exciting ways for people to discover why fishing is good for you.

Successful projects included school's establishing their own fishing clubs to get more kids active in the great outdoors, charities organising health and wellbeing projects and new coaching programmes to encourage people to excel in the sport.

Head of Participation at the Angling Trust Clive Copeland commented: "The Get Fishing Fund has seen thousands of people discover the magic of fishing. This latest round of funding with applications from a diverse array of organisations, reflects the fact that fishing has a broad spectrum of appeal – partly because it's so simple to get into, is inexpensive and it doesn't take long to create smiles all-round when people spend time together outdoors enjoying the fun and challenges that fishing offers to allcomers"

Heidi Stone, Fisheries Manager from the Environment Agency said: "Angling is a much-loved sport that appeals to people of all ages and through the Get Fishing Fund, we've seen some fantastic, creative projects that encourage individuals to get involved and reap the health and



wellbeing benefits that fishing can bring.

"By investing the income from the sale of rod licences, we're able to support numerous clubs, fisheries and other organisations, increasing angling opportunities that are available to the public."

After this year's round of Get Fishing Fund awards over 300 projects have now been able to access fishing licence income to help get more people fishing!

Luke Rose from the Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Trust told us: "We've been able to deliver weekly fishing sessions to people from our area who are experiencing their first episode of mental illness, specifically psychosis. Going fishing together helps peers and parents to build relationships by taking part in an activity that brings family members closer together. Seeing people who would have otherwise not left the house get out fishing has been amazing."

Paul Slater from Donington Angling Club in Lincolnshire was similarly enthusiastic when he let us know

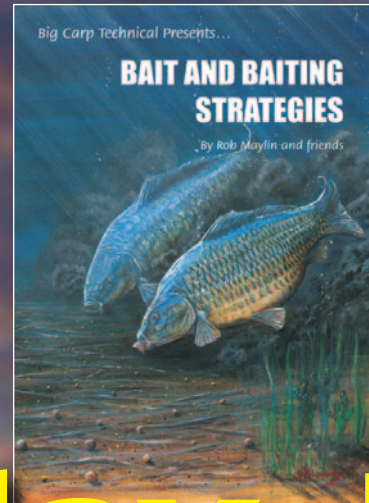
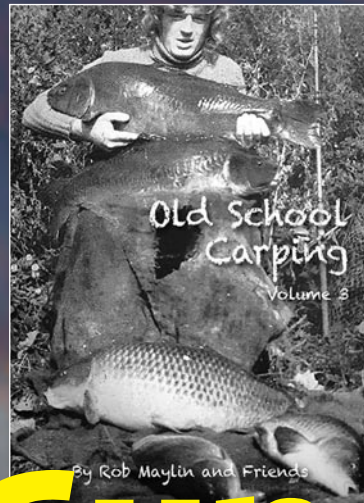
that: "As a result of the Get Fishing Fund we have increased the club's Junior Membership by an incredible 300%! This has really helped raise the profile of the club within the community".

A spokesperson for Living Sober CIC, a community organisation that provides support to men and women in the North East, said: "We are charitable organisation set up as a peer led recovery community. Each of the 12 have-a-go fishing events was eagerly anticipated by the group of 6 to 10 mostly newcomer participants, and helped with confidence issues and low self-esteem. The events were truly wonderful, spirits were always high, and we even managed to catch a few fish! One of the many benefits of the Angling Trust and Environment Agency fund, has been affording us the opportunity to spend very special time together as a group in the great outdoors."

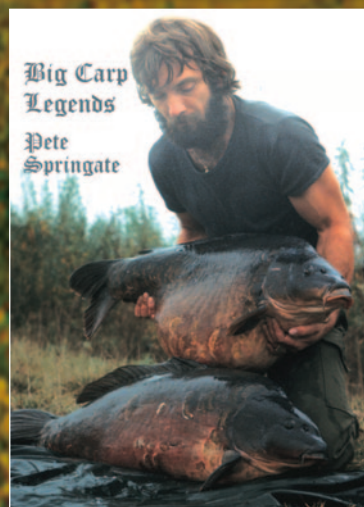
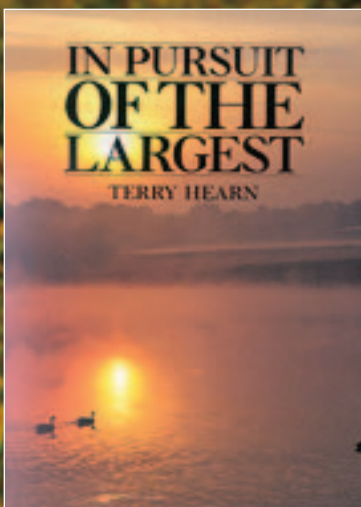
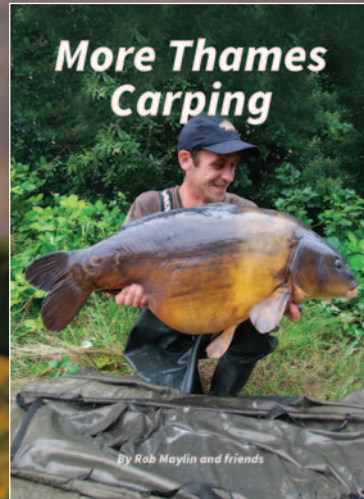
For more information and details on events and activities that have been created as part of the Get Fishing Fund visit www.anglingtrust.net/get-fishing. ■



The Perfect Gift

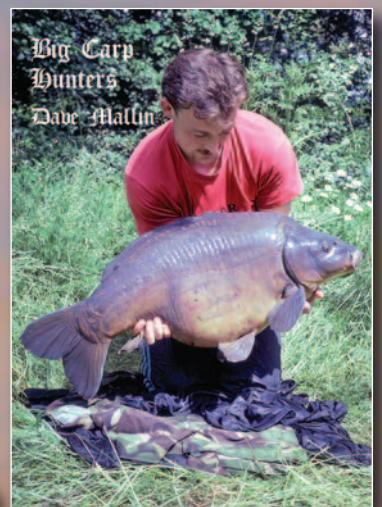
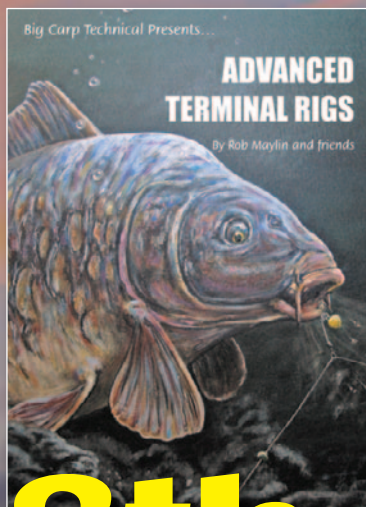


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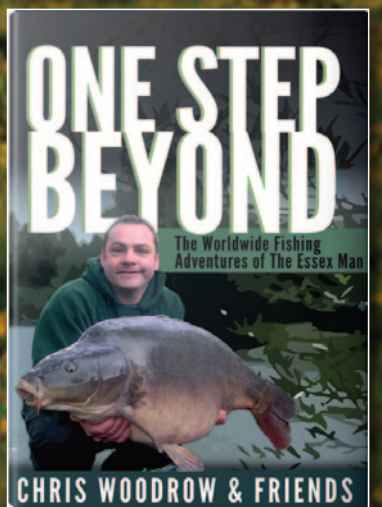
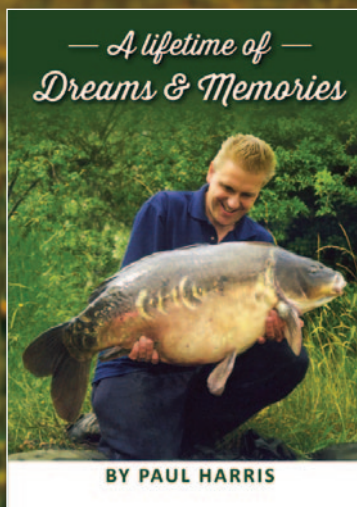
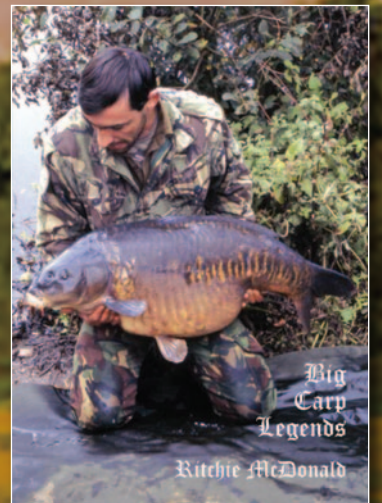
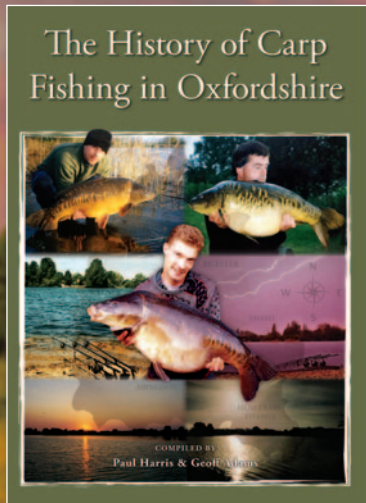


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for Father's Day



the 18th 2023



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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 ■



Teddy – a warm acquaintance

100% recycled. Yes, our Teddy is now made from post-consumer plastic bottles and fresh hope, to help you do more with less. Thanks to Repreve® technologies we have pushed the boundaries of fabric science and eco engineering even further. If you're looking to increase the sustainability of your fishing clothing, this is the style to help you make it happen. Plastic bottles have been transformed into certifiable, traceable, high-performance yarn. The contents of your recycling bin become your new thermo-regulating midlayer. ■



Nite Watches - Atlas selling fast!



The ATLAS is available in five different colour dial variants (Night Black, Stone Grey, Forest Green, Desert Black, Navy Blue) and housed in a traditional 316L brushed steel case with a SWISS-MADE SELLITA SW200-1 automatic movement.

The hands are dual colour mountain cut with our signature TRITIUM ILLUMINATION.

The Atlas was the Titan in Greek mythology who bore the heavens on his shoulders; today, the name is synonymous with power and endurance. NITE has spent the last twenty years supporting a constellation of exceptional men and women on adventures around the globe in pursuit of their passions.

THE ATLAS IS MADE IN SWITZERLAND BY ROVENTA HENEX SA.

Founded in 1959 in Bienne, they have a long tradition of developing and manufacturing watches for some of the world's most famous watch brands. More than just a geographical location, Swiss-Made means a



promise of quality and reliability.

Individually numbered, our first production release will be 100 of each colour dial variant. The first customer who orders the Night Black Atlas will receive serial number 001001.

Will that be you?

The Atlas stands on the shoulders of the MX10, our classic field watch supplied custom stamped as standard issue to UK Special Forces.

Now, 20 years later, we celebrate this with the Atlas, our first automatic Swiss-made watch manufactured to endure the elements.

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Nite Watches - New Product Announcement

ONE DESIGN. 5 COLOUR OPTIONS



Rapala



**X-LIGHT CRAZI
SHALLOW RUN**

NITE Watches first Swiss-made Automatic watch, the Atlas, will be available on general sale on 1st May 2023. As a NITE subscriber, you will have the chance to purchase one of the first 100 manufactured. Details coming soon.

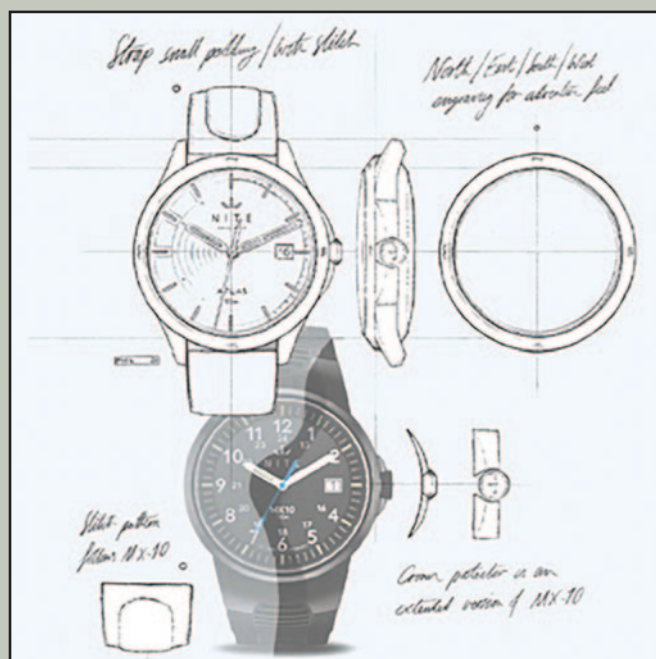
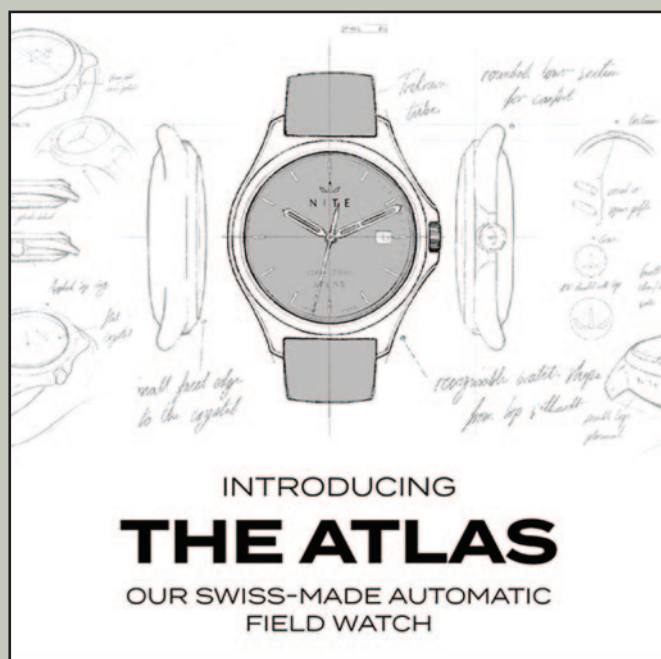
The Atlas has all the characteristics you would expect from a NITE Watch - tough, accurate and highly legible due to its tritium illumination. This is a no-nonsense, bold, robust, utilitarian field watch that could survive the demands of the military and thrive on adventures.

HERITAGE

Celebrating our 20 years of designing and manufacturing classic-inspired watches. The Atlas is inspired by the MX10, our original field watch, previously standard issue to the UK Special Forces.

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Model No.	Body Type	Body Length	Weight	Hook	Price
FNC502	Shallow	3.5 cm	4 g	Two No. 10	£10.00

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Model No.	Body Type	Body Length	Weight	Hook	Price
FNC503	Shallow	3.5 cm	4 g	Two No. 10	£10.00

AVU Ayu BAP Baby Aplus FT Fire Tiger GFR Gold Fluorescent Red GHSH Ghost Shiner PEL Live Perch PW Pearl White BOL Live Roach

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Selk'bag moves to 100% recycled materials for key products

Selk'bag has confirmed that two of its core products are now made from 100% recycled materials. The Selk'bag Original and Selk'bag Lite are two of the brand's most popular wearable sleeping bags and offer warmth, comfort and freedom of movement for outdoor and camping enthusiasts. Updated to reduce the impact of production on the planet, the Selk'bags are now made out of 100% post-consumer recycled materials, while retaining all of the performance and features for which the products are renowned.

Each Selk'bag Original and Selk'bag Lite combines a 100% recycled polyester face fabric and lining with 100% recycled hollow fibre insulation made from discarded plastic bottles (230 bottles for the Original and 153 for the Lite), making a meaningful step towards less impactful production. The main zip and other components are also fully recycled.

Like their predecessors, the updated Selk'bags offer campers and outdoor enthusiasts the very best performance features for year-round use, no matter the conditions.

Features include: No-hassle elasticated hand openings that allow wear-



ers to bring their hands in and out of the bag quickly and effortlessly; large kangaroo pockets which provide an ideal place to stash essentials; and removable booties with reinforced outsoles.

The adjustable, insulated hood offers added warmth, and the two-way double zipper makes it very easy to quickly and easily get in and out of a Selk'bag and access pockets.

It comes with a handy stuff sack to compress the bag and allow easy car-

rying and stowing when not in use.

The Unisex Selk'bag Original (£139.99) weighs 1.54kg (S) to 2.08kg (XL) and comes in a choice of four colourways – Burgundy Earth, Ash Foliage, Black Light and Ice. The Selk'bag Lite (£99.99) weighs 0.96kg (S) to 1.51kg (XL) and is available in Teal Sunlight, Foggy Blue and Black Terracotta. Both Selk'bags are available at www.selkbag.co.uk, in sizes from small to extra large to fit wearers between 4'11" and 6'4" tall. ■



Selk bag Lite Recycled Black Terracotta men front 4 booties off



Selk bag Lite Recycled Foggy Blue men front 1 booties on



Selk bag Lite Recycled Teal Sunlight women front 2 booties on

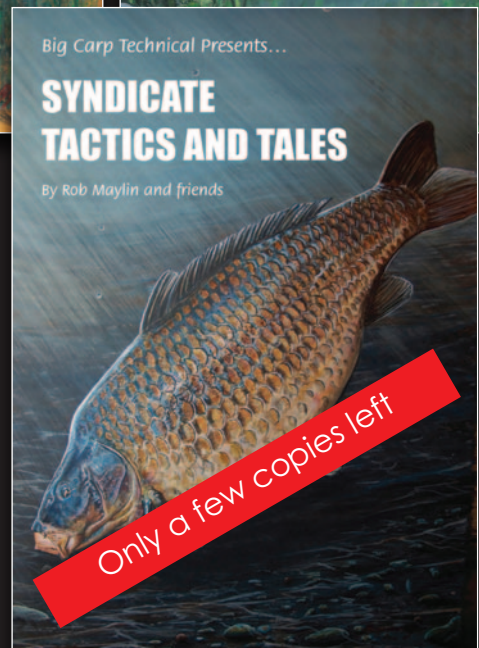
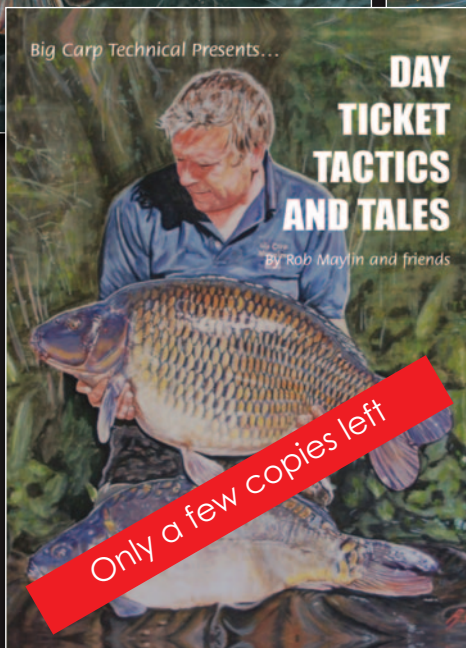
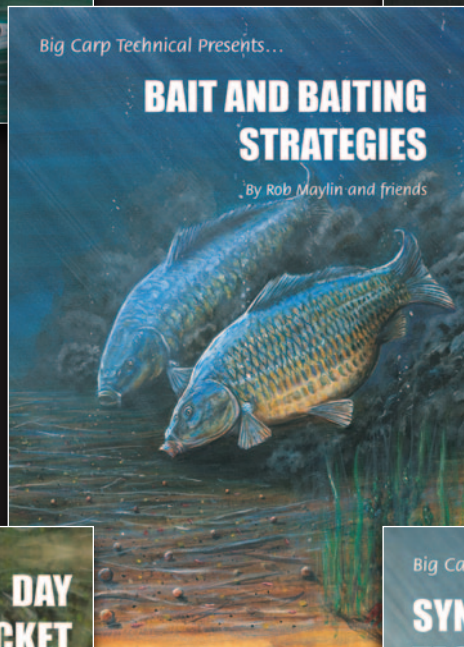
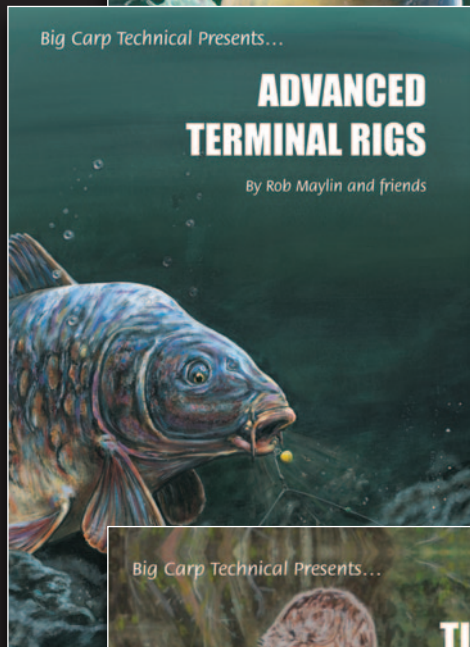
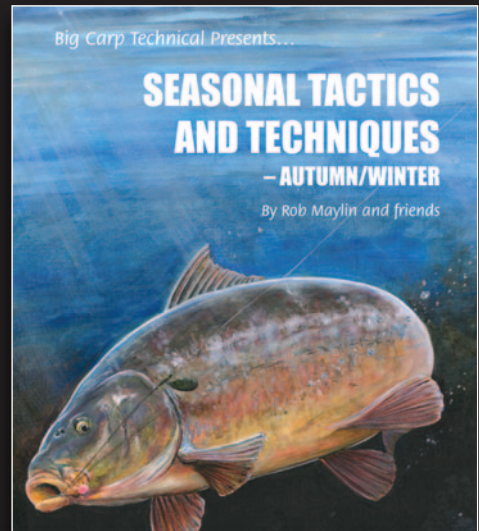
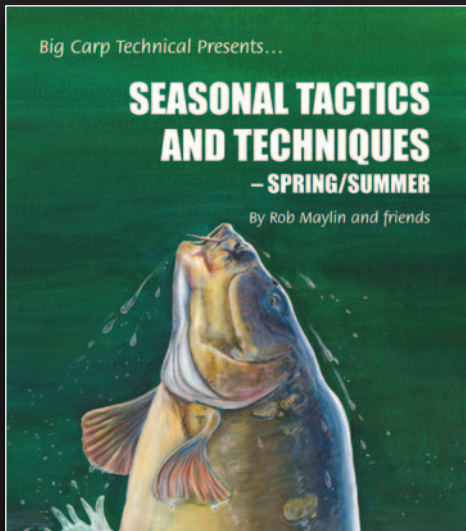


Selk bag Original Recycled Burgundy Earth men front



THE TECHNICAL SERIES

The carp anglers bible unlocks the path to consistent catching

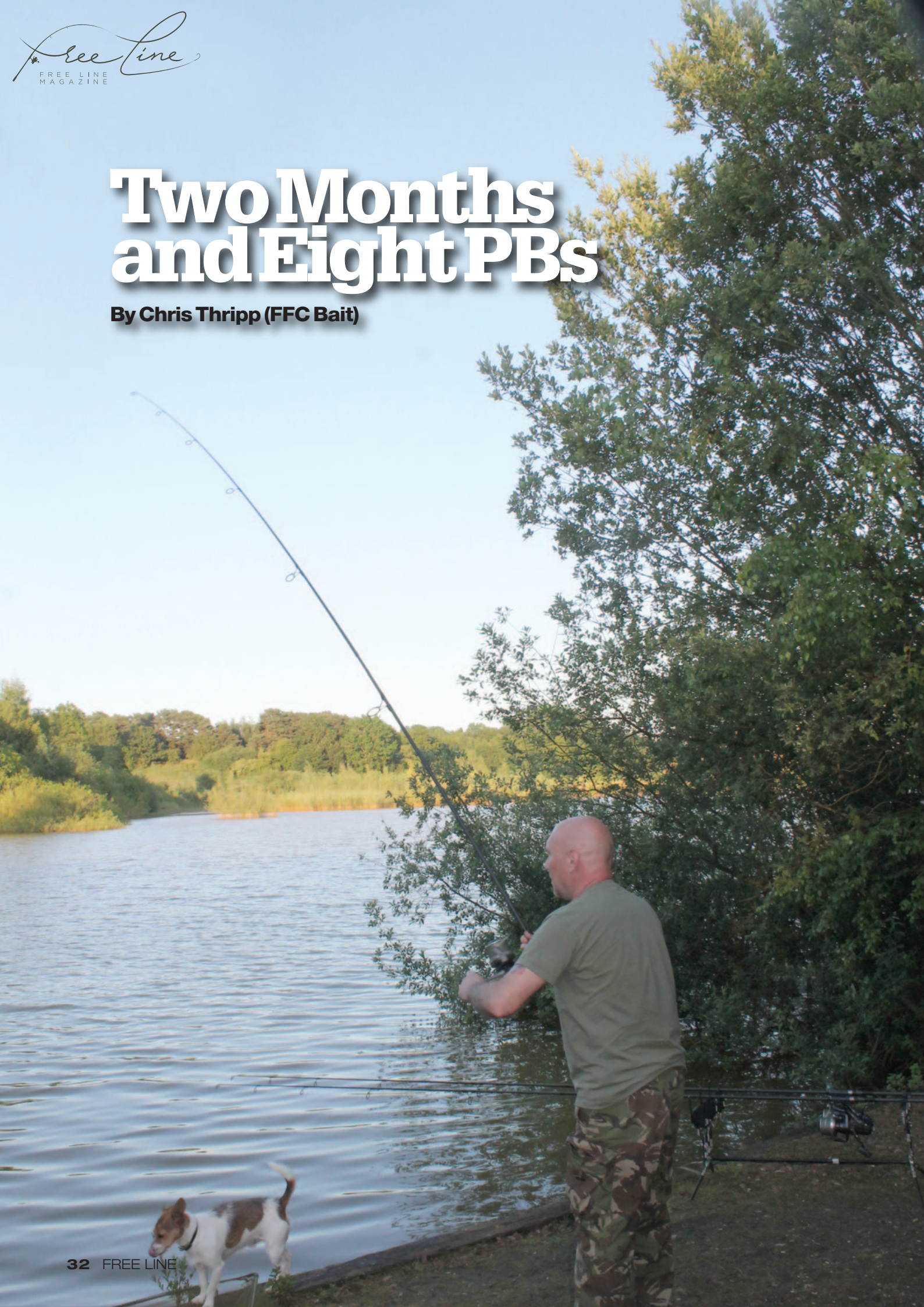


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Two Months and Eight PBs

By Chris Thripp (FFC Bait)



After the very successful bait test in the worst months of the year at the Priory – Big Carp volume 39 issue 234 – the Thripster team rolled on... We were invited to join a syndicate run by Gary Edwards, over at Leighton Buzzard called Double Arches in Heath and Reach, a very old sand quarry pit. It consists of four small lakes joined together making approximately nineteen acres and also a smaller deep lake of two to three acres known as the Trout Lake, which no longer has trout in but plenty of surprises. The Trout Lake is a tranquil, lovely looking lake surrounded by trees.

We were joined by two other members of the Thripster team: Nigel Shopland, a Withy Pool graduate, who had been out of the game for many years, and Luke Marvin, an expert with a passion for the smaller, deep carp lakes. We set ourselves two months to see what a few test mixes would do on a difficult complex – let's face it, if you're testing bait, why do it on an easy water? It's cheating the carping public if you ask me.

We always like to test new mixes

(Above) 21lb.
 (Below left) 23lb stunner.
 (Below right) 24lb.



on the most difficult waters that we can find, and Double Arches was no exception. Bream specialist and company partner Neil Williamson and I decided that we would tackle the main lakes, and that Luke and Nigel would tackle the Trout Lake. The main

lakes had a very frustrating trait: the fish never show themselves, and in the two months, I only ever saw two fish top, and if I had blinked I would have missed them. Not many carp were present in the main lakes, but plenty of bream and cats. It was a fair





old troll to the swims that we had chosen, but I liked the area, so we did the trek as we did many times over the next couple of months to keep us fit.

We started testing the Pearlesk, a darker bait. I'd put together fifteen additives and added it to the now notorious Pearl base mix. I was amazed at how well the Pearlesk had turned out and wasn't ready for it's incredible catch rate. I found my

areas, fishing to the channel between Lake 3 and 4 – a far margin and close margins. Having not seen any fish it was just experience and watercraft that I had learnt that led me to fish these areas; they just had to feed there, and luckily I was right. Off the bat they came thick and fast... Neil had a million bream, and then got into the carp. He landed his first PB, a 26lb mirror, and then a couple of days later a PB cat of just under 19lb. Then to

top it off less than two weeks later, he had his third PB, a mirror of 32lb. Well done, Neil – not bad for a noddy basher. I had 27 carp over the next couple of months, all stunning fish, and I never saw one of them top or roll – only the buzzers told me that they were there. I did have a PB cat though, so say no more.

On the Trout Lake it was a different story with fish showing, rolling and topping all over the prebaited Pearl,

Hay Fever? Dust or Pet Allergy?



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*80% said HayMax works, 134 of 166 respondents, Allergy UK survey, 2016.

[†]Proven to trap over 1/3 of pollen, plus dust and pet allergens, National Pollen & Aerobiology Research Unit, 2012.



Luke Marvin 32lb 4oz – first PB.



Luke Marvin, 36lb second PB.



(Top left) Chris Thripp; (Top right) Fighting fit after a rest in the retainer; (Centre left) Sprinkling some freebies. (Centre right) Neil captures a bee with full legs of nectar; (Bottom left) Neil Williamson, 26lb 2oz, first PB; (Above) Nigel Shopland, 22lb PB.

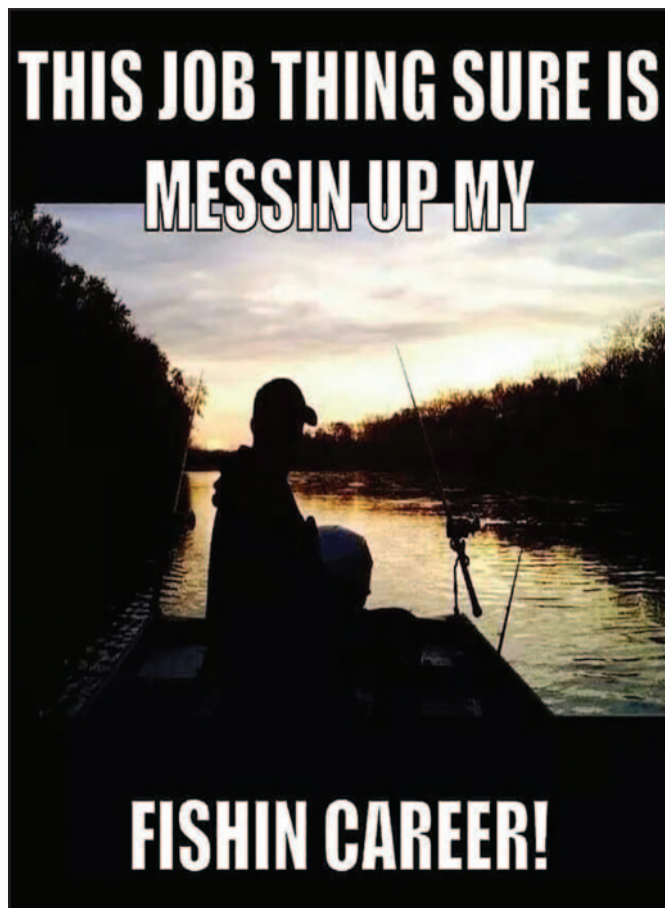


and Luke and Nigel were having a field day up there. In the two months fished, Luke had his PB twice too with carp to 36lb. And back in the game, Nigel had his PB twice with carp to 24lb. We had over 80 carp between us in two months of fishing a great little syndicate, with no silly 72-hour rules while paying a fortune. It's never packed and there are plenty of swims on the complex. The regulars were very friendly and helpful, a lot of them getting on the Thripster test mixes after we left, including the boss Gary Edwards, who is now a very successful tester.

Shortly after Gary joined the team he went on to catch so many big fish and lake records including a scorching 45lb common, but as they say, that's another story, and a story for Gary to tell. If you fancy a walk around this very secure well run complex, then give Gary Edwards a call on 07702 432 948... then grab yourself some Pearl and go and have some fun! We all did.

Thanks for reading, Chris Thripp. ■

Carpy Humour





Lake Serene Up For Sale

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

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

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Farlows

By Daniel Daneshi



In 2013 my angling took me to Farlows Lake, which is a day ticket water in the Colne Valley. A friend of mine, Anton Dejean, called me and asked if I would like to go for a day session there. At first I wasn't sure, as I had heard bad reviews about the venue in the past that had really put me off. For example there were tackle thieves, and the staff members were not too friendly or welcoming, so I had never even set foot on the venue. Then I heard that the venue had new owners and that they were cleaning the lake up, so I thought it was worth a visit for a day to see what the place was actually like, and I thought I would find out first hand a little more about it. My brother Lewis and I were on the lookout for a new local venue, as it was time for us to move on from the syndicate lake we were currently



members of. Having fished there for around three years and having most if not all of the fish between us and we were also starting to get a fair amount

(Above) 23lb common – 2013.

(Left) 27lb-plus linear – 2013.

(Bottom) Triple take on factory bank – 2013.

of recaptures.

It was April 2013 and the day had come for our day session at Farlows. When we arrived at the venue we reported to the tackle shop and asked if it was ok to have a walk around. The gentleman was really helpful and said, "Once you find a swim that you like, just come back and pay." We had a walk around, and I could not believe my eyes. The lakes were stunning and looked so carpy, if that's even a word. It had a lot to offer – bays, islands, weedbeds, gravel bars and just about every feature you could possibly want from a carp lake. Our plan was to fish Lake 1, and on walking around, I found a little bay I really liked the look of and an area I thought would 100%





have a few fish in. As I stood in the swim, I could see one of the reeds twitching and straight away looked at Anton and said, "I'm going in here."

After paying and returning to the swim, I had a think about how I was going to set my traps in terms of bait. I was going to stick with Carp Company Icelandic Reds boilies tipped with fake corn, as over the past few years my brother and I had great results on this, and we had a lot of confidence in the bait. The first rod was easy, as I was going to be putting that one as close as I could to the

reeds at the back of the swim where I had seen movement. As for the second rod, this went out to the right of the swim, where there was a small opening between an island and reeds that led into another small bay, which looked like a possible patrol root. The third rod, which went out to the left of the swim, was cast under an overhanging tree. Once all the traps were set, I put a couple of catapults over each rod.

A few hours passed and not much happened, then all of a sudden my right rod pulled up tight and held. I

looked at the tip and saw a little tap, and then I lifted into the rod and felt the fish on. It was trying very hard to get into the reeds at the side of the channel, but with steady pressures it soon turned, and I went on to land my first Farlows carp. When I saw the fish in the net I could not believe my eyes; it was stunning, and at that point Anton came over to take a few photos along with a small video clip. The fish went 24lbs, and I was over the moon to catch on my first visit. The rest of the day was uneventful, but that did not bother me too much. When I got home that night, Lewis called me and asked what it was like. I told him it had blown me away and I could not wait to go back. Lewis then said he was going to do a couple of nights the following week.

When he got to the lake he called me and said it was really busy, but there was a little bay (Swim 30) free that looked like an area fish could go to when there were a lot of lines about. He also said that he had not seen much, but would give it a go in hope of a few carp moving in. His first night was uneventful, but when he woke in the morning the reeds were going crazy, and he went on to bank six or seven fish in the last 24 hours of his session. We had a chat the next day and both did a little more research on the venue, finding out about some of the fish that lived in there. We both said that we wanted to give it a go this year and see how we got on. One of our other friends, Paul Forsyth, who also helps with our YouTube channel ReelfishingUK, had recently been appointed as a bailiff at Farlows and said he was going to do more of his angling there from now on. I also carried out a bit more research, and on speaking to two guys that we had become friends with from our syndicate lake, Brian Lewsey and Michael Bromfield, both having fished Farlows before, they had nothing but good things to say about the place.

We were both hooked on the venue, and over the course of 2013, we had no issue on the bank with people or thieves, and nor did we hear of any. The staff and other customers were



**(Top) 2013 – one of 15 fish caught between 11.30pm and 7.00am.
(Left) Black common, one of 15 fish from an overnight session in 2013.**



FISHING RESORT



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Daniel – new PB common – 2013.



Lewis's new PB common – 2013.

very friendly, so all that we had heard about Farlows before was either rubbish or had been quickly cleaned up by the new owners. The biggest reason for us wanting to fish the lake was down to the array of carp that lived in there. The carp are old and dark with character in abundance. Talking to Lewis and Paul, we decided that we were going to create videos from our experiences at Farlows and share through our YouTube channel. This is what our YouTube channel is about, sharing our experiences from the bank and creating a visual diary for us to look back on in years to come.

April-June 2013

Between Lewis and Paul and me, we tried to make sure at least one of us had a session every week. The plan was to try and learn as much about the water in terms of features and



(Top) Lewis with his first Farlows carp – 2013.

(Below) Jon with The Pretty One at 42lb 4oz.

lake contours. In all honesty it did not go to plan, as most of the time we would all end up fishing around the same areas due to signs of fish. This was the first thing we picked up on, how easy the fish were to locate. Normally when you first start fishing a

new venue, it takes a few trips to get your head around it. That was not the case for us, as on most of our trips we would find signs of fish along swims on the motorway bank and ended up not even thinking about the rest of the lake, due to so many fish holding



up in these areas.

Results started to come from the off, and I had caught around 15 fish from the three sessions I had done. Lewis had caught even more than that, and Paul had only managed a night, but had caught three or four. We were all getting our results using the same tactics, which were tight baiting around the reeds with Carp Company Icelandic Red boilies and sweetcorn. In terms of rigs a few fish had come on chod rigs, but most on bottom baits tipped with corn and snowman rigs. I'm not going to bore you with how you tie the rigs, as there are a lot of magazines out there that give you this information already.

On my next overnighter I got to the lake about 4pm, and after a quick lap of the motorway bank and road bank, I decided to fish a swim called the End of the Arm. I put the rods out. I put one down the left margin and the other two out to an island with a couple of Spombs over the top of each. The three rods felt like they were sitting in a nice clean silt area. It was dead with not a beep before bed. At around 11.30pm, I was woken by a screaming take, and while I was playing it, the other rod screamed into life too. I put the other rod on the floor while I quickly landed the first and then played the second one in. They were both low doubles, but I'm not one for being disappointed at any fish. Once I did the photos and returned the fish, I cast both rods out to the spot again and climbed into my sleeping bag. No sooner than I had done the zip up than one of the rods was away again. The fish had really moved in, and from then until the next morning I had around 15 takes. Most of the night just sat on my bed-chair knowing it would go again. All the action stopped around 7.30am.

I was shattered, and I managed to get some sleep for a few hours, but then my phone went off with a Facebook message saying, "Hi, mate. You were a busy boy last night! I saw your



camera flash loads. How many did you have?" It was from one of the bailiffs who I had met and who seemed like a nice fella. He was fishing opposite me. I told him 15 and asked if he had caught, but he hadn't yet. Later that day just as I was about to pack up and get off to work, I saw him walking up and down the far bank. He did it for about 20 minutes, and then I saw him going through his things like he had lost something. He started walking up and down the bank again, and I remember thinking, is this guy off his nut? A bit later I saw him cast out a little rod on the surface, and within minutes he was playing a fish. The fight seemed to last a fairly long time, and just as he was about to

land the carp, the lake owners and head bailiff were walking past and stopped behind him. They all helped him with his photos, and then he returned the fish. After I packed up, I drove around to him to say goodbye and see what he had had. He had a massive smile on his face and told me he had the Pretty One at 42lb 4oz, and that it was also a new lake record. I congratulated him and asked, "Did you find what you were looking for earlier?" He laughed and replied, "I saw a big fish swimming up and down the swim, but I had no surface baits. After looking through all my stuff three or four times I managed to find a fake tiger nut and cast it in her path, and she took it first time." After



(Top) Lewis with his first upper twenty – 2013.

(Right) My first ever Farlows carp at 24lbs.

BIG CARP TOP TEN

Carp Fisheries



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talking a little more I went off to work.

A week or so later I popped up for a look around the lake on a lunch break and saw a large group of carp spawning in and around the reeds on the motorway bank. Straight away this told me why the fish had been holding in the area, as they were obviously visiting and grouping up in readiness for spawning.

A couple of weeks later Lewis, Paul and I planned a night together. When we got to the lake the area we had been fishing just did not look the same, and there were not many signs of carp at all, so we started to walk the rest of the lake. We arrived at the factory bank, and it was empty. It would easily take all three of us and give us a good amount of water too. We must have seen three or four fish show and looked at each other like, yes, this is the place for tonight. Having not fished the area before, we found a couple of gravel bar areas at really short distances, so each of us set our rods out for the evening and baited up. Lewis had a few carp within the first hour, but for most of the night it was uneventful even with good signs of fish in the area. Between the hours of 5am-10am it all kicked off on the rods, and at one point we were all playing fish at the same time. I just remember having a brace photo together and thinking what an array of fish. I had a common of around 20lb, Lewis had a chunky mirror of 22lb and Paul had this old warrior of a plated mirror of around 24lb. We were all happy and had around ten or so fish between us up to 24lb. The triple take was one of first great memories from Farlows, and Paul's plated mirror just highlighted even more so why we were so excited about fishing the venue.

At this point we produced our first Farlows video.

July-August 2013

We continued to manage to get an overnighter in between us each week, and we started to really get around different areas and build an idea of the different contours in the swims. Every time we had a result in an area our confidence in fishing there grew. Results were still going well, even with us fishing new swims, and this was always down to two things... One was walking the lake and finding the fish to set up on, and

two, because most of our sessions were in the week and there were always a good number of free swims to pick from, as it was never really busy. In this time, we all had a decent amount of fish between us and continued to be consistent, but Lewis and Paul 100% outshone me in terms of fish size. Lewis had managed his first two upper 20s from the water, one being a mint common of around 26lbs and the other a fin perfect linear at 27lb 10oz.

Paul had managed one of the named fish in the lake, Crinkle Tail at 28lb 8oz. We had not really been thinking about the size of the fish we were catching, as I guess we had not yet managed any of the bigger ones until this point. There was a little bit of friendly banter and competitiveness starting to show and talk of catching our first Farlows 30. At this point we produced our second Farlows video, and we were starting to receive great feedback from many of our subscribers and Farlows Lake social media pages.

September-October 2013

September kicked off with Lewis and Paul adding a few more fish to their names, with a couple of upper 20s each too. As for me, I had two blanks in a row. On our next trip I was more of a spectator, watching Lewis

have a great session. We both went to the lake after work at around 4pm, and we managed to set up in a very popular swim called Scott's Island. We could not believe how many fish were out in front of the swim. He was on a little run at the moment, as in his last three sessions he had managed an upper 20 from each one. Within an hour of casting out he had a small mirror off the surface, and not long after that, one of his bottom rods screamed off. I just remember seeing the fish turn, and I could see how wide it was. We both looked at each other, and Lewis said that the fish looked decent too. The fight felt like it went on forever, with the fish turning three or four times before I managed to net her. Lewis set up the scales, and then I brought the fish over. We knew it was the biggest he had had from Farlows, but was it a 30? The scales swung around to 30lb 8oz, which was a new PB common for Lewis too. We were buzzing. Lewis went on to have another three, which brought his total to five for the session. This session will always stay in my mind for two reasons... One, our first 30 from the venue, and two, the variety of fish he had including a 30 common, a mirror, a linear, a fully scaled and a plated. I had blanked, but it did not feel like a blank. It's hard to explain, but because of fishing with each other most of our lives, I get a



One of the few Italians still in Farlows at 23lbs.

buzz from Lewis catching just as much as me... well, for now anyway.

Around a week or so later, I managed to get out myself for a day session and really did not expect what was about to happen. I walked around and saw a few fish topping out in front of Scott's again. The angler in that swim was starting to pack up, so I went around and asked how he had got on. I think he had two fish over two days and said that they had been topping like that for the last few days, but he had struggled to catch. Once he had gone, I got the rods out, and the spot was showing fish. As quickly as possible I put one rod on a zig and the other two on the bottom. Five hours passed without a beep or a touch. I had also been changing the depth on the zig regularly to try and see if I could maybe find the level the fish were holding in, due to the other guy having all the rods on the bottom with not much luck.

Another hour passed, and the fish continued to show well over my rods, but without any action I was thinking of pulling a rod off of them and fishing short for some reason. I had talked myself into saying that they were not interested out there, so I did just that and moved one of the bottom rods twenty yards shorter and put twenty matching OPM bottom baits around it. Fifteen minutes later I had a bream sort of bite and hit into the rod, 100%



(Above) Paul with an old plated Farlows warrior.

(Bottom) Paul with Crinkle Tail.

expecting it to be one. At first it felt that way too, but once the fish got into the margin it just plodded up and down, at which point I knew it was a carp. The first time I actually saw the fish pop its head, I dragged it into the net first go, and it was a fairly tame fight. When I looked in the net I could not believe my eyes. Lying there was one of the best commons I had ever seen. I did not even think about its size, but on getting the net out of the water I knew it was a good fish and my largest from Farlows. I unhooked it and quickly put the fish in the retainer and back in the water. At Farlows if you have a 30, it's one of their

rules to report it to the shop in opening hours, so I did. I also called Lewis. By luck he was only five minutes away and said he would come and take the photos and video. Both Lewis and the bailiff arrived at the same time and did the honours of weighing her. She pushed the scales around to 32lb, making her a new PB common for me by a few ounces. I went on to do the photos and still could not believe how nice she was. 100% the best looking fish I had





caught to date in my opinion. I think at this point the word 'woodcarving' definitely fitted her description.

The rest of the day I did not have a touch, but I can honestly say that my effort had slowed right down, as once I had my PB I sat there for the rest of the day smiling to my myself. I then packed up and went out for a meal

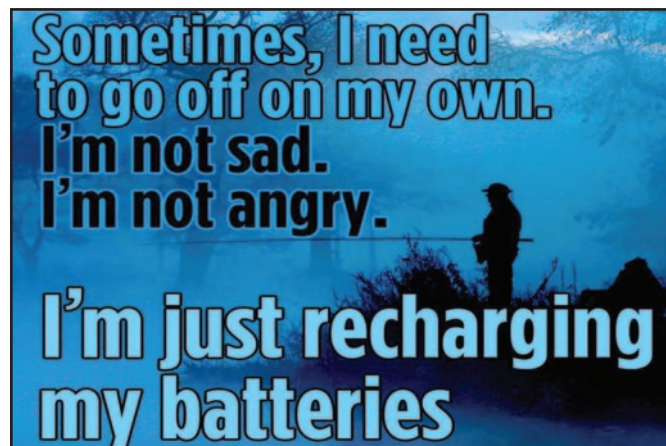
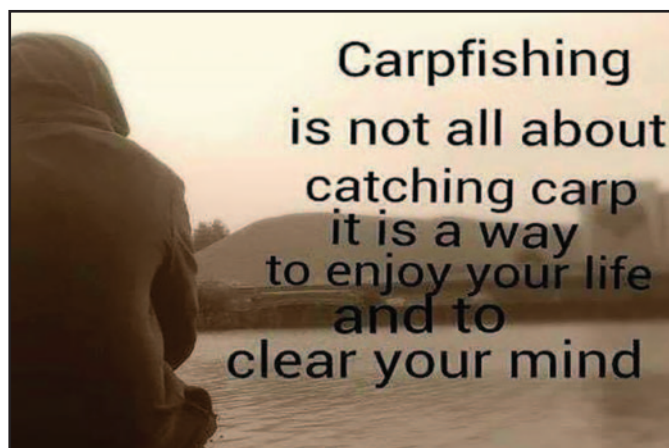
with my missus and my son to celebrate. We did a few more sessions over 2013, but we also started doing a little bit of pike fishing too. I managed a new PB of 20lb 8oz, and I also wanted to have a little go on Lake 2 of the complex.

By the end of 2013 we had made a few good friends on the lake. The

standout two would be Jon Baker, the guy who banked the Pretty One opposite me earlier in the year and who I thought was a nut-job. Well, I can confirm he is a nut-job! Every time we fished in the summer, we would see him doing a few pics of the lake and never really fishing. He also ended up being a good laugh and very much like us guys in terms of how we fish and the enjoyment we get from it. The other standout would be one of the owners of Farlows, Ed McDermott. Over the course of 2013, he watched and talked with us about our videos and gave us lots of positive and productive feedback. We had been doing videos since 2010, and this was the first time that a lake owner had shown any interest and actually complimented us on our effort. By the end of the year, Lewis and I had both been asked to join the bailiff team and had done a few videos for the Farlows YouTube channel too.

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Beneath the Flight Path

Part two by Keith Jenkins



Pete with the classic brace shot of Mary and Mary's Mate.

Unlike Horton, the history of Wraysbury stretches back many decades before the launch of Big Carp, and most of it, up until that point, had been shrouded in mystery. Apart from an interview with Pete Springate by Tim Paisley for the Carp Society magazine in the mid-80s, very little was published about the lake, its carp and the anglers who hunted them. But, just a couple of months after the Big Carp launch, Pete Springate caught a carp that just couldn't be kept quiet about.

On July 4th, 1991, Pete Springate and Richard Skidmore were creeping along the banks of the Swimming Pool on Wraysbury 1. Their quarry was a small number of carp sunning themselves beneath the pads near that bank, and after failing to tempt one with a floater, Pete clambered onto an overhanging tree and presented a bait beneath the overhanging branches. His view impeded by the leaves and branches, Pete had to rely on Skid's commentary from the bank to keep him appraise of events below the surface. However, minutes later he needed no such commentary



as the float disappeared and the force of the take almost pulled him in.

The fight was protracted and precarious; eventually Skid had to wield the landing net from the bank, and Pete had to trust his friend like never before when he commanded Pete to 'Bite the line! Bite the line!' Bite, he did, and into the net slid one of the largest carp in the country – a 45lb mirror that would soon be forever known as Mary. Suddenly, the carp world was very aware of the mysterious Wraysbury denizens.

The previous decade had seen a few hardy, dedicated (some would say foolish) souls battling against all that Wraysbury had to throw at them, just for the chance of capturing the rarest of things – a Wraysbury carp. During that decade Pete and Kenny Hodder had been joined by Dave Cumpstone, Richard Skidmore and a couple of northern buddies, Robin Dix, Chris Ball and Jan Wencska, but very few other anglers had either the



(Top) Sir Pete, introducing Mary to the world.

(Left) Robin Dix with a mid-eighties capture of Three Scale.

gumption or the plain pig-headedness to last long on Wraysbury. It was not unusual for an angler to go a whole season without even a bite, let alone a carp to photograph, and it took a special kind of resilience to keep going back, week after week, in the hope that this time would be the time.

That resilience during the eighties had produced famous fish such as Mary's Mate, The Hoover, Olive, Three Scale, Mallins and Cluster. Of course, they had no such names back then, but they were 'regular' visitors to the bank and so became recognisable to Pete and his small band of madmen. Dave Cumpstone had captured a 28lb carp in 1987 and had taken a couple of terrible shots of it lying on the grass, but when it was caught four years later, Pete remembered the photo and so discovered the first ever capture of Mary.

Subsequent conversations with Dave Ball and Barry Meeuwissen over the photos revealed that she was one

of four fish that Barry had transferred into the lake in the mid-eighties, after a lake he was fishing was condemned to be drained. The other three fish were Mallins, Cluster and a fish that may have been the mystery 'Waddle', which would swim through many a Wraysbury angler's dreams and nightmares.

Pete's capture of Mary, and the subsequent buzz through the angling world, brought with it the kind of publicity that Pete and his cohorts had tried to avoid, and pretty soon the banks were rumbling to new foot-steps. The thing is, if you have never been to Wraysbury before, you have no idea how daunting it can seem, and pretty soon that rumble had died down to a faint whisper. True big carp hunters like Steve Allcott, Jon Holt and Johnnie Allen were used to the attrition of fishing big pits that held very few carp, and they settled down to wait, letting their limbs take root.

Even with this new influx of good anglers, Wraysbury was reluctant to

give up its prizes with any regularity, and usually if you hadn't caught a carp by the end of July, the chances were that you may as well pack up and return the following June. But then, that changed.

Dave Cumpstone (Compo) had been on the lake for a dozen fish and, as was his way, had fished for whatever came along, be it carp, tench, pike, roach or crow! He was wont to spend many, many weeks on the bank at a time, so to supplement one or two of the potatoes he kept in a 25lb sack beneath his bedchair, he could often be found dining on many of our feathered friends, and the odd pike! Anyway, this particular year he had set his stall out solely for carp – not as a culinary delight, but as a target for his angling skills – and with the aid of some good bait from his friends at Nutrabaits, he proved to be more successful than even he could have wished.

The season had begun with a capture that would, once again, rock the carp world, when Pete fished a tiny swim he had fashioned in the winter and took two carp in a matter of hours, but what carp. Mary at 47lb was followed by Mary's Mate at 37lb, and once again Wraysbury was on the lips of anglers across the land. PIC 3

Compo took heart from that and began to amass a pretty impressive catch list (in Wraysbury terms). A 22lb mirror (later to be known as Rosie) was followed by a real Wraysbury rarity – a 30lb common. The 34lb common was very distinctive because it had a bald patch, devoid of any scales, on one flank (sadly, that was enough to identify her corpse a few months later, when Pete and Richie found her in Bryant's Bay). A month later Compo was at it again, this time aided by Richard Skidmore as they heaved a ton of weed towards the bank, in amongst which was Compo's hook attached to what looked like a 40lb carp. It was Mary's Mate, and without the weed she was still very close to that mark, turning the scales round to 39lb 6oz.

Autumn had arrived in earnest and that would normally be the time that Compo would be upping sticks and looking for some moving water to fish during the colder months. But he had three Wraysbury fish to his name already, what was there to lose by fishing the big pit throughout the



Dave 'Compo' Cumpstone with a Wraysbury winter whacker – Mary at 50lb 8oz.



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winter? As it proved, there was nothing to lose at all. At the beginning of October he battled with a huge carp and eventually landed Mary at an enormous weight of 49lb 6oz. To show the significance of such a fish, a phone call from Compo to Richard Skidmore in Yorkshire had him contacting Bill Cottam, who had just returned from a trip to Scotland. They jumped in the car and drove straight down to the lake, arriving four hours later to witness and photograph the captor and his carp. But that wasn't the end of it for Compo.

At the beginning of a cold December he sat alone on the lake, watching the tufties diving over his bait. The following morning a bite to one rod proved to be anything but a bird and he was soon looking down at the stunning winter colours of another forty-pound Wraysbury carp in the shape of Mary's Mate. She weighed 40lb 3oz, Dave's third forty-pound carp (he'd caught Olive at 40lb a year or so earlier), and the exuberant Chris Ball was delighted to get to work late in order to do the photos for Dave.

But there's more! In the early hours of the following morning he had the battle of his life with a carp that would just not give up. After more time than he cares to remember, Compo eventually slipped the net under the obvious culprit. It was Mary again, but she obviously hadn't stopped feeding since his last capture, and now she was one of those rarest of things – a fifty-pound English carp. At 50lb 8oz she was the second largest carp ever to be landed in England.

Even though she went on to hold the British Record on two occasions, Wraysbury wasn't all about Mary, and any capture from there felt as if it was a British Record. In the years following Compo's successes, the lake saw the likes of Dave Lane, Phil Thompson, Darren 'Tetley' Ward and Del Poulter all pitting their wits against the lake and the carp. All bar Del caught Mary, but some of their other captures and encounters are just as memorable.

Phil had a fair degree of success on Wraysbury after he and Laney had trotted down the Welley Road from Horton in 1994. Within a few months Phil's close-in, margin approach had accounted for three or four of the lake's most sought after, but one cap-



Phil Thompson dubbed this unusual common 'Judy in Disguise'



Laney with a couple of odd'uns – and Sam!



**(Above) 'Mallins!' – I heard it in France without the need of a phone!
(Right) One that didn't fall off – the wonderful Cluster.**

ture that he loved was that of a common disguised as a mirror. He'd set up in the Rocky Barge, late in the year, and at midnight had been wrenched from his slumbers by a screaming take. The Rocky is a treacherous swim to fish, with a near vertical fifteen foot cliff between the edge of the bivvy and the water's edge, but Phil managed to scale it without incident. The fish was heavy, the fight was dour, and when he saw the scales in the net he thought it was just a rare Wraybury common, but it was more than that. Whether it was spawnbound, or had dropsy, was difficult to say. All you could say was that it didn't like your normal common carp shape. It weighed 31lb, another rare thirty-pound Wraybury common, but Phil thought it was a mirror in disguise, so was delighted to dub it Judy in Disguise. It went back, fit and healthy, but was never caught again.

Laney had a myriad of weird and wonderful encounters on Wraybury, both above and below the water, most of which are detailed in his wonderful 'Obsession with Carp'. Typical of Dave, it wasn't necessarily the regular visitors to the bank that he

craved, but the misfits; the rarely caught little gems whose weight was less significant than their actual appearance on the bank. He called them the 'Odd'uns'.

One such that haunted him was The Pug. He and Phil had called it the bodyguard because it seemed to look out for the two or three other carp that used to hand out together. Many

was the occasion when a perfectly placed rig was about to disappear into the mouth of a rarely caught 'Odd'un', when the Pug would charge forward and spook the offender, and all the carp would leave the area in a cloud of leaves and bait.

But one day, Dave thought he'd done it – fooled the Pug. He'd set a cunning trap down in Sunnymead's Corner, having lowered his bait onto a clear spot from an overhanging tree. He'd watched the Pug slowly mooching along the margin, confidently picking up the odd free bait, and he knew that his chance was about to come. Bubbles appeared exactly where Dave's rig was then the line ripped from the spool and Dave was onto the rod in a flash. Strike, bend, snap!

The line had parted and left Laney on his arse in the grass. On closer inspection he could see that the line was frayed and damaged from previous encounters. But for the respooling of his reels he would have surely been cradling his prize in his arms. Instead he sat there, punishing himself like a latter-day Dobby.

A year later he was standing in a windswept Bryant's Point, staring out into the blackness. The previous day he'd landed both Three Scale and Measles, two fish right at the top of his wanted list, and the party that followed had left him just a little 'tired'.





Now, however, he was wide awake as the unseen protagonist on the end of the line battled away in the darkness. After what seemed an eternity he saw a tail splash over in the margins, and soon the fish was in the net. It was the Pug, and Laney howled with joy. After all those close, eyeball-to-eyeball encounters, he landed the fish from the middle of a storm-tossed inland sea. Sometimes, your luck's just in.

Chilly and I moved onto Wraysbury in the spring of 1997, a year or so after Terry Hearn had caught Mary at a record weight of 55lb 8oz. Chilly's first capture from there came whilst I was on holiday in France, and I barely needed a phone to hear him scream 'Mallins!' A month or so later, a similar scream was travelling the other way down the phone line as I let him know of my capture of Cluster. Things went downhill a bit for us after that,



Cockle and Mary, and not for the first time.

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Two of angling's true gentlemen – Steve Allcott and Jon Holt.

and by the end of the summer, of the eight further carp we'd hooked, Chilly's capture of Rosie was all we had to show for it.

We'd hooked ten carp and landed three. In their first season, Phil and Laney hooked the same amount... and landed all of them! Just shows how rubbish we were, I suppose.

To be honest, their run of success went very much against the grain on Wraysbury, and although they would continue to catch well from there,

both Phil and Dave would feel the pang of loss over the next few seasons.

The mid-nineties saw some fine anglers treading Wraysbury's banks in search of myths and legends, and amongst them were two of the nicest, finest and most humble carp anglers you could wish to meet – Steve Allcott and John Holt. Both had seen their fair share of large carp slide into their respective landing nets on some very difficult waters, but Wraysbury

was on another level. That said, they had the experience and patience to bide their time and, eventually they began to reap the rewards.

Steve landed some classic carp from the lake, including Mary's Mate and Cluster, and amongst John's collection of fine Wraysbury carp was he who would certainly be king – King Fungus. But the one fish that eluded both of them was Mary. By the autumn of 1998 she had grown to record proportions when Kev Cummings caught her at 56lb 6oz. That was her heaviest weight, but for the next three years she didn't drop much below that on her dozen trips to the weigh sling.

On a few occasions Steve's carefully planned holidays would coincide with her capture, but normally just an hour or so before his arrival! Still he persevered until, eventually, he held her in his arms, but it was the cruellest of ironies. In August 2001, he and John Holt spied what looked like a carp floating in a windward margin and, sure enough, there was the body of a recently dead carp, and a big one at that.

It was Mary, and her more than decade-long reign as Queen of Wraysbury was over, but she had brought joy to many people's hearts, both those who caught her and those who witnessed her on the bank. She was landed 33 times by 22 different captors. Interestingly there have been 24 men who have orbited the Moon, two more than those that have held Mary in their arms.

The new Millennium brought new life to Wraysbury, both in the lake and on the banks, and a new band of anglers came to fish for a new stock of carp. Some of the old originals still remained, but time was taking its toll, and soon the likes of Cluster, Mary's Mate and the Hoover shared Mary's fate. But the new stock of fish introduced by Simon Scott were of high quality, and whilst the carp world turned its attention further south to the home of England's first sixty-pound carp, Wraysbury quietly went about repairing and renewing. King Fungus was now top of the pile and homing in on that fifty-pound throne vacated by Mary, but the new stock were also thriving in the rich, open expanses, and soon new thirty-pound carp were being introduced to the delights of large landing nets. Some of

these thirties were destined to add ten pounds or more to their weight, and the likes of Paw Print, No Name and Little Lin were soon being revered and cosseted.

But now another change was about to herald a new era for Wraysbury. The owners of the lake, Cemex, had decided to sell off a number of their waters, amongst them the great Wraysbury, and rumours were rife that this could be the end of the lake and its inhabitants. Fortunately, some people had other ideas, and in 2013 Raf Khalili of RK Leisure became the proud owner of the lake.

His plans for the future of the complex didn't sit well with many of the old guard, but the only way that Raf could see of extending and securing the life of the lake and its carp was to make the whole venture financially viable. To that end, RK Leisure split the lake in two, creating the North Lake as a standalone day ticket fishery of 40 acres, and restocking it with a few hundred high quality carp to add to the existing stock. Three years further on, the North Lake is a successful and popular fishery with a number of thirty and forty-pound carp. It is not the Wraysbury of old, but then, nor is Redmire, but people still want to fish on that most hallowed lake, and the same is true of Wraysbury.

In my opinion, people who had the balls to actually walk the banks and cast into its windswept waters have every right to feel aggrieved about the turn of events, but, to be honest, not many of them do. Most have moved on to other challenges and will look back on their time on Wraysbury with happiness. However, for the hundreds of people who have never even walked the banks, let alone cast out into it, yet feel they have an unalienable right to air their anger and displeasure at the Wraysbury of today, I would say this: 'Where were you when the chance came?' In the last season before Cemex sold it, just 17 season tickets were sold for the lake (and they were less than £200 each). People travelled from all over the country to fish the lake, so distance is not a problem if you feel that strongly about the water. Redmire was different... that really was a closed shop to most of us, but there were at least 50 tickets available each season for Wraysbury, and, as far as I'm aware,

they were never sold out. So I think it's a case of, if you didn't put up, then shut up.

It will never be the Wraysbury of old, but the memories remain, as do

the stories, and whilst people like Dave Lane, Phil Thompson, Pete Springate and Ian Chillcott continue to retell those stories, those memories will never fade ■



Simon Scott with a new stock carp – Paw Print at mid-doubles.



And a decade later Tom Anderson with the same fish at 40lb!



Twenty-Five Years Behind The Counter

Part Two – The Tackle Box, Dartford by Lee Jackson

As you will be aware if you read part one, The Tackle Box was born, bred and raised in the little village of Sutton-at-Hone in the Darent Valley and very close to some historic carp waters such as DDAPS and Leisure Sports Sutton-at-Hone fisheries, the Darent complex, Horton Kirby and the very famous Brooklands Lake, Dartford, or if you're fortunate enough to have read Jack Hilton's Quest for Carp book, Goodwood Lake, as it was named by Jack and his friends. This was the dilemma that Kevin and Gary were faced with. Part of the reason that The Tackle Box had grown and thrived was because of its proximity to these famous lakes, therefore the proximity of a new bigger premises really had to tick all the boxes in order for the business to grow and become a more professionally run setup. From a personal stress point of view also, a bigger premises was urgently needed, because although we now we had extra staff in the shape of Roy Wheeler and Dave Buckley. It was often difficult to cope in the little shop, as we were always in each other's way and treading on each other's toes. We had reached bursting point in other words; if we didn't change then nothing would change. We had to grow at a similar fast pace to how the popularity of carp fishing was growing, as well as how fast the carp fishing tackle manufacturers were growing.

Eventually the perfect premises were found, a former Suzuki car deal-



ership in Watling Street, Dartford, although it wouldn't be a quick and easy job of moving in straight away. Lots of building work would have to be undertaken first in order to convert it from a premises that sells and repairs cars to a premises that sells carp fishing tackle and repairs a few reels. That last statement shouldn't be taken lightly however, as over the next few years our spares, repairs and servicing department grew to the extent of being perhaps the most respected and reputable workshop in the game. If our boys couldn't fix it then nobody could!

The location of the new premises was nigh on perfect. Although not quite as close to the local lakes as the Sutton-at-Hone shop was, in most respects it was better situated. It was close to the M25 and M20 motorways, close to the main A2 London to Dover

road, not too far from Dartford railway station, with a bus stop right outside the front of the shop, near to the Dartford Crossing and just down the road from the Bluewater shopping complex – perfect! The wives and girlfriends could drop their man off at the shop and then go off shopping for yet another pair of shoes or a handbag.

I've got to say at this point that I've got total respect for Gary, Kevin and their partners for having the courage to go ahead with this bold move because although it is very easy to write about a move to a bigger premises in a few simple words, I know that it wasn't without quite a lot of financial worry that they made their decision. Not only was the initial cost of the bigger property and the building work that needed to be undertaken a worry, there were shop fixtures and fittings etc that needed



Tackle Box 2016.



financing, and the fact that we were moving into a bigger premises meant that quite a few extra staff would need to be taken on as well. In a nutshell, quite a few bob would need to be taken by the business each day even before the front door was opened every morning. Oh sorry – I got it all wrong, all you have to do to run a successful fishing tackle business is to sell all the tackle at a discounted price and stand around and

drink coffee, smoke fags and talk about carp fishing all day long... Dream on, and see you down the Job Centre!

Because the catalogue was now a major contributory factor of our business, although always quite difficult, stressful and long winded to compile, rather than put Kevin and Gary under additional stress, I volunteered to do the lot so that they could concentrate on the purchase of the new property.

I must admit, although a bit stressful, I actually enjoyed doing the catalogue, but how things have changed. It wasn't done on a computer; everything was drawn up on paper, and the only computer-like jargon used was cut and paste, which meant cutting out bits of paper and sticking them onto a page with a Pritt Stick! Whatever, most of my workdays for the next few months were spent in the workshop out the back of the shop, smoking fags for England whilst trying my best to compile yet another bible. Looking back at that catalogue, catalogues before it and catalogues for a while after it and comparing them to more recent catalogues, I can't help thinking how much better they were and better they looked back then. Back then there wasn't anything like the amount or choice of carp tackle and bait that there is now, and that has evolved in recent years. Therefore, all the products were given plenty of space and with nice big pictures. Nowadays the amount of carp tackle and bait has quadrupled from what was available back then, and because the amount of catalogue pages hasn't altered by much, we now struggle to fit it all in, and it's very stressful trying to do so.

The last couple of months in the old

(Top left) Tackle Box Christmas 'Fish-in'.

(Below) BCAC Team winners.



The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

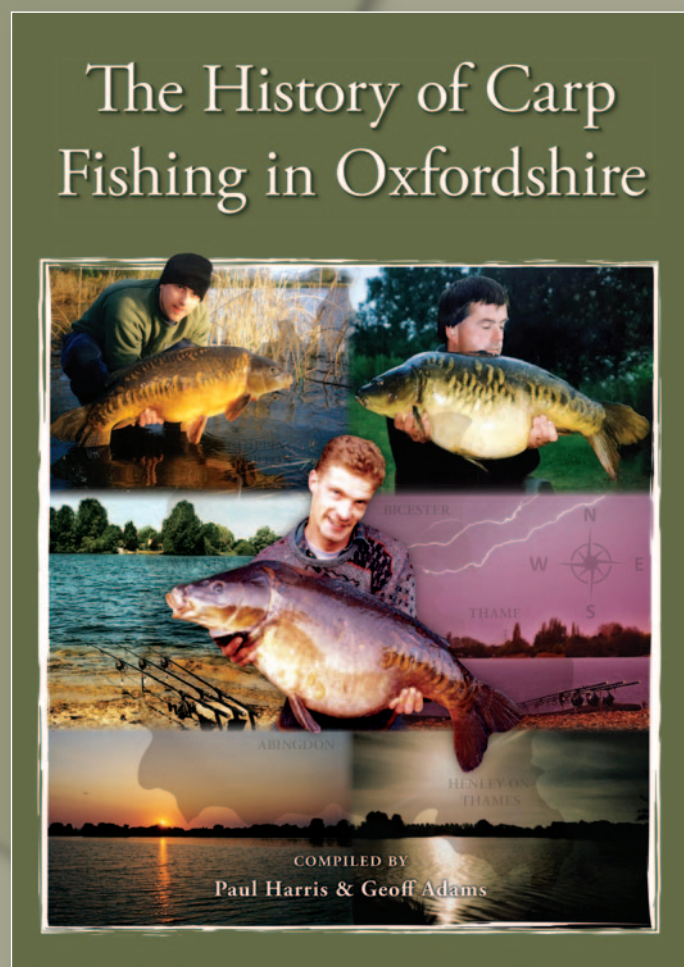
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing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

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

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

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

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



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



BCAC winners.

shop didn't go without the odd incident, one of which in particular needs a mention. As well as the front door to the shop, although not normally used by customers, there was also a back door. Well there we all were, business as usual in the shop, when a blue Transit van pulled up round the back and two rather large travelling boys came through the back entrance. "Anyone want to buy a new video player or TV, boys? 100 quid each?" Gullible or what? All I could think was that I could do with a video recorder for one of my daughter's bedroom. Roy and I went out the back to peruse the goods, and very impressive it all looked as well, all wrapped-up in tight cling film polythene with a Discovery Channel leaflet on the top of every item. Quick to spot a bargain, and without having our brains in gear, Roy handed over his 100 quid as quickly as he could and bought a Sony video recorder, and I did likewise, buying a Panasonic. On reflection I should've smelled a rat straight away, because the travelling boys were quite keen to get away quickly, judging by the speed the Transit accelerated off down the road! Well you've probably guessed the rest.

When we got back into the shop, Roy held his video recorder up to the light, and with steam coming out of his ears exclaimed, "Jacko! Mine's got no guts in it!" I tried to make out that mine was OK, although deep down I knew that mine wouldn't work either

when I got it home. Roy was absolutely fuming to the extent that he started to ring the police until somebody asked him how he was going to explain that the stolen goods he had just bought were faulty. Funny thing is, I went down to Conningbrook a couple of days later and bumped into Paul Forward and his then wife Jane and told them about the video incident. Whilst relaying the story to them I couldn't help noticing that Paul's face was going redder and redder with a sort of embarrassed look to it. Then Jane exclaimed, "That must've been the same people that sold you that video camera last week, Paul! They were in a blue Transit weren't they?" Now a very embarrassed Paul had to swallow his pride and own up, and it appears he was even more gullible than Roy and me because they followed him to the cash point so that he could draw the money out to give to them!

With yet another catalogue finished, the building purchase secured, work and alterations completed, we were all ready for the big move, although if my memory serves me right it was June time, a time of year that's extremely busy in the fishing tackle trade, therefore things had to be done a bit lively so that we didn't lose too much business. With all hands on deck and with a few extra bodies to help, we completed the move in a couple of days (and nights). I actually found the whole process

quite exciting, filling up an empty shell from scratch and with plenty of room for everything to go – a world of difference from what it was like in the old shop. It was really surprising though how much stock we had at the old shop and unbelievable how it all fitted in there, because once the new shelving and peg boards were filled we were still struggling a little bit to fit some stuff in to our liking. This aspect has always been an ongoing thing though, and even today we are still making little, and sometimes big, alterations, and no doubt will continue to do so.





On the downside and being honest, one thing that was a little sad about moving into the new shop was that the old atmosphere went. There were no more Darenth Fat Boy or Sutton Elite gatherings, no more June 15th parties... a lot of the fun went out of it in other words, which was inevitable I suppose, as The Tackle Box had now become a big business that needed to take a much more professional approach.

Over the next few months the business flourished and more staff were taken on as a result, and although a lot of the old regulars that missed the old shop atmosphere stayed away for a little while, they all slowly crept back and were welcomed. At the end of the day, although we were now in a different environment, we were all still carp anglers that enjoyed a bit of fun along the way.

The mail order side of the business was probably the aspect of the business that had grown most in professionalism. We now had our own computerised mail room, manned by a team of predominantly women, and customer details other than card details were now properly stored on a database in order for further orders to be dealt with quicker and more efficiently. Not a lot differently to nowadays however, the entire infrastructure of the business was and still is run on teamwork, shop floor staff to ensure that sufficient stock was ordered, as well as to serve shop customers, answer telephones, take

phone mail orders and pick the orders to go in the mail room, a mail room to enter the customer details, pack the orders, generate invoices and delivery labels and ensure that the orders were posted out as quickly as possible and by the most efficient means, and goods-in staff to deal with taking in, unpacking and putting away deliveries. Couple this with a website to maintain, new stock items to be researched, a catalogue to compile and produce photographs for, reels and other items taken in for servicing and repairs, rods to be built, it's a miracle that we found any time to go fishing ourselves, but we did.

Practically all the shop staff apart from the mailroom girls are proficient and knowledgeable carp anglers, something that was always felt to be important so that everyone had an understanding of the tackle being sold so that they could practice what they preached. It perhaps goes unnoticed, but when you venture down to the end of the shop, the smell of carp often hits you, because one of the shop staff has his weigh sling and landing net hanging up to dry following a successful overnight session before work.

Probably one of my best memories is when we entered the British Carp Angling Championships in 2001 as individual pairs and as a team of three pairs for the team event – Team Tackle Box in other words. The pairs comprised Gary Peet and me, other shop staff Roy Wheeler and Dave Buckley, and regular shop customers Gary Harrow and Keith Pepper. For

anyone that doesn't know, although it's not a great deal of difference nowadays, in order to qualify for the final you have to first fish a qualifier and finish in the top three, and we all did – Gary Peet and me on Walthamstow No. 1, Roy and Dave on Chilham Mill and Gary Harrow and Keith on Tyram Hall. I vividly remember going up to Dovecote Lake on three occasions for a practise session, the first time coming away thinking that there weren't any carp in there, the second time going up with Roy and being wiped out by sturgeon, and the third time thankfully seeing carp in practically every swim and catching some of them in the process.

The finals were in September, and it was with a lot of pride that the six of us walked onto the battleground wearing our team clothing, which was bright red and bore the words Team Tackle Box, the Union Jack and a slogan of 'IT'S NOT THE WINNING, IT'S THE TAKING 'EM APART' on the back. When it came to the draw I don't think in reality anybody really knew where they wanted to go, as it appeared that there weren't any particularly favourite areas or swims. All that I hoped for was a swim with a bit of room and with as much water in front of us as possible to go at. And so it proved for Gary and me, and by the final morning of the match we were in the lead. The next few hours of the match were nerve wracking to say the least, and a massive sigh of relief and feeling of joy came over us when the final whistle went and the rest of our team came storming into the



If our boys can't fix it, it can't be fixed.

swim. For the next few minutes we all danced round like lunatics. Gary and I had won the overall thing, and collectively we'd won the team event as well. We may not have been the best carp anglers in the country, but for that moment in time we were British Champions, so we felt like we were. It was a very proud moment for all of us, and The Tackle Box too – we won, and we took 'em apart!

The years that we've been in the new shop haven't passed without a few mishaps. One in particular that springs to mind was when I opened up one morning and could hear the sound of running water. On turning the corner past the tills I immediately found myself splashing about in water, as all of the back part of the shop was flooded, and water was coming down the stairs like Niagara Falls. I've got to admit that I panicked because my immediate thought was that electricity and water don't particularly mix, therefore I feared going up in smoke. Rather than wade through the water anymore I thought the best thing to do was to walk the little way along the road to the fire station to see what they had to say about it. I was reassured when I was told that if there were a problem then I probably wouldn't have been standing there and telling him the tale! When I went back into the shop and went upstairs I was confronted with the source of the problem... Somebody (I wonder who, Kevin) had left the sink tap on in the kitchen, and it had been running for at least 12 hours. As a consequence of the accident we had to close the shop for the day and hire a few dehumidifiers to dry everything out. All I can say is that I'm glad it wasn't me that left the tap on otherwise I might not have been writing what I am now! Accidents happen though, and it was business as usual the following day.

One major boost to our business that happened a year or two after moving in was the birth of a new company, Free Spirit Fishing, and we played a major part in contributing to its success in its early days. Proprietor Simeon Bond was no stranger to our shop and had visited us a number of times when he then held a high up position with both Shimano UK and then Fox International (or maybe the other way round), and obviously rated our shop's opinions highly with



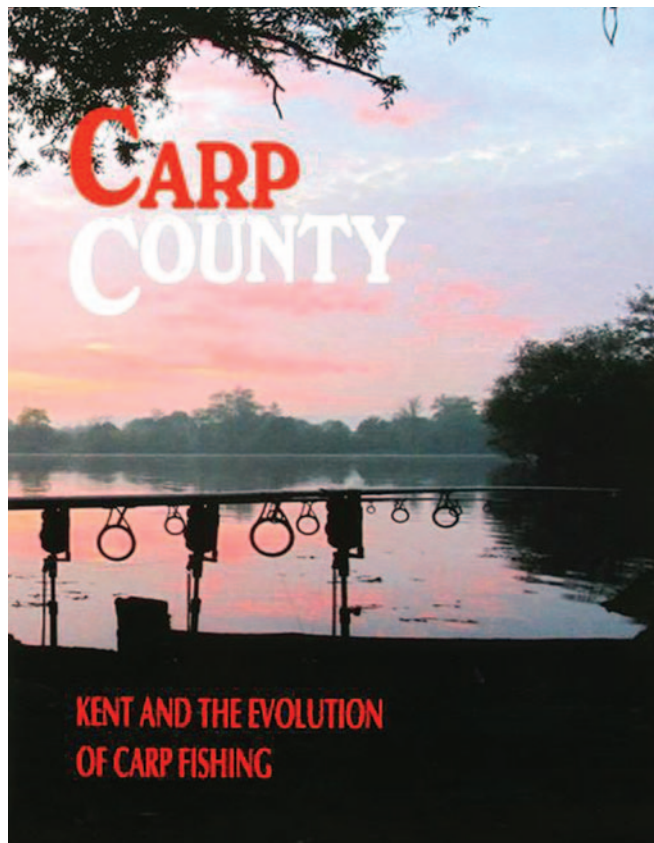
regards to carp rod design and development. And all very exciting it was too – an initial limited amount of reputable dealers, all singing from the same song sheet and all working together as a team. What was nice was working from scratch, no manipulating existing products or using existing blanks; every single rod in the range was designed from scratch with a lot of rejects making their way into the dustbin along the way.

Initially the range comprised the Spirit and Explorer Carp ranges, then as different blank materials evolved and were developed, the range grew to include low resin carbon models with matching 'Clone' reel seats, and the 'S' Range had arrived. In later years the higher modulus Hi-S Range was developed, and they are still the top of the range Free Spirit rods, building a reputation by those 'in the know' as perhaps being the best range of carp rods in the world. That said, and from my own personal point of view, although there are a few leg-

endary models in the Hi-S range, one of my own personal favourites is still the S Range 12ft 2.75lb ES; in fact I still have a set of these that are now 15 years old and still going strong.

Moving on to the current times, I sometimes look around the shop and feel a little bit overwhelmed at how much carp tackle and bait is now available. With bait in particular, new bait companies are popping up all the time, living the dream I suppose and thinking, believing and preaching that their baits are the best baits of all time. In reality, and this is based only on my own personal opinion, modern day baits, and I'm predominantly referring to boilies, are no more effective or nutritious than they were, say, 30 years ago, in fact less so in many cases, because back then most carp anglers made their own and often used more expensive and better quality base ingredients.

Think about it logically – a bait company produces readymade boilies and has to make a profit in order to



Book publishers, another string to our bow.

(Bottom) Who would have thought we would be catching carp on this.

stay in business when selling them to a shop, and the shop has to do likewise when selling to the customer, otherwise it's a pointless exercise unless done for egotistical reasons. For this reason I'm never surprised when a company such as Nash Baits bring out readymades that sell for £14.99 per kilo. It's not a case of them making more profit; it's a case of them using more expensive and perhaps better quality base ingredients, so fair play to them, methinks. People moan and whinge about the cost, but then go into the pub and tip four pints of beer down their neck, which is about the same sort of monetary value, and they think nothing of it. What also makes me smile is that, obviously brought about by customer demand, as well as readymade boilies, there now has to be pop-ups, wafers, pellets, a stick mix and a boilie dip to go with them.

And what about these washed-out coloured baits – what's that all about? The only logical reason I can see as to why this works is because the carp view them as having been in the

water for a long period, therefore diluted to an acceptable level compared to the original bait that was thrown in! I always think of it like this: if somebody who doesn't usually take sugar in their tea takes a sip of a cup of tea with sugar in it, their usual initial reaction is to spit it out, as they are repelled by it. I don't personally think it's a lot different in a fishing scenario, and the reason the carp take a few days to get on it is that it was too strong, therefore overkill in the first place. In my view the bait industry hasn't really moved

on a great deal at all over the past 25 years. The only advantage is that there is now so much more choice, which is good for the angler, albeit sometimes very confusing.

One area of bait that has really grown out of all proportion over recent years is the imitation/artificial baits. 25 years ago if somebody had told me that in years to come anglers would be using plastic hookbaits then I would've thought that they were stark raving mad. In the Tackle Box now we've got an entire six-foot by six-foot section of pegboard dedicated to plastic/rubber baits. Do anglers really think that carp go swimming round the lake bed thinking, oh look, that looks like a bit of sweetcorn, a tiger nut or a water snail, I'll eat that? Of course they don't. That said, if it gives an angler slightly more confidence that a bit of plastic looks like an item of foodstuff,

then it has served its purpose, so who am I to criticise?

Although I have just stated that the bait industry hasn't really progressed a great deal over the past 25 years in my opinion, the tackle side of things has improved in leaps and bounds. We can now easily cast 100 yards with 15lb breaking strain main line whereas 25 years ago we needed to scale down to a fine diameter 6lb breaking strain main line in order to achieve a similar distance. Bite alarms and similar items can usually be relied on not to let us down and break down in the middle of the night. All the tackle looks really nice on the bank, not that we catch any more carp because of this; it just makes it more pleasing and attractive to the eye. We now push or drive our gear to a swim as opposed to having to carry it on our back or over our shoulders. The beds we now sleep on are often more comfortable than what we sleep on indoors. Very rarely do we get wet or cold in the angling shelters that we now live under. Rarely in winter do we have to wait an absolute age for a kettle to boil. On lots of the lakes we fish there is no real need to cook food, as the local Indian, Chinese or kebab shop will deliver to the lake. We never have to spend hours and hours rolling our own bait if we don't want to. We've got mobile phones that can be charged on the bank so that we can keep in contact with the outside world or even locate fish with if they are jumping at the other end of the lake. We put the carp that we catch down on a nice padded bed opposed to laying them on the ground. And on some waters we get a bite about once every Pancake Day.

Would I like to go back 25 years? In truth I would; it was a lot more exciting and mysterious back then, plus I'd be 25 years younger. Gary, Kevin and I often jokingly say to each other, "How about opening up a little fishing tackle shop in Sutton-at-Hone? That might be a good idea!" ■



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The Highs and Lows

By Matt Hart (Urban Bait)

Personally I think it's hard to beat the buzz and anticipation of joining and learning a new water. Of course you can do your research with the Internet these days, but it never really paints a true picture, I find. I was fishing on the Wingham syndicate in Kent when I got the letter through the post that a ticket was being offered to me on the Essex Manor. This really appealed to me as it is more local, around 35 miles to the gate, from my home, and, well... the fish are total stunners! At around seven acres with estimations of around 90 fish you would be led to believe it could offer reasonably easy fishing, but how wrong could I be? I've fished some tricky waters over the years, but the pressure these fish have been put under over the past couple decades by some of the best in the business is immense! This is a farmer's irrigation reservoir, and the water levels can rise and fall as much as 10ft in a season. This is a deep pond, and I have personally found 30ft



depths, and most swims have a covering of silkweed on the lakebed, meaning finding spots is important.

So as you can imagine things started a bit slowly, and I was starting to notch up a few blank nights, which then led to me putting a bit of pressure on myself. Finally my first bite came from a swim called the Steps. It

was a hot sunny day, and I was fishing a zig in around 14ft of water quite close in, as they were going up and down the margins. The fight was an instant full-on close quarter affair, which resulted in the parting of my zig hook link. I was gutted... I was probably now just into double figures on nights, and my first bite was gone!



31lb 2oz mirror.

It took a few days to get over the feeling of loss, but I soon shook it off and was planning my next session. I now really needed a Manor fish under my belt! I turned up at the lake, and it was fairly busy with I think 11 out of the 14 swims taken, so I opted for the Steps again. There was a light easterly wind blowing into me, but it wasn't cold at all. Full of confidence, out went my rods, getting a nice drop, and a very light scattering of bait. A pattern was now starting to emerge... When I started on the Manor I was fishing over around 1kg per rod. This approach served me well on Wingham, but how different it seemed on the Manor. That session resulted in another disaster when I had a bite from what I'm presuming was a catfish, as the rod was bent double, and coupled with the fact the drag on my reel was snatching, it resulted in a snapped frayed hook-link!

Now I was fuming! What had I got to do to get a fish from this place? Luckily on my return the following

(Top) 21lb 12oz.
(Below) 31lb common.



week around midday, I managed to get in a swim called the One. I saw a couple of shows while walking around; this was a bit of a going swim and was rarely empty. Nothing much happened during the day, and come the evening I ordered a Chinese take-away and crashed about 11pm. At 5.30am the next morning my right hand rod was away, and after a reasonable scrap during which my knees

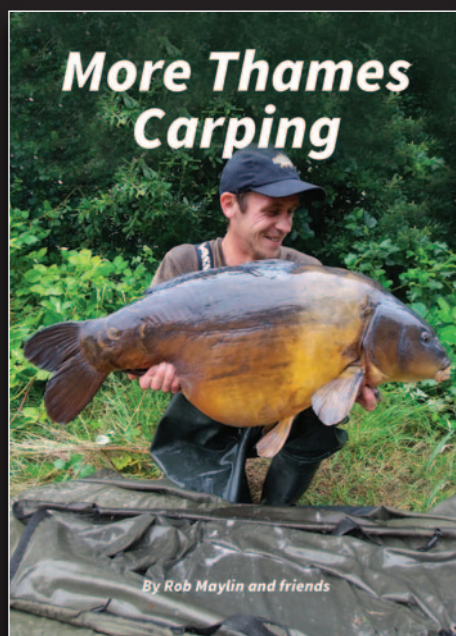
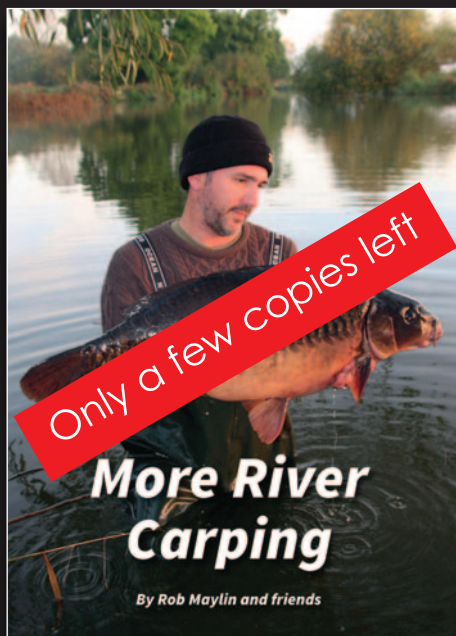
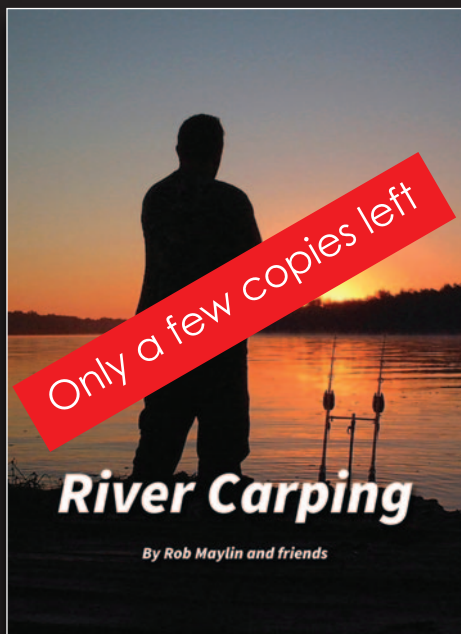
were like jelly, I banked my first Manor carp, a pretty scaly fish that went 22lb. I had no more carp that session, but did it matter? No! I had got off the mark!

A couple of blank sessions later I was back in the Steps, and I was fishing just to the right hand side of some sunken reeds in around 14ft of water. I had fish all over me, and they were showing every ten minutes or so. I



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35lb common.



41lb 2oz big plated, Kent day ticket.



41lb 3oz.

was fishing with probably only 20 or so baits, but I couldn't buy a bite. A good mate of mine, Eddie, who I had fished with on Wingham and who also managed a Manor ticket, turned up in my swim. "Matt, you've got them all over you!" "Tell me something I don't know..." The fish continued to bosh on my spot another cou-

ple times. "That's it!" I said! I had some sweetcorn in my bag and opened a tin. I literally put about 40 grains in my catapult, and with and a light flick they landed on my spot. I kid you not – probably only two minutes passed and the rod was away! After a good five-minute scrap I netted my second Manor fish a common

of 31lb-plus. I am still convinced that those few grains of corn got me that bite!

Over the next few sessions I managed four more fish, which were all upper twenties. My confidence was growing, but I wasn't getting into any of the bigger fish... I was definitely on pest control duty! So I set about tweaking a few things. I was convinced bigger fish were coming to baits on the bottom rather than pop-ups, so I started making my own cork ball wafers, which consisted of a 10mm cork ball wrapped in paste and meshed with ladies' tights. I did this because I needed to protect my hook-bait from the nuisance fish, of which there are literally tens of thousands. I boiled these for a minute, and the results seemed almost instant, and my very first session out resulted in a known fish called Bulldog, which tipped the scales at just over 33lbs – a right prehistoric looking carp that looked as old as the hills. I was chuffed to bits!

Autumn was well and truly setting in now, and the next 48-hour session down I fished a swim called the Flat. This is quite a deep area, but with lots



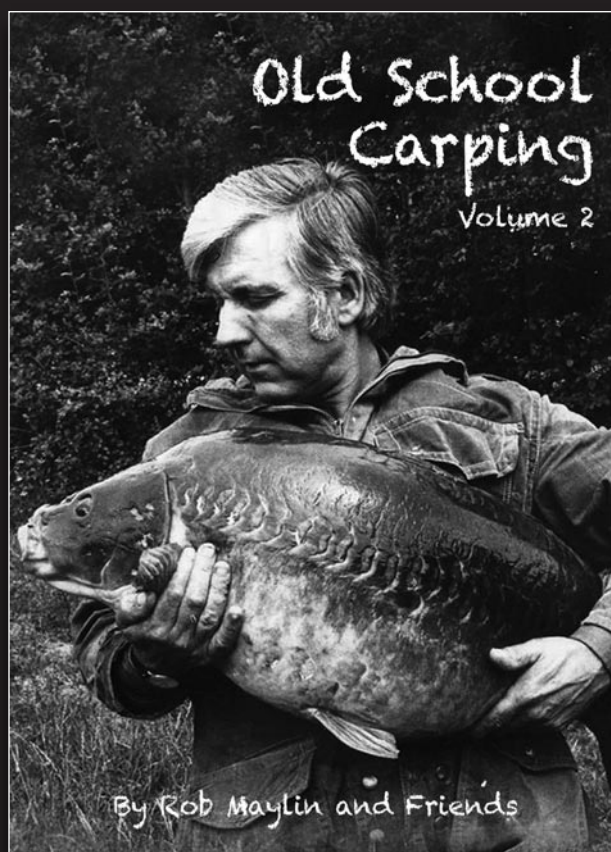
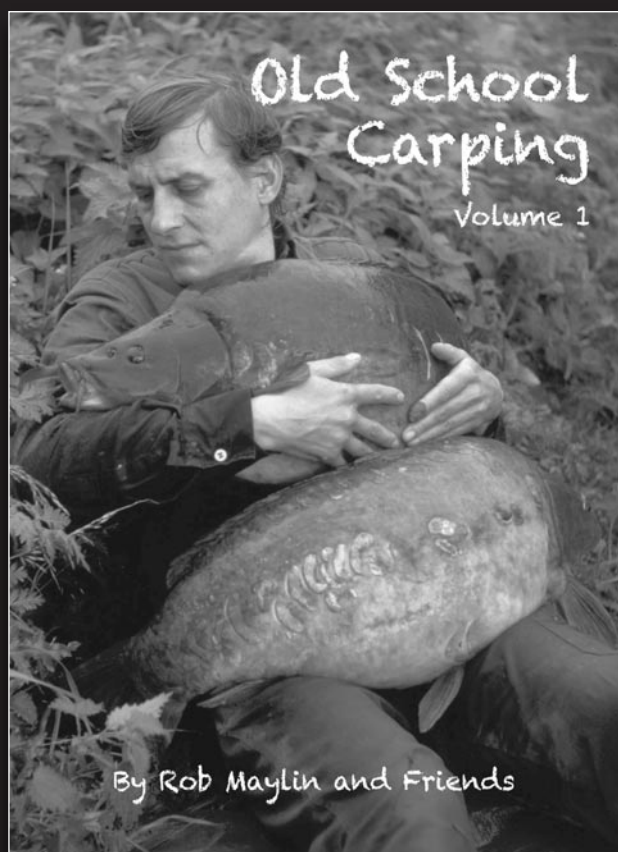


Bulldog at 33lb 1oz.



Clover at 42lb 8oz.

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of sunken reeds to both left and right of the swim that literally go out yards and yards underwater. This had served me well with one of the upper twenties I'd had recently, and also I had seen a couple show on my walk around the lake close to this area. It was a very good place to start, so I baited lightly again and fished on a clear spot 25 yards to my left tight to

some underwater reeds.

It was one of those afternoons when not much was happening. Then a fish rolled close to my spot, and now it had my full attention. Twenty minutes passed with nothing, when suddenly my left hand rod arched round, and I was in. I knew it felt a decent fish, as it was plodding about, and I was struggling to get it up in the

water away from all the reeds... then all of a sudden the fish locked up, and I thought that was going to be it! Also, just to make things better for me, the heavens opened and full-on torrential rain kicked in! I grabbed the net and waded up to my waist down the reeds. I got probably 20 yards down until I felt I was pretty much close to where the fish was. I then gave a heave and bent the rod, and inch-by-inch I could feel some bulk moving. Suddenly I made direct contact again, and it was off at a rate of knots into open water! "Now we are back in business," I said to myself.

After a few more minutes the fish was getting tired, and I was edging the fish back to the reed line but on the surface this time. Now came the next big problem – netting this huge carp wallowing around on the surface. There were reeds all around me, and the dead reeds wouldn't allow the sinking of the net! After what seemed like ages, but in reality was probably seconds, the brute went across the cord. She was mine! I bit the line above the tubing, broke the rod down and rolled the net up and



(Top) Day after Boxing Day, just under 30lb.

(Left) One of the upper twenties.



Hank at 40lb 8oz.



Heart-tail leather at 39lb 14oz.

waded back carefully through the reeds to the waiting unhooking mat where a couple of my mates, Dan and Drew, were now waiting in my swim in anticipation, trying to find out what the commotion was all about! "I've got a lump," I said. We weighed the fish, and she went 42lb 8oz – finally a Manor biggie!

I didn't know which fish it was, but after asking an old member she turned out to be Clover, a fish that maybe only makes one appearance a year. We took some shots, had a few pats on the back, and then we did a quick returner picture and slipped her back. I was now over the moon! Now things were falling into place.

After the success of landing a forty from the Manor, I didn't have the chance to do much more time in the couple weeks after that, as I had to go to my lake in France Etang de Berniere, to sort a few things ready for the opening. In the new year I did manage another trip back, pushing towards end of November, and slipped in a swim called the 18. It was a cold, clear night, the moon was huge in the sky and I managed to bank a really pretty scaly one that



went upper twenty during darkness. Winter was well and truly starting to set in now, and my mate Eddie suggested we did a few sessions on a day ticket water in Kent with a decent stocking of 30s with a chance of a 40. Most of these fish were big plated mirrors and real lookers, so I concentrated my efforts on there. Together we did something like 14 nights, and I ended up banking 12 fish in total, four being 30s. On our agreed last

session in February before coming back to the Manor, I landed one of the Kent biggies, which went 41lb 2oz, a big plated mirror and a real cracker! Happy days!

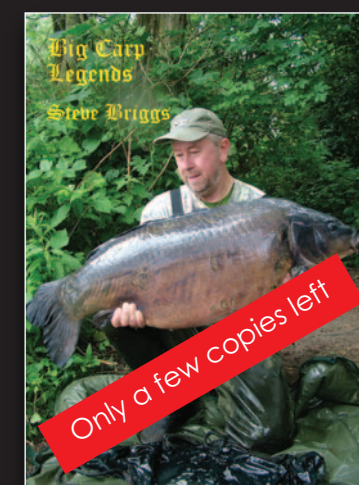
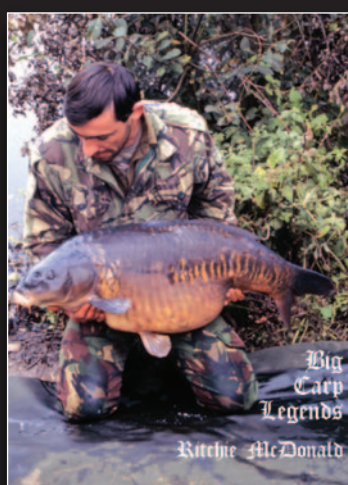
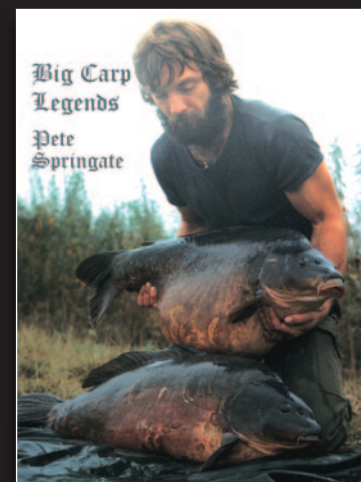
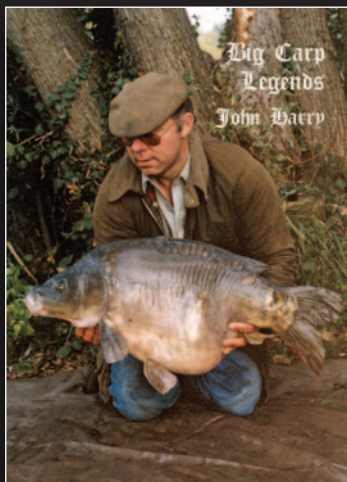
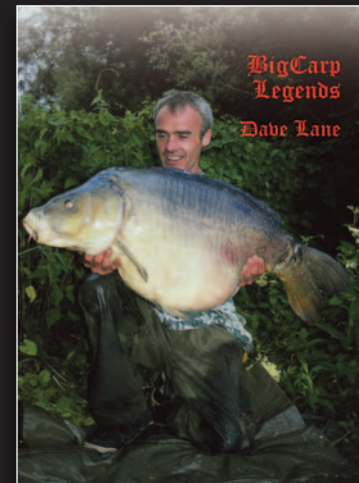
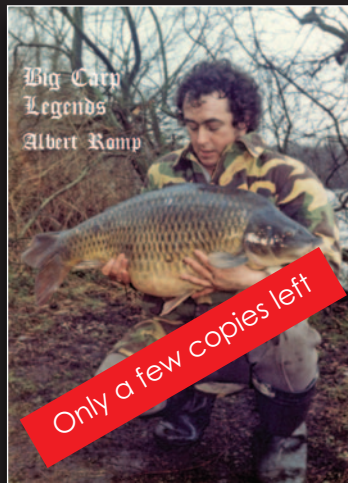
March was upon us and spring was here. I had been away from the Manor now for best part of three months apart from a 24-hour session that I did the day after Boxing Day when I tried one of my spots that had seen regular bait. To my amazement I did manage

(Top) Upper twenty.
(Below) Pretty Lin at 35lb 10oz.



BIG CARP LEGENDS SERIES

The anglers that shaped today's carp scene



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a belated Christmas present with a winter mirror of just under 30lbs! What a result!

Fishing on the Manor was still slow on my return in March, and I slipped in the Flat swim, which was starting to become one of my favourites. That session I managed a fish called the Pretty Linear, in my opinion one of the nicest looking fish in the lake. This went 35lb 10oz – I couldn't seem to put a foot wrong. I think I blanked my next session, which is easy to do on this water, but then the lake woke up, and boy did it wake up!

It was now the beginning of April, and the lake was alive! Fish were showing everywhere, and I had been trickling bait in some clear spots I had found at the end of the year. There was a crazy period of around two weeks when fish were getting caught for fun. They had properly woken up, and they were on the munch big time! Luckily I managed to be there right in the mix. The weights were good too, as they were feeding hard.

I baited an area in between the Flat and 18 swims with 12kg of boilie on leaving that last blank session. I was fishing slack lines, and the line lay is really important to me trying to get



them to feed and not notice the presence of my line. Anyway, that session I managed another at 41lb 12oz. This was turning into a crazy six months! I baited heavily upon leaving again and returned the next week. Someone was in the Flat swim where I'd had last week's capture. I think where I was having a few it wasn't going unnoticed! But I could still get to the spot from the swim next door, and within two hours I had another 40 on

the bank weighing in at 41lb 3oz. This was getting silly now, and I was on cloud nine! Just before packing up on that 48-hour session the rod bent round, and I was doing battle with another Manor lump. The fish came in without too many problems only to be one I wanted, the Heart Tail Leather, which went 39lb 14oz! Talk about everything going to plan!

I managed to get away quicker from work the following week. I think

(Top) View from 18.

(Below) Stella Essex Manor 44lb 10oz



it was four days after leaving before I managed to get in the 18, which wasn't my preferred swim of the two swims that we're doing it for me, but still great nonetheless. There was a westerly blowing into my face, and it was quite strong at one point; it nearly ripped my bivvy out of the ground!

I had to hold it down and then do some serious pegging with whatever banksticks I had spare. It amazes me that this side of the lake doesn't seem as popular. Clearly these reeds held resident fish. I could only put it down to the fact that it was much easier to lose them, and when the water level was higher at points it was tricky fishing!

As I was packing everything down thinking I had blanked on that trip, my left hand rod nearly ripped off my buzzer, and I was attached to one very angry carp. To date it has to be my hardest fight on there. This fish did me twice in the reeds, and I was praying to the carp gods to not let me lose her! Luckily a member was walking past when I was in full-on battle mode, and he slipped my waders on

and proceeded to walk 20 yards down to where the fish was adamant he was going deep in the marginal reeds. This spooked the fish out in to open water, and after a few more scary dives we netted her. I ended up breaking my Free Spirit net at the spreader block, but I didn't care – I had another unit, and that was just a casualty of war!

Getting the fish back on the bank to the unhooking mat revealed another much sought after Manor fish called Hank, which pulled the Reubens round to 40lb 8oz – another Manor 40! Now I'm ready for the A-team, and for me it was Stella or the Northern Liner. Where are you?

The following week I got back in the Flat for a 48-hour session, which I hadn't been in for a while, and I was buzzing to be back in there. I had really learnt this swim well, and I was almost at the point where I felt I couldn't blank even if I saw fish show elsewhere, which really went against my fishing principles. I knew that if I presented my baits well on my spots, fish would pass at some point. The fish were well spread, and I was con-

fident. I banked two fish that session: a mint 35lb common and a cracking 31lb 2oz mirror! I was on fire! After that I couldn't get back to the lake for what seemed like ages. I had started another business, and that seriously took my time up, coupled with another visit to France and competing in the Eric's Carp Angling Championship with a pal of mine in which we got to the semifinal. It had been weeks since I had been to the Manor. Then I had a trip booked up – nine of us hired a tricky lake in France in which I lost two fish early doors and ended up blanking along with another five of us. That's fishing though, and I was rusty.

When I did get back over at the end of August, the place had changed so much. The lake had risen probably 3ft or maybe more. I wasn't confident at all after my losses in France. I've noticed that for me personally it doesn't take much to fill me with confidence but equally a couple of losses and I'm down there bottom feeding and looking to the sky for guidance. Anyway, that trip was a disaster.

I lost one on a hook pull in open



Returning Stella.



water during the day, and then that same night at 11.30pm I was woken to a screaming take, and after a short fight it did me in the reeds. I got all the rig back, so at least there wasn't a fish snagged or towing line, which was a form of saving grace, but I had lost my last four bites. I was feeling low, even though I know that these things are sent to test you, and something good had to come out of this low period.

I have a saying in fishing: "It's hard to beat someone who never gives up" and my very understanding wife said, "You have to get back down there!" This time my good mate and business partner Jon McAllister had recently just started a new bait firm with Sean Leverett. Proper Carp Baits, so I jumped on board as a consultant. Armed with his new bait, Red Seal, I was there for another 48-hour session, and I banked a clean mirror of 29lb 14oz. It felt good, and the weight was irrelevant – a double would quite easily have done the job! Upon leaving I baited these spots with another 10kg to let them have a feed-up on the new bait.

Next trip down, and the lake was fishing hard. I think one fish had been out over the weekend to ten anglers. I even saw coots eating the bait I'd put out a few days before, so it was still

down there! It was late Monday when I arrived, knowing that the previous couple of weeks it had been doing night bites. I took full advantage of this, getting the rods out in the Flat just before dark. Overnight nothing had been out to the five anglers on the lake, but at around midday on the Tuesday a member in the One had two bites in quick succession. I reeled in and walked round to see what he had caught. He'd had a lovely stockie of twenty and a bigger one that just went over 30. While we were standing in the One swim we saw a big fish go over in front of the 18 swim. I knew this swim well and packed up straight away. I barrowed all my tackle barring my brolly that was still in the next swim 50 yards up the bank. I put my rods out and walked straight up the bank to get my brolly.

As I was walking back my dog, Fred, started acting really strangely, so I dropped it and started running. I got to the steps of the swim, and my middle rod that I'd put out last because it was the easiest flick was in meltdown and the fish was 40 yards out into open water! I played the fish with relative ease until it started kit-ing fast. I then had to control it hard, which wasn't helped by the resident swan that decided to sit above the fish in the water, the line only missing

this or her feet by inches. The carp spooked the swan when it surfaced, which then fortunately did the off!

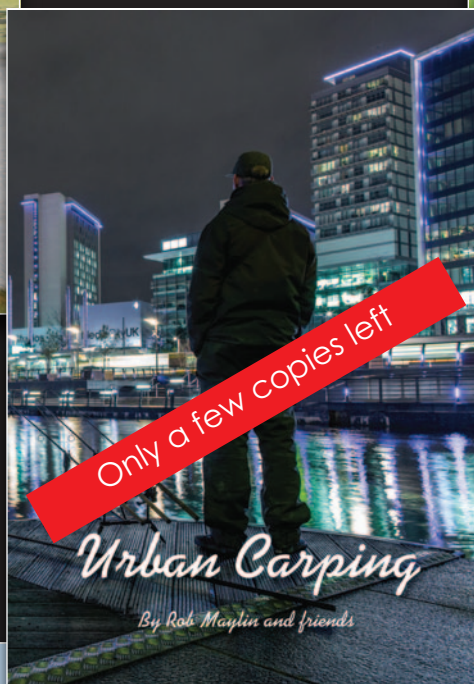
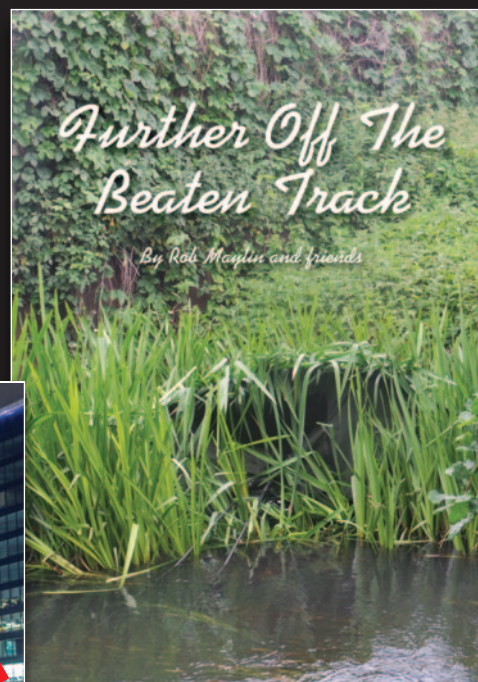
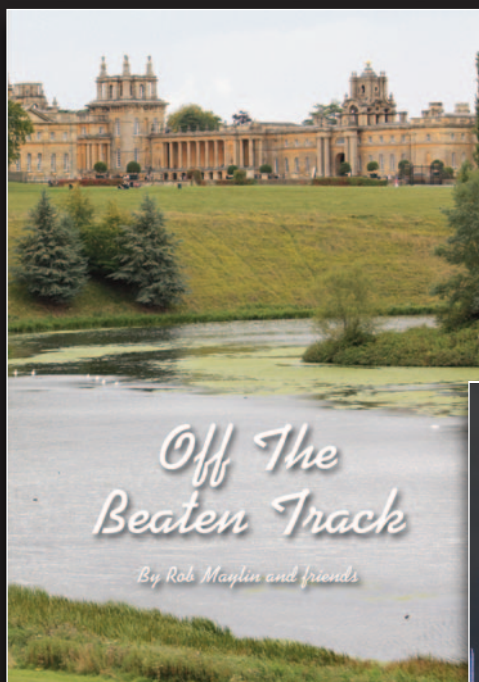
I was slowly coaxing her back when a member, Matt Miller, came over to help, as he knew I had only had my rods out for three minutes. He wasn't sure if my net was set up, but I had done it before getting my brolly luckily! But boy was I was glad for the help! I said to Matt, "This feels like a good one!" As the fish surfaced I could hear his tone of voice change. He netted it for me, and as soon as it went over the cord he called it: "It's Stella, mate!" "No way!" I said. I thought he was winding me up until I looked into the now full net and saw the two-tone body! I shouted as loud as I could – after all, she was the one I joined the lake for! The weight was irrelevant, but she went 44lb 10oz and was another UK 40 under my belt. She was my sixth UK UK in ten months, but more importantly, it was her the one I wanted, even before I was offered a ticket!

In the 12 months I landed some cracking fish. I endured heavy winds, snow, thunder, lightning and I even had rats eat through my bivvy to get to my food! I really felt the highs and lows of carp fishing, but it was all worth it!

Be lucky! ■

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Short Session Success

By Nick Onslow (Urban Bait)

It's been a long time since I put pen to paper about my carp fishing. It only seems like yesterday when I was writing for various carp magazines. I had a break for a while, as fishing six evenings a week and working full time took its toll on me. The years passed, my love and passion for fishing returned, and I spent a good few years fishing a non-publicity water in Essex. The time I spent there enabled me to catch some of the most beautiful fish I have caught

to date including my personal best of 49lb.

As my achievements in fishing developed, things also had developed in my personal life. I was then expecting my first child, and I knew this would have an immense impact on my fishing life, as I'm sure every carp angler with children would be able to relate to. Since the arrival of my son, Harry, life has changed in many ways. I have relocated from East London to Essex, and the daily commute to and from London for work six days a week

means the time I do get to go fishing is limited and invaluable, which makes me better appreciate the waters that I fish.

I spent many years fishing the big lakes for the big fish, but this year I wanted to stir things up a bit and fish smaller club waters such as Billericay Angling. As my time on the lakes are limited, I knew I needed to be using bait that I felt 100% confident in, so recently I got in touch with an old contact I knew would hold the answers I needed – the Urban Baits



31lb common.



Small full scaled.

head honcho and my old mucker, Terry Dempsey. He introduced me to all the baits he had to offer, and the one that stood out of the crowd was the Red Spicy Fish Mix. I knew instantly that this was the bait that would elevate my catches to the next level.

With the waters and the bait chosen, it was then time to set myself some targets. Being based at Billericay gave me choices, as it has three waters. The first of my three targets was to catch a 30lb common from Barleylands, which I knew was going to be a challenge, as they are few and far between in that lake. The second target was to catch the big Fully Scaled from The Long Lake, and my final target was a 25lb+ from Toby Wood. Although these fish are not the monster size that I am used to targeting, it would be something different.

I started my fishing campaign on May 2015 when the waters opened. It was the first Saturday of the month, and I headed eagerly to the Long Lake. The easterly cold wind made it a fresh, cold start to the season. It was

a quiet start, and I was only one of four anglers on the lake. As I was actively searching and watching the water for signs of carp, I managed to spot a couple roll off the back of the cold wind. I opted to fish a straight 14mm Red Spicy Fish bottom bait in conjunction with crushed boilies in a PVA bag. Within half hour I had my first bite, but unfortunately the hook pulled – I couldn't believe my luck. I recast the bait to the same spot. The evening flew past, and I thought the chance of my first catch had evaded me for that evening until the rod ripped off again. I was determined not to lose it again. After a short struggle I landed one of the Long Lake's smaller fully scaled mirrors of around 17lb. What an amazing result for my first visit to the lake! The bait had done its job and had given two bites in one evening. My confidence was higher than ever.

The week followed at a slow pace due to my eagerness to return to the lake. When the weekend approached the weather was to the contrary of what the previous week had been –

the sun was shining and the fish were basking in the sun in the upper layers. I fished all that evening but with little success – the only bites were from a couple of tench. My high hopes for weekend were not to be fulfilled, probably due to the weather.

My next opportunity to fish again was to be an early start. I arrived at Toby Wood at 6am, and the lake was deserted and peaceful. This was a lake with a lot of character; it provided an endless selection of various fishing features. I chose to go and fish in the Rope swim, which limited the fishing area, but I knew this area was popular, and the little ripples on the water confirmed that there were fish to be caught there. I cast both my rods as tight to the rope and lily pads as I could get them, with PVA bags of crushed Red Spicy Fish bottom baits with around 100 freebies scattered over both rods.

By 10am I had three bites, but yet again they managed to escape me. I lost two by hook pulls and the other the line snapped on me. I thought that this was a bad start to the day, and I

was praying this would not set the standard for the rest of the day's fishing. The hours passed by, and before I knew it was gone lunchtime. I repositioned both rods, and within ten minutes one of my rods was away again, but this time I banked a short, dumpy common of 21lb, which is a PB for me on this particular venue. I took the photos and slid her back gently into the water, watching her swim elegantly away.

The swim was quiet for the next couple of hours. I contemplated moving swim, but I kept thinking I would just give it a little longer, as I had an inkling the fish were still in the area. I thought it was time for a brew, and as the kettle went on, in the corner of my eye I saw a couple of fish roll near my baited area. I felt a sudden satisfaction in my decision to stay put in this swim. Not long after seeing those fish I was away again. As I was playing the fish I realised she was keeping very deep, and after a short struggle I landed a very decent mirror. Up on the scales she went, and the dial shot

round to 27lb 4oz. I could not believe my luck. It was my first target smashed of the three targets I had set myself (as far as I am aware this is the largest to have been caught from this lake). I was so made up... I continued to fish for the rest of the day, and my total takes for the day was ten, banking seven carp. The day turned out to be a successful day's fishing.

I had a few days off work, and all that was on my mind was getting to try for my remaining targets. I decided to do 24-hour session at Barleylands with my old mate Copper Top. We started early afternoon, and as usual for Barleylands it was a busy day on the lake. We had a good scout around and spotted a couple of anglers packing up, and we noticed a couple of fish show. The weather was bang-on with rain and southwesterly winds. Anyone who knows this water knows that it has deep waters with very few features. I just cast both hookbaits at the topping fish using pop-ups this time around instead of my usual bottom baits. I also spoddied

out around a kilo of bait. The rain started to pour down and the wind got up, so up went the bivvy, and before I knew it my luck had struck again and one of my rods was going.

I shouted to Copper Top to help me land it – I was playing the fish for a good ten minutes. It was keeping very deep in the margins, and I knew in the back of my mind it felt very heavy. All of a sudden up came a big common, and she made it into the net first time. As we both looked in the net we knew straight away this was a decent one. We set up the scales and mat, and we were soon looking at a 31lb common. Copper Top took all the photos and then we slid her back into the water. I was just watching her swim away, feeling knocked out by this achievement. I was not the only one having a successful fishing day – Copper Top then caught two mirrors up to 22lb. Both of his fish fell to the Nutcracker pop-ups. All that action, and it was soon time to call it a night. My next bite was at 2am, and it was a lovely long mirror of 19lb. I recast my



Big fully.



27lb 4oz.

hookbait and then went straight back to bed, as I was soaked due to the rain pouring down on me. I awoke at 6am to see if the fish were still in our area, and to my delight they were. I did manage to bank one more of 14lb before I had to start to pack up to head home. I was quietly ecstatic with my results from the weekend, and yet again Red Spicy Fish has done its job effectively.

The following weekend, which was at the end of May, I knew there was only one place to head for and that was back to the Long Lake. Could this be my chance to catch my final target fish, the Big Fully? As I arrived at the lake I bumped into the bailiff, and I quizzed him about the size of the fully when it was last out. He informed me it was about 23lb and it had not been caught this year. I know it may not sound that big, but for these lakes they are the big ones. There were only a couple of anglers fishing, and the weather was very hot. I found most of the carp in one particular corner, but unfortunately they were spawning, I knew that this was not going to be the day for my target, so I didn't even set up, and instead I just headed

home. The next day I just had to get back up there. The weather was perfect, and when I got there and found the fish it looked like the spawning had finished and the lake was empty of anglers. The fish were not very hard to find; I found them in Tiger Bay, and I cast out single hookbaits to them. Within minutes I had a bite, which turned out to be one of the lake's little fully scaled carp at 15lb. I put her back and cast straight back out to the spot, but this time I put a load of 14mm Spicy Fish freebies out.

Around an hour later I was away again, and this time it was an 18lb common. After a couple of hours with no action, I reeled in my rod and went for a wander. I found a lot of bubbling at the other end of the lake. I wasn't sure if they were tench or carp. All of a sudden a big orange carp rolled over the bubbles, and that's when I knew I had to move spots. Once I had moved I cast the hookbait over the bubbles, and within ten minutes it was away. As I was playing the fish there was another angler walking around, and luckily he helped me out. The fish kept low and kept on taking line off the reel. I could tell by the fight the

fish was putting up that this was not the typical sized fish for the Long Lake. Suddenly a beauty of a fully scaled fish crashed on the surface. As soon as I saw it I knew it was the big one. We weighed her, and she was 25lb on the money and possibly another lake record. I put her back and I sat down and thought to myself this was one of the best looking carp I have ever seen. Carp fishing can't get much better than this. I could not believe I had met all three of my targets in such a short space of time.

For all my fish I used simple rigs with nothing particularly special about them, but I have 100% confidence in using Urban Baits Red Spicy Fish Mix. I would like to thank Terry Dempsey for having me on his team. Because I thought it would take longer to meet my targets for this year, I have had to rethink my fishing plans for the rest of the year. I have managed to join an Essex Syndicate in South Ockendon, so hopefully my luck will continue, and I will have more amazing catches to report back to you using the Spicy Fish Mix from Urban Baits.

Get on the going bait! ■

A Year in the Medway Valley

By Paul Banes

After having a productive spring campaign on Larkfields No. 2 in the '99 season with 17 fish and banking some true stunners with the likes of Scaly, Sherves and the Highback Fish, the decision was made to move next door and tread the banks of the Johnsons Railway Lake.

After spending a night in Oscar's, I could hear a few fish crashing directly behind me in the hidden swim on the railway and on inspection they was close in so with a few handfuls of tigers, I baited left and right on the shelf and moved the next morning.

The Hidden was a tight two-rod swim and hardly ever fished, so after donking a lead around either side and receiving clean drops at the top of the shelf, a single tiger nut was dis-

patched on each rod. It was a quiet night, at least that's what I thought, as on close inspection in the morning the right hand tip was pulled round and line missing from the spool. The buzzer had packed up, and everything was solid. After a short boat trip the line was zig-zagging between different weedbeds, and without me knowing if the fish was still on, the line broke.

With mixed feelings of a take and the way it happened on my first night, I was gutted but elated at the same time, and a plan was hatched. After spending a few days relaxing, socialising, boiling up buckets of particle, respooling with the strong 15lb big game and a trip to Tesco's, the Highbank swim became free, and the plan was up and running.

With my confidence sky high the lake had other ideas and beat me up

for the next four weeks. Within that time and numerous days of extensive plumbing and boat trips as the spots kept changing with large Canadian weed growths, I stumbled over a perfect firm area straight out in front at 95 yards in 14ft. This dropped rapidly to a deep gulley, which was then marked out with two permanent ones at the back of the spot and two large buckets of hemp, wheat, tares and mashed up tigers were spread over the zone.

The long spot was devoid of activity for weeks until the tench moved in, a few good ones were had and a top-up was needed. On my way back out to the spot I saw a few fish cruising to my left at 60 yards and noticed a dark, clear hole in between large weedbeds. On returning I made a large stiff groundbait ball with rig inside and dropped it off the side of

the boat in the hole. On the third evening, right on dusk, the rod tore off and instantly locked up. On taking to the boat in the dark with young Jon, the heavens opened, the wind picked up and the battle became desperate as thunder and lightening was added to the mix. Seventy-five minutes later we returned, soaked through with 2ins of water in the bottom of the boat and my first Railway carp, the mean looking Cassien Fish.

A few days later the long spot started rocking and producing steadily for the next month with most takes coming when the sun rose above the poplars along the railway, and on several occasions the area was like a cauldron bubbling away when the rest of the lake was flat calm. It didn't take



Cassien Fish, 28lb 12oz.



The Barbless, 36lb.



Freemason's Four Scale, 32lb 8oz.



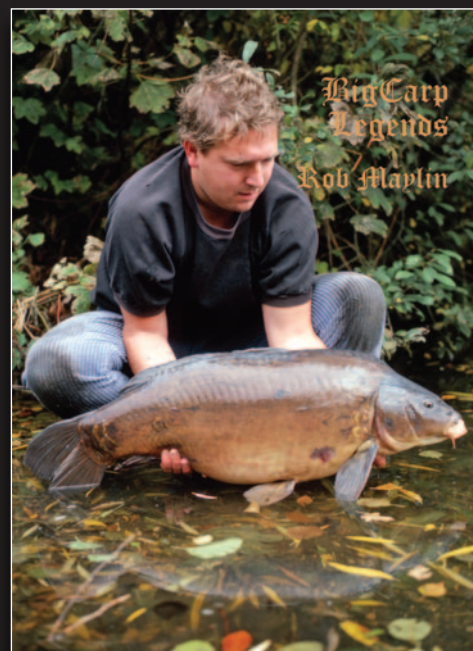
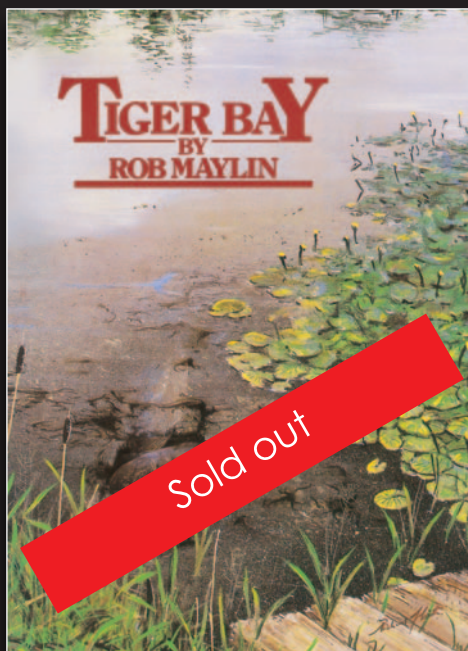
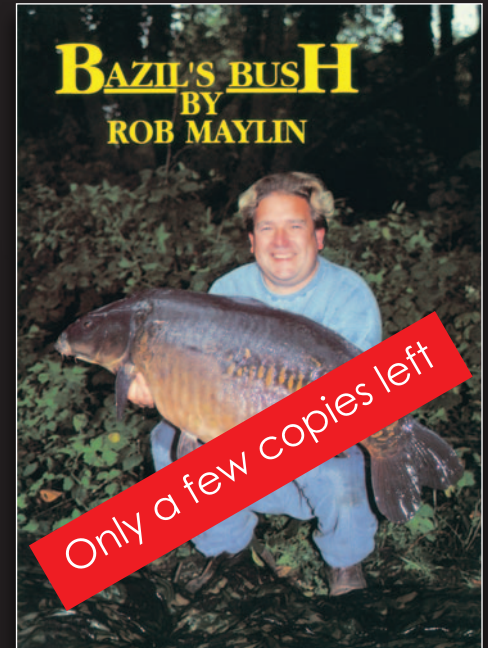
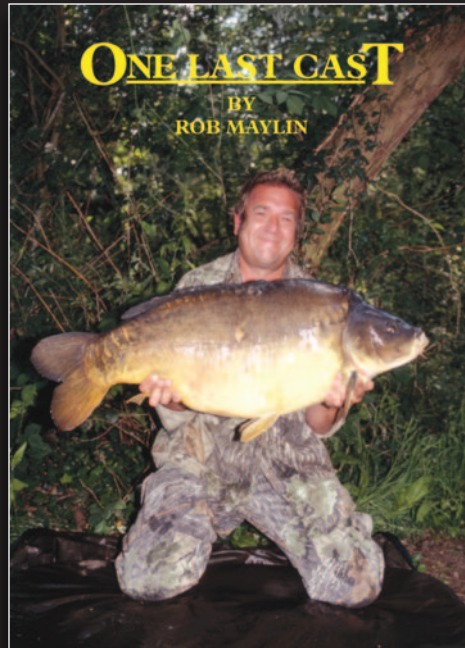
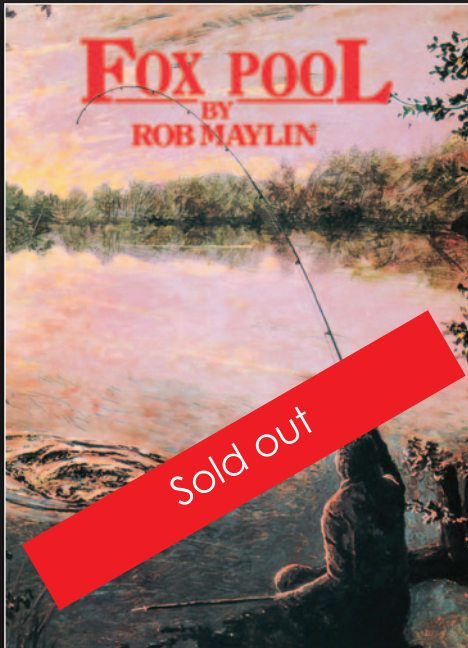
Floppy Tail, 33lb 9oz.



The Italian, 34lb 4oz.

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The Pretty One, 34lb 10oz.



Larkfield's Scaly, 32lb 8oz.

long before my next one when Ronan took me out in the boat and slipped the net under Floppy Tail.

After losing one and a few more tench, I received another fast take, which weeded me up straight away. Jonny Mac was asleep a few swims down in the Bridge, so after waking him up he took me in his own boat (that he had kindly left for us to use all season) out to the fish. After another hectic battle the fish swam past the boat, and we both froze with Jon's words, "Oh my god! Do you know which fish it is?" "Yes, it's the Pretty One," I replied, and within a few heart stopping minutes was in the net. The big shout went out, echoing in the valley, as this was only its fifth time on the bank and the first time out for four and a half years.

On approaching the spot for a top-up there was hemp and wheat churning up under the surface as another bucket was despatched. For some reason I decided to put a third rod on the spot, which proved to be a very bad mistake, as this particular morning a fish was constantly sticking his head out over the area in a way that Ted had seen before and shouted,

"You know which one that is?" before receiving a take. Straight away the fish hit the surface then did me over my extra line and a hook pull followed. I was pig sick I lost the leather, and this was confirmed the next day as it floated up unwell in front of Ted's swim. On taking to the boat and netting it, I spent nearly four hours in the water stroking and massaging it constantly and righting it up. With my hook tear in the side of its mouth, I started blaming myself and feared the worst. After a couple of massive spasms that seemed to kickstart the old fella, it started to move better and regain its life before swimming off fairly strongly and disappearing down the shelf.

As the long spot started to slow down, a few fish started to show to my right at 30 yards where I knew in amongst the thick Canadian there was a small bar. So when it all settled down I investigated extensively and struggled to get a drop, but finally it landed on the deck. So with more constant casting with a rig, it was apparent that the small area was completely flossed over with the slimy stuff when all of a sudden I

found what I was looking for – the spot the size of a dinner plate, so a few spods followed and a rig was cast with precision.

After losing another one from the long spot, the short rod that had been out for seven days was away, and Glenn was on hand with the boat. After another heart in the mouth lengthy battle between the solid weedbeds, a black, bream-shaped fish came up from the depths, and the Italian was mine.

Action started to slow down now as we were coming to the end of September and the fish had their autumn feast early, but I did find a couple of fish in the Little Bridge close in under the tree I was in. I spent hours dropping chopped worms from above and watching them feed, feeling chuffed, as it was the first sighting of the Leather and the Italian, which I had just caught, so I decided to let them be.

With the weather dramatically changing, the lake completely shut up shop with hardly any shows to go on. October soon became November, and when a big southwesterly turned up, so did the fish. I moved straight on



Larkfield's Sherves, 36lb.

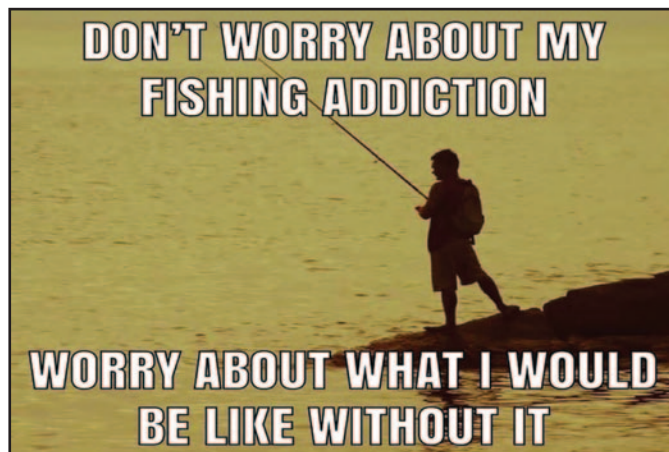
them in the Beach and there must have been over 50 shows that night, only for them to push further out by morning. Rather than cast all over them again I moved round to the Brambles for a better angle. The shows stopped that evening, but the following afternoon, on returning from the call of nature, one of my indicators was stuck against the buzzer and with everything solid. Another boat trip followed, and after another proper battle, the Barbless Common was my last prize that year and the last fish to come out until spring from the lake.

Having received my Freemason's ticket earlier in the year, I packed up and moved the short distance across the valley doing days only and sleeping in Ted's van of a night. Within an hour of casting out for the first time, the leathery looking Four Scale was on the mat. I did manage another 30-plus mirror in December before finishing up on my year in the valley and getting myself back to work after an accident I'd had the year before. ■



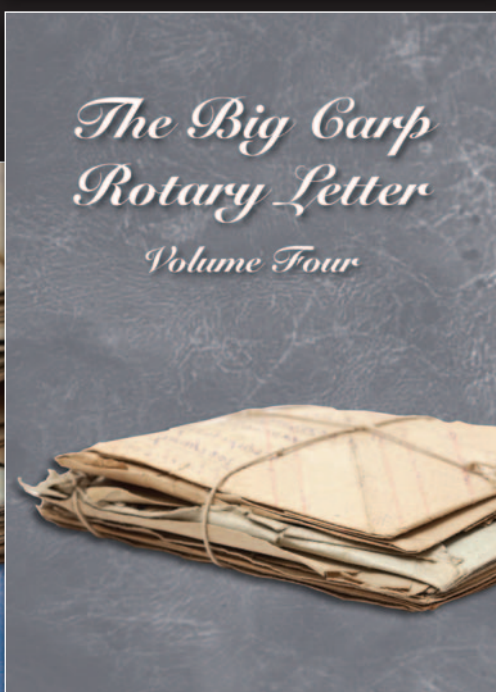
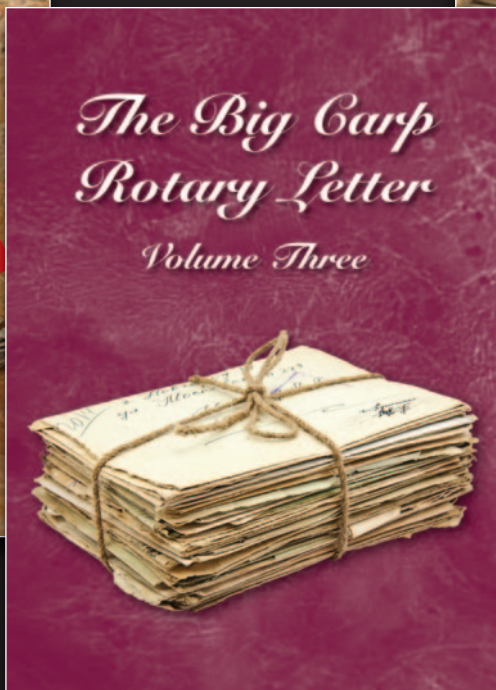
Larkfield's Highback Fish, 28lb 12oz.

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