

JULY ISSUES OF **BIG CARP** AND **FREE LINE** MAGAZINES FREE HERE

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Zigs – the right time... by Lance Barton
The Bullet 44lb 12oz by Chris Connaughton
The Overnight Life by Levi Reeves
Estate Lake Success by Jonny Old
An African Adventure... by David Charley
Eight Days In Eden by Tamás Skaczal
Bitemark Remembered by Baz Lloyd
Zig Success by Tom Stokes

Fishing for the Unknown by Alan Tring
Spitfire Pool by Andrew Hargreaves
Cumbria's First Forty by Chris Sawyer
Goal Setting by Carl Milton
The Big Common by Daniel Stacey
Little Irchester – Blind Eye by Liam Close
The Forgotten Pond by James Thompson
Anglers Paradise First Ever 40lb Common! by Zenia
On and Off Chance by Mark Webster
Bevo and the 'Brace' by Stephen (Bevo) Bevington
Diary of The Urban Myth by Terry Dempsey
Two PBs by Tim Rowland
Two seasons at Hyde Lane by Paul Beckinsale & Dave McAllister



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BIG CARP

Top Tens!

Top 10 Day Ticket Carp Fisheries

1	COTTINGTON
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 324

SUMMER HOLIDAY SPECIAL

**Levi Reeves
Over-nighters**



**Tom Stokes – Zig Success
Chris Connaughton – The Bullet
Jonny Old – Estate Lake Success
Baz Lloyd – Bite Mark Remembered
Lance Barton – Zigs – The Right Time**

Still the proper carp angler's favourite read



Lake Serene Up For Sale

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

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

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

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

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



Summer Holiday Special

As I write this at the end of June, we are in the middle of a heat wave. Day time temperatures in the thirties, hardly conducive to productive day time fishing unless we concentrate on the surface, either with a controller, or zigs. And night time temperatures making sleep uncomfortable and sticky. That's summer carp fishing for you!

Most of you will be taking some vacation time in July, either here in the UK or abroad, so most places will be busy, swim availability will also be a problem. Yet all winter we dream of summers return, sometimes it's hard to imagine why lol!

So, what do I have for you in this months 'Summer Holiday Special Issue'? Something for everyone of course.

A couple of zig rig instructional pieces from Lance Burton and Tom Stokes, both very skilled in this technique. Big fish pieces from Chris Connaughton and Baz Lloyd, one past and one present. Some estate lake success for Jonny Old. A holiday tale at Gillham's from Tamás Skaczel and something very different from David Charley as he creates his own holiday destination for the future in Africa!

I've even got something for those working through the holiday period from Levi Reeves as he returns again this month with his account of making the most out of 'over-nighters', straight from work, rods out, head down and up for work in the morning. I can remember them well, never been so tired in all my life, but the results are possible for those putting in the effort.

Also, this month an extended 'catch report' section. Over a quarter of the magazine devoted to recent catches of some of the best fish in the country. Definitely not to be missed, as many of the UK's big names have been putting their nets under their target fish for the first time this year. 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 start back, we would love to hear your tale. There are no picture or word limits. Simply email your article to info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk.

If you would like to join our FREE subscription list to be sent the mags as soon as they come out, email FREE SUBBY to info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk. WITHOUT YOUR INPUT THERE WILL BE NO MAGS!

Have a great 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.

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Front Cover

Simon Croft with the BBQ Zip at 50lb 8oz from Long Lake equaling the lake record.



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HALO BAITs

— QUALITY GUARANTEED —

Halo Baits Ltd was started to allow everyday anglers access to, what we consider, some of the best baits available in the UK.



Website: **www.halobaits.com**

Email: **sales@halobaits.com**

Telephone: **01689 862875**

See us on  **Facebook**



We have two 'Excellent Boilies' in our bait range.

'BMX' Our signature fishmeal bait

We named it BMX as belachan and mussel are featured strongly within this awesome bait.

Made from some of the finest fishmeal blends and mixed HNV powders available on the marketplace, bird foods, milk proteins, hydrolysed fish, belachan, and mussel extracts, N'Butyric acid, betaine, with added stimulant attractors. This bait has low level oils and can be used all year round.

'Smelling this bait, you get a fishy/savoury belachan aroma, break it open you get a sweeter mussel smell'. A truly incredible bait.

'The Nuts' Our signature nut bait

This epic, all year-round, high-quality nut bait, consists of milled chopped nuts, cereals and birdseeds, milk proteins, and HNV powders, bird food powders, plus hydrolysed liquids, and a special food industry, high grade, chocolate extract.

It is a unique one-of-a-kind bait, with aromas of chocolate, nuts, cream and maple.

Proving to be an effective, awesome, premium nutritional bait!



ShockLeader

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

Festival of Carp - 8th July 2023

Don't miss out on this year's spectacular event!

Join us for the Carp Society's largest open day...The Festival of Carp!

Featuring an incredible assortment of more than 20 renowned anglers and top brands from the industry.

An opportunity to visit well known anglers bank side

Improve your casting range with some 1-1 tuition

Visit Julian Cundiff, Mike Kavanagh and friends in our Rig and Bait clinic

Relax in our Theatre of Memories with Bill Cottam, Lee Jackson, Ritchie McDonald and Terry Hearn



TRADE AREA

Little Egret Press, Carp Society, CR Baits, Wallop, Haulerz, DT Baits, Dobbins Bobbins, Carp Particles, Sailvvay Perchfishers Bristol Angling (with Nash), Bristol Angling (with Century Rods).



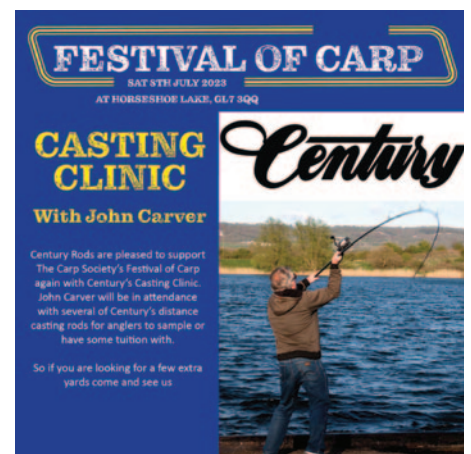
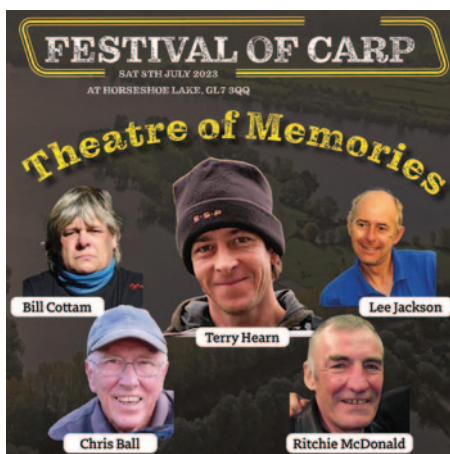
GET FISHING!

with the Angling Trust

Join the Angling Trust coaches for an introduction to angling for all ages!

ANGLING DEMOS

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), One More Cast (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), Angling Times **CARP TEAM ENGLAND's** Rob Hughes and Bev Clifford



Dynamite Baits say goodbye to Terry Hearn

Like all things in life, nothing lasts forever. It's with sadness to announce that Terry Hearn has taken the decision to leave Dynamite and pursue other options. Please see the statement below from Terry:

'After twenty plus years with Dynamite I've decided to take on a new bait arrangement. Dynamite have always looked after me exceptionally well, providing great bait and regularly driving all the way down south to drop it off and to pop in for a brew. Lovely people at a lovely company, and I'll always look upon my time there with great fondness.

However, there comes a time when a decision needs to be made, and I've been given an offer that I think suits me well, one focused on steering carp fishing in the right direction with a strong emphasis on nature and the environment, something I'm very passionate about. Most exciting will be the new venues and contacts I'll have at my disposal, something I've started to struggle with in recent times. I'm also looking forward to fishing with a couple of my old buddies again, something else which has



been missing for some years.

All that's left is for me to thank Dynamite for all the years in their care, and for everything they've done for me. Big love.'

Thanks, Terry x

We would like to thank Terry for his input into our bait range over the last 20 years and also his advocacy of Dynamite as a brand.

Terry's departure will not affect the recipes or quality of the baits he

helped to develop, they will continue to be some of the leading Carp baits available and keep catching 1000's of fish each year.

As a company Dynamite keep moving forward with an expanding bait range, with many new and exciting products in the pipeline along with some great new additions to our anglers' team in the near future.

Thanks again to Terry and good luck with your new venture!

It gives us immense pleasure to be able to announce that Terry Hearn will be joining Sticky Baits!

Although 'Tel' needs no introduction, he is the most gifted angler of his generation, whose passion and appreciation of carp fishing has inspired and shaped so many anglers over the years.

"Proper over the moon to be joining Sticky, a company that already has a solid reputation for top quality bait and a team of anglers second to none. Exciting times ahead, now let's go get 'em!" Terry Hearn

"Making this announcement means more to me personally than it is possible to convey in words alone. I first met Terry some 18/19 years ago when I found myself fishing on the same Berkshire pit as him. I was a young keen angler in my early 20's (I'm quite sure I annoyed the hell out of him) but it was impossible not to be inspired by how he conducted himself and the love he had for our sport! His passion and storytelling were the same face-to-face as it is on his recent films that everyone has had the pleasure of seeing. In this modern social media driven age of Carp fishing, I feel that our connection to nature and the reason that we all started fishing has been lost in the interest of commercial gain.

I can honestly say that I would not be in the position I am now in the angling industry without the inspiration that Terry gave to me in those early days and now to be able to work with him to promote angling in the right way has left me understandably excited."

Tom Anderson - Sticky Baits



Get ready for a summer full of fishing

Summer school hols are getting closer and it's hot hot hot!

Fishing is a great way to cool off in the shade, relax, and enjoy nature by the water's edge. Get Fishing coaches and volunteers will welcome you back to improve your fishing skills. While you have another go please ask away and get answers on the best tackle, bait and places to be ready for a summer full of fishing!

Remember: most events are completely FREE of charge! We'll send you more info when new events are added. Look out for these emails.

WHAT'S AT THE NEXT EVENT YOU COME TO?

Have a go – practice how to catch, net and safely release fish

Tackle to use – the essential items you need

Where to go – your closest venues, clubs and coaches

About your fishing licence – day, week, annual and free for children!

Going it alone – what's next on your angling adventure! Everything you need to use on the day is included.

PLUS: A FISHING LICENCE IS INCLUDED FOR THE SESSION!

Thanks to the Environment Agency.

Facebook: Get Fishing

TikTok: @getintofishing

Instagram: @getintofishing

ORGANISED BY
Angling Trust



Get Fishing is the Angling Trust's campaign to get more people fishing more often. It's funded by the Environment Agency from fishing licence income and Sport England to encourage regular participation and diversity in sport.

FUNDED BY
Environment Agency



The Environment Agency funds the Angling Trust to provide more opportunities for people to go fishing and encourage sales of fishing rod licences. Money from fishing licence sales is spent on improving fisheries habitat and angling infrastructure.



SUPPORTED BY THE OFFICIAL PARTNERS OF GET FISHING

Angling Direct



Angling Direct is the Exclusive Retail Partner of the Angling Trust's 'Get Fishing' campaign to get more people fishing, more often.

This partnership encourages more people to take up angling for the first time, to get back into the sport and brings the health and wellbeing benefits of fishing to a wider audience, across all age groups. Find a friendly fishing shop near to you at www.anglingdirect.co.uk

Shakespeare



Shakespeare is the Exclusive Fishing Tackle Partner of the Angling Trust's 'Get Fishing' campaign to get more people fishing, more often. There's no fish like your first fish. As more and more newcomers discover the joy of fishing, Shakespeare will be there, providing the gear and inspiration to make sure that the next bite will never be the last. Find out about fishing tackle at www.shakespeare-fishing.co.uk.



The Angling Trust is a representative body for all anglers in England and Wales. We are recognised by Sport England as the national governing body for angling in England and we promote active lifestyles and encourage maintaining a regular angling habit.

A remarkable individual

We grieve the tragic loss of Ian Coates, a remarkable individual who not only shared his love for angling but also dedicated his time to introducing young people to our favourite pastime. With unwavering passion, he passed on his angling knowledge, equipping others with the resources to embrace the joys of fishing and steer away from crime.

Ian's commitment to nurturing young minds through angling was a testament to his selflessness and belief in the transformative power of our beloved sport. His dedication and mentorship inspired countless individuals, instilling in them values of patience, respect for nature, and the joy of pursuing a wholesome activity.

In the wake of this devastating tragedy, we extend our deepest condolences to Ian's family, friends, and all those whose lives he touched. The loss of such a compassionate and influential figure leaves an irreplaceable void within our angling community and beyond.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with the families of all the victims affected by this senseless act of violence. May you find strength in one another and in the memories of your loved ones during this difficult time.



Carpy Humour

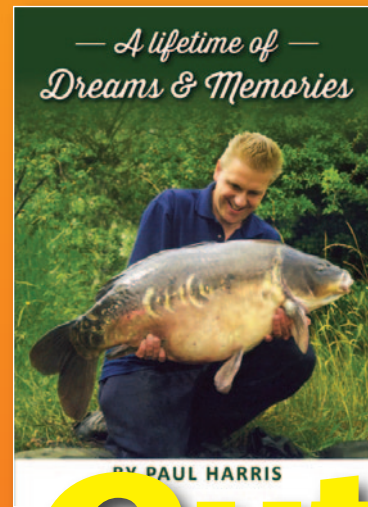
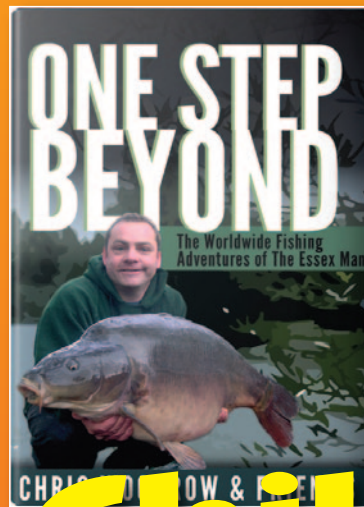
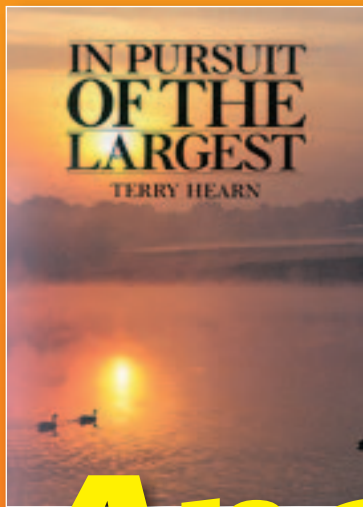
King Tutankhamun's camping bed discovered in 1922 by Howard Carter. It's the first ever three-part folding camping bed.



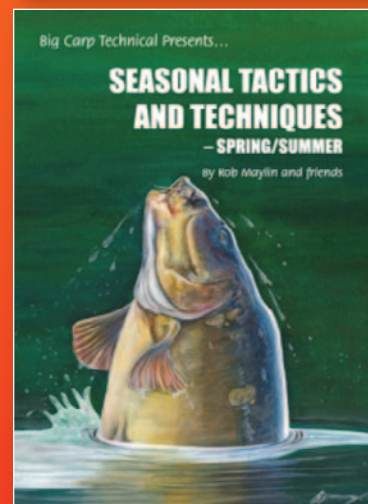
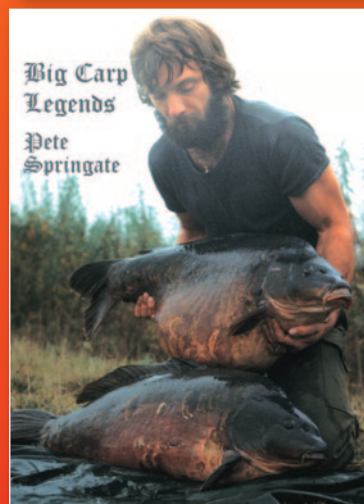
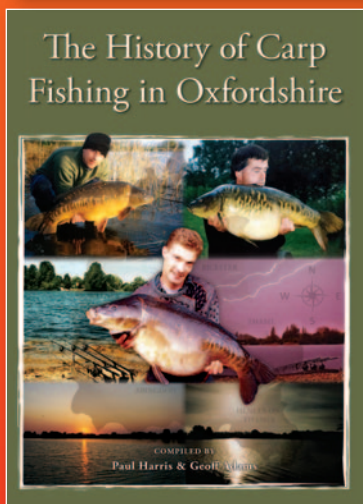
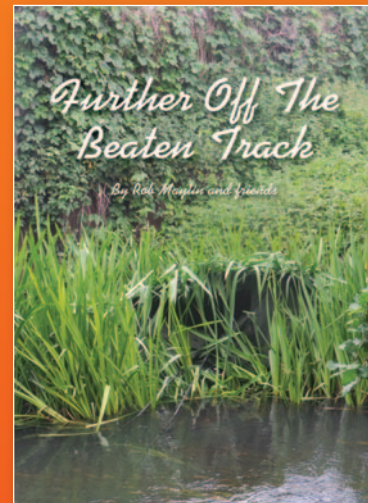
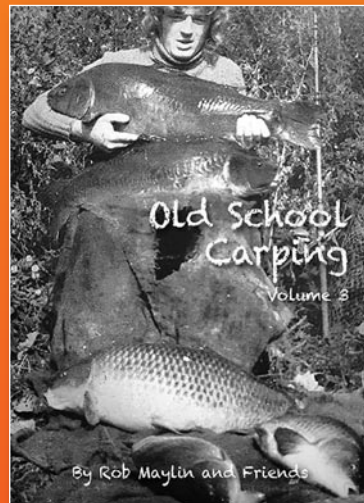
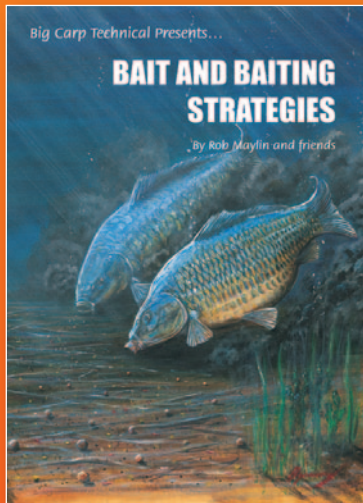
The good thing about fishing is that nobody bothers you



Bag Yourself a Score

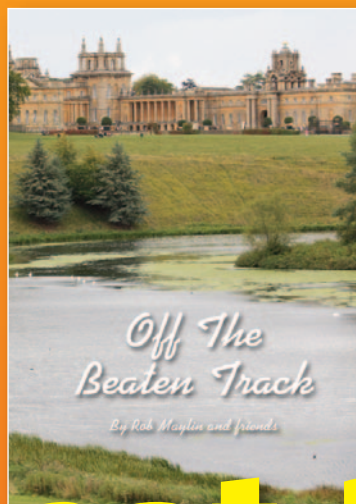
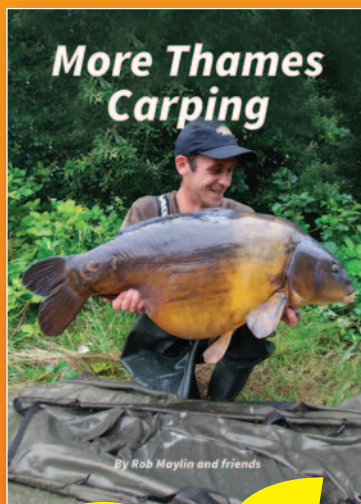


And Chill Out with

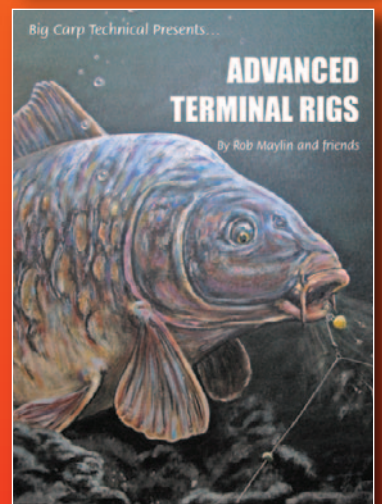
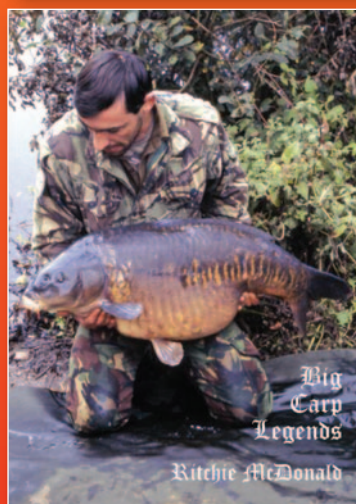
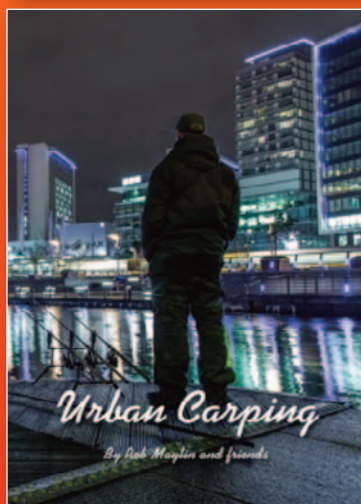
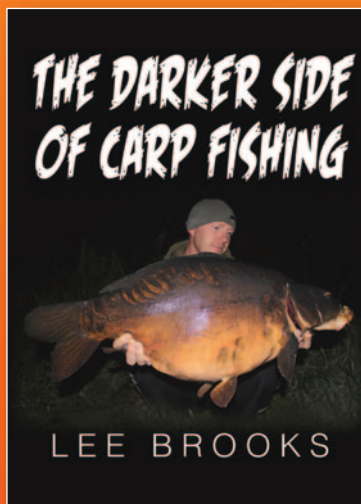


NEW BOOKS www.bigcarpmain.com NEW AND OLD BOOKS: www.ebay.com

Summer Scorchers



With a Great Read



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Our monthly reviews on products currently on the market

In this issue:

- Geoff Anderson
- Nite Watches
- Geoff Anderson
- HayMax



WizTool – then you have the tool at hand
Good tools make the fishing trip easier



WizTool Mini Pean
€24.95

And maybe our three new WizTools can help you here?

We have just launched three new pieces of equipment, each of which can help you on your fishing trip.



WizTool Multi Scissor
€9.95



WizTool Ceramic Braid Scissor
€29.95

NITE Watches Lighting up your Adventures



If you are sporting one of our Watches, you will know the benefits of permanent illumination technology first-hand. Often overlooked but always greatly valued, the ability to tell the time all the time is why every NITE Watch is fitted with Tritium illumination.

Widely regarded as the world's best and most reliable form of illumination, Tritium provides a constant glow throughout the night, unlike traditional watch illumination, which will fade in several hours.

Tritium is a radioactive isotope of hydrogen that undergoes beta decay to emit light. Tritium vials provide a reliable and long-lasting light source when combined with a phosphorescent material.

Our watches feature tiny glass vials coated with a phosphorescent material that contains tritium. These vials are then placed on the watch's face and hands, providing a constant source of illumination that doesn't require any charging or external light source.

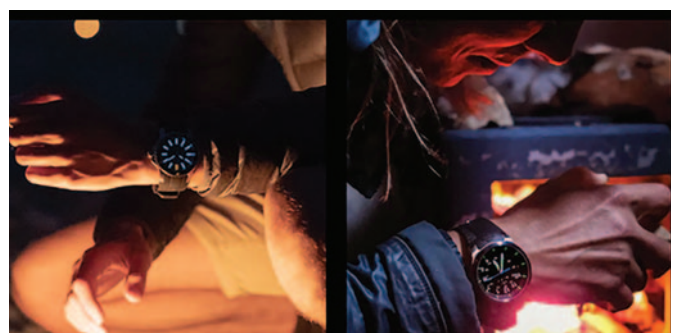
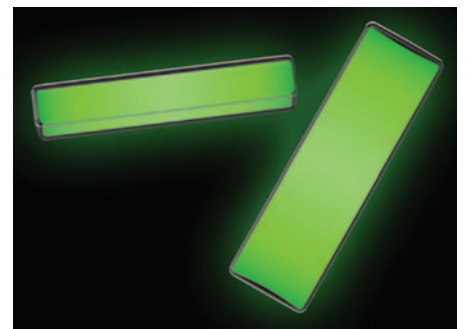
AND, OF COURSE, THIS IS 100% SAFE.

Tritium is incredibly reliable and long-lasting, with a 20-year average lifetime.

In summary, tritium technology is a game-changer for watches and outdoor adventure lovers who don't want to be day-time activity-limited, providing a reliable, long-lasting, and safe illumination source that doesn't require any external power source.

We are proud to be the only UK watch brand to feature this technology

for 20 years. During this time, it has helped our armed forces, tv crews, photographers, international mountain guides, extreme athletes, Atlantic rowers, and international adventurers perform to their best.



Get ready for summer – with our new summer collection

For the first time in 10 years, we are launching a new summer collection.

We have taken the best from our previous summer models and added the latest technology and our experience in making functional and durable clothing.

Yes, our summer collection is brand new. But it is built on our core values:

- High quality
- Long product life
- Maximum comfort
- Full functionality



Zulo2 Short Sleeve Green
€99.95



Zulo2 Long Sleeve Blue
€129.95



Zulo2 Short Sleeve Blue
€99.95



Zulo2 Long Sleeve Green
€129.95



ZipZone2 Green
€149.95



ZipZone2 Black
€149.95





Roxxo Shorts Green
€99.95



Roxxo Shorts Black
€99.95

We could talk for hours about the new products. But we think you should be allowed to look at them in silence.
PS: The trousers are actually water resistant. And the shirts are the most breathable we've ever made.

Do you want to be a dealer?

If you want to hear more about Geoff Anderson or become a dealer of our products, you are very welcome to contact us.

More information
Malthe Ryge Petersen
mrp@geoffanderson.dk
+45 71 991 859



Roxxo Green
€149.95



Roxxo Black
€149.95



Roxxo Long Black
€149.95

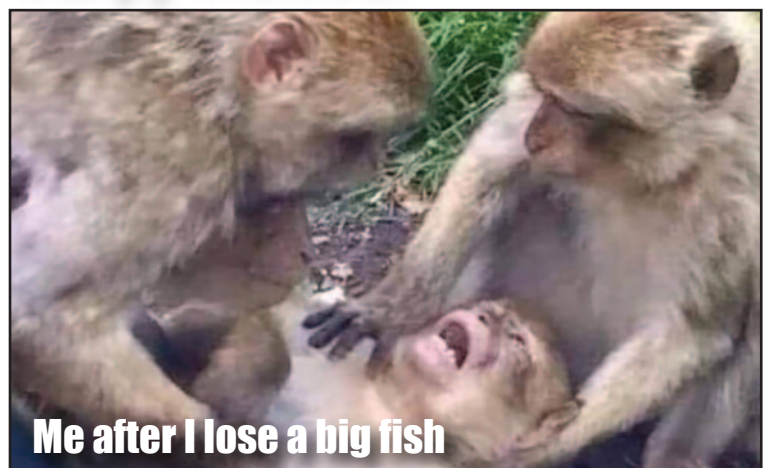
Who is Geoff Anderson?

Geoff Anderson is a small danish company that exclusively designs and produces clothing for anglers - especially for the harsh weather in northern Europe.

In the production, special consideration to the environment is taken and all products are certainly free of toxins. Durability and water proofness has always been keywords in the production.

Today, the clothing are only produced under its own name, but for many years Geoff Anderson has produced clothes for a number of other brands: Vision, Rapala, G. Loomis, Shimano, Zpey, Scierra, Hardy and Greys – the last two in more than ten years.

Carpy Humour



Make HayMax Part of Your Daily Routine

HayMax is an organic allergen barrier balm for hay fever sufferers that helps stop the cause of the problem – too much pollen getting into the body. To optimise its effectiveness it's best that it becomes part of your daily routine. Here's how plus some handy tips to help anglers...

Most hay fever products work by trying to deal with these symptoms. HayMax is different. It seeks to stop the cause of the problem – namely too much pollen in the body – from occurring. This helps prevent symptoms occurring completely or helps reduce the severity of symptoms by reducing the pollen load. Prevention rather than cure – since there is no cure for hay fever.

Put HayMax on first thing in the morning. After washing your face in the morning, apply a small amount of HayMax around the rim of the nostrils and bones of the eyes (but not in the eyes). In independent, university studies, HayMax has been proven to trap over 1/3 of pollen grains (as well as dust and pet allergens) from entering the body [1].

Apply HayMax before you go out fishing. Pollen counts are highest during the peak morning and evening

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

When you're fishing or out and about, wear a cap or hat and tie up long hair to prevent pollen being trapped in it. Wearing wraparound sunglasses will help protect your eyes from pollen. Change your clothes when you return home and wash your face or take a shower to wash away allergens so that they can't cause a reaction. A cool compress will soothe sore eyes.

Put HayMax on before bed as part of your night time routine. Before bed-time, take a shower or bath, to remove pollen particles from your hair and body. This will also make you feel more relaxed, which will help you to sleep.

Keep your bedroom windows and door closed to prevent pollen blowing into the room. If this makes the room too hot, consider using an air filter/purifier with a HEPA (High Efficiency Particle Arresting) filter to cap-

ture the pollen and dust particles, and cool and circulate the air.

If your symptoms are particularly severe or the pollen count is particularly high, or you find that one product is not enough or stops working, you could try creating your own Hay Fever First Aid Kit. This can consist of one or more natural products, such as HayMax, only one antihistamine, only one steroid nasal spray and eye drops.

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

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

Reference

[1] Chief Investigator: Professor Roy Kennedy, Principal Investigator: Louise Robertson, Researcher: Dr Mary Lewis, National Pollen and Aerobiology Research Unit, 1st February 2012.

Carpy Humour





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Alex MacDonald catch report

Spawning isn't far away, for some it may even be here; Alex MacDonald wasn't going to miss the opportunity to get out for one last role of the dice to try and snare himself a spring big 'un! Targeting the silty areas in a swim he had been in the week previous with a minimal baiting approach, the alarm that sung the next morning wasn't the one for work! A Yateley North Lake proper one.



Paul Bacon catch report

Still on cloud 9 after this week's trip to RK Kingsmead, after spending a couple of days not on fish I managed to secure a peg that got me closer to bulk of the fish, fishing small Bug crumb bags over light scattering of Bug 12mm boilies and Crayfish pellets, I had 18 fish in total half of them the stunning stockies the lake holds, The rest were lovely carp from 22lb to 36lb, But the biggest to... Scar the king of the lake @54.12 And the Football Sutton@46.6 Big Thanks to Rick Willeatts and Jack Cox for all the help with the pics.



Stuart Higgs catch report

Last one of the spring for me and a special one from Christchurch at a little over 41lb. Black Eye.



Steve Ackland catch report

So, this happened yesterday! The forgotten mirror that's very rarely caught and at a top weight of 45.12 and a new pb! It's been a spring of mixed emotions so far and its nearly time for me to hang the rods up till the autumn. From losing a really good fish two weeks back which may well have been my target fish to the 160-mile round trips to bait up and sticking to my guns fishing an area targeting a certain fish whilst the majority of the stock of the lake are active down the other end! I'm glad I stuck to my game plan and had tunnel Vision. Thanks to Emma Ackland for putting up with me obsessing over it and taking care of Evie whilst I been away not once have you moaned about me going and have been really supportive xx.





Andrew White catch report

Just got back from linear St Johns and had a mega trip, I managed 11 fish in total going 18lb 14oz, 19lb 15oz, 22lb 7oz, 23lb 1oz, 23lb 8oz, 29lb 6oz, 30lb 14oz, 33lb 6oz, 36lb 7oz, 39lb 14oz and a new PB of 42lb 2oz! All the fish fell to 12 mm Pineapple and N-Butyric pop-ups in bags of Asbo stick mix and crushed Asbo boilie with 2 pouch's of 12mm Nutz boilie.



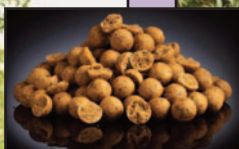
Andy Hazeldine catch report

I left home at 3.30am this morning on a hunch that there may be a decent fish sitting on the back of the fresh wind in a shallow water bay where the water may have been warmer! I saw a couple drift in and out during the morning and at about 1pm the tip bent round and fish on. Scrapped heavily for about 20 minutes picking up both other rods but eventually I bundled her into the net. New UK PB at 50.6 so blooming buzzing. Beer needed but I left it at home - schoolboy error. Well worth getting up early for!



Dan Hawkes catch report

Dan Hawkes had the absolute session of a lifetime over in France recently landing fish in all weight brackets including the biggest fish in the lake known as 'The Big Girl' at an incredible 89lb. Dan told us: "With 12 of the 19 fish being over 50lb it was a session I will never forget and the dream and obsession to catch the Big Girl was achieved. Backed up with an incredible run of big commons weighing 89lb, 75lb, 68lb 4oz, 65lb and 59lb the biggest 5. "I wanted to use something visual and attractive and the Essential Cell has been great to me in England this spring so I decided to take it abroad. All fish was caught using a mix of crushed and chopped Essential Cell coated in Pineapple and Fruit Smart Liquid mixed with Essential IB Stick Mix Liquid. The hookbaits was two Essential Cell Quads balanced on a d rig." Brilliant, Dan. Brilliant.



Andy Collicott catch report

Meadows 47lb-plus! There's absolutely no denying the devastating effect the Shrimp has had over the years. Especially in the Nene Valley, Cambs, Pete's area. Not one offs but year after year for over 17 years. Andy Collicott here with one of St. Ives Meadows girls was yet another one of the complexes A team to slip up. Well done mate.



Jay Burton catch report

Well now I've made a brew I'll begin. About 4.20am my right-hand rod pulled up tight, jump out me pit, it starts kiting round to right I'm attached to a good fish. A ten-minute battle and my new UK PB slips in the net, shaking I slowly get the fish into the sling to get this awesome fish onto the mat OMG, what a unit. On the scales – boom – 47lb 9oz. Thankyou big girl I'll never forget how i feel today you have made it one hell of a morning. It's a lobster thing



Roger Bacon catch report

Roger's fourth 50lb-plus fish of 2023! Roger Bacon has now landed four 50lb-plus fish this year alone from the amazing Grenville syndicate water in Cambridgeshire! Roger extended his incredible run of results by bagging himself no fewer than a dozen fish on what was a spur-of-the-moment session when he saw some big winds forecast. After starting off with bags and receiving a bite on the first morning, Roger decided to commit to the peg he was in and introduced a load of 8mm and 12mm Bug freezer bait that he had pre-soaked in Bug Liquid Food. That day he would go on to land eight fish in total, including two 40-pounders! Topping up the swim with another 8kg of boilies at night, Roger was awake just before first light the next morning in anticipation of a bite, and shortly after dawn broke all hell broke loose, with all four rods ripping off within 15 minutes of each other. It got so hectic; Roger had to call the angler next door to bring over a net. Amongst that quartet of bites was a 50lb 8oz mirror, following on from the 60lb 8oz, 51lb 6oz and 50lb 4oz giants that have already graced his nets this year. As is usual, Pink Peril pop-ups fished over a large bed of Bug did the damage for Roger. Roger added: "There aren't enough superlatives for The Bug; it is dominating the place at the moment. All the anglers who have got on it have seen their results improve."



Craig Livingstone catch report

The Lock Down Lin - 44lb 12oz. A very special carp indeed for Craig Livingstone, caught over BIG beds of boilie.



Peter Hurst catch report

Wraysbury North Lake regular, Peter Hurst, has switched his attention to the other side of the track for this season and armed with a new bait from Tails Up he was off to a flier, banking this 45lb 5oz mirror, to the best of our knowledge, the largest known fish currently in the South Lake. Well done from us all, Pete!



Will Hayston catch report

A Reading Brute! There seems to be a common theme amongst the catch reports at the moment, Hinge and Chod Rigs over boilie; well, it is spring after all... The age-old tactic's unarguably picking out the big 'uns too, this brute weighing 47lb and ounces for Will Hayston.



Les Bowers catch report

Happy days – one I dearly wanted. The Pretty Fish all 42lb of her.



New PB for Jay Carrick

We're losing track of all these PBs! This beauty came in at a whopping 43lbs 7oz for Hobo Armour team member @jaycarrick_fishingphotography!

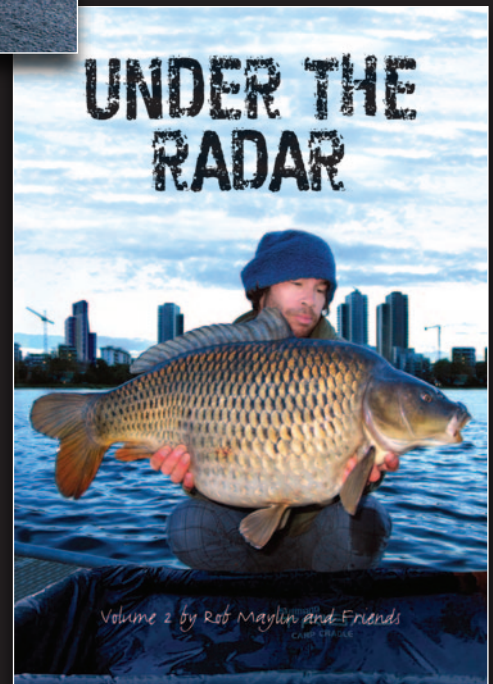
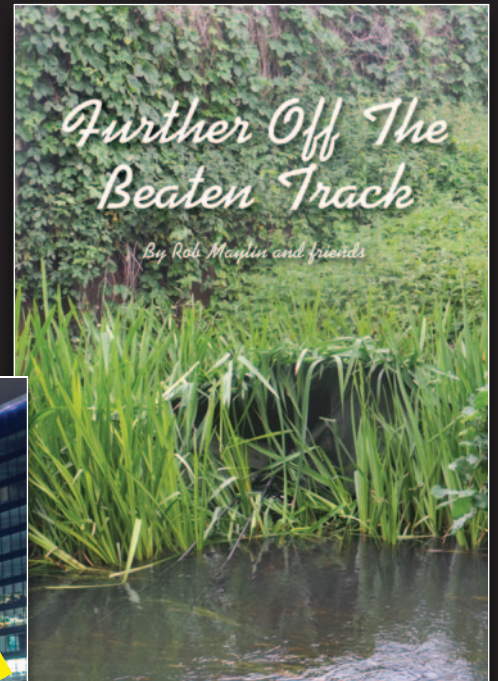
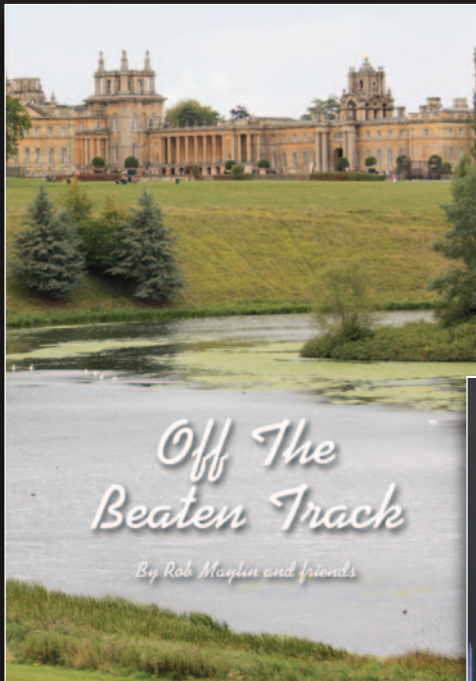


Jack Stutely catch report

I'm not sure what sparked it off but come mid-March when the season ended, I just knew I didn't wanna fish anywhere until May when the club started again, May 1st flew round and I was charged up, I hadn't felt this buzzed for my angling since fishing for the back-up, anyway, I had a target in mind, I wanted one of the lakes 40's this spring!! This one popped up at 43.6 and is the smallest of the three 40's I had this May!! A spell of angling I'll never forget and probably won't ever top!

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK SERIES

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Charlie Ferris catch report

One angler who has kept us inundated with some incredible carp this year has been @charieferris97. Targeting a busy Reading club lake, Charlie has pulled out all the stops this spring by booking off every Friday, to ensure he's been lake side and in a favourable position on the lake for his long weekend trips. Given the pressure the lake see's, meant Charlie has had to adapt his angling depending on available swims and has managed some incredible carp from around the pond, culminating in one of the rarest mirrors in the lake. Carol @ 41lb! Charlie used his trusted size 6 Kamakura Wide Gape X's on spinner rigs, with High Grip Hook Beads and Medium Kickers. 25lb Boom crimped in place ensured his rigs would always kick away and would have the ability to reset if needed. 4oz leads on Heli Safes, with Tight Weave Leadcore and 15lb Carp Line completing his set up.



Shane Newman catch report

Good things come in small packages... Shane Newman's delicate approach tripping up Linch Hill's 'Box Common' at an impressive 42lb 8oz. A carefully placed, trimmed down Krill Active Wafter fished over a little helping of our 2.3mm Bloodworm Pellet producing the bite.



Joel Drapkin catch report

And just like that spring was over, but not before Joel Drapkin had the pleasure of hoisting this epic creature up for the cameras. Joel knew it was going to be his last trip of the spring, so after losing one on last knockings he pulled all the strings to stay an extra night... which turned out to be a great shout! Stoneacres' Mini Choco at 41lb 12oz.



Rob Tough catch report

And then this happened - 52lb 3oz of wet, sodden, heavenly joy. Yeah baby!



Graham Stevens catch report

It's going to take some time for this one to sink in. My new UK pb and to join the fifty club, with such an old and special fish. I'm actually lost for words... The awesome Charlie's Mate at 54lb and 4oz. Part of a 3 fish session along 2 other commons of 33lb 8oz and 30lb 4oz.



Becky Sharman catch report

Well, here she is 48lb 15oz Beauty my UK PB. Thank you to everyone who's messaged me called me totally blown away. One Morning I'll never forget





Steve Cartwright Catch report

Using Carp Tackle online Products , size 4 Cranks , Flurocarbon leader , putty etc , fish run to 3 x 20's to 23.12 and one dodgy night shot of upper double, the scaly one being the 23.12.



A Pride Of Derby 50 for Bob Allan

Bob Allan sent us this pic in whilst I was away UK 50s are not as rare as they used to be but they're pretty rare in Derbyshire. Bob used the Precision Point size 4 curves on a blow back rig with a PSB sweet candy hookbait to tempt the common settling on the scales at 51lb 4oz. That's one happy chap and that's what it's all about. Well done Bob!



David Gaskin catch report

Saving the best 'til last... the one they call Bi-Polar, marking the end of David Gaskin's time on Cramwells. A large spread of 20mm Krill was too much for the 47lb mirror to resist!



Roger Bacon catch report

Cold northerlies and big winds definitely made my end of season trip to Grenville hard going, 20kg of Mixed size DNA Baits Bug soaked in the food liquid on my 20ft deep spot resulted in five bites four fish, The biggest 41.15. My long blow back rigs set to very slow sinking over the light weed on long hook lengths with the mega hand sharpened hook points from Rig-It Tackle, I have had an incredible season on Grenville with lots of big fish including my first UK 60!! This year I'll be fishing the big lake a lot less and focusing on the other syndicate, Where ever you fish this year. Good Luck and always. Enjoy The Journey.

Myles Gibson catch report

Myles Gibson is never shy of a challenge or two, throwing himself head first into the toughest of scenarios when it comes to his angling and in true Myles style... the effort is always worth the reward! Cumbria's first forty-pound common and one he'll not be forgetting for a very long time; just one of several incredible fish he's been holding of late.



Ben Samari catch report

Prepare for your minds to be blown with this bible creature Benjarmy Samari had first light this morning. The BEST of British! The Bream Common - 49lb. Ben fished a Squid Wafter enhanced with Hydrolised Pineapple Hydro Juice over fermenting seeds and feed from the Mainline Baits stable. Congratulations, Ben.



Mark Harris catch report

Mark Harris has enjoyed such great success from Frimley Pit 3 over the previous few years using our S2 hook baits. This includes two separate January captures of Charlies Mate, both times at well over 50lb. This, has led to him receiving a 'red card' (badge of honour) for catching them all (well almost all). There was just one very special fish left, that Mark was longing to catch. With just two weeks remaining on his ticket.... He caught it today, it weighed 43lb6oz. Congratulations Mark from us all at SHB. Exceptional angling as always mate.



James Steele catch report

Urban team member James Steele has been out on the banks of Farlows. James was fishing over a bed of 14mm Tuna and Garlic and had 3 in just 24 hours, this linear being the biggest at just over 38lb. Well done, James. Available now online www.urbanbait.co.uk and from all good tackle retailers.



New PB for Dale Skidmore

Dale Skidmore has just smashed his PB with this massive 64lb common over at Old Mill Lakes just 6oz off the UK record. Taken on the Precision Point size 5 widegapes. That PB will take some beating mate. Congrats from us all at JP.



Matt Rumsam at Virginia waters

How do you like them apples: After catching my target fish from the smaller of the two lakes in April, I hung around for a couple more sessions hoping to catch the big common, but the buzz just wasn't there, and I knew it was time to move onto the big lake. At 140 acres, it was a daunting prospect and due to work commitments, I'd not been able to put in any leg work. With this in mind, I set up on the end of an easterly wind and with the mild temperatures, I knew they'd be in one of the shallow bays. Two hinge stiff rings were dispatched to a far margin snag, and a good handful bait over each for good measure. Less than 2 hours in and my middle rod signalled a take, and a huge eruption of water followed. After applying steady pressure, she kited away from the snag and after a dogged battle, I scooped the net under what can only be described as an absolute unit! On the scales she went 46lb 8oz, a new PB and the biggest known fish in the lake, a fish called Apples. How's your luck!

**For custom
work**

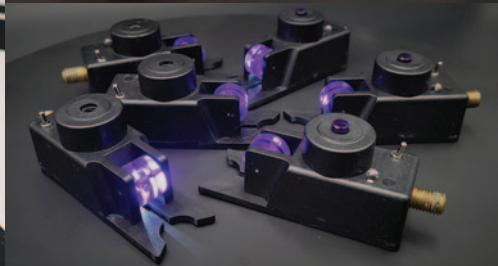
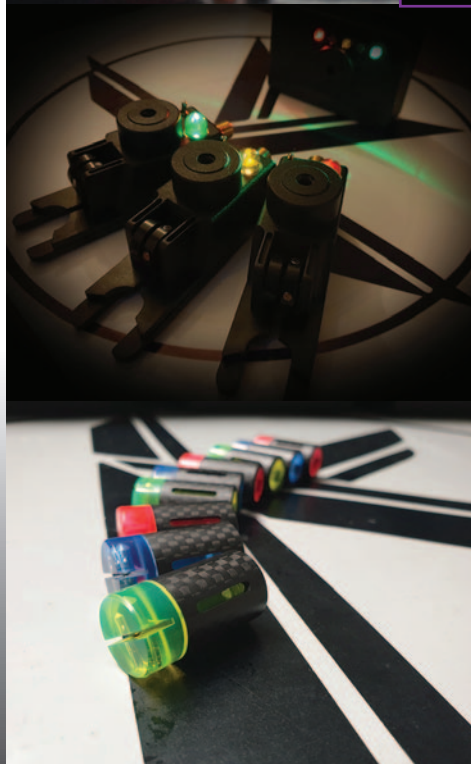
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Darren Belton catch report

Darren Belton has been getting amongst the donkeys recently like these two weighing 43lb and 48lb which he caught during two short sessions both falling to Cell hookbaits fished over Cell 10mm boilies. Happy days, Darren.



First ever resident 40 at anglers' paradise for Scott Jones

We knew it was going to happen before long (we've been working hard behind the scenes feeding and managing the Lakes and Fish) and that day has now come! Scott Jones is the new Anglers Paradise Resident Carp Record Holder who has caught a Carp known as Gemini at 41lbs from the Specimen Carp Lake! Scott caught the special Mirror on a snowman with Dynamite Baits Hot Crab and Krill match the hatch 20mm bottom boilie topped with a 15mm pop up. A massive congratulations to Scott - fantastic angling - you are the new resident Anglers Paradise carp record holder.



Dave Watson catch report

Dave Watson made history recently with Sandhurst's first ever 50! Bubbletail at 50lb 4oz what a carp! And if that wasn't enough Dave backed it up the next day with phoenix at 44lb 5oz! Both fish caught using the advanced wides, brilliant bit of angling mate well done.



UK PB 62lb 12oz – Grenville Magic for Tony Edge

This is not normally something I do but after thinking about it and it being such a momentous catch within my Carp fishing journey, I thought I would put up a post. I am still blown away after catching this unbelievable carp from the mighty Grenville. For those of you that know me know I don't get much time on the bank and to catch one of the special ones out of the lake at 62lb 12oz including 4 thirties in the same session on my second full season on the lake was such a buzz I still can't believe it. To think all those years ago when my dad used to take me and my brother fishing before school to end up catching such a huge UK carp is something I never thought could be possible. This one is for you dad!



Timed to perfection – Cromwell 40-pounder!

Eddie Middleton got his timing and swim selection absolutely spot on when he visited Nottinghamshire day-ticket complex Cromwell Lake for a 48-hour session, bagging himself the PB he so dearly craved. As well as two doubles and two twenties, the 38-year-old from Stoke-on-Trent snared himself his first-ever UK forty, a 40lb 1oz mirror that goes by the name of the Box Mirror.

Eddie said: "I booked a 48-hour session on Cromwell Lakes hoping I'd timed it right just before they started to spawn, as I knew that would give me half a chance of breaking my PB of 38lb 8oz.

"I got to the lake first with my friend, so we had first choice of pegs from whatever was available. After a chat and having been told what pegs were available, we had a walk around the lake. We wanted a social but we both obviously wanted to catch fish, so after looking at the weather forecast and seeing a change of wind direction, we both decided to split up. I went in peg 16 and my friend went in peg one, two very good pegs that we knew would give us a good chance of a fish.

"I wanted 16 as it was the shallow end of the lake and I knew the wind was going to start blowing down there later in the day and for the next two days. I also knew it was going to be challenging fishing up to snags and having to deal with weed, but if I fished it right, I could be in with a chance of a fish or two. Well, my choice paid off, with five fish coming my way, including a new PB, a 40lb 1oz mirror known as the Box Mirror. I was blown away; a trip I'll never forget."

Solid bags were the order of the day for Eddie, who fished PB wafers amongst Crayfish Mini Mix pellets and Krill Meal. He also introduced a mixture of chopped and whole Bug boilies, Crayfish Maxi Mix pellets, S7 Hydro Spod Syrup and Krill Meal.



Paul Bacon catch report

After waiting to get into an area of Kingsmead that obviously was the better end of the lake, I managed a 20lb mega stocky the first night, I settled into the second night feeling confident of another chance. Just on first light I was away and after a very good fight I had a "proper" one in the net, on inspection it's was one of the mega vs fish that are in the lake. At 43lb 1oz I was more than a little happy with that! Third and last night, even though I felt really confident, the bream moved in, and I spent most of the night unhooking bream. Mixed particles with DNA Baits 12-15mm bug out on the spot, Golf ball size Mini mix pellet bags and snow man rigs out there, K1 what a lake.



Jay Burton catch report

Well now I've made a brew I'll begin. About 4.20am my right-hand rod pulled up tight, jump out me pit, it starts kiting round to right I'm attached to a good fish. A ten-minute battle and my new UK PB slips in the net, shaking I slowly get the fish into the sling to get this awesome fish onto the mat OMG, what a unit. On the scales – boom – 47lb 9oz. Thankyou big girl I'll never forget how i feel today you have made it one hell of a morning. It's a lobster thing.



First 40lb-plus for Lee Bailey

Lee Bailey was ecstatic and rightly so after slipping the net under this mid 40 brute. After years of trying, he finally caught his first UK 40+ from his Nene valley syndicate. A fantastic achievement and what a fish to do it with! Healthy helpings of freshwater shrimp were Lee's approach. Well done mate we are buzzing for you.



Russell Crisci catch report

Had this old character at 40lb 4oz fishing the nights, only during my club lakes work party weekend. Complex T/ Hot Crab and krill with some frenzied hemp on pre baited spots doing the only bite.



Boom New Meadow 40 for Macauley Scott

Macauley Scott has banked (40) number 7 from meadow lake, this is "Bobby" tipping the scales at 40lb 2oz this afternoon also being his new PB he got a couple of buckets.





Martin Clarke catch report

Well, here she is, just one good shot from many. What a day, what a moment, watched it go down on the spot and while standing beside the rod it just melted off. Gave a good account of herself and knew it was her. Once it kissed the spreader block and we peered into the net it was just immense, like a barrel of massive sovereigns. 64lb of Waterside magic. So nice to share the moment with a group of friends - so thanks to the person who cancelled their booking.

What is UK Angling Ltd?

I could have started with 101 self-promoted brand products, that we produce, and claim that our hooks are the sharpest.

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Our lake, Dimmocks Pit is the best secluded venue available, loaded with unknown monsters.

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And of course, the screaming, heart stopping sound of an alarm at 2am in the pitch black.

This is what I want all anglers to have, and all anglers to enjoy, that's what UK Angling Ltd is to me.

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Toppings Lane Syndicate Round-Up

What a spring it has been on Toppings Lane for our members. The lake continues to go from strength to strength every year, and the fish seem to be benefitting from our lightly fished collective of experienced members. So far, we've had 9 new fish break the thirty-pound barrier, with captures of note being; Blackscale - 45.10, Patch 39lb, Wasing Lin 35lb 10oz, Pinky 37lb 8oz, Wonga 42lb 8oz, Big Scaley 36lb, Skate Grey 36lb, Clover 39lb 4oz, Unit 40lb 8oz, Welly Fish 35lb, Single Scale 40lb 10oz, Baby Bruno 32lb. Thanks to all of our members for a nice, relaxed year and good luck to the new members starting their tickets in June. Waiting list remains closed. Syndicate is full!



Toppings Lane Syndicate Round-Up



Toppings Lane Syndicate Round-Up



Sam Murphy catch report

Absolutely buzzing with this big mirror from my Kent syndicate I couldn't believe what I was looking down into my net at early hours of yesterday morning. without a doubt the best-looking carp I have ever caught and my new PB at 45lb 12oz.

Zigs – the right time...

By Lance Barton

I was late to the party on the old zigs, a piece of flip flop cast out into the abyss just didn't feel the one. How wrong could I have been; those little pieces of foam suspended at the right depth, on the right day, in the right place proved to be lethal.

We are coming into the period when zigs are at their best. As the carp start to wake up and move around the pond seeking out the thermal layers, and worshipping any sort of warmth, they become incredibly vulnerable.

Location is the absolute key, the smallest of signs could be everything, a subtle head poke or tiny sets of bubbles as they move up in the layers can be all it takes to give the whole stock away. Head for those warmer areas, south facing banks, maybe the back of the wind too which is generally

more sheltered and warmer as a result.

I've played around with my foam on zigs and I have found, the more interesting you can make that hook-bait, the more inquisitive the carp will be in trying to work out exactly what it is. Flavours/sprays have played a big part in my success for sure, I've tinkered with everything you could

think of and very rarely if ever, do I cast one out without a fresh dip in some liquid, or a couple of squirts of my favoured Signature Squid bait spray.

I actually really enjoy fishing zigs now; it's become a period that I really look forward to and a time that can put some really special carp in the album. ■





Carpy Humour



The Bullet 44lb 12oz

By Chris Connaughton

I started a new winter syndicate at Hacche Moor Fishery close to where I live in the south west this year. With a stock of 60 fish all of which are incredible I was eager to get a rod and line in. After 5 quick freezing overnights since November and no fish on the bank I was starting to question my approach. On my 5th blank I decided to reel in early (as no-one else was on the lake) to have a lead around and try and get something going.

I found some lovely spots up the shallower end of the lake where I had seen a few shows on previous sessions. Knowing there was a warm front coming a few days later and finally being able to put 2 nights

together I decided to put some boilie on the spots ready to return a few days later. Luckily being the manager of a tackle shop (Quay Sports) here in Barnstaple Devon I told my boss all about the game plan and he let me leave early to beat the dark (Cheers Mark).

Upon arriving at the lake Friday there was only one other member fishing and the swim I was targeting was free (game on). With 3 of my own own Remix Baits Cellnapple hookbaits on the rigs it wasn't long before the rods where in and the confidence was sky high.

The next morning saw my first fish of the winter campaign going over the cord at 22lb and being an immaculate fully.

Then that evening something unbelievable happened, just on dark my right hand bobbin started to lift slightly and just held at the rod not releasing the line from the line clip. Deciding something was not right I lifted into the rod and I was in but this time it felt much bigger.

After a rather intense battle and being slightly weeded a few times I landed the king of the pond 'The Bullet' at a whopping weight of 44lb 12oz and on my own hookbaits makes it so much more special. This capture being a new pb, The Bullets first winter capture and also setting a new lake record!!

Three more weeks left then the prep for gigantica main lake begins for April. ■







Oak Lakes Fisheries

www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk



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

New Pipe Lake record at 43lbs



Twisted Scale caught by Ricky Collett he was after his target Jensens Common which he also caught at 41lbs 6oz.



24lbs 8oz for Buddha. He also had three tench so he's had a busy day. Nice catches.



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.



21lbs for Buddha.



Ricky Collett is on a roll



Young Frank Chappell fishing the day ticket lake with his Dad Greg smashed his PB which now stands at 21lbs 7oz.



18lbs 8oz for Buddha.

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.

Exclusive

The Overnight Life

By Levi Reeves



Working 5 or 6 days a week as a scaffolder humping tube and fitting around is hard enough but lately I've been pushing myself to do overnights between working days, less sleep and more energy burned but it's all worth it in my eyes.

I started baiting an area that was sort of "middle of the lake" territory, quite silty and snaggy but I knew there'd be traffic passing through and hopefully they'd get their heads down on some boilie I'd be putting in. I started baiting a week before with say a couple of handfuls of Mainlines Cell and Fibre with a good coating of smart liquid. I quickly realised the fish were quick on the bait as the next evening I went to bait up there was fizzing and all sorts. I upped the amount and tried baiting each morning and each evening. It sounds a lot but when you think about it if you get a good group come along the bait they'll demolish the zone.

I packed the car the morning I was

off to work so that I could go straight down the motorway to the lake from work, it's all about saving little bits of time so I can get that more precious time sat on the bank watching and learning. I rocked up to find the swim available and I'd already rigged and baited the rods up in my break at work so they only needed to be balanced and cast out. I was using Hinge stiff rigs made of Gardner Tackle components with a ramped up Mainline salty squid pop up. There was no actual spot the bottom was quite unified and I was just casting for the best "drop", by this I mean feeling for the harder areas amongst the soft silt. I feel this helps a lot and indicates some sort of cleaner spot that's been fed on.

I had just put out my last rod and as I was sinking the line it pulled out of my hand. I was in to a fish and in record time. Watching the fish hit the surface and the dorsal wizz along the surface like a shark on Bondi beach I was battling this fish. The fight was made all the more ferocious because I was using braided Mainline, I'd opted to use the Gardner hydrosink braid

because I was after line concealment but also something to help with the snags and this done the job perfectly. After a spirited fight the fish succumbed and I'd netted my first fish off the baited zone. A lovely common of 23½lb one I'd caught before and remember it because of its boxy shape.

I'd done the pics and remember thinking this is the one, spots working and the Tackle is on the money but into the early hours I heard what I can only describe as hippos jumping further down the lake this got me thinking for a while. Before I headed off to work I baited my swim but also the area I'd heard those fish showing from.

After missing a couple of days and baiting consistently I was back down the lake after work again in my baited zone not the new area yet but the one I'd caught from "the proven zone". Same Tackle and same bait success doesn't change it keeps doing me proud, rods dispatched I was sitting comfortable. I'd seen a few crash out over the zone and was getting all buzzed up but to no avail as I fell









asleep and thought I'd missed my chance until around 3 in the morning the rod ripped off peeling line off the locked up spool. I bent into this fish and felt it was a good one, after a lot of back and forth and some really hairy moments I bundled this fish into my net to find another common again in pristine condition but I'd also noticed it which fish it was, I'd called this one swirly scale as on its shoulder it's got some swirly scales. I was happy with catching the one I'd watched not so long ago from the trees.

Same treatment again, few days off with bait being applied in both areas. Plenty of Mainlines cell and Fibre was being used I'd really ramped it up since the few cattys worth as the fish I'd been catching were all passing the bait heavily. I decided to fish the new area for a slight change, my gut was telling me I needed to be in there, intuition I guess!. I'd done the same again, like I said there's no point in changing the tactics if they were spot on, casting for the better drops again also. Not long after perhaps 30 minutes I'd received the first take which

was a lovely 20lb mirror with a tremendous long overslung mouth. I'd had a rig ready to go so I was quick and effective on the spot so on netting the fish I'd popped the hook and changed the rig to get back out straight away. proving valuable as I'd set the bobbing it pulled up straight away and I was in again and with a fish in the net already my confidence was brimming. I landed the fish albeit a smaller common probably only 5lb or so but spawned on more than likely.

I'd baited up after those fish with more boilie and having had a breem also I didn't want to be left with nothing out there bait wise. I drifted off to sleep and awoke to my slack like now bow string tight and screaming, into the fish it was heavy and held its ground well even when I was really bending the rod into the fish to avoid snags it didn't really budge. I knocked the headlamp on and seen which fish it was straight away being the big mirror. I was happy to see him under the tip and after some real hard work he was in the net. I'd decided to sack him as it wasn't far

off first light and after all I did need some kip as I was off to work soon.

I decided not to put the rod back out not because of disturbance but mainly because I needed some kip for work!. I only had two rods out of three fishing and one of them was away again. I could tell it wasn't quite as big as the previous 33lb 12 oz mirror I'd just caught but it was a lovely common with a little dip in its back, a real character.

I'd left the fish in the net and again I was down to only one rod left fishing. I woke up to the most amazing foggy morning I'd seen in a long while, truly atmospheric, proper carp angling morning. My passion for angling was driven by mornings like this. I done the pictures for the pair of carp I'd caught and on inspecting the sack the big mirror was in it was full of boilie it had been eating, real testament to the bait I was using. Many people aren't happy going to work but I'll be truthful I was tremendously happy that morning evening sat on site working I was buzzing my head off. A feeling only a carp angler would understand. ■



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Estate Lake Success

By Jonny Old

I had a two-night trip planned around the February full moon period. After a few laps I decided to fish up the top end of the lake which is the shallow end, fed by a stream.

After watching fish use the body of open water, I decided to fish my rods on two separate spots. With all the weed dead from the summer, I opted to fish wafers on size 4 Kurvs on spinner rigs. I always add an extra hook bead to stop the wafer from sitting too far back the shank of the hook. This enables the hook to be covered by the hookbait. I fished these on long 18inch 20lb IQ2 boom sections, with and a naked heli safe set up.

A Butter Corn goo soaked Cell wafer was the hookbait of choice, over a few kilos of Cell, spread nicely with the Heavy Katapult.

The night drew in quick and temperatures dropped to around -5 however a few hours into darkness I had 2 fish in quick succession. One being a small 11lb stocky the other 26lb. I redid both rods and baited again with another kilo of bait. Nothing happened till the following day when out of the blue came a lovely 27lb mirror. I reposition the rods for the night







ahead making sure everything was perfect.

The night passed very quietly, I thought I might have overbaited this time as the temperature had gone to -6, however just before first light I had a few beeps on the right-hand rod.

Looking out the bivvy I couldn't tell if I had a take as the bobbins were still on the floor. After another beep, I grabbed the head torch to see the right-hand rod bent right round. The reel was frozen and the bobbin had frozen to the floor.

After a good long fight, I landed a fish I wanted known as 'Bowlers Pet' at 34lb 14oz. I decided just to put a single out over that spot and not to bait up again. It only took 5 mins and it was away again. This time with a stunning 18lb scaly. ■





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An African Adventure...

A story of a fishery, where no fishery has been before by David Charley

Greetings from a rather warm Mozambique! I would like to introduce myself and appreciate anyone who has taken some time-out to read this story. I don't mean to go on about myself, but the first few paragraphs below I hope will help explain my phi-

losophy and drive with regards to developing the first freshwater, catch & release, fishery in Mozambique.

My name is Dave Charley, and I'm a Brit who has been living in this wonderful country for the past two decades, having arrived here as a 25yr old scuba diving instructor back in 2002. I fell in love with the place & the people instantly, and it certainly

helped that the coastline was full of Manta rays and Whale sharks. The pristine reefs were swarming with all sorts of aquatic life, an untouched world where every species seem to thrive in abundance. Days were filled with unforgettable experiences, swimming alongside Whale sharks (the world's biggest fish) averaging between 7m – 12m!



Grow-out pond under construction.



2.5m trench due to subtropical climate.

After a couple of years I set up the first company in Mozambique to specialize in underwater imagery. Now my daily routine was to film divers and their interactions with these incredible mega fauna. Being so involved in the ocean over many years, I began to witness first-hand the destructive consequences of illegal fishing along the coastline and decline in fish stocks and the richness of the reefs. In 2010 I made a documentary with WWF to highlight the plight of sharks worldwide using Mozambique as a case study (<https://vimeo.com/28539793/description>).

During the 3 years it took to produce this film, one of the most profound experiences was observing the daily routine of coastal communities dragging in huge seine nets onto the

beaches, often 13 - 15 people hauling at the same time. The results were always meagre, rarely exceeding half a bucket full of tiny juvenile fish, squid and crabs. What was apparent that if these precious marine resources were to have any sort of future, there needed to be a better utilization of the freshwater lakes and lagoons, to try and reduce the incessant fishing pressure on the coastal species.

This experience led me to set-up a Tilapia fish farm, producing protein for the local markets from lakes, rather than depleting the ocean resources. After a period of five years (sometimes incredibly trying years!) we were successfully producing 1-2 tons a month for the markets. Using intensive cage production, we could grow up to 25kgs of fish per cubic metre,

and all the hard work was beginning to finally pay off.

However, in the fifth year we received some 'health certified' fish, which turned out to have an incurable virus called TiLV. The result: five years of hard work lost and the fish farm closed down.

This was a bitter pill to swallow, both mentality & financially. However, I was very fortunate be offered an opportunity to help develop a small fish farm and assist with the management of a magnificently beautiful fishery back in the UK. Twice annual trips, for a couple of months at a time, gave me the opportunity to implement extensive production methods, focusing on creating optimal aquatic conditions for the desired species to thrive in, which in this case was Tench & Crucian carp.



Soon to be Mozambique's first freshwater fishery...



Carp food! Zambezi river mussels, common pond snails and freshwater shrimp.

It was marvellous to be working with nature again, rather than trying to push nature to its limits. Within the first year we produced hundreds of healthy juveniles from a small, but rich, breeding pond without any feed inputs.

We developed a long-term fishery management plan that focused on improving the aquatic ecosystem, including planting hundreds of marginal plants and macrophytes, along with netting the lake to reduce unwanted biomass. It was incredible how quickly the fishery was reporting the biggest fish captures in years. It was also wonderful to be able to go fishing again regularly, catching a variety of species, but mostly my beloved carp. I'd certainly missed this being in Africa for two decades, and how the fishing scene had transformed and grown whilst I'd been away!

The work was so rewarding, but my wife and dogs were back home in Mozambique, and being away from them for such periods of time was never going to be a long-term option. Then one day I received a call from a former national director of fisheries in Mozambique, asking if I might be

interested in working as a technical consultant at the Centre of Aquaculture Research. Although going back into intensive fish production wasn't what I ideally want to do, it gave me the chance to be working with fish again in Mozambique. The work place was 5hrs from my home, but they agreed to 10 days onsite, 5 days remote working from home. I said yes and began my new job in October 2020.

This is really where the fishery management story actually begins! My work just happened to be situated 5kms away from a friend of mine who also had a Tilapia fish farm. So whilst my working hours were spent managing a team of 14 staff and trying to meet the target of producing 2 million Tilapia fingerlings each year for aquaculture production, my free time ended up being almost entirely spent developing a recreational fishery just down the road.

Within a month of arriving at this new place, Piet, my friend and owner of the fish farm, offered to build me a grow out pond after we discussed the idea of bringing in some carp. This was just too exciting to be true. And yet he called me over a few days later

and there was an excavator, busy building a 25m x 25m grow-out pond!

Piet had plans in place to build two large reservoirs at the top of his farm, which would provide water to his aquaculture ponds if any droughts were to occur. We had already chatted that one of these could eventually be for the carp. A private carp fishing dam, in Mozambique, I was almost overwhelmed by that prospect!

At this point my thoughts began to paint a bigger picture, why not turn both dams into Mozambique's first freshwater fishery?! I felt confident that my knowledge & experience would help in creating a rich, thriving venue, and they had the land and infrastructure in place and ready to go. We met and discussed the business proposal. Piet and the team were very enthusiastic by the prospect, and we soon ended up signing an MoU between us. We were going to create the first recreational fishery in Mozambique!

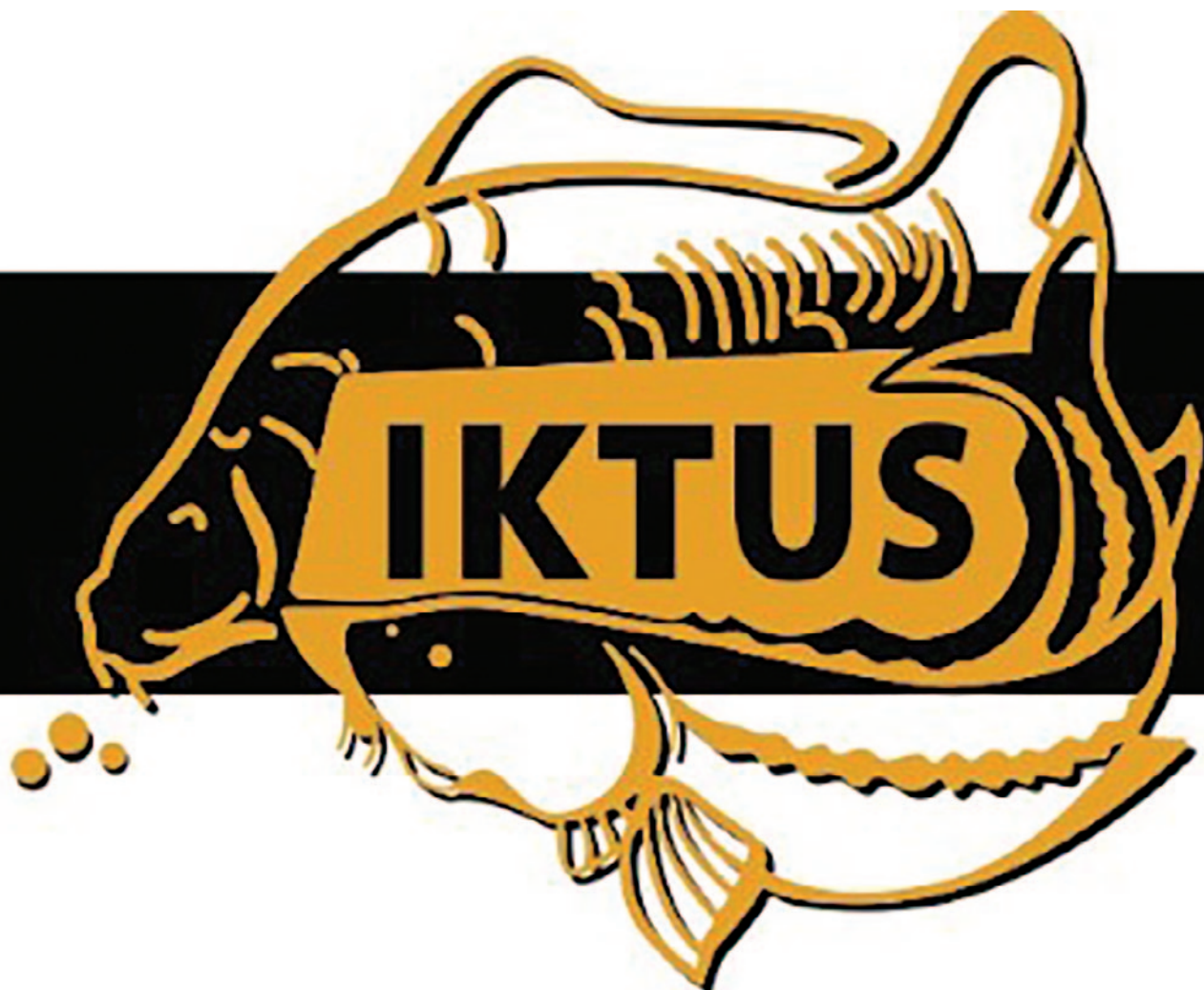
The excavators began the ground work for the dams in late November, knowing that the rainy season was a few months away, and could easily make such work impossible for a couple of months at least. I became



Planting Blue water lilies into grow-out pond.



Macrophytes and marginals establishing nicely.



FISHING RESORT



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Safety never takes a day off...

obsessed in noting everything native and aquatic. I was very fortunate to have use of a company car, with 4x4, so I would drive off to every river, stream and puddle of water to examine what was living there.

My first plan of action was to populate the grow-out pond with as much life, and potential food source for the carp, as possible. I discovered freshwater mussels (*Mutela zambezienensis*), a variety of snails (*Lymnaea natalensis* & *Gyraulus costulatus*), shrimp (*Caridina nilotica*) and even some small fish, as carp also eat fish! These species would need habitat and protection to thrive in, so that meant planting marginal reeds (*Phragmites australis*), bulrushes (*Typha capensis*), along with Blue water lilies (*Nymphaea nouchali*) and an abundance of macrophytes like Fennel-leaved pondweed (*Stuckenia pectinatus*), Curly water thyme (*Lagarosiphon major*) & Common hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*). The baby carp would be arriving mid-March, so time was of the essence to establish a rich aquatic home before their introduction.

In Africa things can be somewhat different to Europe. Whereas these plants and species back in Europe would be purchased from a supplier with ease, there's nothing like that over here. So, I would ask a staff member or two to collect mussels from our

production ponds when they were drained down. This had to be done fairly quickly, otherwise the seemingly insatiable African Openbilled storks would beat us to them all! I would wade (without waders) into leech-filled canals to collect lilies, fennel-leaved pondweed & hornwort.

I even found myself pulling out weed from the banks of a large dam, a bumpy three-hour drive away, that has some huge resident crocodiles. Safety never takes a day off they say! It was at this huge expanse of water that I caught a few small Tigerfish over a weekend, but more on that later...

Mid-March 2021 finally arrived and the big day was upon us, we were going to receive our 100 carp & 5 Grass carp. Nothing is really close in Africa, so their journey began at

07:30, and they were lovingly released into the grow-out pond at 20:30. The genetics had landed!

At this point I think it's worth expanding on the excitement of the fish we had received. During my time involved with fishery management in the UK, we had purchased ten, 2yr old, leney strain carp, averaging 2lbs. The fish we received here in Mozambique have a track record of growing over half a pound a month! Obviously the sub-tropical climate plays a huge part in these numbers, with the water temperatures ranging between 18C

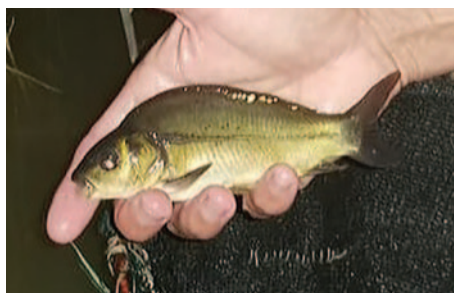
32C throughout the year. These carp also originated from a genetic line of fish that have exceeded 40kg's.

The project was beginning, and the excitement was building...

Part two of the African Adventure to follow soon. ■



Catching a small Tigerfish.



The carp finally arrived.

BIG CARP TOP TEN

Carp Fisheries



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Eight Days In Eden

Written and photos by: Tamás Skaczel

Translated by: Andrea Bánátiné Skaczel



Photo: Nick Parkinson.

I set off to Thailand alone and with limited English knowledge on the 16th of November, 2021 – I must admit I was very excited. My plane departed from Budapest, and then in Doha I changed plane to Phuket. I had two folders full of certifications with me hoping that everything goes smoothly and I can get to my final destination, Gillhams Fishing Resort.

After landing on the 17th of November I had to stay in a quarantine hotel for a night until I received the result of my Covid test. On the morning of 18th of November the taxi driver of Gillhams came to pick me up and take me to the province of Krabi. We passed through amazing places, the landscape was dotted with palm trees, rainforests and beautiful mountains. As we were heading towards the end of our two-hour journey, I got more and more excited. When we arrived the huge iron gate opened and I entered the Garden of Eden. I was received by Sean Gillham himself. After going through the necessary administration he informed me about the schedule of fishing: the

time window is between 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

My fishing started next day, so I decided to look around. As I was walking around and breathing the warm and vaporous tropical air I felt I became one with nature. I understood why it is so important to take care of this wondrous planet.

While I was wandering around the complex I bumped into a few fishing stands and talked to the anglers. Everybody was from England, I was the only Hungarian. Everyone was very helpful. When I arrived back to my room the daily limit of my trip waited for me in front of the door: I was about to fish for six days, this meant 6 kg (13,23 lbs) from the boilie with the secret recipe and six packets of halibut pellet. Then my guide, Kyle McKellar arrived. He asked what my target fish was. I said I was mainly interested in Siamese Carp, but I am eager to catch any species. He informed me that I got one of the best spots on the lake, and we talked through everything.

On the 19th of November I got up at 6 a.m. and I was very excited. I took a few packets of boilies and pellets

and went to place number 1. Kyle had already been waiting for me with the equipment (it is provided here for the anglers), showed me how to use it and finally put a black whistle in my hand. "When you get a bite you strike, whistle, shout place number one – and I will be here immediately to help you" He did the balling in previously, and showed me where to throw the baited gear. I put boilie and yellow, tik-tak shaped wafers bait next to the hook and threw in about 10-14 meters from the shore. Water was 6-7 meters deep there. On the other rod I baited frozen fish and threw it to the bankside floating plant. Fishing finally have started! I was waiting excitedly... While I was thinking, a Hungarian vizsla (a traditional Hungarian dog breed) sat next to me!

Then in a few minutes I already had a bite. The silence was disturbed by full line pull on the helicopter rig – I must add that 80 lbs multifilament is well-tried here because of the enormous size of the fish! I hooked up, whistled, and shouted the number of my place. We have to act like this on every single occasion, otherwise we cannot get help and we might lose



Biggest Siamese Carp of my first day: 77,16 lbs (35 kg).

our dream fish... I didn't know yet what was on the hook, I only felt the strong pulling.

For the voice of the whistle Kyle rushed back to me and jumped into the water with a huge landing net. It was so huge that two men could easily fit into it. After a big fight my first fish, an Amazonas Redtail Catfish came into the surface. I was very happy; I have only seen such a beautiful fish in Jeremy Wade's film so far. When the fish was in the net I jumped into the water and Kyle made pictures of me with my phone. After the photo-shoot we let the beautiful Redtail back into the water, I rebated the rig and threw it back into the feed area.

A biteless period came after. Kyle returned after 1-2 hours, took out my fish-baited rig and put on a robust float rig. It resembled a bit of a carp-rig. He also brought stick pellet, which was a special granulated pellet. This is a well-tried feed here. Kyle prepared it properly, made some balls (five or six pieces), and stuffed it into the feeder. He warned me that it

should always be stuffed hard into the feeder.

When we were ready with everything Kyle started to throw the balls into the water in hand-throwing distance. After the fourth ball he told me to throw the rig to the same area. The float was set to midwater, to 1,5-meter depth, and as I threw to the designated area he kept on throwing the balls. As the float reached the rig depth the food started to dissolve from the swimfeeder and fell on the bait. I waited and watched the float. Suddenly it disappeared under the water, I felt a strong pull and I immediately hooked it. I knew and felt that this fish is much bigger than the previous one. It aimed open water with enormous strength and a demanding yet intoxicating play began.

Finally, after half an hour I managed to direct it back in front of me. I felt that it slowly let go and swam toward the surface. Suddenly I got a glimpse of the first Giant Barb of my life! I was very happy and excited. Kyle jumped into the water again and helped the

exhausted fish into the net easily. I made it, it was in the net! Kyle took out the hook from the fish's mouth and I put the rig aside. Fortunately, the neighboring angler's wife was walking in my direction and helped taking pictures of my first Giant Barb, which exceeded 72,75 lbs (33 kg). When we were done with the photos we sterilized the mouth, pectoral and caudal fin of the fish. It is a necessary protocol when you catch a carp.

Afterwards, I rebaited the float rig with a single boilie, stuffed a ball into the swimfeeder, and threw it back to the baited area. My first day was successful, I caught four more Giant Barbs above 77,16 lbs (35 kg) with this technique! The last one even exceeded 88,18 lbs (40 kg). I was pleased and exhausted. In the evening I threw back the fish rig next to the plants and soon I had a take: it was a fresh-water ray. It weighed 22,06 lbs (10 kg), we let it back into the water after we took some quick and safe pictures. I rebaited the hook with fish, threw it back to the plants



My biggest fish on the second day: Siamese Carp, 88,18 lbs (40 kg).

again, and at 18:20 a bigger Amazonas Redtail picked it up... This was my first catfish above 44,09 lbs (20 kg). I finished my day with this fish.

I started the second day in the same way: one rod in the bottom, one in midwater. After a few hours, I still haven't had any bites. I decided to change the yellow, tik-tak wafers-shaped bait as I noticed that I hadn't had any bites with this colour bait for two days. So I put on a white pop-up next to the boilie, poured pellet and boilie into a PVA bag, and threw this bait back into the pre-baited area.

While I was waiting I continued fishing with the float rig. This turned out to be much more successful: only after ten minutes, the third throwing aroused the interest of a large Giant Barb! Just as the float reached the rig depth the fish took it and literally wanted to pull out the rod from my hand. I hooked, whistled, and shouted. Kyle arrived and watched me playing the fish. I felt it was a much bigger piece. After 30-40 minutes Kyle got it in the net from the water and told me this carp was over

99,21 lbs (kg). I was blissfully happy; I broke my own record on the second day. We took some pictures in a rush.

Then I had a catch again from the bottom, I managed to drive a similar-sized carp into the keepnet. We took some pictures with trouble but with joy, sterilized the fish, and let it back into the deep water. After all these I rested a bit, ate, and called some of my friends to share my experience. I only had a few hours left from the day, but I could still fish out a large Pacu and an Amazonas Redtail.

When I took my place on the third day I realized that Kyle had a day off and Chris Pache was doing his duties but he was just as helpful as Kyle. He left me alone to help others, but I was constantly whistling and shouting my place number. I caught at least 15 fish from different species: Carp, Catfish, Pacu. I got lots of smaller and bigger fish with a Giant Barb exceeding 110,23 lb (50 kg) and an Amazonas Redtail of 59,52 lb (27 kg)

My fourth day started on the 22nd of November. I rushed to my place to start the pre-baiting. Kyle returned,

but Chris spent a lot of time with me too as this day was not boring either. At 7:05 all the rig was in its baited area. The lake was in deathly silence. Then, in the blink of an eye, there was a bite in the midwater rig. After a short play, my first fish was an Alligator Gar. Chris helped me pull it to the shore. He was surprised that I caught it with boilie. This day was a real blessing for me as I could catch a lot of Giant Barbs including a real Methuselah which was over 116,84 lbs (55 kg). I could also catch a Chinese Black Carp. All the other anglers and guides were celebrating with me, they were more delighted with this catch than with a Giant Barb. It is a real sensation around here, but I believe it is a curiosity at home as well. Besides these, I also caught numerous Redtails too.

On the fifth morning I hurried to my place on the shore again. Initially, I caught three or four carps below 44,09 lbs (20 kg) and a Redtail. But I had a feeling that a sensational catch is waiting for me this day. I continued the tiresome fishing with the float rig,

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.

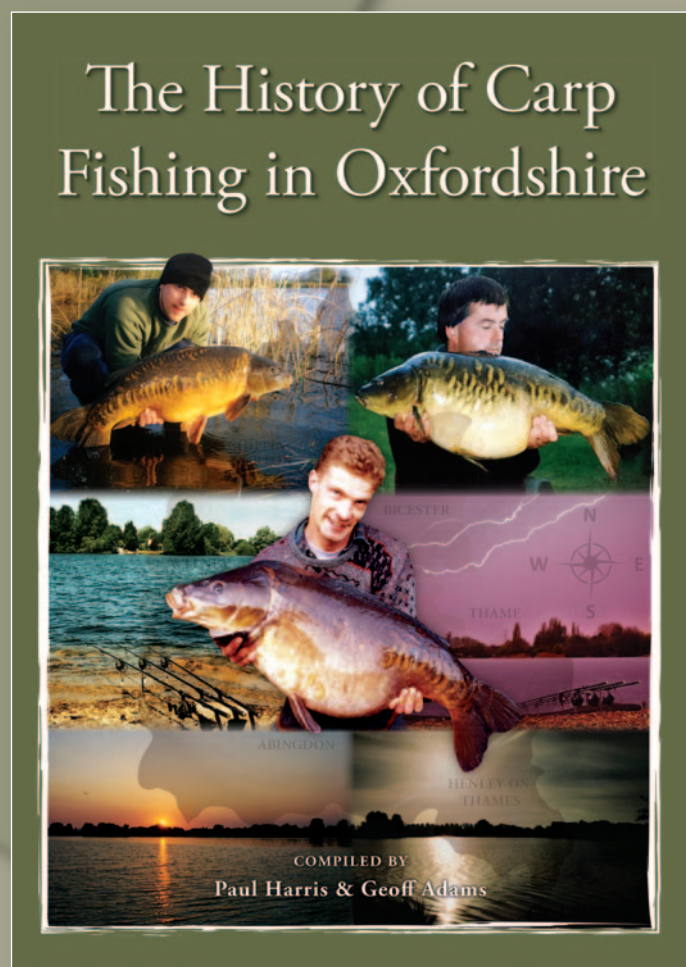
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing 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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AVAILABLE THIS AUTUMN



Day 3, biggest catch: 59,52 lbs (27 kg) Redtail.



The most special catch of day 4: Alligator Gar



I could only hold this 103,62 lb (47 kg) Siamese Carp with the help of my guide Kyle Mckellar.



Record catch of day 5: cca 154,32 lbs (70 kg). Dream record in hand, with the help of guide Chris Pache.



One meter long, beautiful Pacu.



I held 277,16 lbs (35 kg) Siamese Carps at the same time!

but it did not work. There were more fish from the bottom, but these were smaller in size. I ran out of the stick pellet, so I asked Chris for some more. In five minutes he prepared the substance for me, I made some balls and started to feed a new area. When I finished I put some into the groundbait feeder and bait on the hook and set the rig for one meter.

After throwing in it set into work and started to sway as the feed was dissolving. After securing the baitrunner I put the rod down and a fish immediately started to pull it... A robust Methuselah hooked up. At the end of a fifty-minutes-long play Chris was waiting in the water to net it. When it appeared on the surface Chris told: "It is an enormous fish". I could only comprehend how much this sentence meant on this lake when I was standing above the Carp. When I jumped into the water to take a picture of us we measured the Giant Barb several times and it turned out that it was almost 154,32 lbs (kg)!

When we let the fish back into the water I took out my rigs and decided to finish fishing for the day. But as there was only a short day left from

my angling I threw back both rigs. I only had a few remaining hours but I managed to catch two Giant Barbs with 77,16-99,21 lbs (35-45 kg). After the last fish, I was just sitting and chatting with Chris and Kyle.

Frankly speaking, on the last day I was constantly feeding (almost every hour), I fed everything I had left, and it was successful. I caught lots of Carps, all were 44,09-66,14-88,18 lbs (20-30-40 kg). I managed to catch two more Pacuses with 26,46-33,07 lbs (12-15 kg), and obviously, the beautiful Red-tail did not stay away. I used one boilie combined with white plastic corn, this was effective so far. I hang on the bite indicator, set the baitrunner, and threw the second rig into the water.

I threw a few, but there was no reaction from the fish. As I was standing on the concrete stand with the rod in my hand I realized that the biggest Black Carp of the lake was swimming at the surface by the plants next to me, with its 3-meter length and 220,46 lbs (100 kg). My body started to tingle so I quickly threw the float rig 50 cm in front of it. I stuffed the swimfeeder; boilie and

pellet were in my pocket. I threw in the rig again and threw a handful of boilie and pellet on the float so that the Carp hear that something is streaming above him.

The water was boiling around the float. I wasn't lazy; I threw in again and threw boilie and pellet on the float too. The baitrunner was off, and then, just in a second, the float was underwater and the fish was pulling the line. I let him take it. I sized up the situation and struck – the fish was so enormous that it had the power to break my rig. The water rumbled and then there was silence. We felt each other's presence for ten seconds. Several people hurried to me, they told me they had never seen something like that on this lake before. I was happy and sad at the same time, but I could at least feel the fish for a short time.

I set back in my chair and called my friend János, who fished here a few times. He told me several times that he felt he had left something in the lake; he also got in touch with the biggest Mekong, the "Big Boy". I understood everything: this lake always gives you things for a short

time just to make sure you return. I thanked the conversation and finished fishing. I left my spot calmly and in silence because I got the carp I was only dreaming of. As I walked back slowly to my bungalow I admired the huge fireflies in the dark. It was a perfect closure. At dinner, we discussed the happenings of the last day with my new friends. The next morning I packed my bag and gave my leftover packet of pellet to my new neighbour. My flight took off in the evening from Phuket Airport, so my new fishing buddy's Dean Peters, Paul Stanbridge and I decided to go to Krabi to take pictures and buy presents.

I am glad that I explored both sea-side bays during my trip and that I spent eight days in the Garden of Eden. After shopping, we drank a beer on the terrace, watched the water and we just knew that we will return here. There was unbroken silence, nobody whistled, as if the lake was saying goodbye to us. We set still and sad in the taxi, the only thing that gave us some comfort was that we can soon meet our families and share our wonderful experience with them.



Most and biggest Siamese Carps were caught with float rig

Special thanks to Gillhams Fishing Resort for doing everything to make my dream come true. Thanks to my

family, my wife, my child, and all my friends who rejoiced with me for my success. ■

Carpy Humour

When a carp shows over your baited spot and your rod still hasn't gone off!

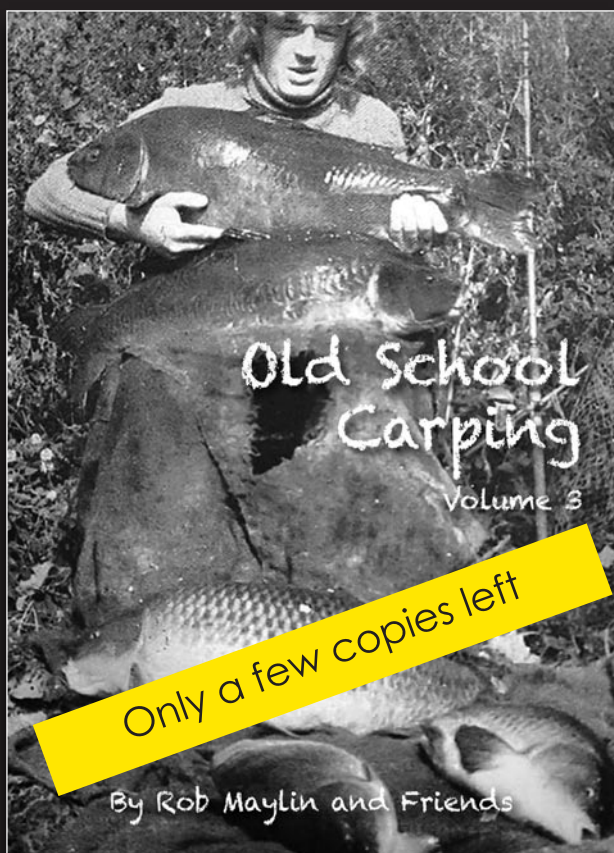
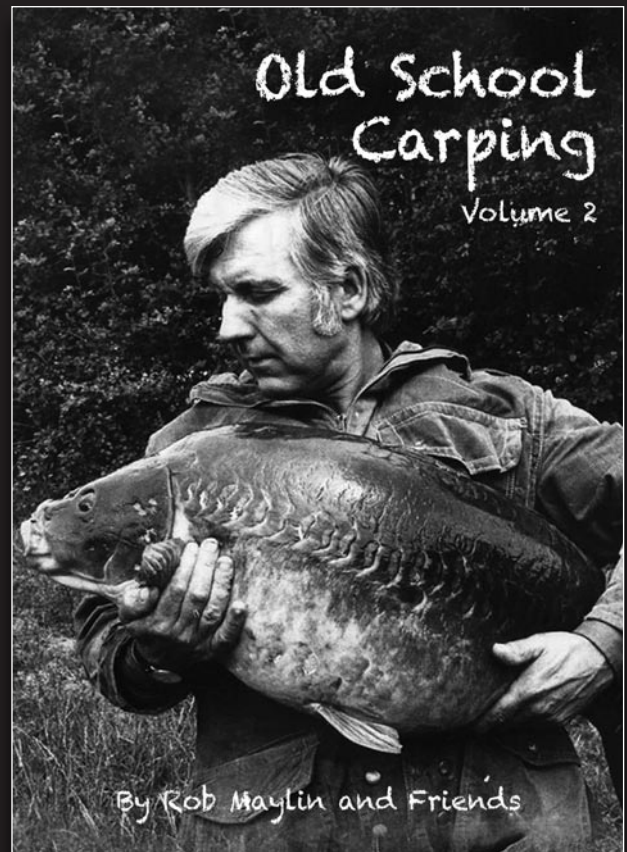
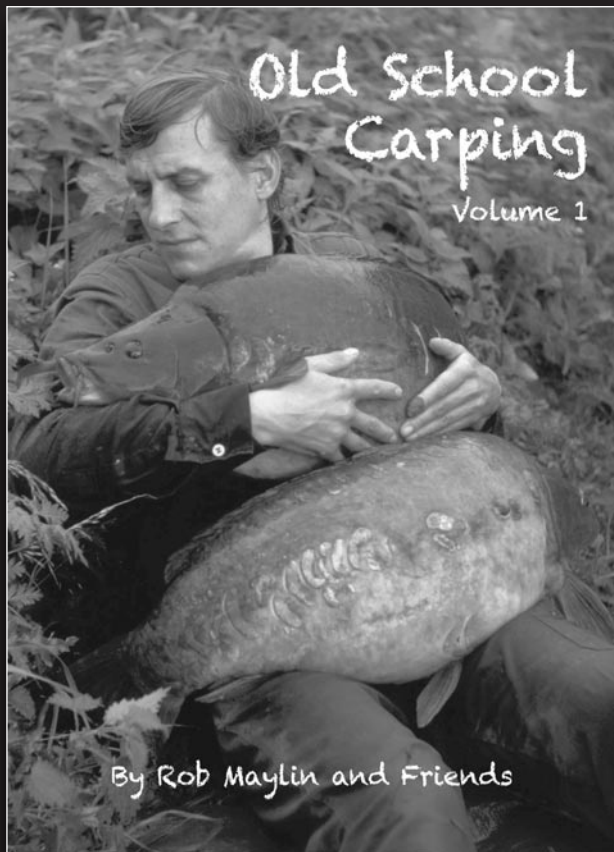


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Exclusive

Bitemark Remembered

By Baz Lloyd



Ifished a three-night session, and although I didn't catch anything, it gave me some vital information. Following a move of swims for my third night, I sat looking over the mighty Stoneacres the following morning and saw Bitemark come clean out of the water at range, some 100 yards past where I was fishing.

That session came to an end, and it was a couple of weeks later before I was back. I didn't even do a lap; I knew where I wanted to be and got in the same swim as before heading straight out to the zone that I saw Bitemark show. It was the end of April, the fish were active, it felt warm, and I was determined to get the rods rocking in that area. I found one area, dropped a H block and found another spot to the left.

Both spots looked amazing, having been recently fed on so I spent a few hours getting everything perfect. Just two hours after getting the rods out, I had a couple of beeps.

The bobbin was drilled into the alarm and the line was drum tight. I picked the rod up and to my disbelief, I was in!

It was a mid-twenty common, my first fish from the lake and so early on in the session. I had to quickly rush to get the rod back out but with the light levels fading, I did it as best I could half thinking if it wasn't right, I could sort it out the next morning.

The following day I went back out and re-did the two rods on the big area that I had caught the fish on. I drifted over to the other spot, with the



remaining rod fishing to it and everything was fine, bait still on and freebies around it, so I left it. I was using the early batches of the Manilla boilies and I could see them easily from the boat, nothing had touched them, yet!

That evening I had a call from my brother, Scott, he had seen a load of fish showing down the other end of the lake and told me I needed to get my arse down there. But having already caught one and seeing Bitemark in the area a few weeks previous, I stuck to my guns and hoped that something would happen by the morning.

The following morning, I was on the phone to Scott again and the fish were still at the other end of the lake, but I received a couple of beeps. I hung up the phone and by the time I got to it, the clutch was ticking! Then commenced an epic boat battle! The fish weeded me a number of times and I caught a glimpse of it quite early on, I knew what it was after seeing the tell-tale single scale on one flank.

The next five minutes were some of the most nerve wracking of my life, but eventually, I bundled one of the UK's finest carp into the net. A few lads had gathered on the bank, I looked back and screamed out her name, 'Bitemark'! She was huge, at just over 49lb, I couldn't actually believe it, she was absolutely incredible in every way. ■





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Legendary Carp Paintings



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



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Zig Success

By Tom Stokes



Following on from the Feb new moon earlier in the week, I headed to Cambridge, hoping for a February biggun. I fancied a swim I'd done well in in the past, a central zone that commanded the bulk of open water. Three zigs were fanned at range, all with maggot topped foam hookbaits, simply irresistible if carp were in the area.

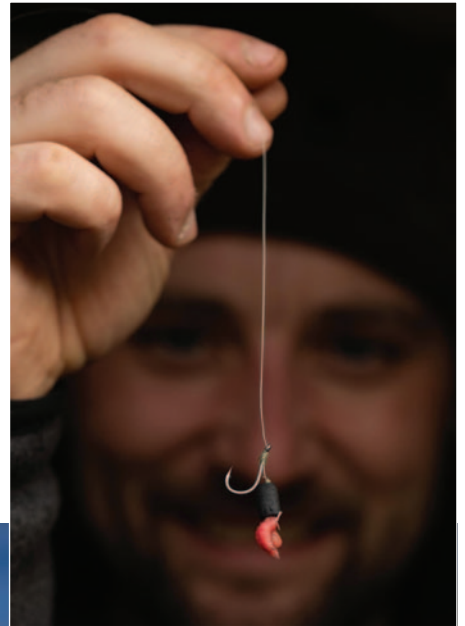
Through the session, I managed three carp to 28lb, a welcome result for sure.

All were taken on size 8 Kamakura Choddy hooks, 11lb Zig Line and

Hybrid Lead Clips with 4oz leads. Due to an experience of tangles with zigs, I ended up using sections of unsteamed shrink tube, acting as anti-tangle sleeves. They are about 2cm longer than an anti-tangle sleeve and just help kick that rig out a little better, especially when fishing at long range.

Tapered Longchuck in 12-30lb fished bow string tight helped get me out there, and often it was just a few bleeps to indicate a bite.

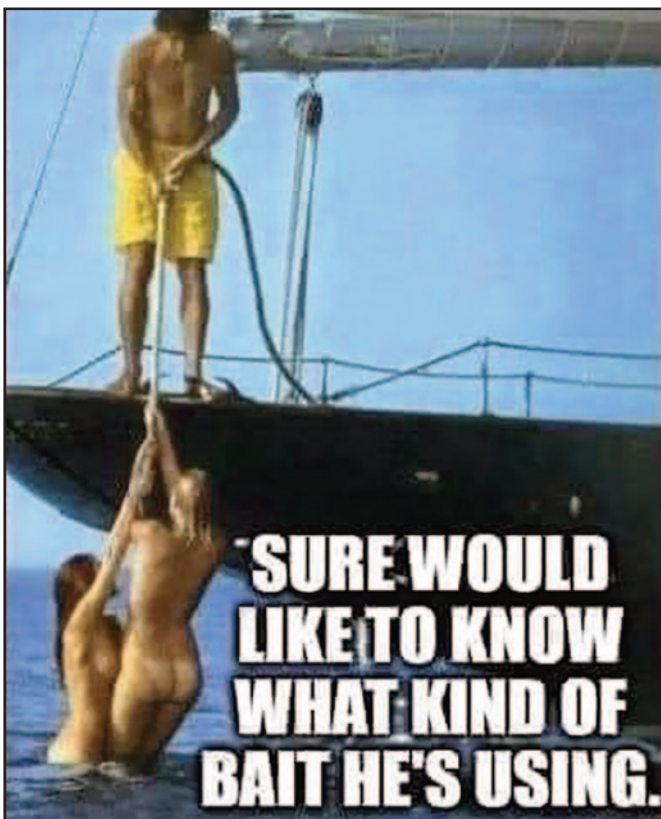
Just shows how deadly the zigs can be at this time of year. Certainly not my preferred way to angle, but a tactic you just can't ignore. ■





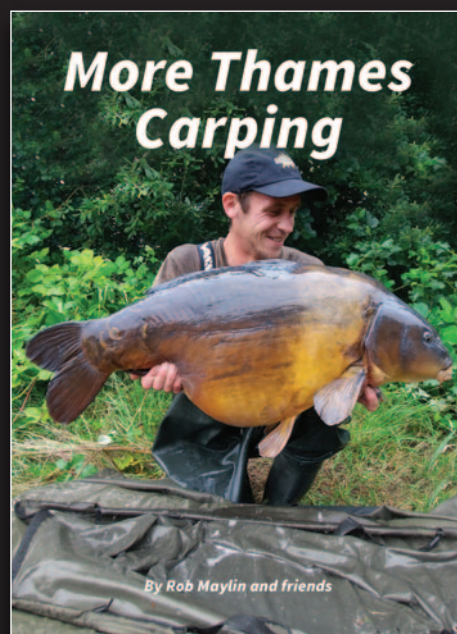
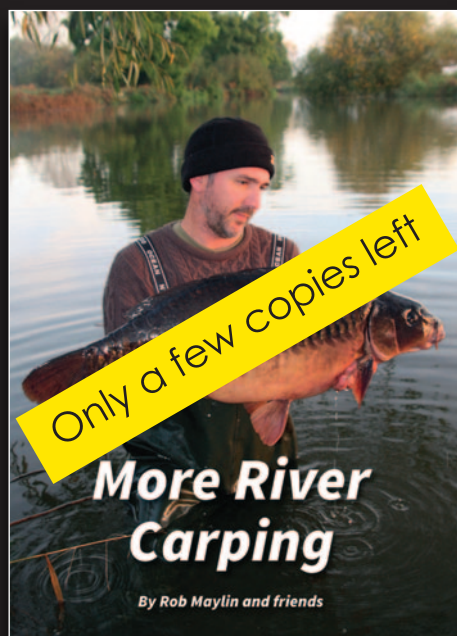
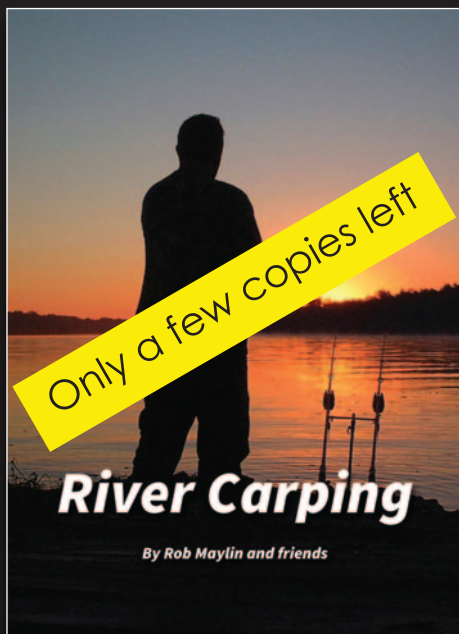


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Also available this month,

Big Carp Issue 323

Miss it and miss out!

Ban bonuses for CEOs

Since Thames Water dumped raw sewage an average of 22 times a day last year, it comes as no surprise that 78% of Londoners support a ban on bonuses for CEOs who fail to adhere to minimum environmental standards. Thames Water were responsible for 12 of the 62 serious pollution incidents from English water companies last year. And yet, to reward this outrageous behaviour, their CEO was awarded £1,368,000 in remunerations. If you're sick of sewage and want to put an end to profiting from pollution, sign the #dirtymoney petition now: <https://buff.ly/3MLg9qH> #sickofsewage #rescueourrivers #saveourseas #endsewagepollution

Proof that water companies really don't give a Despite all the apologies, Severn Trent Water, who dumped sewage for 461,135 hours last year, have decided it would be a good idea to up their dividend pay out to shareholders by £6 million this year to a massive £260 million, whilst asking us to pay more on our bills to fix the problems, their under investment has created. We know you won't stand for this sh*t. Join us and sign the #dirtymoney petition, and show water companies, regulators and the government that we've had enough of their empty promises. We want action. <https://buff.ly/3MLg9qH> **300,953 sewage dumps... but £958 million paid out to shareholders? This shit needs to stop.**

Sign the petition to demand an end to water companies profiting while polluting. Everyone needs to know this: water companies are dumping raw sewage into our rivers and seas, racking up enormous fines and making huge financial losses, but still paying out millions of pounds to their shareholders. This is corruption on a colossal scale. Money from our water bills, that should be invested to improve our infrastructure and stop pollution destroying our waterways, is instead being used to fill their pockets. We're all paying the price. These fat cat sewer rats are ripping us all off and it's time we held them to account. But it will take all of us speaking out to make change happen.

Will you add your name to help pile on the pressure and push the government and regulators to put a stop to this scandal?

We're demanding:

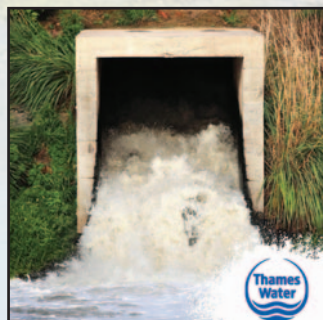
- CEO bonuses to be capped – like we did with bankers – so they can't get rich while ruining our rivers and seas.
- No shareholder pay-outs unless water companies comply with environmental regulations.
- Ofwat, the water company regulator, properly enforces their licences and stops water companies getting away with making their own rules.
- All UK water companies (privatised or public) need to lift the lid on where our money is going.

If you want to hit water companies where it hurts, sign the petition now to demand an end to them profiting while polluting >>

BREAKING NEWS: South West Water have been fined more than £2.1m for dumping sewage in Devon and Cornwall.

But for a private company with combined CEO and shareholder pay outs of nearly £50 million last year, this fine is just a drop in the ocean.

We can't let water companies keep getting away with poisoning our waterways. Will you sign the petition to demand proper regulations that stop them profiting while polluting?



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

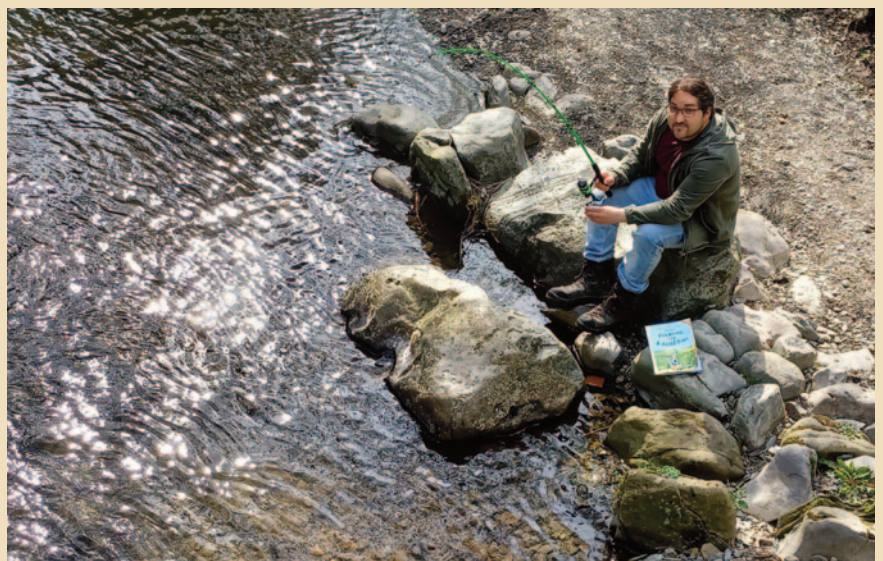
A keen amateur fisherman has dedicated his new children's book to his sister, saying fishing is for everyone.

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.



Oliver Sykes, author of *Fishing For Rainbows*.

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 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 illustrated 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,



Oliver Sykes photo credit Dawn Kilner.

as we had very little money when I was growing up with five siblings in a single-parent family. It was also Dad's 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

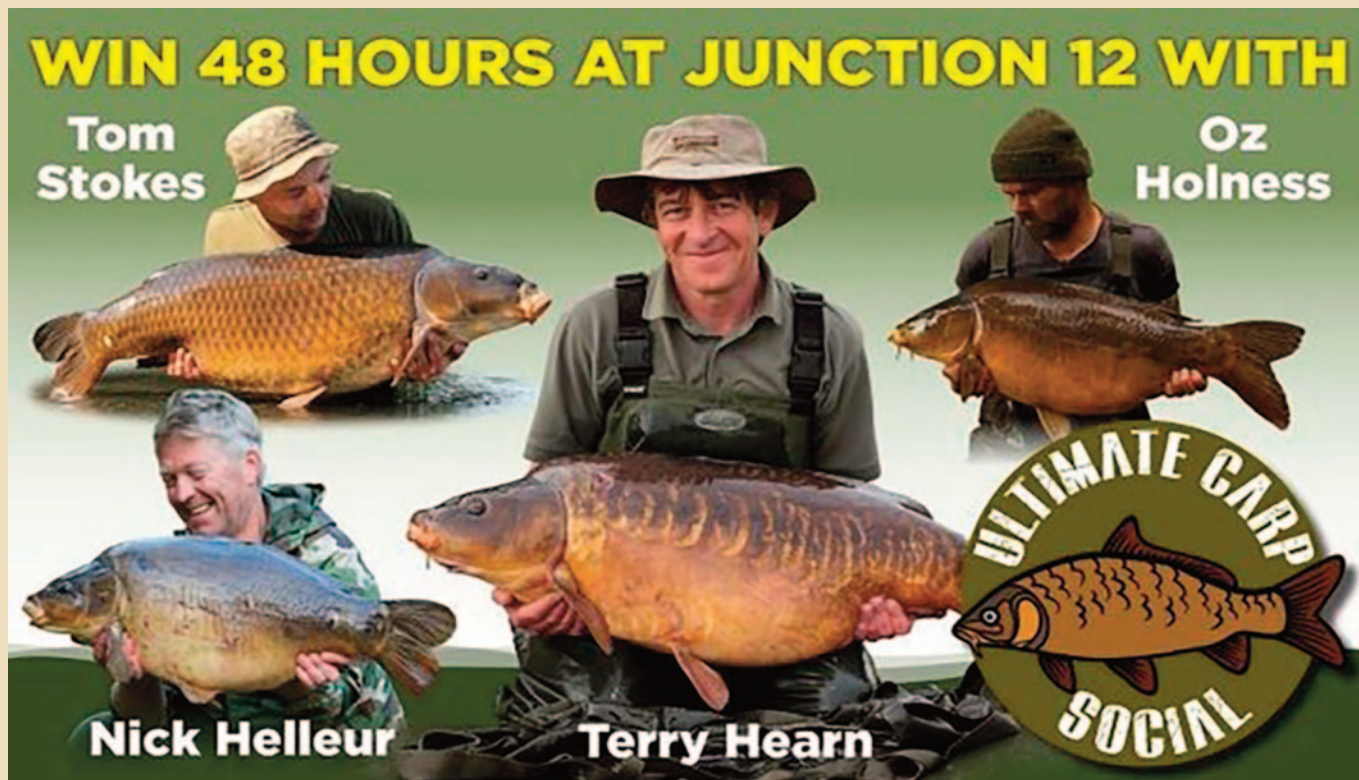
Don't forget to get yours now!





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:



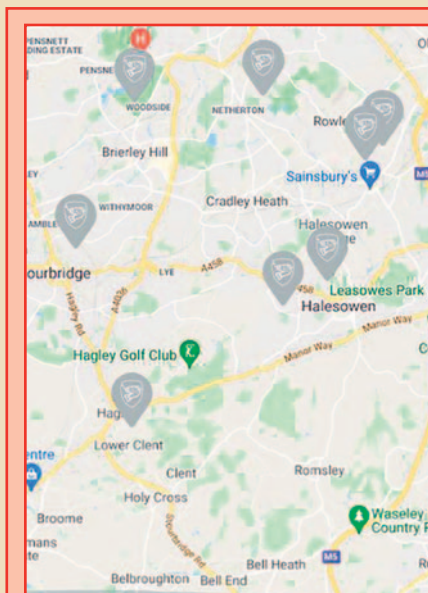
Ultimate Carp Social 2023 ... win 48 hours fishing with Terry Hearn, Oz Holness, Tom Stokes and Nick Helleur

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. ■



Lake Serene Up For Sale

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

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

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

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

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

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. ■

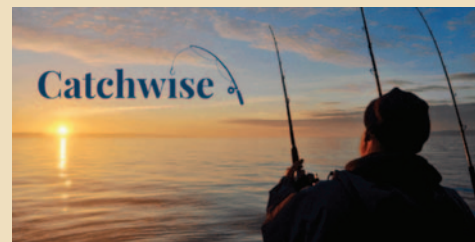
Drennan Barnsley Blacks win historic treble



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. ■

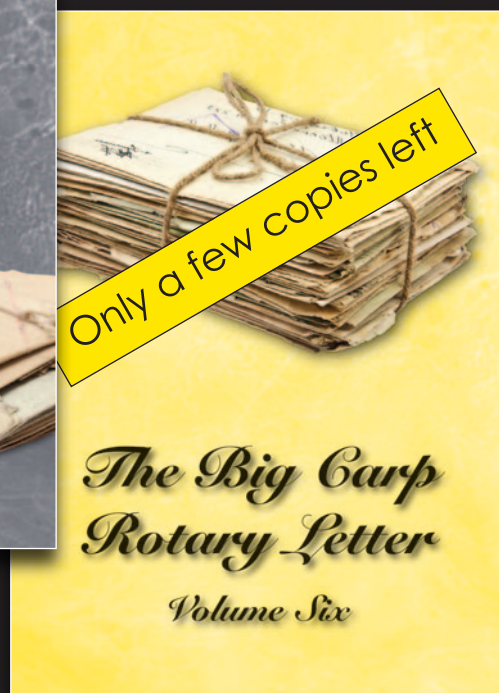
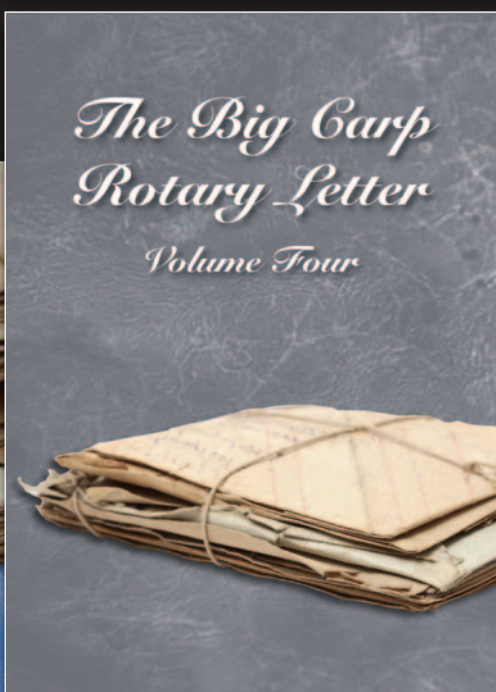
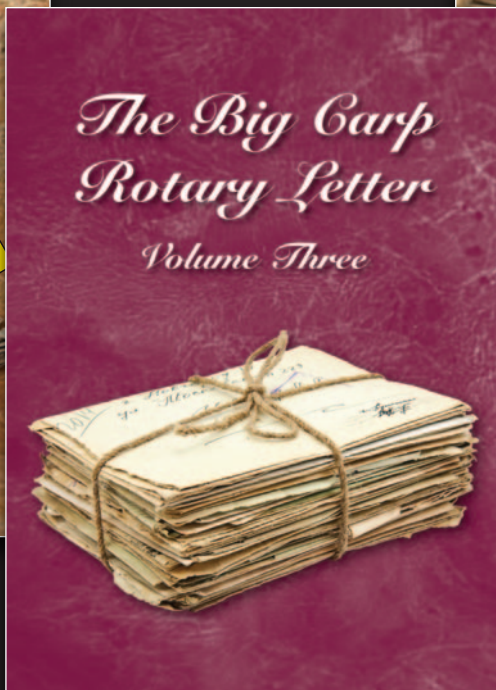
Carpy Humour



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

THE BIG CARP ROTARY LETTER SERIES

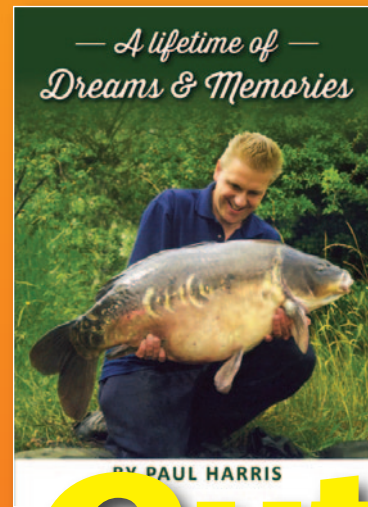
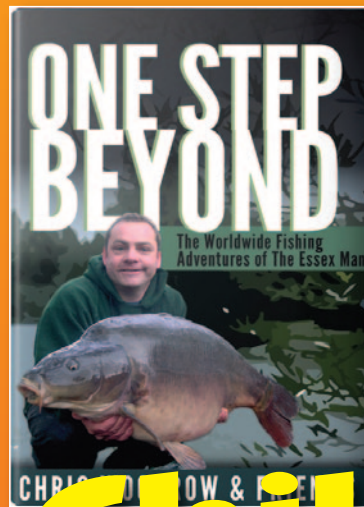
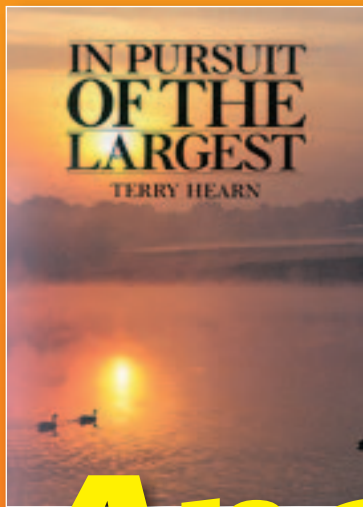
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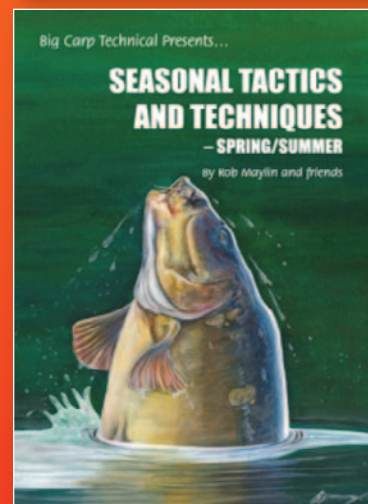
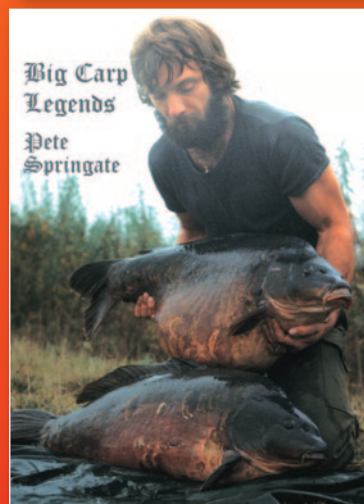
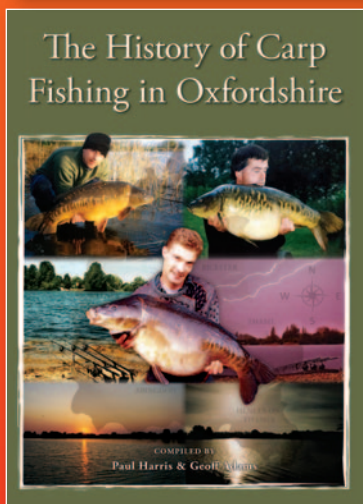
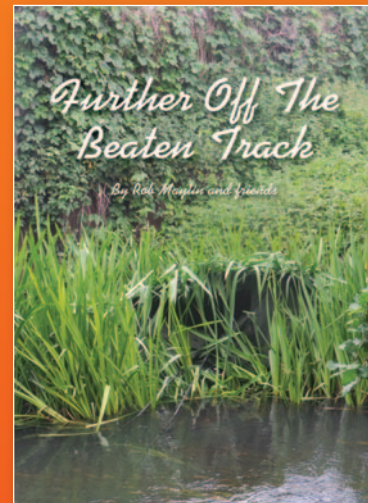
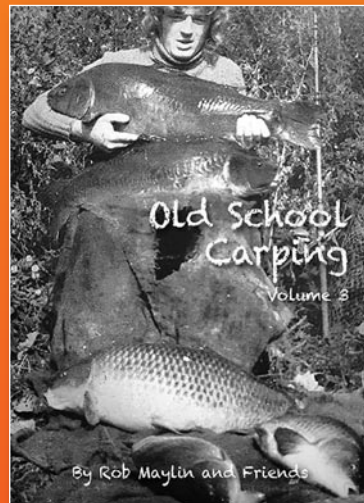
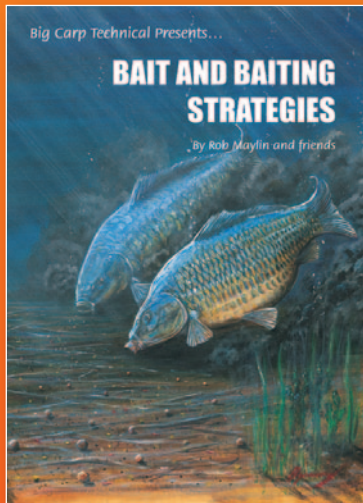
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Bag Yourself a Score

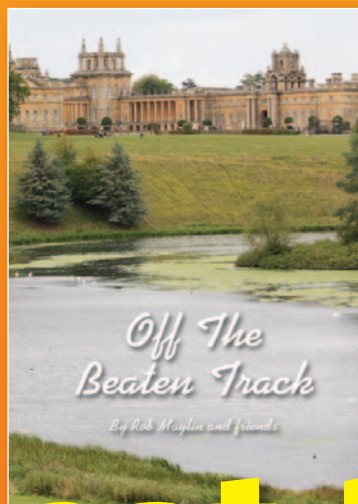
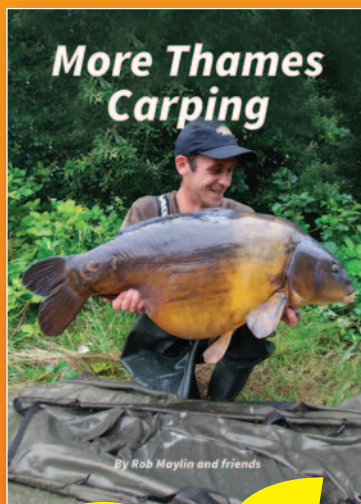


And Chill Out with

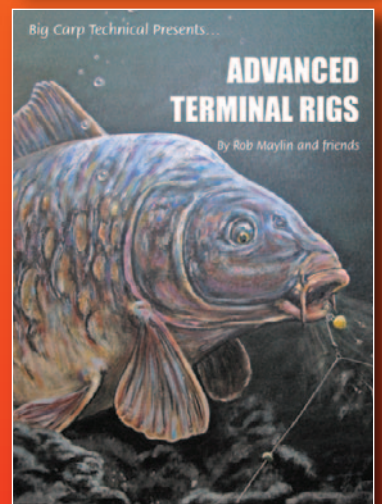
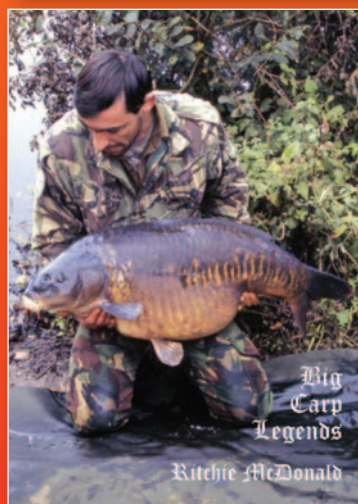
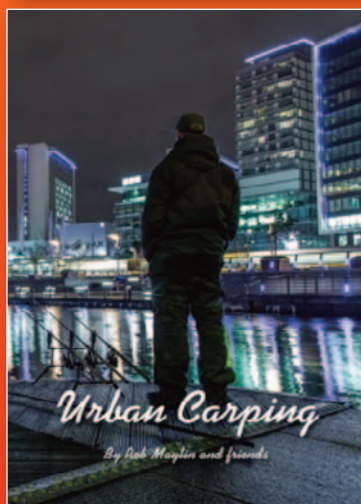
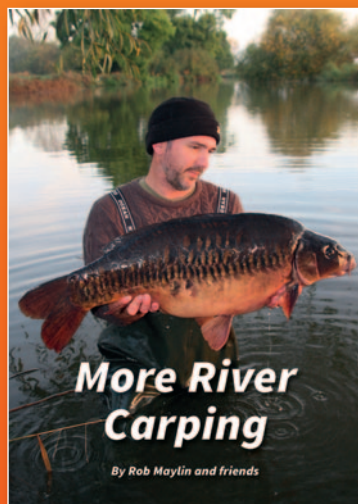
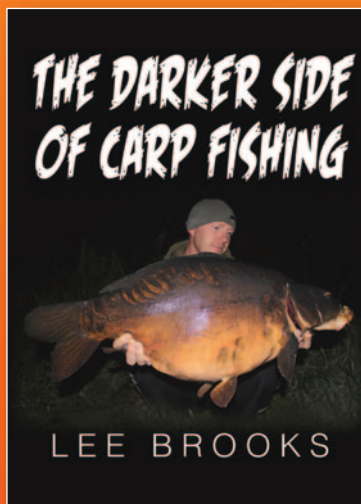


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Snugpak T-Shirts now available!



Snugpak, the UK's leading sleeping bag and insulated clothing manufacturer, has introduced a brand new range of T-Shirts (RRP £11.95) to its ever-expanding clothing range.

Ideal for warmer climates or intense activities, Snugpak's new 100% cotton crew neck T-shirts are available in black, olive and desert tan, XS-XXL. Sporting Snugpak's logo on the front and "we go to extremes" tagline on the sleeve, the casual T-shirts are sure to keep you cool and comfortable.

For further information or to buy online via one of Snugpak's preferred stockists, please visit www.snugpak.com or call 01535 654479. ■

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.



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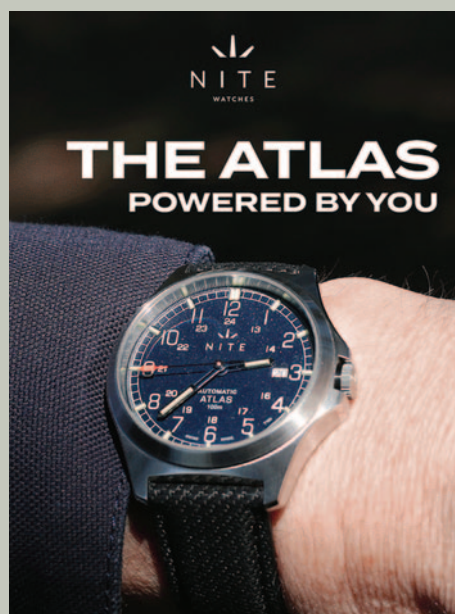
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Leatherman – Raptor® Response emergency shears



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. ■





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Fishing for the Unknown

By Alan Tring

In the Spring of 2015 I was invited to fish an old estate lake with an unknown stock of carp. The lake itself was around 20 acres in size, tree lined the whole way round with the rest of the lake made up with masses of reeds. There were no swims, and the only access was via an old punt that looked like it had been sat there for years, but I couldn't wait for my adventure. After a chat with the owners, I found out I was on limited time; as soon as the carp started to spawn I wouldn't be allowed to fish, so with just over a month of angling ahead of me on the estate lake it was time to come up with a plan of attack.



First fish.



My first visit came at the end of April, but I wouldn't be fishing; it was time to get everything ready for the month ahead. I arrived early on the Saturday morning, armed with some gardening tools to make a swim, an old bivvy I would be leaving in the swim I made, an aquascope and 10kg of bait to deposit on likely spots. I was blown away by the lake itself; it

was lovely, and without another angler in sight it was a nice escape from the usual lakes I fish. I loaded the creaky old punt and decided to boat round the lake looking for signs of carp.

I had been told the far end of the lake was fairly shallow, and with the sun shining brightly on that area, I thought it would be a good place to

start. As I approached the area I couldn't believe my eyes; it was black with them. The carp didn't seem bothered by me or the boat, and I thought this would be a perfect area to begin my mini campaign. Just to the left I could see an area that be accessible, and I was right. I spent the next few hours chopping back all sorts of bankside vegetation and finally my swim was made – perfect! I put the bivvy up and stood and admired my view for the foreseeable future. I was grinning from ear to ear. It looked like the perfect point, as I could intercept the carp as they came in and out of the shallows. It was time to get back in the punt and look for some likely areas.

The margins were quite shallow, sloping off to roughly 5ft in gin clear water before hitting a thick weedbed about 30 yards out. Behind the weed was a silty gully, and after a closer inspection it was about 12ft wide and ran from the edge of the weed out of the shallows for as far as I could see. I could see carp milling in and out of the weed and into the silt, and I decided this was where I would concentrate my efforts. I decided to feed



Second fish.



Third fish.



Fourth fish.



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We have two 'Excellent Boilies' in our bait range.

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'Smelling this bait, you get a fishy/savoury belachan aroma, break it open you get a sweeter mussel smell'. A truly incredible bait.

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Proving to be an effective, awesome, premium nutritional bait!





Fifth fish.



Sixth fish.



Last fish

10kg of Sterling Baits SP1 in a line down the gully in preparation for my first session the following weekend.

After the longest week at work I arrived early Saturday morning for my first 24-hour session. I couldn't wait to get set up and fishing. I loaded my trusty punt, rowed over to my swim and unloaded all the gear. I had a cast about in the area, finding the

silty gully and fished all three rods in a line. I decided to keep things simple, fishing a standard lead clip setup and a slip D-rig with a size 6 curved hook. My hookbait of choice would be a 15mm SP1 wafter. All three rods were in position with a kilo of bait over the top to start.

My rods hadn't been out long when to my surprise I had a take on the

middle rod. My arms were shaking as I was into my first estate carp. After a spirited fight my first fish was safely in the net, a lovely scale perfect common. I got the rod back out on the spot and topped up the area with another kilo of bait. The afternoon came and went, and just before dark I was into another estate lake carp; unfortunately I suffered a hook pull and wound in, feeling a little deflated. The rod went back out on the spot, and I topped the area up with another kilo of bait. The night passed, but the only action I received was three tench. I packed away that morning quite happy with how the first night had gone, but as I was boating back I noticed all the bait in the area had gone.

I returned the following weekend for a 48-hour session and was soon sat in the swim behind the rods again. I decided to put 10kg of SP1 straight out over the spots, as last week the area had been cleaned out. It was a hot Friday afternoon, and I felt the fish just had to be in the shallows. The rods had only been out a few hours, and I received my first take. After another great fight I had



another lovely estate lake common in the net. I put the rod straight back on the spot and put another 200 baits over the top. I felt if the carp were here I needed to keep them here.

No sooner had I done the photographs and I was away again. The fish was plodding about and felt slightly bigger than before. It rolled on the surface a few rod lengths out, and it looked like a scaly mirror. It was soon sat in the bottom of my landing net, and it was a gorgeous mirror with big apple slice scales.

This theme continued for the whole weekend, and I managed ten takes, landing five carp and five tench. The carp were perfect, and I bet some of them had never been caught before. I felt extremely privileged to be able to enjoy this kind of fishing. The extra bait had definitely kept the fish in the area, and the action came thick and fast at times.

I returned the following weekend for another 48-hour session using the same tactics as the weekend before. 10kg of SP1 went out over three rods,

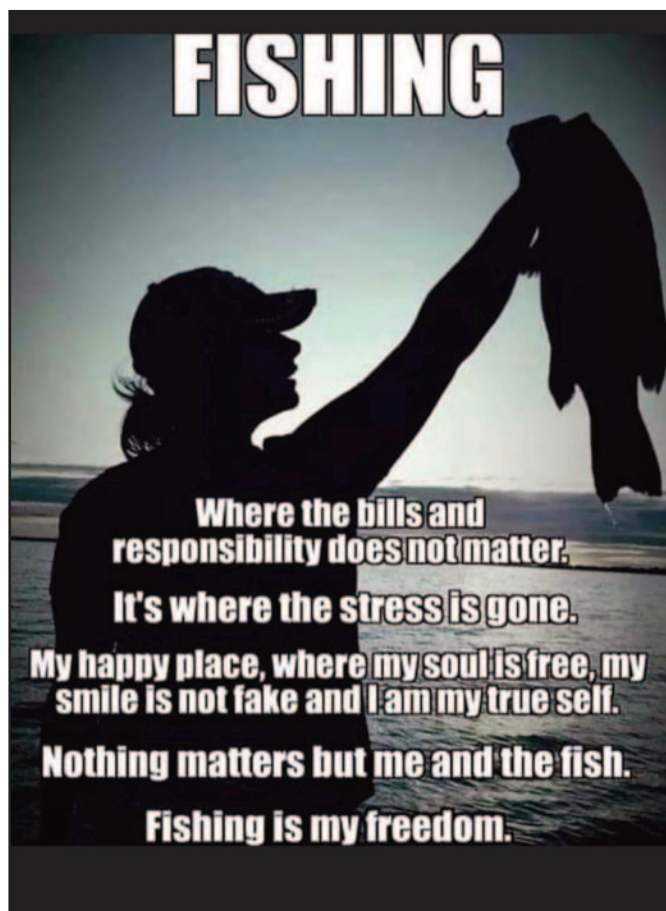


A very productive morning.

and I sat waiting for the first take. It was red hot, and I had seen fish in the area, but the day passed without any action. I still felt confident of a take, and I did manage one stunning common in the night, but I woke the next morning to find the fish spawning. This marked the end of my short time

on the estate lake. It had been an amazing month away from the crowds in a peaceful environment fishing for the unknown and catching some special fish along the way. I loaded the punt one last time and looked back down the lake hoping I will be able to return one day. ■

Carpy Humour



What is UK Angling Ltd?

I could have started with 101 self-promoted brand products, that we produce, and claim that our hooks are the sharpest.

Our baits bags catch you big carp. Our no carp-tax products smash value for money.

Our lake, Dimmocks Pit is the best secluded venue available, loaded with unknown monsters.

Or I could just tell you about what it's all really about...

The love of angling!

FISHING

From simple hand-line fishing for the old Grand Union perch, to old skool ledger-floating for deep tincas. It all fills me with a sense of calm and wellbeing.

The rush of a pike striking the lure from the depths of a lake, and the relentless pull of the river barbel.

And of course, the screaming, heart stopping sound of an alarm at 2am in the pitch black.

This is what I want all anglers to have, and all anglers to enjoy, that's what UK Angling Ltd is to me.

To 'Encourage, Educate and Inspire'.

And if something that we have produced can help bring that to others, then that's an absolutely beautiful result.

If one of our products results in a Pb or a lasting memory, we have achieved what we set out to do.

Over the years we obtained a lake, designed for family fishing, a step-back from the park lakes, a safe place for kids to catch and family bonding,

Hopefully resulting in upcoming free educational-days for anglers, where all our products are free to use.

WE HAVE

A range of quality baits and tackle that work, all tried and tested by our anglers.

And a hub of support for charities, communities and groups.

This is UK Angling at its best, this is true angling.

This is how you 'Encourage, Educate and Inspire'.

Mark Escott - Owner of UK Angling Ltd



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Spitfire Pool

By Andrew Hargreaves (Impulse Baits)

This was my fifth trip to Airfield Lakes. The venue had been kind, already letting me capture some of its prize jewels. The pool is only small and made up of little bars, humps, holes, lilies, reeds and even a small island, but most importantly it is home to some stunning mirrors and commons, the Long Common and the Wood Common being the select targets of the anglers that get the chance to fish there. Having had the tricky Long Common at 41lb around the same time a year ago, I was left with the Wood Common. The Wood Common is arguably the nicest common carp around and one I needed to tick off my list.

I arrived at the pool on the Monday, a few minutes before our booking, just in time to meet Rich as he opened the gate. After a quick catch up, it was

time to do a lap around the beautiful Spitfire! We didn't see anything that lap, so Rich left, and my good mate Shaun Condron and I went for a second lap. This time we found the fish in an area we knew as No Carp Bay. Why it's called that I haven't a clue, as they are always in and out of it. We split the pool into a left and a right. The toss gave me tails, which meant I was going to the left. I had the road bank side, and my mate No Carp Bay side. I felt a bit deflated, as the fish were clearly over the other side. Knowing the fish in the pool, I soon perked up, as I knew they like moving about.

My peg for the trip covered the area I'd been hoping and dreaming of for months before the trip. I just had a feeling that I had seen its patrol routes enough from past trips and I felt I knew a few spots that would produce that take I needed. Having

not seen any fish in my water yet, the night went by quietly. The next day I finally spotted a fish in my water. By around dinner there were four carp, and the Wood Common was one of them. I was now in with that chance I needed. The fish were sat in a very weedy section of mare tail, Canadian and big green blooms of algae-like weed. I positioned my rods around where I thought its routes in and out would be. I'd spread around a kilo out in the area in the hope of getting it moving and feeding. The Wood remained in the same section of weed, just moving around slowly in the sunlight.

The Thursday afternoon came and the fish were gone. I didn't see it leave, but I just new it was gone. The lake went quiet, and the only fish I saw were in the back bay, but not seeing the Wood up there, I had to sit it out on the plan of the Wood Com-



mon and no go off fishing for the others.

The conditions started to turn for the worse: the sun had gone, the full moon had passed, and it was getting cold and started blowing a gale. I felt I'd missed my chance, and as the last night arrived I sat defeated and low. I'd tried a few changes over the week just to tempt a bite, but it didn't look good.

As I sat there as the light fell, my receiver battery ran out, and I was sat there thinking – better change it; you still have a chance. Battery changed, and it was off to sleep. About an hour before light the receiver battery died again! I had to drag myself out of bed to go turn the heads up, but I kept saying to myself, there's still a chance. Well I awoke and nothing had happened. Pack up time. I was doing the usual session clean-up – the table, food bag... useless bloody rigs!

I had a check on the rods, as I was still hoping, and as I checked the left hand line had tightened up. I must not have heard the alarm between the rain, hailstones and packing up. I

reeled down, and the fish was on and sat about 5ft from where my rig was lying previously. Now the Wood Common is known to fight in a strange way, a bit of – is it a pike, a big rudd or the Wood Common?

Well In my head I new what I had hooked – it was the Wood, and this was confirmed as a flash of white broke the surface from the beast's tail. I went to jelly, shouting to Shaun, "It's the Wood! Quick." But there was no time, and just as he got there, it slipped over my net cord. I lifted the mesh, and there it was, The Wood Common.

"Yeeeeehhhaaaaaaa!" sounded to the complex in a moment I wouldn't be forgetting. I collected myself and gave Rich a call for some pics. Having had pics from Rich in the past trips, I knew I needed him here for this, and as you can see, I was right – mega photos.

Up on the scales and the call was 49lb 8oz. Wow! I was over the moon. What a fish, every last ounce of it. She was ready for her photo shoot, and as I hoisted my prize I admired her

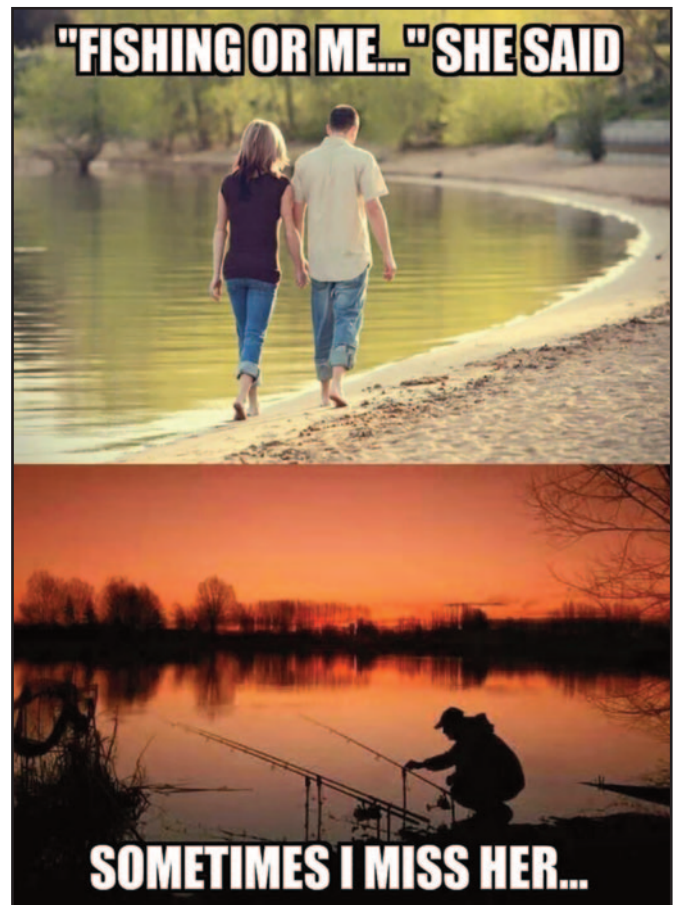
colours! It was time to let her go back to the pool to give more memories to the lucky anglers that grace her banks. It was done. Spitfire ticked off!

The next day Rich informed me that I was the first person other than him to have had the set of commons since the pool was opened to fishing. The feelings have settled down, and now I'm home I feel a sadness not to be going back to the venue, as it really is something very special, but there's a second, greater feeling of accomplishment from catching two of the best looking commons around!

She slipped up to a washed-out Pink Pepper Squid pop-up that was fished over the Apex Formula from Impulse Baits. I'd baited with about 5kg in total over the week, as I wanted to make her feel safe eating the bait once she did switch on.

Terminal tackle was a size 6 Nash chod hook and Nash link and Taska chod components fished as a short chod method to a small S-shaped bar up close to the main body of mare tail. ■

Carpy Humour



Cumbria's First Forty

By Chris Sawyer

The last 13 months I have been targeting a small, tricky water in Cumbria with approximately 20 carp in, with only one fish in mind, a fish called Shoulders. I had already done a few seasons on this water, which in that time had most of the residents in there including a fish called Hurty Gurty, the one I always dearly wanted to catch and my PB of 33lb 4oz. Unfortunately I was one of the last to catch it out of the anglers that fished it, and I seen it in everybody else's net before mine, but that's fishing, and it made it all the better

when she was finally mine. It wasn't its size that attracted me to this fish, even though it was the biggest in the club for years; it was its looks, and it was the oldest in the club, which made it older than me. Sadly this fish is no longer with us and died early on this year. Along with Hurty, which was my last one to catch on this water the first time around, I had the rest of the A-team more than once over, the other fish being Stars and Stripes at 32lb 10oz, Big Scaly at 29lb 14oz, Original Lin at 27lb, Arthur at 29lb 8oz and LP 30 at 30lb 2oz.

The following season I had no real targets, and I just wanted to fish

around and enjoy my fishing on many different waters. After a few months of doing so, I started to like a big, deep water, which was an old mineshaft with depths of over 80ft. It's a bit of an unknown stock, which took my fancy. The two biggest known residents were little Lin and Big Lin, and this is now where I spent most of my hours fishing. I started off fishing all over the lake, catching in most swims, mainly mid doubles. I settled for a swim out of the way to start baiting. After the first week of heavy baiting I got down to the lake on Saturday morning and flicked out three snowman baits over my baited spots in the margins and







topped up with about a kilo of pellet and boilie.

I didn't have to wait long, as at around 1pm my left hand rod got ripped off my sticks on a savage take. As soon as I lifted into the rod, I turned to my two mates who were present, Daz and Garf, and said, "This is one of the Lins." I got two strange looks off them, and after a 15-minute battle in the depths those strange looks turned into smiles and grins as Little Lin rolled into my net first time weighing 24lb 2oz. I had a mid double around 3pm, got the rod back on the spot and topped it up with bait. At 7pm just as Daz and I were finishing off a KFC, which he wound in for and kindly collected, my left hand bobbin smashed my blank. Same again – I lifted into it, turned around, and this time said, "This is Big Lin." After another 15-minute battle, Big Lin rolled into the net at 25lb 4oz. I couldn't believe it! I had the two biggest in the lake in six hours. The weighing and pictures were done, and before I

knew it there were four of my mates there with cups wanting a celebratory brew.

After that I just started to fish about again for the next few months, as winter was rapidly approaching and the temperatures started to drop. The season after I joined a syndicate the other side of the country, which is a ten-hour round trip for me, which just has to be done! Sometime in March a fish known as Shoulders at 35lb 10oz came out of the lake I'd come off two years previously. Its weight gain was unreal after it had last been on the bank at 28lb the season before. This was when I thought it was time to get myself back on there, as I needed somewhere other than my syndicate to fish, as I couldn't do quick overnights on there and wouldn't be going every week.

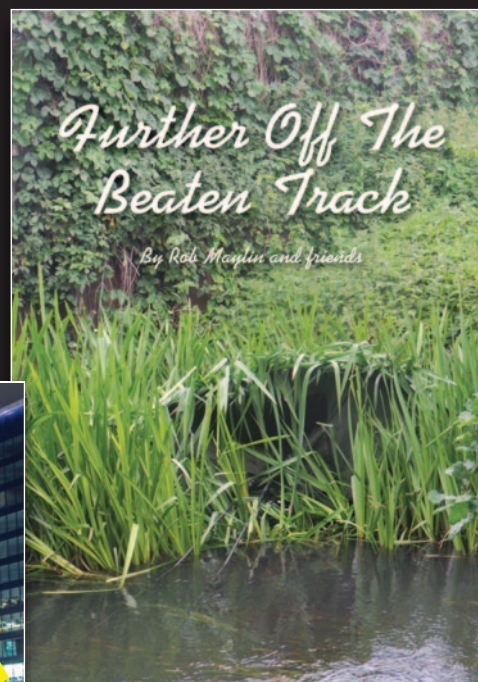
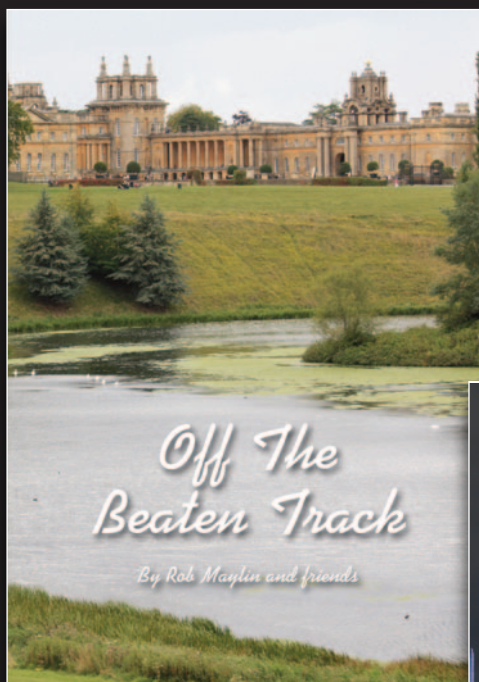
I started off well, getting amongst a few of the fish straight away, most being twenties with some real stunners included. Early June my syndicate opened, and I went down on the

opening weekend after spending most of the week before on the lake back at home fishing for Shoulders. Around 10am on Saturday morning after my first night blank on my syndicate, my phone started ringing, and it was my friend Kez, who was also fishing for Shoulders. The first words I heard were, "Shoulders has been out." My heart sank, and I said, "Who caught it?" to which he replied, "Me, at 36lb 6oz!" I congratulated him, as he fished really hard for it and put plenty of time in for it, so top effort to the guy.

Later on that afternoon I had my first take from the syndicate, which was a 32lb mirror followed by my PB common of 27lb, a 22lb common and a 25lb common in the night. After that I didn't have much time off fishing for Shoulders, as I thought it might just come out again. In this case it didn't, and before I knew it the season had gone. I had 18 fish, which is most of the fish in the lake, but a lot were recaptures from the previous cam-

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paign. I fished it right though winter, and the place completely shut up shop and I couldn't buy a take for months.

On the 10th April 2016 I finally put a stop to the blanks and had two in an afternoon, a 17lb ghostie and a dark common of 20lb. Both picked up single white pop-ups on a multi-rig cast to showing fish tight to some trees in the shallows. From there I went on a bit of a roll, having 12 fish in the next month. I even had three in a quick overnighter, which doesn't happen very often on this particular water, one of the fish being one of the best in the lake in my opinion, a fish known as the D Lin at 25lb 8oz.

May was now upon us, and most of the fish had been out. Some of them had made a few appearances, but Shoulders hadn't. I was at work during the week, and my mate Sam was fishing. This particular week it was red hot without a breath of wind. He rang me and said he'd just seen Shoulders under his tips, and his





words were, "It's huge! It's massive! It's got to be nearly 40!" To be honest I didn't want to hear it.

I was already on edge and buzzing to get down there that night for an overnighter. What made it hard work was that there is a 48-hour rule, and then you've got to be off for 24 hours before you come back. So I could do my 48 hours over the weekend, and then I had Sunday off, which meant I could do overnighters all week but have Thursday off and I could do my 48 hours again starting Friday night.

At this time all I had in my head was that Shoulders would be the next take on the water, so I had to be there as much as I could. This was my chance, and I felt I wasn't far away. On the Friday 27th of May I arrived at the lake at 5pm. I was happy to see the swim I was in on the Thursday was free, so I wasted no time in getting the kit around there. I opted for my right-hander in the margin and the other two on a spot along the

front of a weedbed. I scattered out a kilo of Red Reaper from North East Baits over the two rods, and I settled down for the night with high hopes, as I began to see shows at the back of my baited area. Nothing occurred on the first night, and this is all too often the case on this particular pond.

I gave it till dinnertime and wound in to do a couple of laps to try and locate my target. I decided to stay in the same swim, so I topped up my spots with another half a kilo of Red Reaper and waited to see what the night would bring. Unfortunately when I woke at around 7am, I'd only had a savage liner in the night. Fortunately I didn't have to wait long until my left hand bobbin hit the rod on a slow but steady take, and I lifted into it and realised I was connected to a good fish.

After a ten-minute heated battle I slipped the net under my target fish after over 200 nights and let out the shout of "SHOULDERS!!" I looked

down and knew it was going to be the biggest it had been. The only other angler on the lake, Rob, heard and came around to assist. We hoisted it onto the scales, and to our disbelief the needle spun around to 40lb, smashing my previous PB of 33lb 4oz. To our knowledge it's the most northern 40lb carp.

I rang my mate Kez on the next lake to come and verify the weight as we did the pictures. All those midweek rainy and cold mornings blowing a gale after a blank and packing up at 6am for work had all paid off and were forgotten about when Shoulders filled my forearms.

That was my last fish on that lake, and I will be moving on to other things. I really enjoyed my fishing on there even if it was hard work at times. I learnt a lot and made some great friends and memories that will be with me forever. I wish all the lads still on there all the best throughout their campaigns. ■

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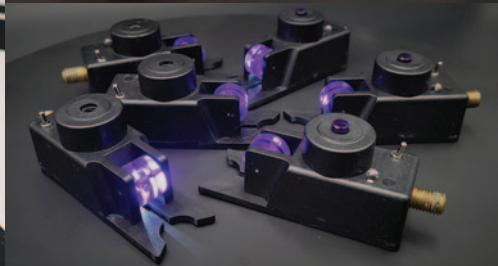
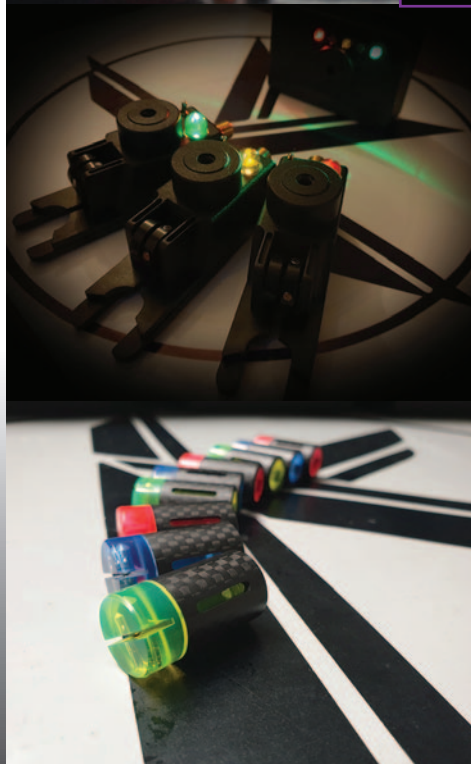
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Goal Setting

By Carl Milton

Normally at the end of the traditional coarse fishing season and before the new one begins on the famous 16th

June, my thoughts turn to the next season, and I set myself some targets for the year ahead. Goal setting for me is born out of my working life where it is an ingrained process. Some people are happy to just go fishing and see what comes along, which I can fully understand. So why set goals? For me objective setting focuses my mind on what I want to achieve from my angling. This started in my case many years ago when I realised that I wasn't challenging myself in my fishing. I had been fishing the same few venues for many years. I was going fishing less and less. By chance a friend invited me to a different venue, and the enthusiasm started to come back. I realised I had been going through the motions on the same venues for too long. This is when I realised I needed to set targets to keep my passion burning.



So what factors should be considered when goal setting? My yearly objective setting has three main facets: the goal or goals must be attainable, precise and have a value attached. Taking each of these factors in turn, I will explain why I use these three factors and give some examples. Firstly my goals must be attainable. No matter how hard we try, we

don't all have the natural ability of the likes of Terry Hearn, so our goals must be relative to ability. Another factor is available time in attainability of goals. I consider the venue, my circumstances at the time and ability. The venue I choose to achieve my goals must most importantly contain the target fish. I like to do my homework on this. There is no point in putting



your valuable free leisure time into fishing a venue that doesn't contain what you are after. Some people love the mystery element in their fishing, and I, like the next person, also enjoy this. But also if I'm aiming for a 30lb common carp for example, I don't want to spend my time on a venue where there is no chance or history of such a target fish.

Of course there are other considerations with venue too. It's not just about target fish; surroundings, environment, locality and cost of fishing the venue are important also. My circumstances will always play a part in attainability of a goal. Available time and work and family commitments are major factors to consider. I always try to keep my yearly objective setting precise. Precision of the goal ensures I don't go off on a tangent in my angling. For example a 20lb carp from a river is a much more precise goal than simply a 20lb carp with no venue attached. Adding a value to the goal I find is important, so that there is a way to be clear about whether the



goal has been met or not. The value doesn't always have to be a fish weight; for example, it can be numbers of fish or a time of year, such as to catch a carp in December, or to catch 50 carp in a season. This is a very personal part of goal setting – everyone will be at different stages and want different things from their fishing.

Goal setting for me last season helped me achieve a lifelong goal of a 40lb common carp. Until I started goal setting I would never have attempted or thought myself capable of ever capturing such a fish. However by setting myself progressive objectives over the years, I have tested and improved myself to a level where I felt confident to fish venues that contained such fish, and achieved my

goal. There will be times when my set goal will not be achieved within that season, but the goal can either be reviewed or rolled over to the following season, or adjusted. Some people will say goal setting as part of a pastime is too clinical or regimented, but for me it provides me with increased drive and enjoyment in my angling. I hope this article gets people thinking about their own fishing. Goal setting for me certainly works and reignited my passion. Give it a try! ■





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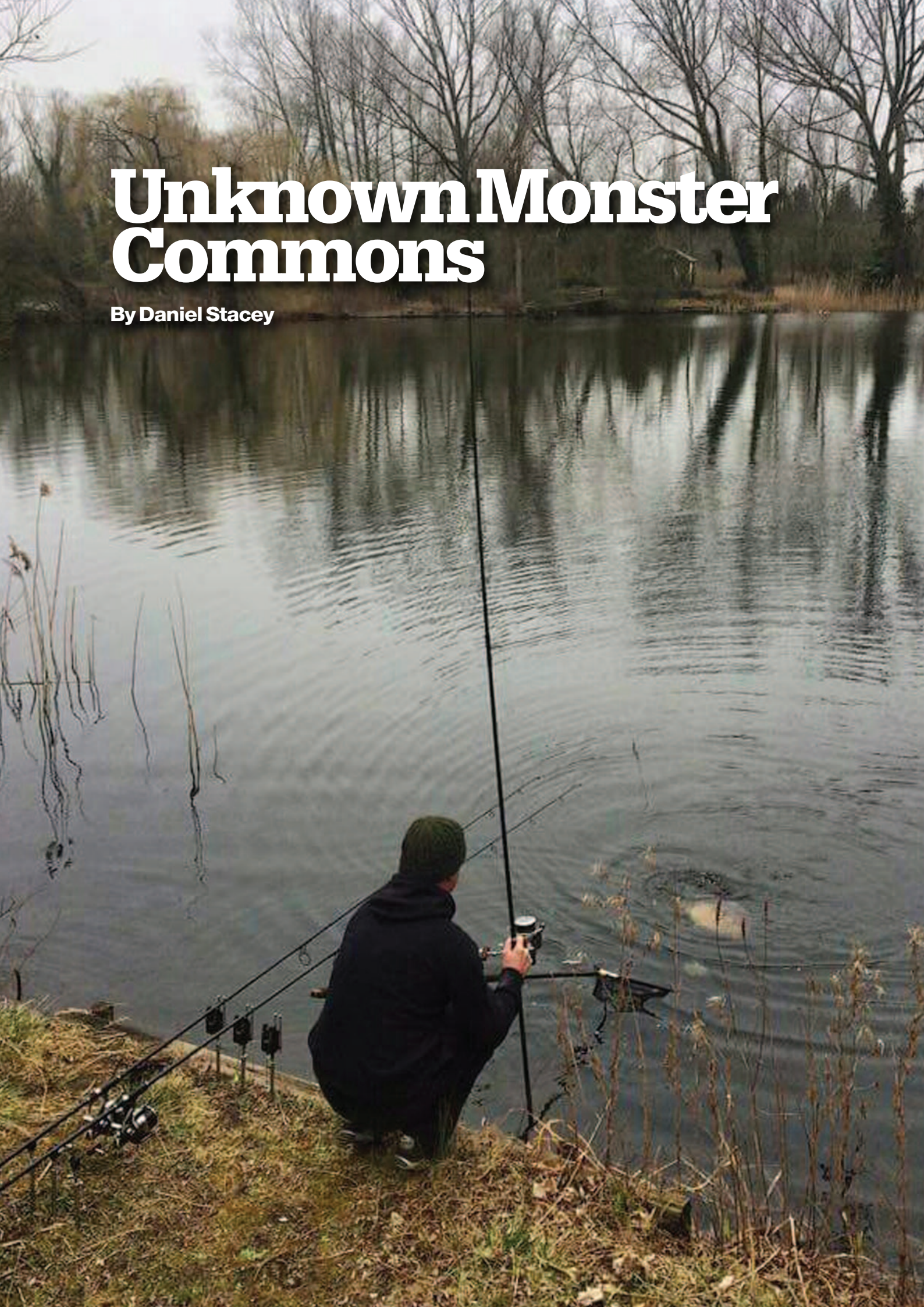
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Unknown Monster Commons

By Daniel Stacey



Iask myself so many questions about the water or waters I want to fish; it's definitely not just turn up and fish for me. I like the quiet type of waters with a low stock and the element of surprise. I can remember fishing a small water close to home on a bloody cold winter's day when a young chap asked me to do some photos of a fish he just landed. After the photos had been done and the fish was safely returned, we sat looking though them admiring the colours when I noticed a rather large mirror from a different venue. It had my eyes popping from their sockets. After a few cups of tea I plucked up the courage and asked him where it was from. The reply I got was that it was from his own lake on the estate he runs, and I was welcome for a walk round. Damn right I would!

So that was a ticket sorted for the following year, close to home, quiet, big fish and talk of a rather large uncaught common, but every lake has one. It was rocking my world already. After getting the ticket, the fact that there were only eight members allowed me walk, bait and most



importantly find where the fish liked to hang out. After a few blank trips things started falling into place, and I baited certain areas that I could see the fish visiting more than most. Like anything location on any lake is the most important aspect of angling. Carp can be creatures of habit... easy, surely? I started getting into the fish on a regular basis, nothing massive by today's standards, but size isn't everything; it's all about enjoyment

and loving our hobby, but I did want the queen of the pond one day.

It was a rather hot day when I arrived at the ready for the next 24 hours, and to be honest it didn't look good. All the stock was floating around the surface, not wanting to take a mixer, and being tired after my night shift at work I decided to get the rods out and get a few hours' shuteye. How wrong was I? It wasn't because I was catching loads; it was



Along the way.



The Big Common.

the dreadful crayfish giving me the odd few bleeps keeping me on edge – a bloody nightmare really.

It was probably midday and stinking hot when another member, John, was sitting with me, chatting carpy stuff and drinking tea. All I wanted to do was sleep, but then completely out the blue I had a take – a few bleeps and then it turned into a full-blown run. It's strange how you feel totally awake when you get a bite – adrenaline. After what seemed a life-

time I had a fat mirror charging up and down the deep margins and weeding me up every few minutes. The sun was cooking me like burnt toast, and if it rolled into the net I promised myself I would pack up and get some much-needed sleep. Well everything held up to the job in hand, and I had the lake's biggest mirror in the net, all 41lb 2oz of pure muscle. I was totally blown away, and just when I least expected her – bizarre. True to my word, I packed up and

went home and even got a lovely dinner cooked... well, burnt for me by the girlfriend.

After catching the big girl I didn't really fancy the small intimate pond anymore until I had a walk round one day wasting some time and I saw the big common. It wasn't a myth; it was real – game on! I asked myself why she hadn't been caught. I had a plan to establish my bait in the area where I saw the common in a neglected part of the lake furthest from the car park. It was a lake that didn't see much bait, so obviously she thrived on naturals. It was weedy, therefore full of bloodworm, insects and other larvae that inhabited the large weedbeds. My plan was to prep the area every other day with 3kg of my chosen bait, C.C. Moore's Equinox, and at the time I was rolling all my own baits by hand. It was a fun, and I'm sure I had blisters from all the rolling, but if I caught this common it would be worth the effort.

Again it was high pressure and no wind – not great conditions for fishing, but after a few weeks and regular baiting it was time to start fishing. The rigs hit the spots nicely, and everything looked good until I woke





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The Big Mirror.



The uncaught common.

up after a blank night. The day started getting hotter by the minute; it looked dead, and all day was uneventful, so I started cooking my dinner, and as you can imagine, when the right hand rod pulled round and the Delkim started singing its heart out, I jumped up, kicking my chili and rice all over the floor, burning my leg, but I was attached to a rather angry carp trying to get to the other side of the lake. After the fish weeded me, I turned the

gas off and looked at my dinner spread all over the floor. I was feeling sick. I remember putting the rod down and sitting on my bedchair thinking I had no other food and a potentially lost carp that felt like a lump – gutted.

I walked round and got the boat. It was full of water, so I was soaked too, making the situation even better... the ups and downs of fishing. I grabbed my rod, pulling myself to the

bundle of weed, and when I got over the top I saw a massive tail waving at me. Now my heart was racing and my hands were shaking, as my season could be made in the next few minutes; it was massive. It was all a blur, and all I can remember is hand lining a massive ball of weed and a massive common into the net then uncovering her in the middle of the lake and seeing that I had the “uncaught common” that everyone talks about. I stood up in the boat, shouting as loud as I could; I had just made my season, and I felt so emotional I couldn’t do anything.

I called the owner who ran across the fields from his house faster than Mr. Bolt – smoke was coming from his shoes. We just stood there jumping up and down like two kids at Christmas. It’s moments like these that I live for, and it will stay with me for my lifetime. For the record, although completely irrelevant, she was just over the magical 40lb mark. Sadly my time had come to an end on this lovely, small, intimate water fished now by some very close friends. It is a water very close to my heart.

I had nothing lined up for a few



months, so I started looking but nothing really took my fancy. I looked and looked and looked until one day I was out with the girlfriend in the pub when an old man was struggling to count his money at the bar. I offered to pay, being the nice person I am, and we had a small chat. Fishing popped up in the conversation, with him saying he had acres of land with a few large waters on them as he was a big farmer in the area. He said I could have a walk around with a few days fishing chucked in... interesting.

After a long winter, and with spring fast approaching, I had nothing else to go for apart from my farmer friend's offer. I didn't even know if any carp were resident. I walked, walked, walked and walked more without seeing a roach let alone a carp. I rowed, rowed and rowed more, and again saw nothing apart from the wildlife and nature at its finest, and not one other angler; it was almost perfect.

I fished a few nights and almost gave up, as it looked fishless. Then

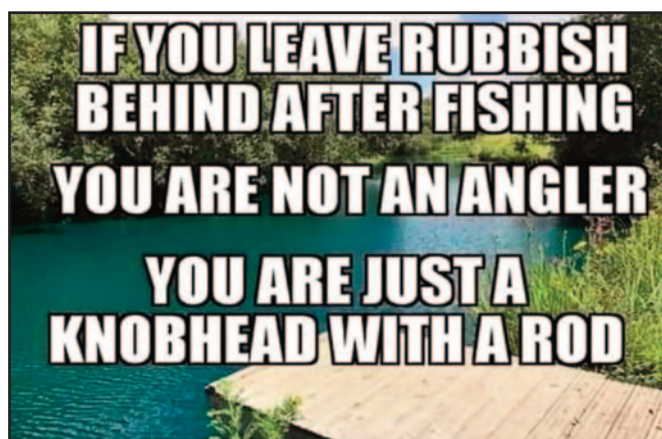
one morning a fish crashed on the other side of the 65-plus acre lake. I reeled in, jumped into my boat and looked until my eyes almost started bleeding, and then I saw a carp – exciting times. After a few hours in the boat I located maybe ten or twelve carp near an island drop-off in a silt channel, so I baited with a new bait from C.C. Moore called Pacific Tuna. I wanted the carp to see it as a long-term food source, as it's a natural, nutritious meal and most importantly it's highly digestible throughout the year. This is key in my eyes, and hopefully I can keep them in the area long enough to catch them! I was really dedicated to the lake now, climbing trees, walking around and baiting when necessary. I saw a couple of really big fish, but not many. It is getting under my skin day by day, week after week now, and I'm loving it.

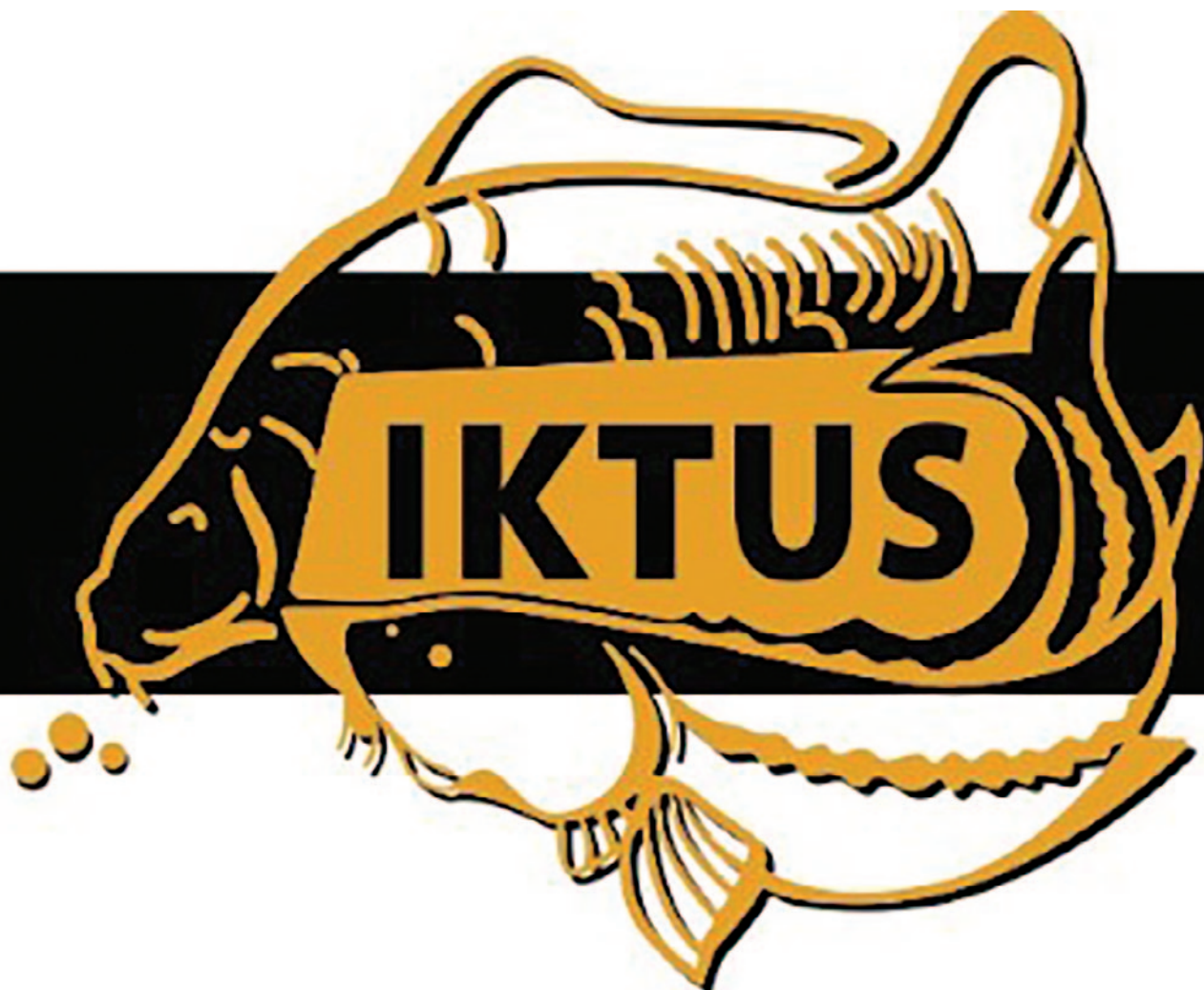
My first fish was under my belt; it was only a low twenty common, but the sense of achievement was incredible – it blew my brains away. If I

knew what was about to happen I probably would have died of excitement. I fished the night and caught nothing, and then the weather changed. I booked emergency holiday, and I could see the fish getting closer then feeding. I was getting the odd liner until I had a lovely, mint 29lb common; it was immaculate, scale-perfect.

Then another rod was away an hour later. Its power was superb; I actually couldn't stop it. The fight pulled my arms off. Looking back I was very lucky to land it; the line was rough and the leader was frayed, but that's not important now, as my biggest common this year was smiling with me, having her photo taken, all 40lb 6oz of it! The thing that really gets my hairs standing up is that it's maybe an uncaught lump with a bigger one swimming round with her. Hopefully she too will be resting in my arms sooner rather than later. I've also learned that it pays not to be frightened to fish for the unknown and to expect the unexpected. ■

Carpy Humour





FISHING RESORT



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Little Irchester – Blind Eye

By Liam Close (Retro Baits)

Finally arriving at the gates of Little Irchester came as a real relief after another long drive from my Shropshire home. The conditions I was greeted with were far from ideal with northeasterly winds and high pressure forecast for the next couple of days.

Undeterred, I made my way over to the lake. The first angler I bumped into was the bailiff, who informed me that very little had been caught since my last visit. After we finished chatting, I went for a couple of laps around the lake.

I fancied a peg known as No Point, as it had received little pressure and commands a good chunk of water. I had nothing else to go on, so I

thought it was as good a place as any to start.

I fetched the gear from the car and started making my way to No Point. Halfway between No Point and the car park there is a peg called Second Point. I stopped to catch my breath as I stood watching the lake. I saw a fish head and shoulder around two thirds of the way across to the far bank. I was just thinking about where to place my second rod when a fish crashed clean out the lake, tighter to the bank than the first show and around 30 yards to the right. I cast the rod straight on the spot where the fish showed, and the lead went down with a real donk.

Both rods were baited with Retro Baits Meaty Garlic boilies fished snowman style with five-bait

stringers. Around a hundred baits were spread over both rods. The third rod was baited with a PVA bag, which I cast around 50 yards. It was a bit of a chuck and hope rod, but with two rods on the money, I was fairly confident.

The night passed uneventfully, as did the morning. I didn't see anything all morning, and my previous night's confidence was beginning to diminish. The sun rose higher, and it looked like a rerun of the previous day's weather. Although it was still blowing a northeasterly it was slightly stronger and felt a little milder.

At around 11.30am my middle rod let out a couple bleeps, which I thought might have been line bites. It got to 12pm, and I was just thinking bite time had been and gone when



the middle rod was away. As soon as I struck, I was forced to give line, as there was no stopping whatever I was attached to, and yard after yard was taken off the tight clutch. All of a sudden the fish stopped, and everything was solid. I feared the worst; I couldn't feel anything, so I put the rod back on the rest, slackened off the clutch and went to get the boat.

The boat was a good 150 yards from my peg, and by the time I'd got the boat to my swim I'd had a few bleeps, so I was hopeful that the fish was still on. Life jacket on and boat launched, I made my way out into the lake using the rod and reel to winch me out to where I hooked the fish. The line entered a thick weed bed, and I started hand-lining it back onto the rod and reel to take up the slack. This seemed to go on forever, as being in a small boat with a 12ft rod while hand-lining is awkward to say the least. I eventually got over the top of the rig, and to my relief felt the fish kick hard twice.

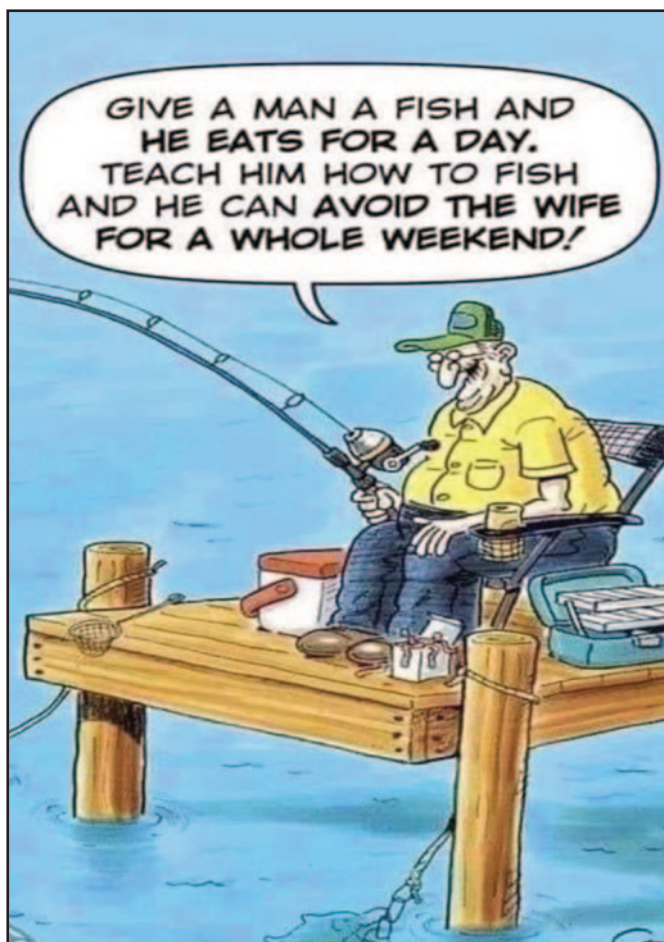
It was now free, and I was back in direct contact. At this point the fish was coming up through the layers, and I caught sight of a huge common swim past the boat. It then went on a powerful run, taking line off the clutch with me in pursuit. It must have towed the boat around for a good ten

minutes before it was ready for the net.

The buzz and relief of catching such an awesome fish after such a fight was immense. I knew it was one of the A-team, and when I got it on the mat it was identified as Blind Eye at a new PB of 43lb 12oz. ■



Carpy Humour



The Forgotten Pond

By James Thompson

Unloading the gear as the rain lashed down it would have been strange not to question my sanity! I'd persuaded the missus to play taxi and drop me off at a local pond that had been steeped in rumour for as long as I can remember. Tales of 40lb commons and pike big enough to put a saddle on had circulated for years. Hand in hand with those rumours went the stories of angry gamekeepers and snarling security dogs. The Forgotten Pond, as I now fondly call it, is an old brick pit approximately three acres in size. Nestled in the heart of the Lincolnshire countryside, it truly is a gem – a special place that evokes that pri-

mal excitement deep inside oneself. I wasn't entering the complete unknown, as I was in possession of a couple of photographs from a few years back. A couple of local lads got brave and wet a line, but didn't last long after numerous chases off the land. It was certainly full of mystery, and I couldn't help but feel they had perhaps only scratched the surface. Stories had circulated that some of our new neighbours from elsewhere in the EU had been in, and that perhaps most of the carp were now somebody's Christmas dinner. There was only one way to find out...

It was mid March 2016 when I reached the conclusion that I simply had to have a go. I set about scaling the gear down and got onto Google

Earth to check out how I could get in and out. After a little research I ascertained that the pond was owned by an old guy who lived a considerable distance away and used it infrequently. My enquiries were ignored, and I took the decision that I would give it a go until told otherwise, which added excitement, not that it was required anyway! The adrenaline coursing through my veins as I stood in the rain with my gear on my back was incredible. After waving the missus off I was alone in the dark with thoughts only of how to gain access. I daren't even begin to dream of what may lay inside.

Having exhausted Google Earth it was clear that the easiest way in would be through the roadside hedge.





Whilst I anticipated a few cuts and scratches, it was far and away the shortest route. That first night, upon approaching the pond on a small country road, we were confronted by a gang of high-viz vests stretching as far as the eye could see! My initial comment to Soph was, "Police! How did they know I was coming?" We slowed down and proceeded with caution, and it soon became clear they weren't police! Thank God! They were, in fact, what have now affectionately come to be called 'froggers' in our house. In a nutshell they are a local band of brothers that police what I am now aware is a 'Toad Highway!' I am informed that there are in excess of 700 such spots up and down the country, and volunteers look to escort amorous amphibians across roads from their winter hiding spots to their breeding grounds, in this case The Forgotten Pond. Whilst it hampered my progress and threw Plan A straight out of the window, it was still pleasing to see efforts being

made. It is now nearly ten years since the common toad was listed as a threatened species, and we can only hope that the efforts of people like those I have mentioned can go on to help preserve what is one of our national treasures.

A quick rethink and another quick look at Google Earth meant I opted to get dropped off about half a mile away at the entrance to a farmer's field, and it was here I stood in the rain, packing myself like a donkey ready for market, and questioned my sanity! The questioning was only brief, as I soon concluded that it was perfectly rational and reasonable and set off across the field heading north-east. I knew from the map that I would eventually hit a treeline, which was silhouetted against the horizon and that beyond that was somebody's garden and orchard. I had to rest when I reached the trees and then set about finding a point of entry. Eventually I came across an area that was only waist high and carefully

lifted my gear over piece by piece. Climbing over behind it all, I loaded myself back up, and the nerves then kicked in. Standing in someone's garden laden with my gear, dripping wet, the sanity came into question again! Watching my back I made my way to the other side where I negotiated another small fence and entered woodland.

The nut-brown woodland was a leafy paradise still awaiting the arrival of spring and in turn its cloak of green. The creaky branches of the aged trees were audible over the driving rain, and their ancient trunks twisted up from the forest floor standing in my path like an army halting my progress. Picking my way through them, they stood like centurions, and I could hear the scuttling of rabbits and skittering of mice seeking cover from this intruder. Wood pigeons cooed, crows squawked, and even a tawny owl screeched as it left its canopy perch as I approached. From deep within the forest, under the security of its roof, I looked out at the sheet of rain driving hard into the fields beyond, so lucid and all encompassing. With centuries worth of leaf mould and broken branches left undisturbed, it was crunchy underfoot, and the deeper into the woodland I went the more conscious I was of every sound. After what felt an eternity I caught a glimpse of light, a bright reflective flash through the trees. Sinking to my knees, holding my breath, I was sure it was a torch. Waiting in the cold, damp air, it soon became apparent that I was still alone. The reflection was in fact the moonlight glinting off the water's glass-like surface. I was there. I had reached the Forgotten Pond.

Laying my gear down on the wet grass and sitting back to take a minute, the aura of the place hit me instantly. The adrenaline was pumping and my heart racing, but yet somehow I felt at home. The first point of the lake I reached I knew to be on the east bank, and from what I could make out by moonlight, it was inaccessible. After collecting my thoughts and calming myself down I loaded back up and made my way along the east bank in a southerly direction. I could make out the shape of what appeared to be a vehicle in the inky blackness and so approached with caution.

An old caravan, half white half blue, sat in an opening between the trees, adorning the shore of the lake like its keeper it would have been more at home on the Skegness seafront in 1969! Using it as cover, I once again set my rods down, and from here could make my way to the water's edge where I couldn't resist dipping my fingers in. Still carrying the cold of winter, it was enough to make me shudder, but not enough to put me off getting the rods out. I decided that as it was the only part of the lake I seemed able to access, and struggling without using any artificial light, it was as good a place as any.

I remember when I was told of this place as a kid, the one thing always referred to was its depth. There had to be some truth to it, as I knew in the not too distant past it had been used for police scuba diving training upon the creation of the UK's first specialist diving unit. More than one officer supposedly explored its depths only to refuse to ever get back in there again. Stories of pike the size of great whites and of an inquisitive nature had scared even the hardiest of souls.

A couple of simple choddies were already tied on the rods and ready to go. I'd not long before been to see an old friend of mine, Jason Hayward of

Specialist Sharpened Hooks, to pick up a batch of a bait that he had released, MPX. Knowing Jason of old, and with his angling prowess and attention to detail being second to none, it was an easy call for me to get on his bait. This first night though, I thought it best just to flick a couple of singles out and sit back and acclimatise. I'd been lucky enough that when picking a sack full of sticky sharp Drennan Continentals and four sacks full of MPX up that Jay had also given me some 'White Specials' and some 'Orange Specials' The smell when opening the tubs was incredible – enough to make even Willy Wonka drool! Onto both rods a white special was tied, and I dropped one off the rod tip into what I guessed to be about 15ft of water, and the other I chucked about 40 yards into the darkness.

Between trapping the line as the lead hit the water and feeling that donk of it touching down, I could have written this article! It went on for what seemed an eternity, and I estimated it to be in approximately 30ft of water. Indicators clipped on, rods on the rests, I rolled a smoke and poured a brew from the flask. It was about 10.30pm by this point, and I was only allowed out until about 2am,

at which point my taxi was going to bed! I soaked it up, literally as well as metaphorically, although by now I had the brolly up and was laid under it next to the rods.

After a brew and a smoke it must have been coming on for 11.30pm when I decided I would roll another. I had it in my lips with lighter poised, but the next thing I knew both fag and lighter were gone and replaced by 12ft of carbon. I don't really recall the run other than it being a one-toner. As I was so close to the rods it just happened in an instant, and instinct took over. Standing back out in the torrential monsoon conditions with the rod hooped over I had to smile. Was this really happening? I persuaded myself it was a big tench, and then it was a foul hooked pike, or possibly even a slimy eel, but all the time I knew it was too big to be any of those. It was most definitely a carp, and a good one at that.

After ten tense minutes of back and forth she finally started to wallow on the surface as they do when nearly beaten. Slowly coaxing her those final few yards to the net cord my nerves were in pieces like never before. Over the cord, net lifted, and she was in. I left her netted in the margin and staked it down so there was no fear of escape, unhooking her in the water. I took a minute and recovered the smoke and lighter that luckily I'd thrown left instead of right. In the sling and on the scales I waited to see the dial pass 30 and only dreamt where it might end up. It settled on 25lb 2oz. I was shocked it wasn't heavier, but this has been a common theme with all of the fish I have now had from The Forgotten Pond. I've been lucky enough to catch a fair few 30lb carp, so as a general rule I know what they look like. Not these fish though. Maybe they are hollow? I don't know, or care for that matter, but what I do know is that in my net I had a big old British carp that was born and bred in Lincolnshire – just how I like them – a proper warrior with an old scar along its flank. The scar alone was probably older than me. A very pale fish with a huge frame and some unusual scaling on one side, it truly was what dreams are made of.

After the usual love we give them and a few quick night time snaps it was now gone midnight as I released



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her back to swim another day. With nothing worse than a sore lip and dented pride, she powered strongly back off into the depths, no doubt to go and sulk for a day or two about that nasty white thing it tried to eat, most likely telling itself it won't make that mistake again! By this point I was completely soaked to the bone, yet I couldn't care less. It felt like my dreams had come true. This fish meant so much more than a stocked 40 from a more typical venue. In truth the dream was only just beginning. The next couple of hours passed in a blur, and after making the mammoth trek back out of the woods and across the field I got back to the layby just as Soph pulled in. I think she could tell before I even got in the car that the mission had been a success, judging by the grin of a Cheshire cat on a drowned rat! She has also soon come to recognise the 'smell of success' and knows instantly now when she picks me up if I bagged one or not!

After processing the initial excitement and thinking into the future, I decided my other plans had to be put on hold, and this was most definitely a case of making hay while the sun shone. I couldn't get down the next night but managed to get down every evening for the rest of the week and baited a spot. The froggers hadn't shown themselves so I had decided that for ease of access I would bait a roadside swim. Or THE roadside swim I should say, as despite 85m of bank there was only one spot where you could safely fish through the trees. A few nights baiting with the MPX meant that by the time the weekend arrived I was brimming with positivity and enthusiasm. Any carp angler will tell you exactly what follows such positive thoughts – two blank nights! Both were only six-hour sessions under the cover of darkness, but dreams of this being my Redmire were fading as fast as Tottenham's title hopes at the time!

Over the following a week I put the graft in again and got down every night before bed to put some bait onto some likely looking spots. With the Friday booked off work I had three overnights planned and lifts arranged. Thurs night came and went without event, as did Friday. Saturday I decided to brave it and get down before dark so that I could try and find something to go on. After stashing



the gear up and having a wander around I saw a fish moving along the far margin. As great as that was, getting anywhere near that far margin was a mission in itself. Back to the shed for some gardening tools and back down to the pond, I set to work gaining access. It's a balancing act between needing to clear enough to get in and going too far and advertising my presence. After being torn, shredded and ripped to bits I finally sat back in a new swim with a deep clear margin in front. I guessed it was about 12ft deep, which in the grand scheme of things is shallow by Forgotten Pond standards!

We were at that point of the year where it's hard to decide whether they will be in the shallows or whether the extra warmth they offer hadn't really arrived yet. I had, however, seen a fish and caught one the week before, so they were obviously on the move. Full of confidence on the White Specials, I had to put one rod on them, but tied an MPX corkballer to the back of the bait for the other rod. It was dark by the time the traps were set, and again I sat back to soak up the majestic atmosphere this mysterious place drowns you in. It was late by the time I got in the bag and nodded off for the night, and I awoke at about 7am the following morning to fog rolling across the lake right into my corner – a thick, grey cloud of vel-

vet dancing across the pond; shrouding me in a vaporous cloak. After a brew and some messing about with the camera capturing the fog I sat back down on my bed just enjoying being there and the natural beauty we are blessed with in this country.

My thoughts were a million miles away, dreaming of halcyon days spent with rod in hand when I was interrupted by a couple of bleeps on the buzzer, and as I turned to look, the tip hooped over and the water in front boiled. Within a split second the swim erupted, and I was out in the fog doing battle with another Forgotten Pond warrior. The scrap was much less eventful than the first. A couple of half-hearted lunges and she rolled over on the surface, going in the net without fuss. As usual she was made safe whilst I took a minute to gather my thoughts and get ready for the weighing. Again I was sure she was over 30, but again the Reubens told otherwise, and 28lb 9oz of bronze common lay before me, a stunning carp with a hint of purple to its fins and the 'angriest' of dorsal fins. During this time the sun had risen and burnt through the fog, revealing what was to be the first real sunny day of 2016. I was confident that its arrival, coupled with the fact I was fishing the shallowest margin that morning, would bring further action. It didn't. I left with a smile and knew I would be

back again soon.

I continued to put the effort in and introduced the MPX daily in the hope they would be queuing up awaiting my arrival. The next weekend coming I had plans to be away with the missus and the dogs and knew I would be missing out on The Forgotten Pond. I managed a quick overnighter on the Thursday night, but drew a blank. After sweet-talking Soph I was allowed back down after we returned on the Sunday and squeezed a quick overnighter in before work. Effort rewarded, I bagged one at 25lb 6oz, although unlucky in that it was a repeat of my first fish. Whilst never ungrateful to catch any carp, it is always an anticlimax when you realise it's one you have had before, especially only two weeks apart and after only two captures. The positives were that at least I was doing the right things, and the fact that this time it did come to an MPX Cork-baller and from the opposite side of the lake! Back to work and back to reality after releasing her, I sat at my desk for a couple of days, guessing at

the potential stock. Roll on the sunshine when I might actually see a few, if indeed there were 'a few.'

I was back down on the Thursday for another quick overnighter between work and was now nearly a month into my campaign. A short session resulted in my first ever true leather at 26lb 8oz, a real old beauty of a fish, slate grey across the back with a real yellow belly. True leathers are few and far between these days so to catch one older than me, and unknown, was a bit special.

The first 30 came that weekend in the shape of a common that would have been well placed as part of a Naval submarine fleet. Long and lean, it had plenty to remind me of the famous Burghfield Common, one of the greatest in the country in my humble opinion. I'm not normally one to sack fish, but on this occasion it had to be done with only a couple of hours until daylight. The resulting photographs and short video I filmed were well worth the sleepless few hours worrying about her sacked up in the margin.

Over the next couple of weeks I had another friendly face grace my net in the shape of the common I had as my second fish, along with another 27lb mirror. I kept the bait going in regularly in anticipation of some annual leave I had approaching the following week. After willing the time away for the week at work I knocked off on the Wednesday evening, and the gear was good to go. I was back at the lake before 7pm with four nights ahead of me. I fished hard for two days and really pushed the boundaries in terms of not getting caught, but to no avail. I'd seen a few cruising the upper layers and got the big common taking floaters. They were all too clued up to fall for my hookbait though.

I had my angling protégé and self-proclaimed godson arriving on the Saturday for a couple of nights and was really stuck for how I was going to get us a fish. Having felt like I had banged my head against a wall for a couple of days, it was welcome relief when he arrived. Absolving myself of the responsibility I let him decide on the plans for the night. He opted for





comfort and a more social setting, whereas my original spot was on the far bank, so that's what we did. After a good night's kip we awoke early, and I laid down the law. Effort equals reward I drummed into us both, and

we reeled in and set about finding something to go on for the final night. We watched the fish all day and got some great footage of the big girls in the snags and cruising the upper layers. Amazing stuff to watch, and we

were both encapsulated for hours sat up in the trees watching them in the crystal clear water. Incidentally the lake was dug for the Oxford Clay, which results in the water being extremely clear all the way down, but yet it has a real bluey green appearance to it. It makes for perfect carp watching conditions as they stand out incredibly well.

After getting the marker rod out and deciding we would brave the 'no-go' zone in front of someone's house we found a few spots in about 8ft of water in a sheltered, sunny part of the lake. It ticked all the boxes, and I was surprised to find such shallow water after what I had discovered to date. We knew that the forecast for the following day was 25 degrees, and it had been 20-plus for the few previous days, so we were confident they'd be hungry. After speaking with Jay and my other angling confidant, it was decided we would do what I never do and fill the spots in with bait and sit back and wait. This doesn't fit with my style of angling as a general rule, but it felt right at the time. Whilst after a four-day session and no fish I was



desperately in need myself, I was more keen to get one on the bank for young Gord. He knows and values carp fishing for what it really is anyway and appreciated fully the opportunity to be there, so a blank was no issue, but I really wanted to show him one! We sat up until about midnight waiting and listening and gradually drifted off hoping to be awoken by that familiar Delkim scream.

The following morning I opened my eyes and grabbed my phone to check the time. As I did and read it as 6:59am, Gord rolled over and said, "Morning." I hadn't even had time to reply when the Delkim went into meltdown, and the clutch started spinning. It wasn't the most epic of fights, but I was on my floater gear, which we had set up an extra rod on to cover an extra spot we had seen a fish over.

I was more delicate than usual and let it do its own thing. When the fish initially rolled on the surface I turned to Gord and said, "Just a small common, mate." He looked at me confused but didn't say anything, and it was only when he netted her for me

that he turned and said, "Are you sure it's a small common?" It turned out it was actually a great lump of a mirror, jet black and slate grey and Italian in descent, judging by the high shoulders and short length.

It was a real old stunner and one of the most 'carpy' carp I have ever caught. A moment I will treasure forever is when we set the camera for self-take and got one of us both holding her – truly the stuff dreams are made of. Pounds and ounces were irrelevant as always, but for the record it went just over 26lb. By the time the photographs were done and I'd made the boy his bacon baps, it was time for a slow pack up and the nightmare of getting all the gear back to the taxi rank! We left happy though and made some memories we will treasure forever.

I have carried on with the baiting campaign and they have now seen about 40kg of the MPX over the last couple of months, but as always, there are now a few trying to jump on my bandwagon. They are supposed friends I trusted with too much information, who never fancied putting

the graft into the unknown themselves, but were happy to give it a go as soon as someone has done the hard work and shown them the way. This is all too common in carp fishing these days, I am afraid.

On my latest session I arrived to find my small stash of water and a few other bits had disappeared and some other blatant attempts of sabotage. There ain't no mountain high enough though as they say, so I stuck it out without a brew and managed without a few other bits. Yet again the mysterious old place rewarded me, this time with a 28lb mirror – another real old classic carp and one I am truly grateful to have in my album.

I'd reached the point where I was sure I only had a couple left to go after all the time I had spent watching them cruise the upper layers, but two of my last three captures were fish I hadn't seen in the water, so who knows? I'm still sure there is one big surprise left although it's hard to trust a fleeting glance without your Polaroids! Time will tell, I guess. Fingers crossed I get her before the circus do... ■



Anglers Paradise First Ever 40lb Common!

By Zenia

Kieran Evans, 20 from South Wales has caught a new venue record from the Kracking Carp Lake and has made history in catching the first ever 40lb common – all 40lb 8oz of it! Kieran fished Peg 3 on the Kracking and took on board advice from the staff, fishing both rods to the far bank on the entrances/exits to the weed

using a single grain of fake sweet-corn popped up about an inch with a very small handful of corn around it. At three o'clock the alarm screamed off, and as soon as he hit into it he knew it was one of the big girls!

Kieran said: "I was shaking with excitement as I was fighting it, just hoping I'd land it. After I finally woke the old man up to give me a hand to land it (lazy bugger!) I finally got it in the net, and at the top of my voice

shouted, 'Get in there!' We got it out and weighed it, and it was a fin perfect 40lb 8oz common! I was over the moon! We then took pictures, and I also went in the lake to have a picture with it, saying, 'Goodbye! See you at 50!' I have been trying for more than four years to get one of the big girls out of Kracking, and after all the effort I have put in, I've finally done it and smashed my PB by a massive 14lb! I'm absolutely thrilled and still can't believe it!"

Not bad for a day's session! We are all over the moon for Kieran and are even happier to celebrate our first ever 40lb common being caught. We brought these fish on from 1lb up to this size, so we are extremely proud! We have a great team at Anglers Paradise; the staff has worked so hard in looking after the fish over the years, growing them on, and the results show just what a good job they have done!

Stuart Yeardley also caught a 40 from the Kracking Lake! Stuart caught a 40lb 10oz mirror on a Cell pop-up over a kilo of chops and 10mm boilies. It's far from an easy lake, but when it does produce, it produces BIG!

Adam Fitzpatrick, 17, from Liverpool, caught his personal best carp, beating his previous by 10lbs! Adam caught the legendary Tadpole at 30lbs from the Specimen Carp Lake. Adam caught Tadpole whilst on a guided session with Julian Chidgey. Adam told us he has wanted to come to Anglers Paradise for a few years now after seeing it numerous times on the television. He came here hoping to beat his personal best carp, which was 20lbs. After spotting a fish that looked like a potential



Finlay Tosey, PB 25lb mirror.



Kieran Evans, PB 40lb 8oz common, Kracking.



Stuart, 40lb 10oz mirror, Kracking gallery.

target they dropped four freelined maggots in front of the fish. The fish took the maggots within seconds, so he played the fish and managed to land it. After weighing it and seeing that it was exactly 30lbs, Adam said, "I was over the moon. I never thought I'd catch a fish that size, especially at my age, and I will never forget it!" Adam naturally won our Fish Of The Week competition too!

Finlay Tosley, aged eight, has caught a new personal best 25lb mirror, which beat his previous PB by 19lbs! Finlay caught the mirror from the Main Lake using our Paradise Baits Pink Stink boilies. Finlay also caught a 14lb common and 17lb mirror on the same day from the Main Lake!

Let me know if you'd like any more info or higher resolution pictures and I will get them. ■

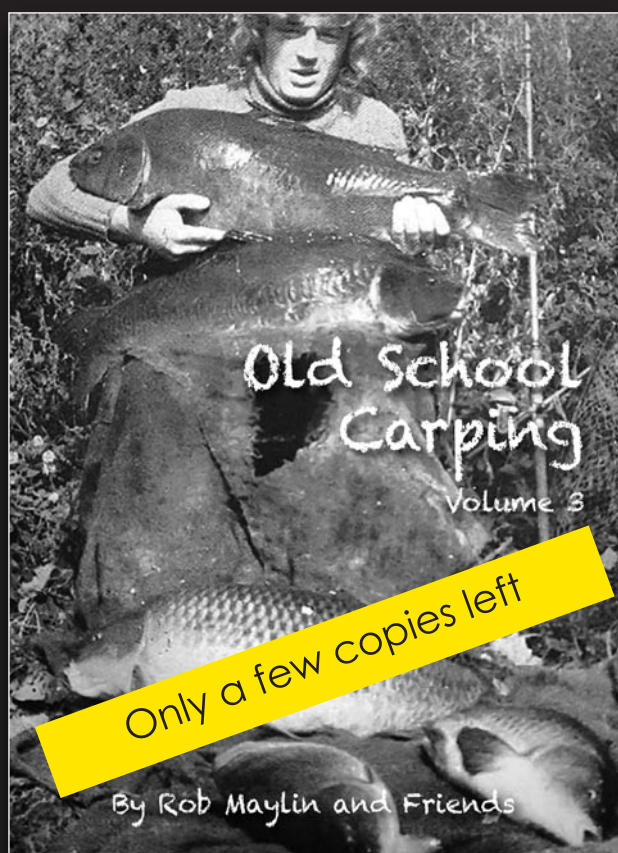
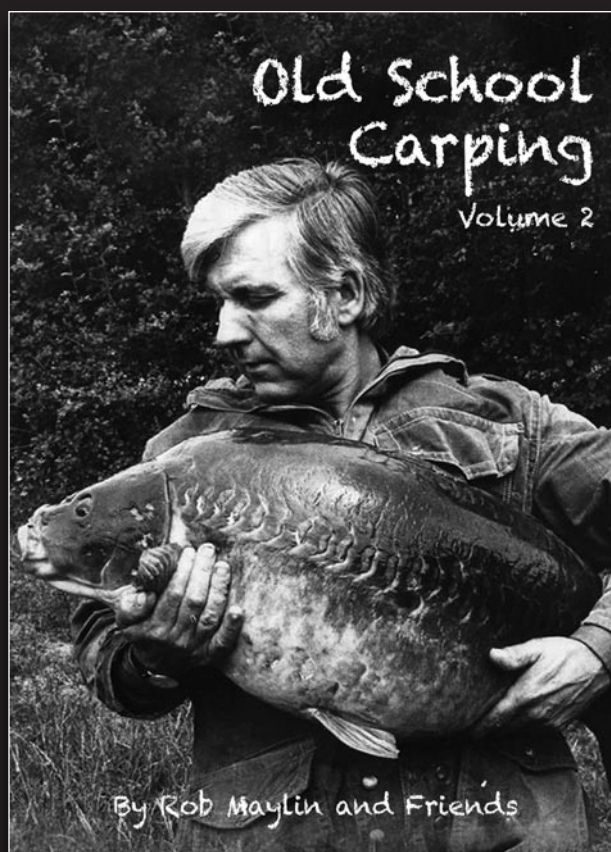
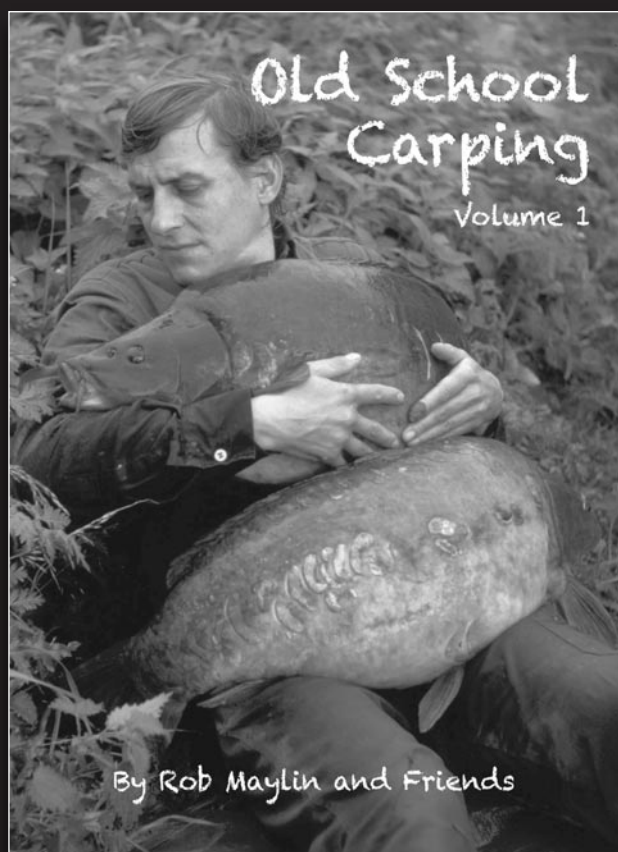
Adam Fitzpatrick with the Tadpole at 30lbs, 26th June.



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On The Off Chance

By Mark Webster

I'm sat here scratching my head a bit, as it's hard to know where to go with this one. Most of my stories have been on times past, closed chapters so to speak, but this one is different, as I've only done 48 hours fishing on this particular water so far and yet to catch the big'un, but Rob Maylin asked me to write a little piece, so write it I shall.

It all started with me noticing what looked like a stretch of river near my missus' house, and as the season was ending, I asked her to investigate it for me on one of a dog walks. She did, and she came back saying that it didn't look like there would be any fish in there, but it looked so good on Google that I had to have a look for myself. After dropping her off home a few evenings later, I quickly popped down there. It looked prime with a river flowing into a bridge at the top end and winding up to about 50 yards wide, then bottlenecking down till finally ending with a waterfall at the bottom. It was snags galore, a true lit-

tle paradise in a lovely posh little village. So I planned to have the final day of the season on there, as I was sure it would hold some good chub or even a monster roach. I decided to bait the bottom, and there was about six acres of water to play with at a guess, although it was the narrowest and it was also the deepest and had a huge snag, which seemed the best feature on the river to go at, so that's what I decided to bait for three days leading up to the 23rd.

When the 15th finally arrived, there I was at first light, big grin on my face, trotting rod in hand and a pouch full of wrigglers and punch crumb, marching down to the river for some lovely times. I nestled my bits down quietly, set the float at what looked like the appropriate depth and flipped it out for the first trot. To my surprise the float just sat there motionless. I pulled it back in, shallowed it up a bit and went for another cast. The same thing happened again, and I thought, that's odd, not much flow on here considering how it is roaring out of

that waterfall at the bottom end. I swapped over to the feeder and started ledgering close to the far snags and spent most of the morning getting plagued by little bream – not how I planned my last day on the river. I pulled the rod in and went on a little wander as a bit of afternoon sun had broken through. As I came alongside the snag I was fishing over to, I could make out some big black shapes beneath the branches. As I peered closer I could see that they were carp and good'uns too. My jaw dropped; I found one fish in particular, which stood out – a near fully scaled mirror. It was a bit special, and it was swimming alongside a bigger, fatter one. I slipped in some maggots and crumb, and they were having them on the drop. I was so frustrated, as all I was armed with was a light rod and 2lb line. I like light fishing, mostly after landing 45lb mirror on 2lb line a few years back, but I knew it would be suicidal in these snaggy conditions. I was gutted, as I knew I wouldn't to be able to come back and fish





for them for the next season.

Later that afternoon my missus turned up with the dog and some lunch. I was telling her how disap-

pointed I was over wasting the last day of the season on here and not having any heavier gear to go for the carp I had found. We started doing a

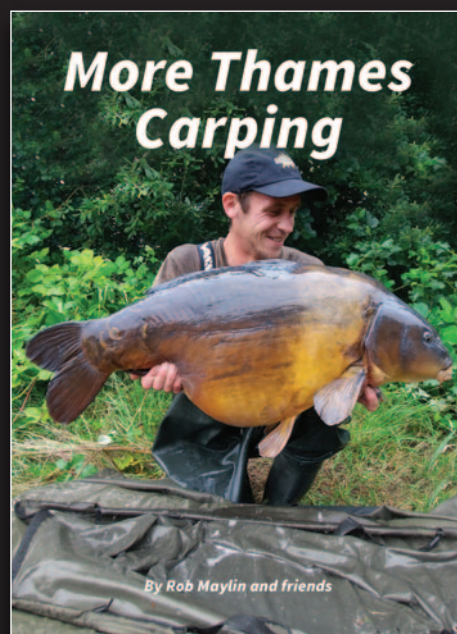
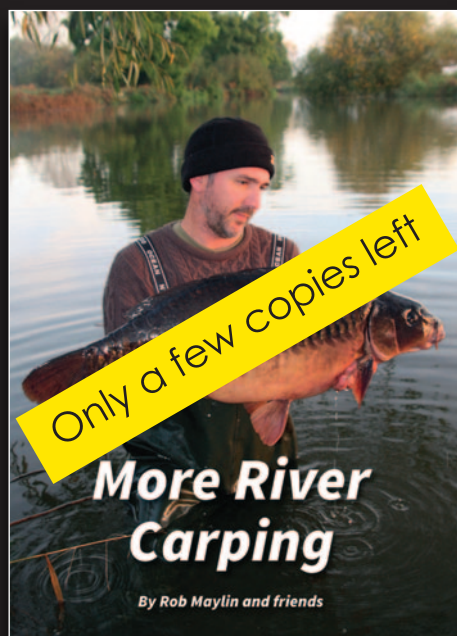
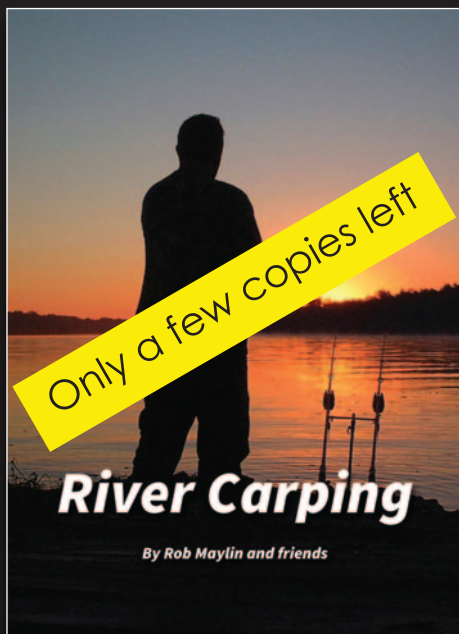
bit of research on the phone and came across a site that had the history of the place, and it all became clear. It wasn't a river after all, but as stream-fed pond where the stream had been diverted in the 1950s to flood a little valley that contained two stew ponds, which had created the place I was fishing. After further digging we found out it has been done by some lord of the manor, and he had also stocked it back in the fifties with carp. It was the find of all finds, and the land on one side was privately owned and was being taken over by a fishing club for all year round fishing that had all been put to a stop after complaints about the work being done by the club. So in my eyes it was as good as an invitation, as I could get in and better still no closed season.

I went scrambling through my bags before I left and found a few kilos of pellet, some boilies and a few tins of corn. I went round and loaded the snag up and planned to return a cou-



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ple of nights later to do a few hours in the dark. Unfortunately, at this particular time all I had in my armoury was some 1.5lb tench rods and a little ABV

664 GT loaded with 6lb line. I had sold my carp rods, and I was planning on getting some more, but it was what I had so it had to do.

I returned a couple of nights later as planned. It was a spooky old place after dark with a walk through some woodlands. I finally got nestled in opposite the snag and quickly went about getting the two rods in position. Although it was poaching, it wasn't like that hot poaching I've done in the past; it was pretty easy going. I could have a bedchair at least and a stove, as I wasn't worried about anyone seeing the flame, so I got a brew on the go. Before the kettle had even boiled I was away on my left hand rod. The 1.5 TC was bent double as a fish ploughed hard for the snag, but after manic battle I was rewarded with a wild, old-looking upper double common. Not a massive fish, but that was my first blood from a new adventure, so I was buzzing. There was no one to take a quick snap, and I had minimal kit, so I just took so long glance for the memory bank and slipped her back home.

As I was picking all the weed and silt off my rig to get it back out there, the right hand rod pulled around. Drink up, I thought, as I struck into



another one. Again it was another mad fight; there were proper wild fish in there, and obviously they weren't used to having a hook in them. It resulted in another common, a little smaller. I got the rod started again, topped the spots up with a few more pouchfuls and finally sat back with a nice brew. It felt good to be back on there, as I've been having a break from the carp scene for a while but could feel the buzz was back.

I had a smoke and crashed out but was awoken in the early hours with another bite and yet another common, a proper little one this time. I thought, oh dear, perhaps it's full of these, but an hour later I was away again and with what felt like a different fish altogether. After a ridiculously long battle, my arm aching, I finally pulled the net over a cracking old chestnut mirror. It still wasn't light, and I had no sacks, but I couldn't slip this one back without a quick snap, so I pegged it down low in the net and just prayed she never jumped out. I texted my missus to come and take a photo after it got light. Whilst I was waiting for her I managed to land another two wild commons. They were proper angry looking things, more like barbel – long and lean.

As the sun came up I looked across the misty pool and all I could see was my lovely lady with a smile and what looked like a cup of tea and a bacon sarnie. Lovely times! She came round, and after filling my belly I went about showing her my prize. She was amazed how big it was (ha ha!). Anyway, we got a couple of shots, and I slipped her back home and wrapped up camp. I couldn't wait to return, and I did a few days later for another night, and what a night it was.

I got the rods out about 10pm I suppose, and by 5 in the morning I'd had 12 bites, landed nine, hooked/pulled on two and had one aborted take. It was a mental night's angling; the baited spot was kicking, but not one mirror that night – they were all commons between 14 and 20lbs. The following morning I returned to bait up, as I'd planned the day out with the missus for lunch and the pictures. I came across the same two mirrors I had seen previously; they were on my spot trounging, but they looked like different gravy to anything I had caught before. They were definitely the king and queen of the pool. So I



decided after dropping the missus off later to do another sneaky night in the hope of snaring one of them.

I returned to the pond about nine that night and had the rods in and settled by 10. It was quiet up to midnight, not like the other night where it was action from word go. Just as I was about to nod off, I had a single bleep on my right rod and saw the bobbin twitch then drop back. I hovered above the rod, but nothing happened. As I climbed back in my pit it happened again, so I slowly lifted the rod and held the line in my fingers. I could feel it twitching, so I slowly leant into the lead and felt another twitch. I bent into it and one was on! It chugged off up the lake, leaving a big wave behind it. My little reels only held 100 yards of line, and I had no choice but to follow it, passing the rod around trees and falling in stingers as I desperately tried to catch up with it.

By the time I did, it was about 200 yards up the pool, and I could hear my other buzzer let out a scream – what dramas! It was locked up tight, and it was the snag rod, so I was just praying my old John Roberts butt rests had it in them so I never lost my rod. As much as I wanted to bully the fish I was playing, I knew it felt special and didn't want to lose it. After about half an hour playing it, it finally came off the bottom and pulled up, and in the torchlight I could see these huge apple sliced scales along its flanks. My knees went, and I knew it was one of the proper ones. I wish I hadn't have seen it as soon as I did, as it took

me another 15 heart-pounding minutes to finally coax it into the net.

I quickly made my way back to the other one, and to my relief it was still there. The reel was wedged against the buzzer, and I gave it a little pull and felt a nod. Then by luck the fish came off the branches and out into open water – someone must have been looking down on me. My arms were killing by this time, and I was glad to have that one in the net as well, and I had a lovely brace. I was lucky I brought a sack this time, so I put the big scaly in that and left the 20 common in the net. I got the rods back on the spot, rolled a smoke, had a victory cuppa and texted my lady to come take photos, as I had the big un' I was after in the bag. By the time she turned up I had landed another six commons and two mirrors including a few more 20s. I was picking up some better fish but couldn't hold on to all of them, so I had to slip a few back.

I took photos of the 20s first, and my missus was in amazement and couldn't believe the size of the fish I was catching out of there, as she has grown up there and never even knew about fish like that being in there. Then as she thought she taken all the photos, I said, "One more to go" and pulled the sack up and laid it on the mat. As I unzipped it I was hoping to shock her, but I ended up more shocked myself, as it looked even better than it did in the night in torchlight. It was one of the best looking scalies I had ever caught, all red and crinkled and littered in apple slices.

My missus took some unbelievable photos considering she only had a phone to use. We popped up the pub after slipping her back to celebrate with a drink and a nice lunch.

I didn't return to the pond after that for a couple of weeks because of work, as I had too much bait to roll, but I did continue baiting it, as I had yet to catch the biggest one I'd seen. I finally dropped in for a night a few weeks later and was shocked to see another angler on there and in my swim – such cheek! But after having a chat he seemed a decent guy and even offered to move. It turned out to be a genuine mistake it seemed, and to be honest it felt nice having some company for the night, as I'm always fishing on my own. He had informed me how hard it was on there, and he was top rod last year with eight fish. He seemed quite pleased, so I just kept quiet about my last three nights,

as I was hoping to keep him away from my swim in future! But I still ended up having a crazy night in the swim next door.

It started kicking off about 3am when I received a double take. I managed to play them both at once and landed a lovely little linear and a cracking chestnut common throughout the night and about another six commons to over 20lbs. They started showing signs of spawning, all grouping up, and it was time to leave them in peace. As I was packing away I had my rod laid on the deck, and out of the corner of my eye I noticed one getting dragged in the lake. I quickly dropped my stuff and pulled into a good fish as it charged off up the lake. I just hung on, hoping the 6lb line would hold, and by the time it stopped I had a crowd of dog walkers and family strollers behind me cheering me on. I had never stayed that late before and

was shocked at the friendly response of the locals, as I was clearly poaching, but I was finally rewarded with a lovely mid-twenty common and a round of applause from a group of shocked onlookers. I managed to get one of them to take a couple of photos on my phone before letting her go and making my way home.

Since they spawned I haven't returned to the pool. I've also found another pond up the road, which is a lot harder poaching, but as is always the case it has better rewards. I have only seen four carp, but one is a decent 40lb common. So I'm unsure whether I'll carry on at this pond, as I know I'm close to the big'un, or move on for this common. But this story has to be continued, so hopefully I'll come back with a few more photos and a few more tales and share them with you fine people, but until then, tight lines! ■



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Bevo and the 'Brace'

By Stephen (Bevo) Bevington
(Dave Mallin Baits)



The following article is based on my angling experiences over the past 18 months using Dave Mallin's Brace Mix. After a forced month off work due to an ankle injury sustained whilst stepping out of my van, this gave me plenty of time to think about a change of bait and venue. Fishing on my current syndicate was proving difficult, as my injury limited the distance that I could walk, so I returned to an old syndicate in Shropshire that I had fished back in 2007. A telephone call secured a place, and that was the simple bit done. Now for the difficult part – deciding which bait to use.

In my mind, I wanted to return to the way I used to fish twenty years ago in both style and bait, so for me the bait had to be a bird food/milk protein. I wanted to have bait that I could use all year round without changing once the cooler weather arrived. I had heard of Dave Mallin 12 months previously from a guy on my old water, and I remembered him telling me about his bird food mix. I searched through the Internet and found him and looked at his range of baits.

After a quick call to Dave he sent me some samples of his bait to look at. In my head, I already had the idea that I wanted to use the Brace Mix Liquorice Cream, so another call to Mr Mallin and my first order was placed.

My first few trips out were to my local club water, as the fish on the syndicate had decided to spawn early, and the owner shut the lake for a few weeks. Well, the fish on the club water seemed to like the Liquorice Cream, as I caught half a dozen fish to upper doubles. Over the coming weeks, when my syndicate reopened, I made my return and took my first fish at 20lb 4oz. Over the next few weeks I caught a number of double-figure fish.

Then one Friday, straight from work I made my way to the lake hoping that a swim I had been baiting was free (and it was!). I set up, and during the early hours of Saturday morning one of my alarms sounded. After an uneventful fight, I landed one of the lake's known fish (Clive) at 30lb 6oz. My confidence in my choice of bait was sky high, as I seemed to be



catching every time I went. Through the course of the summer this remained the same, as I never blanked, taking numerous doubles and low twenties. I'd had my head down doing my time on the syndicate on my own, so when the invite came to fish a social on a local day ticket water I took up the offer gladly.

So on a September morning I met

the lads for breakfast and then off down to the lake we went. All the swims on this particular water are on the same side, ten in total, so a draw was done, and I came out of the hat 10th. With my confidence high from my summer on what was turning into my best year ever, I dropped into my swim. After a great social, Sunday morning arrived, and no one had





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.

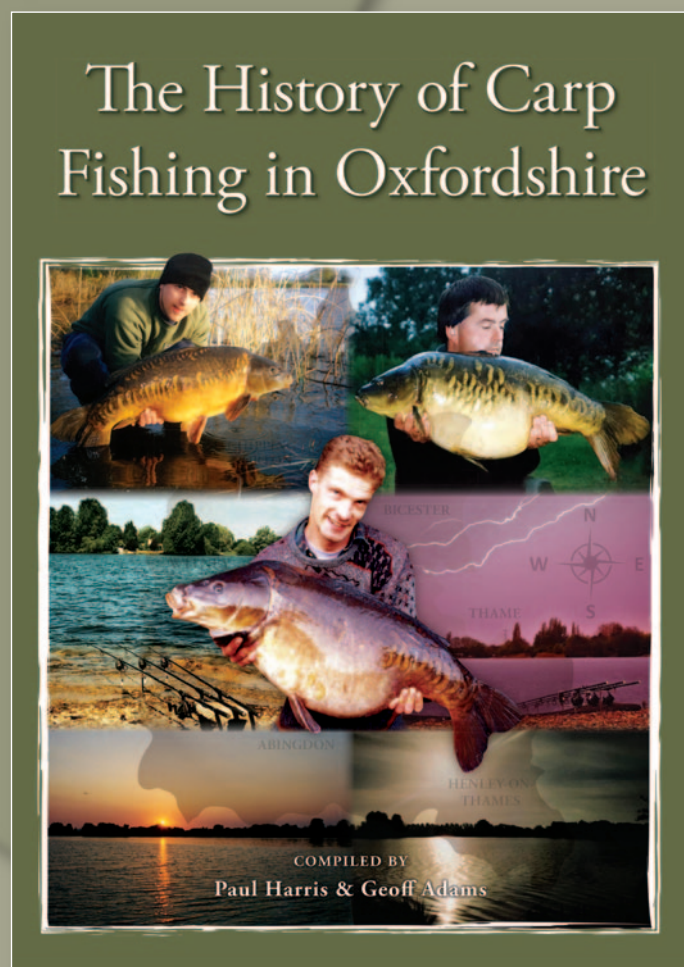
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing 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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caught. Then, out of the blue, my right hand rod took off. After an eventful fight, I finally landed a nice dark mirror of 31lb 6oz, a new PB. Taking into account that the biggest fish in this lake was only 1lb heavier, I was more than happy.

So now the temperatures had started to drop, and I went back to my syndicate for the winter. I caught fish steadily throughout the colder months, only doubles, but I was still having a few. By now, it was February 2015, and I returned to my club water in search of a 20lb common, as in all my years on there I'd not managed one. Into March I again caught steadily, but the best common I managed was 19lb. April was now with us, so I returned to my syndicate again, taking mirrors and commons to 25lb-plus.

Now this next bit still leaves me in a daydream. I was once again invited to a social on Baden Hall's Quarry Pool, a place I had only fished once before, but this pool held a fish I could only dream of catching, a Staffordshire 40lb mirror. Well, I arrived late to the lake, and once again there was no swim choice, so I got what I was given. Friday night was uneventful, so Lee, who I was fishing with, suggested we wound in and went up to the cafe for breakfast. Whilst it was being cooked, I stood looking at pho-

tos of the big mirror, wishfully day-dreaming. We returned to our swims around midday, and once again, out went the rods. Now, we all do casts that feel right, and after about three hours I had a steady take, and after a long battle in the net she went. Well, at this point I'd not seen the fish, just that Lee had said it was new PB. I peered into the net and knew instantly it was the big mirror I'd been looking at on the cafe wall only hours earlier. By now I was in pieces, so the lads weighed her, and she took the scales round to 43lb on the nose. And yes, definitely a new PB!

With my confidence brimming, my next trip was to a small private day ticket lake. Three of us had booked the lake for a weekend, and once again, I came out of the hat last (I don't seem to have much luck when it comes to peg draws). But with my ever-faithful Liquorice Cream, I was not unduly concerned. Over the course of the weekend I managed seven fish up to 28lb. Feeling confident, I even tried zigs dipped in one of Dave Mallin's cranberry flavours and managed three fish up to 26lb 10oz. By now, the fish on the syndicate had spawned and didn't want to feed. I scratched my way through June and July, only catching a few fish, but at least I knew that it wasn't down to the bait.

August arrived and so did an invite to another social, but this time, I came out of the hat fourth out of ten anglers, so I chose a swim that suited my style of angling, which is mainly margin fishing, as I am not a big cast angler. My Friday was off to a flyer, landing a mirror carp of 23lb 14oz. The following morning, I had a take and landed what turned out to be the biggest common carp in the lake at 28lb 10oz. The weekend finished for me with a small common, but it seemed that everywhere I put this bait I caught. September and October saw me back on my syndicate again, catching numerous fish up to 25lb.

My next trip was to be tailored around a family holiday in the Cotswolds in our touring caravan with my best mate Shaun and his family. By now, Shaun was also using the Liquorice Cream. So with both of us using the same bait on the lake for a week I was sure this would work in our favour. The week started slowly for me, as we were only fishing a few hours each morning as I was told this was a family holiday (by order of the wife!). Shaun managed a PB on the second day, a 36lb 8oz mirror! I was still yet to catch.

Monday arrived, and before first light we were back at the lake to bait up before the seagulls awoke and ate everything we put in. Finally, I got my first take, a mirror of 30lb 3oz. I couldn't have been happier. Tuesday morning was the same – up onto the lake before first light to bait up. This was to become the norm for the week in order to beat the local birdlife. Tuesday gave me a mirror of 35lb 5oz. Wednesday couldn't come quickly enough, and I was rewarded with a 23lb 4oz mirror. By Thursday I couldn't get out of the caravan door quickly enough to get to the lake and managed two – a 35lb mirror and a 13lb common. What a holiday this was turning into.

Friday was to be a great day too, landing two fish – a mirror of 34lb 12oz and a common of 26lb 12oz. Throughout the week Shaun had also been catching steadily. Saturday arrived, and this was to be my last morning, and out with a bang I went, landing my biggest fish of the trip, a mirror of 35lb 10oz. Shaun and I finished our week with 16 fish between us. We calculated that we had only fished for a total of 24 hours each



through the course of the nine-day holiday.

November and December 2015 saw me only doing a few day sessions on the club water, catching mid doubles. January had been very wet, and the temperatures unseasonably high, but as yet I had yet to catch my first fish of 2016. As the temperatures dropped and the first snowfall of the year arrived, I still ventured out to my syndicate, as I had not been on there since October. As usual, despite the sub-zero temperatures and a partially frozen lake, I still managed a respectable 20lb 12oz mirror.

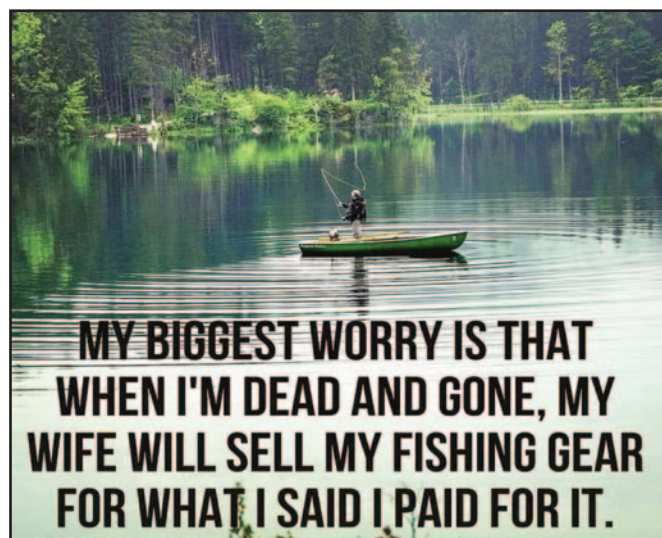
I can honestly say that in all my 24 years of carp angling, I have never had the level of confidence using previous baits as I have in using Dave Mallin's Brace Mix Liquorice Cream and Reaction pop-ups. Just looking back over the last 18 months in my diary, I have logged just shy of 100 fish caught using Dave's bait.

Long may my success continue!

Tight lines! ■



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Diary of the Urban Myth

Rob Maylin chats to
Terry Dempsey (Urban Baits)



Rob: It's been a few months since I met up with Terry, and I've met up with him today at the end of the first week of June just before the start of the traditional fishing season. It used to be an exciting time years ago, but of course all that is gone now with fishing open all year round. I say it's open all year round, but that's not exactly correct; the rivers open on the 16th of June, and I bet there are some river anglers up and down the country who have been baiting up left right and centre ready for the off, but most of the lakes are open.

We met up at our usual haunt down at the coffee shop to record something really, really special. For the first and only time in the history of carp fishing an angler has caught three massive commons all averaging over 50lbs in size. I was rocked when I saw a picture of Terry and his son Daniel on Facebook this week with the big one out of his Kent syndicate water, the Long Common at 53lbs 12oz. It is

just a phenomenal fish, and to think that Terry has caught another two huge commons in only 12 days' fishing, it is just unbelievable. I was talking to Terry earlier about the size of these commons. It doesn't seem that long ago when a 20lb common was a big fish, and it was virtually unheard of for anyone to catch a couple of 30lbs commons.

I remember when I started fishing at Savay. I was introduced to Roger Smith, and he'd had Sally at 34lb and 31lb, and to me that was out of this world. I didn't know anyone who had caught commons at that size, but they have really exploded throughout the UK now. There are big commons everywhere now – just look at the ones in Frimley. When I fished there was one 40lb common, but there are about eight 40lb commons in in Pit 3 and three or four 40lb commons in Pit 4 now. Terry's syndicate water in Kent seems to be the most fantastic water in the country; it really does. As I say, in just twelve days' fishing to have caught three such huge commons is such an accolade for Terry. He is such

a fantastic angler, and we are so privileged to have him here in Big Carp. Here is Terry to tell you all about it:

Terry: Good to see you, Rob. It seems like not that long ago that we were here talking, and it was a lot colder then, wasn't it? We were looking ahead to a long winter and wondering when the next time would be that I would come across a carp. Since I saw you last, I haven't done a great deal of fishing to be honest. I had that big common that we talked about last time at 51½lbs on a super-moon at the start of October. I don't fish as much nowadays in the winter as I used to in the old days; with a family and a business I tend to concentrate on spending more time on them during those winter months. In any case the syndicate lake that I fish doesn't fish in the winter.

One of the strange things that happened this year is that we had an influx of coots. About 500 coots turned up from Holland at the end of November, and they just followed me around the lake, looking for the Nutcracker – all 500 of them! They



The first of the monsters at 51lb.

must have eaten 500 kilos. It became the Cootcracker for a couple of months, and in the end, I was going crackers. Every time I stuck a rod out there, within about two minutes I had a coot picking up the Cootcracker, and I was cracked. I'd had enough of coots by Christmas, and I decided to call it a day. I never went back to the pond until the start of April. If you remember last year at the beginning of April I had a really good hit of fish; I had four in a morning's fishing, which is incredible for there. One of them was the heavily plated mirror, which hardly ever gets caught, a mid-forty big Italian scaly thing.

I was to get keen back down there at the start of April this year after last year, but I blanked for two nights. What I did notice was that it was a slow start this year. I think we were about two weeks behind with the weather; it was really cold. I had two nights down there at the start of April, and it was a thick frost on both nights. I never saw a fish, and I just thought, I'm going to give it a couple of weeks to wait for things to warm up.

My next trip down there was on my

birthday. I don't normally go fishing on my birthday, as in the old days it was the closed season. I have only ever been a couple of times on my birthdays, but I generally catch. It's been a lucky, lucky day for me, and in fact I think I got my personal best common in 2014 on the Johnson's Railway Lake at 36lb, the old Barbless Common, on my birthday. I will always remember that.

Anyway, I got to the lake on my birthday and cast out to try and catch a birthday carp. Jo Morgan from Carp TV promised to come down the day after my birthday to do some filming, and being the cheeky git I am, I said, "I'll have a big'un in the net waiting for you." He started laughing at me brimming with confidence. He was supposed to get down there for about ten in the morning, but he didn't arrive at that time. At 10:15am he still hadn't arrived, and at 10:30am my rod buckled down in the rest, and I had a heavy fish on the end. The next thing you know I was being towed up the lake by this fish; it must have taken about 70 yards of line off me. It took me right over to the other side, trying to make it to some buoys that were

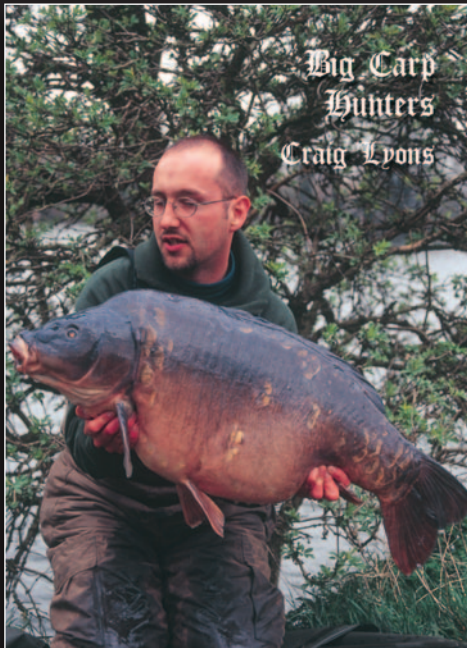
tethered on a rope on a bar. I wouldn't let it get there, and I played it hard. So, I got this fish right back to the net, and when I saw it roll, I saw it was a massive common.

Straight away I got a bit nervous. I carried on playing it, and then all the sudden I'd got it in the net. When I looked in the net I saw the size of this fish. I'd say there are probably half a dozen of commons in the lake – really, really big commons. I'd had most of them by then, but there were a couple that I hadn't caught. When I looked in the net, I thought it might have been the one that I caught at 51lbs last autumn. We got it on the bank just in time for Jo Morgan to turn up, which was unbelievable. He walked straight in the swim and there was a common on the bank, filling up the mat. That common I caught last year at 51lbs has two little bald patches on it. We looked all over and we couldn't find them. The shape of the head was slightly different, and the colour was different as well. The one that I caught at 51lbs was caught previously at 44lbs, so I knew the fish well, and this was a totally different fish, so I was buzzing! I had my second mas-

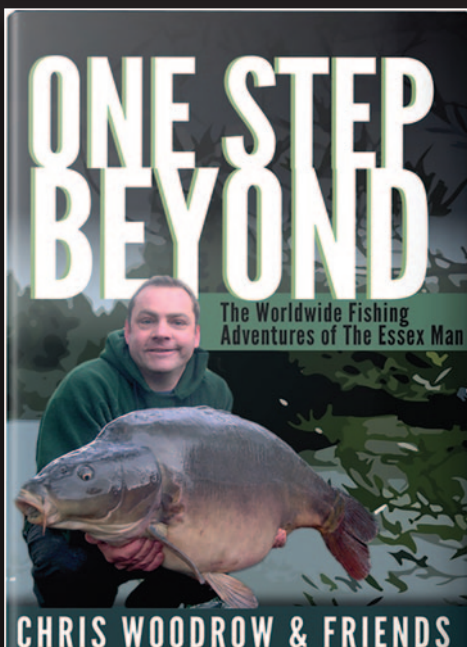
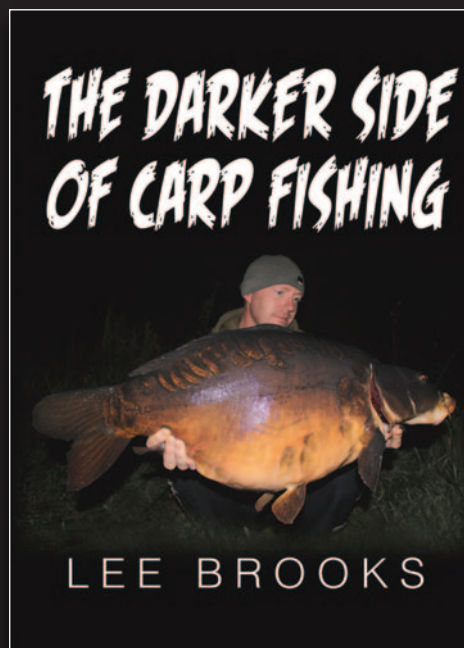
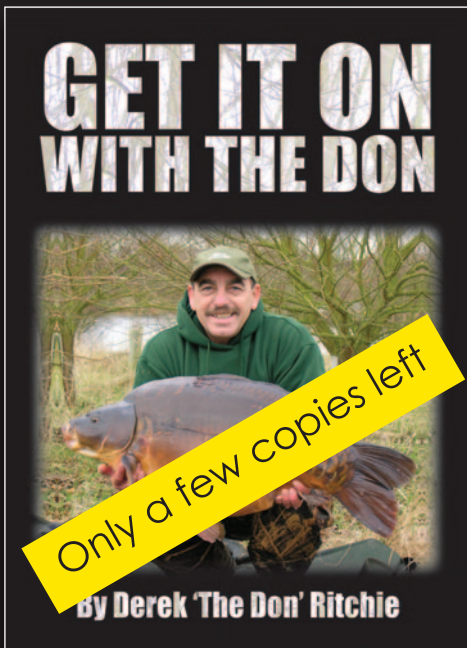
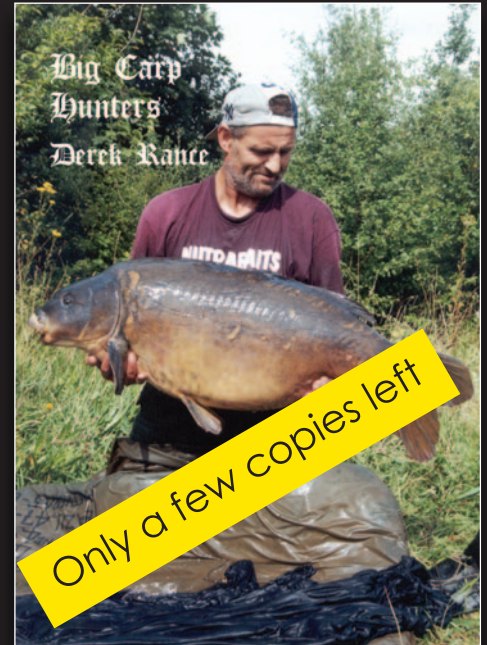
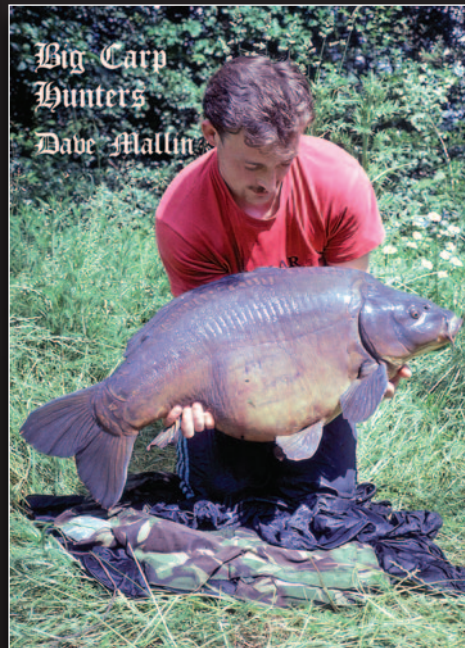


49lb 12oz – the second of the monsters.

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Other side, confirming it was a different fish!

sive common in just a few nights' fishing really.

We put it on the scales, and it just hovered on 50lbs. It looked like it was going a pound under. You know I'm not the one who wants to cheat myself or cheat anyone else, so I said, "Come on, let's call it 49lb 12oz," so that's what we called it, but what a massive fish. Two fish in a few nights fishing, and two commons for over 100 lbs. I didn't get another fish that trip.

I went back two weeks later; it had warmed up quite a lot, and I went straight back in the swim where I'd had the 49lb common. I spent the day there and didn't see much. I saw just a little bit of fizzing over the other side, so moved onto it, and within half hour I had another fish in the net. It was a 26lb common, so my average had dropped by half, but I wasn't complaining, as it is a tough lake. My next session was about two weeks later, probably the middle of May, and that was grim session. I'd been really stressed out with the bait, so busy, and I came across a few problems – you know, staff having days off, bits and pieces. I got to the lake, and that

night I had the worst headache. I never saw a single fish either, and I packed up that day little bit disillusioned. The lake didn't look good; I didn't feel good and it wasn't right. I wasn't going to plan to get back down there until later in the year; the reason being that I've been trying to get into Savay for all these years.

I mean, you remember me going to Savay when you were fishing Harefield in the early nineties? Luckily enough the guy who runs Savay, Tom, gave me a call and offered me a night ticket, and that really changed everything I'm going to do this year because I had my heart set on finishing off my job at the Kent syndicate. I really wanted to get the big common from there, which is the Long Common. That's the fish that I really wanted, and one of a big mirrors, but having a Savay night ticket changed all my plans. Straight away, I was looking at the calendar thinking which rotas I was going to be on, which weeks I was going to be able to fish, and I forgot about going on the Kent syndicate altogether ...until last week.

It's a bit of a long story, but I went

to play football in the park on Saturday with my son, Daniel. I'd been up the bait yard all morning making bait, and in the afternoon Daniel wanted play football. To cut a long story short, we were in a match, and he went in for a sliding tackle. The guy kicked the ball hard, and it hit him on the arm and injured his arm. He started crying, and he is normally a tough little character. I took him home, and he was nursing his arm. Anyway, by the next morning his arm was still hurting, so I took him to the hospital, and he had broken his arm. That completely changed my whole week... Normally I leave him each day with a playgroup, but having a broken arm we had to change it round. My mum had him for three days, and then I had him for the next three days because my wife was at work.

I had never taken Daniel night fishing before, so I decided to take him night fishing. He was so excited, and we went and bought two torches at the Tackle Box. We got everything ready; I spent loads of money on food to keep him happy down there, and I took him down to my syndicate. He was all excited, and in fact he chose

the swim. We went to have a little walk around... He stood in a swim, and he really fancied it. I know why fancied it; it was because it was full of rocks. Anyway I got my rods out, we set our camp up, and then Daniel spent the next four or five hours throwing large rocks into my swim, one after the other, the biggest boulders as he could get, and by the evening the swim was totally destroyed.

We settled down for some sleep and woke up first thing in the morning. Not a lot was going on, so Daniel decided to rock the swim again and for the next two hours he sat there throwing large rocks into the swim. Because the swim had so many rocks in it, there probably wasn't a carp for miles, so I decided to fish at range. I found a plateau right in the middle of the lake as far away from Daniel as possible. I got two rods out there, put bit of bait out there with a stick, and we were sorted. Then Daniel came up to me and said, "Dad, I have a really

good idea. Why don't we send the fish an invitation?" So I said to him, "What do you think we should do?" He said, "We write a letter to the fish to invite them to our swim." So that's what we did; we wrote a letter and we put it on our bank stick on the front of the buzzer bar and sent an invitation to the fish, and you wouldn't believe what happened...

Fifteen minutes later the left hand tip pulled down, and the reel started smoking. This fish was pulling so hard, and Daniel said to me, "What does it feel like, Dad?" I said, "It feels like a horse on the other end." I played it for maybe 20-odd minutes with a running commentary and more flying bricks, aiming at the fish this time. Eventually I got the fish over the net, and I couldn't believe my eyes. I have been on this lake for over four years now, Rob, and I know pretty much every fish in the lake. I've caught most of them, and the ones I haven't, I have seen pictures of. When the fish was coming over the net, I saw the

size of its head and the size of its gob, and I knew exactly which fish I had straight away. When I got in the net, I confirmed it straight away, because it's got a few twisted scales on one side. It's the longest common in the lake; it is the biggest built common in the lake, and it is just like a tank and dark as they come – what a fish.

Daniel and I pulled it up on to the bank, and Daniel couldn't believe what a lovely fish it was. I bent down to take the hook out, and it spanked me right in the chin. The worst thing about it was that my tongue got caught in between my teeth and I nearly bit it off. Daniel, seeing this, realised he was not going anywhere near that fish. We put it on the scales, and we tried to weigh it together, but we really struggled. When we weighed it, it was 56½lbs, but I wasn't surprised, because the last time it was caught it was 55½lbs. We put it in a retainer, and Daniel and I were walking around wondering what to do next. I was still holding my jaw, and



Monster number three at 53lb 14oz.

he was still looking for more rocks. Anyway, the next thing we saw a guy opposite us, so we waved him over. He came over, and luckily enough he is a bit tasty with a camera, and he's a nice guy, Michael. We reweighed the fish, and it was 53lb 14oz. What a catch, and what a day! I realised that in twelve nights' fishing I had caught three commons of an average weight of about 52lb.

Rob: What an amazing story. I'm just sitting here with Tel and little Daniel and his broken arm. I can tell that in the future Daniel is going to be a force to be reckoned with – if not for the fish, for the rock throwing. Hopefully we'll meet up with Tel next month again. He has one more big mirror to catch out of the Kent Syndicate, and then he's down on Savay Lake. He is going to have a great time down there just like I did. I am envious of him, but he has got it all to fish for. Thanks very much, Tel.

Terry: It's good seeing you again, Rob. Hopefully when I see you next



We wrote a letter to the carp inviting them to dinner.

time I will have a couple of nice Savay fish to show you and to talk about, or one of those big mirrors that I've been

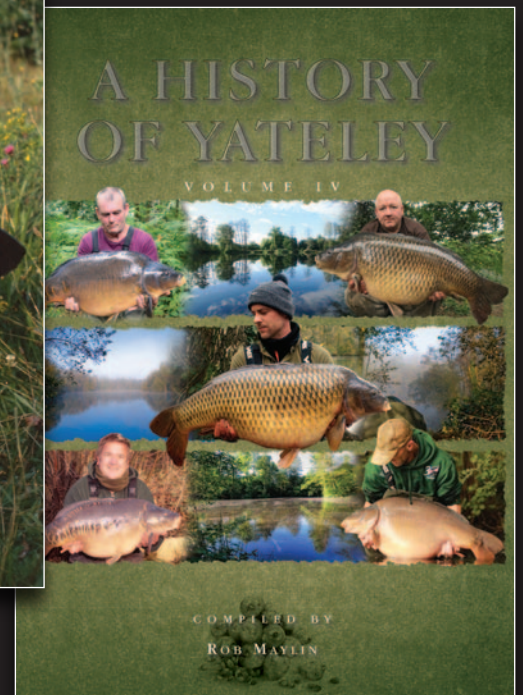
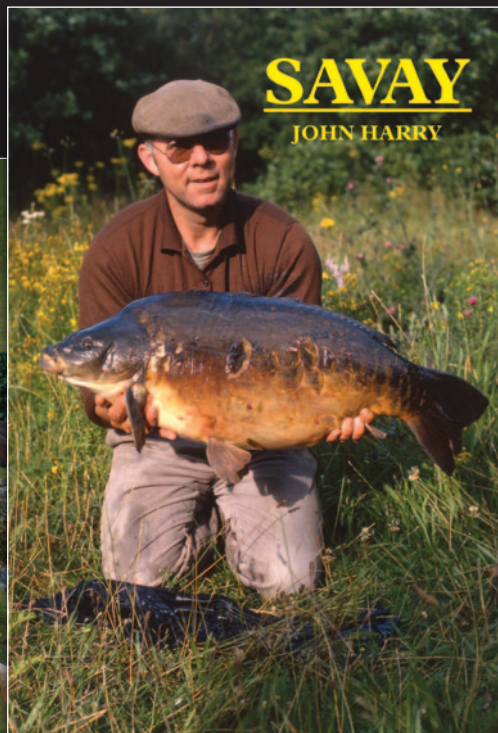
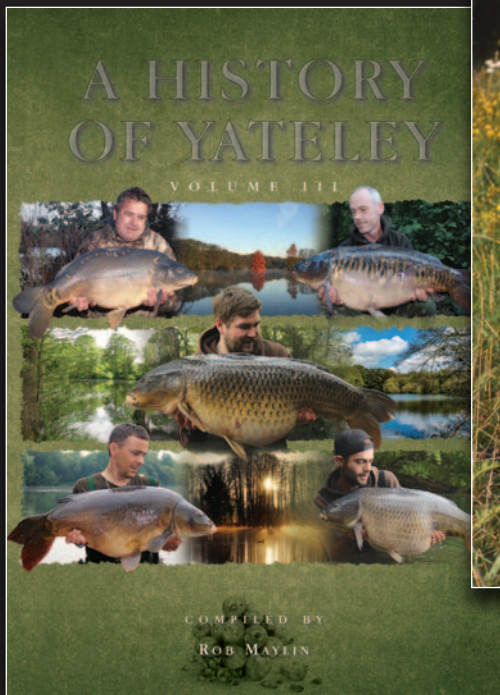
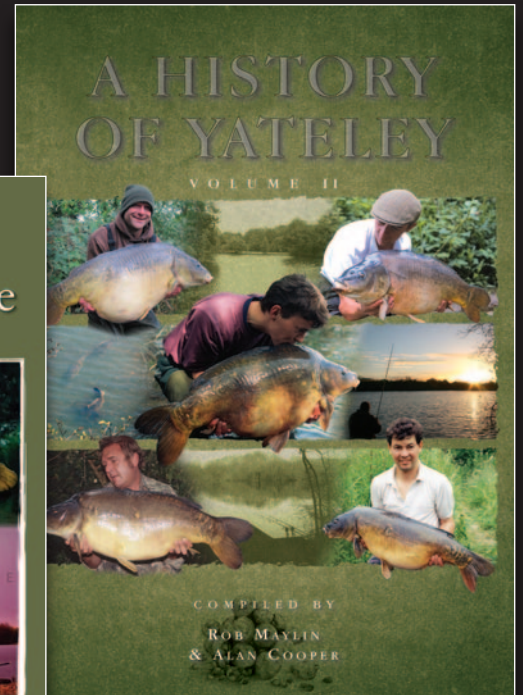
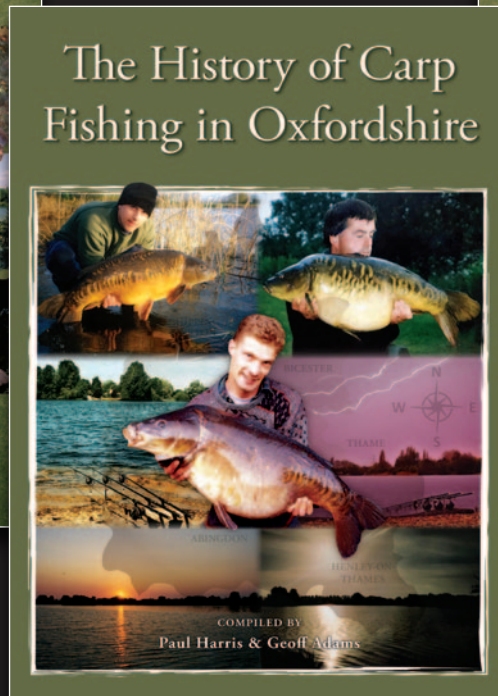
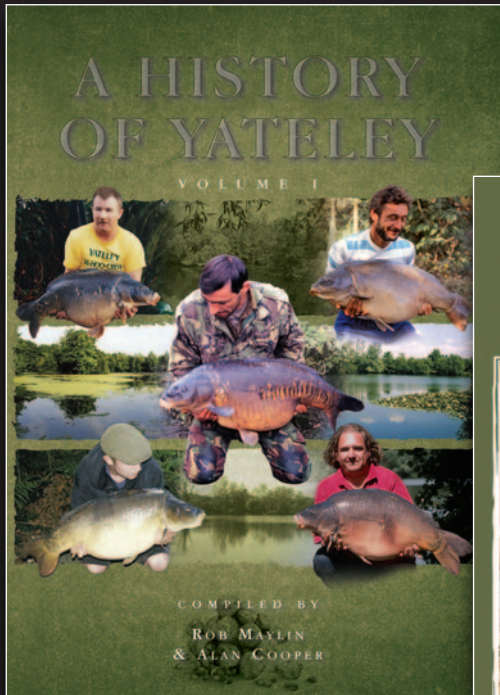
after for the last four years.

Rob: I have no doubt you will mate thanks very much. ■

Carpy Humour



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Two Seasons at Hyde Lane

Paul Beckinsale and Dave McAllister

This article first appeared in Big Carp Issue 6 February/March 1992

June 15th 1989, my first full season on Hyde Lane. The lake is around 46 acres, and the fishing is long range. I was forced to take the long hike down the canal bank, as the other swims I'd had my eye on were all taken – typical. Half an hour later I was set up in peg nine, and a fish jumped straight up out of the water about 100 yards out. It must be my lucky day, I thought. I baited the area with 200-300 J and K Birdfood boilies flavoured with Blue Cheese and Garlic and then set up the bivvy, anxiously awaiting midnight.

At midnight on the dot I cast out,

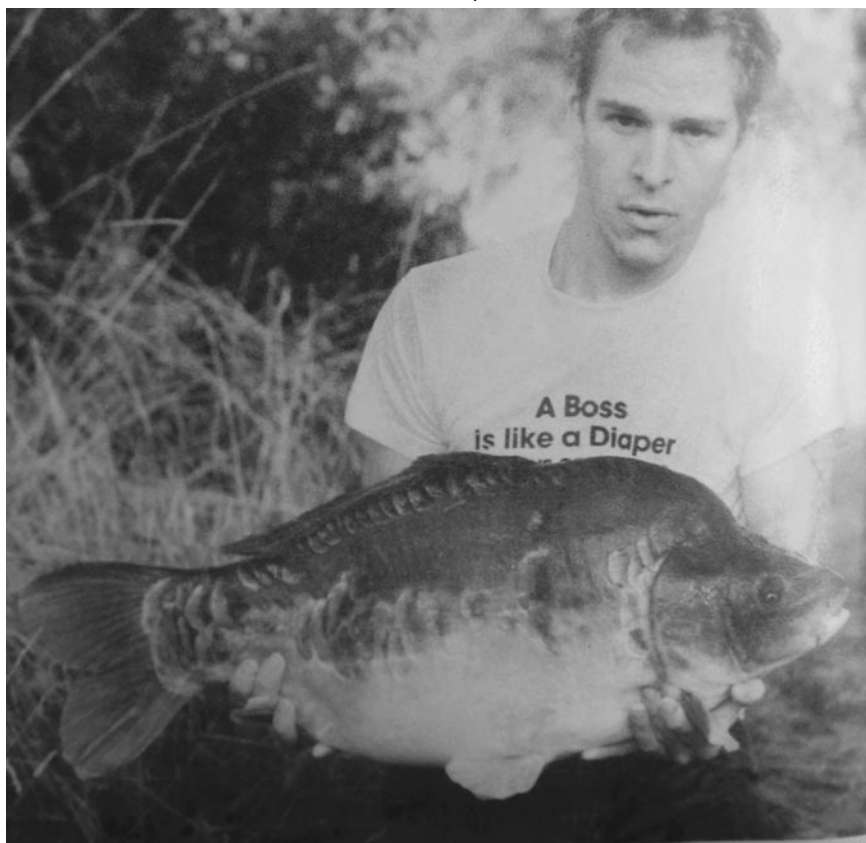
and sleep was furthest from my mind. At 5.30am, after just putting the kettle on for a brew, I had two bleeps. I struck the rod immediately, and it hooped over – I was in, and 15 minutes later I had a lovely mirror in the net, my first Hyde Lane fish. The scales read 20lb 4oz, and I was well chuffed to say the least. The following morning saw another fish of 17lb 8oz, and I went home on cloud nine, I can tell you – what a start. A few weeks passed, and I decided to concentrate on what's called the high bank, baiting up on peg 44. Both rods were fished at long range, one behind a gravel bar at 100 yards and the other on a snag at about 120 yards. As the season rolled by I was doing fairly well taking on average one fish a weekend. I'd also acquired some good friends – Slacky (Graham Slack),

Russell Bennett and Monk (Dave McAllister) who were also fishing the high bank.

In late August '89, I arrived one Friday afternoon, and the lads were already there, but nothing had been caught. I was soon set up, kettle on and optimistic. It was 10.30pm before any action occurred when my right hand rod screamed off. After a short, hard fight I landed a 13lb-plus mirror. The excitement died down, and Slacky said he was going to get his head down, so we all hit the sack. Midnight came, and the right hand rod screamed off again. I was soon on it, and the line was stripping off the reel. I managed to slow it down, and I had a good feeling about this one. Slacky was soon behind me with Andy and Dave. "Any good, boy?" said Slacky. "It feels heavy," I strained to say.

I had it in sight of the net when all went silent... The reel had jammed, and I only had 20 feet of line left, but luckily the fish was ready to net. Before I knew anything Slacky was naked and in the drink netting it. "It's a thirty," he said. We soon had her in the sling and on the scales where the needle shot round to 29lb 13oz – not quite a thirty, but who cares. She was sacked up and well knackered by now, and I resumed dreaming about that thirty I was going to catch.

At 2.30am I was in again. It felt like another good fish, but this one wasn't so clever and swam straight towards me. I was reeling like mad, and Slacky came round to see how I was getting on and armed himself with the landing net yet again. It kept deep in the margins for a while, but it wasn't too long before it was safely in the landing net. "This is it, this is it! You've done it this time, mate," said Slack. "You said that the last time," I said. A big cheer went up when I lifted the scales and they read 31lb 4oz, what a lovely mirror and what a night! She was sacked up alongside the other



31lb 4oz.

monster, and we opened a few cans to celebrate at 3am. An hour later I was snoring my head off.

At 6.30am the dawn silence was shattered by the sound of my Delkim once more. This was unbelievable; the sleeping bag was wrapped tight around my ankles, and in the panic it took me quite a while to get to my rod. The fish kited around 90 yards to the right, and I couldn't do a thing with it. It went through both Slacky's lines, so he was soon awake. About 20 minutes later the fish was in the net with one of Slacky's lines – the other had been cut off. The fish went 21lb 12 oz, the rod was recast and the kettle went on for a brew. We were discussing the night's events over a cuppa when I was in again. "Bloody hell, you jammy bugger," said Andy. The fish didn't give me any grief until it was in the margins, and I couldn't do anything but let it tire itself out. Shortly we netted a 20lb 4oz mirror – lovely!! "What a session!" I said, with a big grin on my face.

The fishing slowed down as the season progressed with Slacky taking three fish to 24lb 12oz, Russell four fish to 22lb, Andy with two doubles and Monk was still tenching. The winter came and went with only one fish for me at 21lb 7oz, making a grand total so far this season of 21 fish including 14 20lb-plus and one thirty.



My first 'biggie' of the season at 28lb 6oz.

I just couldn't wait for the following season to come round.

The 1990 season was soon upon us, and I'd been prebaiting the lake with

one of Joe Taylor's fishmeal bait mixes with Monster Crab and Anchovy Oil. The same swim as last year was baited up and a new one started on the Headland Point where there was a big clear patch around 90 yards out. The start of the season was slow for me, not catching a fish until the third weekend. I'd purchased some four-pound Armalites by now and was fishing with seven-pound main line. The fishing slowly improved, and by August I had 11 fish under my belt, the biggest being 19lb 8oz... still, I wasn't complaining. To top it all I broke my wrist, so the throwing stick was a bit difficult to operate, but thanks to Russ and Kevin my bait found the spot each weekend while I was in plaster. The week the plaster came off I had a week's holiday on Hyde. Great!!

I arrived on the lake on the Monday, a boiling hot day, and dumped the tackle on the Headland and went off with the floater rods stalking. I spoke to Nick and Matt on the way round who said nothing had come out, but they had seen some fish moving on the top in the middle lake, which was full of weed. The first fish I ambushed



This 34lb 5oz fish smashed the lake record by over 3lbs.

on the floater was a small five-pound common (who says there are no small fish in Hyde?). The bait was cast back out in the same area with a single Chum mixer freelined over the edge of the weedbed, when in cruised two biggies. One of them took it, and the bloody thing went mad, weeding me solid. I had to get in and nearly drowned. Two lads helped me out, but I had him in the end, and at 21lb 8oz, I was well pleased, as it was the biggest fish I'd ever had on a floater. I couldn't have asked for a better start to the week.

After all the commotion I didn't think there'd be any fish left in the middle lake, so I headed back round to my tackle on the Headland. I put out ten pounds of bait with a throwing stick, and it was hot that day, so there was sweat pouring off me, as I was well out of practice (those who've done this know how I felt). Two hours later I was casting the rods out again. I didn't have a touch that evening or through the night and was wondering if I'd made a mistake putting so much bait out. It was 6am and I was wide-awake, so I brewed up. Bleeeep, the Delkim went, and ten minutes later a nice double figure mirror was on the bank.

Half an hour later I had another screamer, and a better fish this time at 22lb 8oz. This was more like it, I thought, but there was no action for a while. The rig I was using was a three-ounce fixed lead helicopter rig with a four-inch hook length with the boilie tight to the hook, and it was doing well. The week went by, taking two fish each morning – not the biggest in the lake, but I was still catching. Russ arrived on the Wednesday afternoon and set up in the next swim. I was just telling him what I caught when at 4.30 in the afternoon I had a screamer. Three-quarters of an hour later, four swims down and up to my neck in water, I was still playing the damn thing. There was a crowd round me by now, and I didn't want to lose it and have them take the piss. I know it sounds far fetched, but after an hour and a quarter she was safely in my net, my first biggie of the season, a 28lb 6oz mirror. The week ended with a total of ten fish – one of the most memorable weeks on Hyde.

Dave had temporarily hung up his tench rods and was out for carp. I'll



Dave with a hard-fighting 28lb 4oz mirror



Tatty Tail recaptured at 30lb 8oz.

leave him to explain:

After enjoying tremendous success tenching on an Oxfordshire stillwater, I'd decided to give this carp fishing a bash from September onwards. As I only live five minutes from Hyde, I'd spent a few evenings during the summer months float fishing for them and caught six to 14lb. I'd got the bug by now and could see what all the fuss was about after all, so it didn't take much persuasion from Beck to get me fishing for them on the bottom. Over the years fishing for tench I had lost a few carp due to four-pound hook lengths probably, and a lot of my rigs were in similar style to modern day rigs for carp, so after a bit of thinking and discussion I had decided where to fish and with what bait to fish. The Bay was to be my location, which had produced quite a few fish from the start of the season, and the bait was to be J and K Masterbaits Birdy Mix with a flavour Mark 'The Yuppie' Middleton had suggested – Strawberry, Nutrafruits and Pear.

I fished a Tuesday to Saturday stint with 'Yuppie' Mark about 50 yards along the bank from me on the Headland. The first night was totally fishless, not even a knock, but midnight

on the Wednesday Mark had a run, which resulted in a lovely 14lb mirror. At 3am on Thursday morning I repositioned my left hand rod a bit further out towards the far bank of the bay, and at 10pm I had a drop back, which ironically turned out to be a five-pound tench. It didn't deter me, as I assumed if the tench were feeding the carp would be; I just hoped they were in the area. For the record I was fishing an 18mm bottom bait mounted on a conventional hair right tight to the shank of a size two Super Spec Hook on a semi-fixed bolt rig.

At 11.15pm my left hand rod burst into action again, and on hitting it I knew it was a bit different to the tench run. The fish kited to my right along the canal bank, and I could feel it on the gravel. I let the pressure off and waited for its next run, it moved off quite soon and swam towards me but still to the right, so I walked to the left and applied the pressure, as it was towards Mark's lines. Fifteen minutes later it was in front of me, but I still had no idea of the size of it. Another five minutes under the rod tip, and it was ready. Yuppie Mark did the honours with, "You jammy bastard! You've got a thirty!" Sure enough, no

messing, this was a beast. That will do for my fish off the bottom, I thought. We weighed it on my 30lb Waymasters, and it bottomed out, so we tried again on Mark's 32lb Avons, which also bottomed out. We placed it in the sack and went on the hunt for a set of bigger scales. The 'Aylesbury lads' Alan and Paul were on the high bank, and Alan had luckily just invested in a set of 40lb Avons. I ran back the half mile to my swim to weigh her again, the needle pulled round to 34lb 5oz, smashing the lake record at the time by over three pounds. What a result! The rest of the session remained fishless for Mark and me, but I didn't care because I had achieved my ambition of having a fish off the bottom and showed the others they weren't just caught at 100 yards-plus. Although September pulled a blank, October turned out to be quite different as 'Beck' explains:

The winter was on its way, and Jo said he'd got a good bait mix for me to try: Fish and Spice Mix. I was going to use it with Bergamot oil, the same end tackle, but with square pop-ups. I started putting in about 10-15lb a week. Dave had had a right result in October when he landed one of the biggies. I was with him at the time, and he was fishing a bar 40 yards out. It was around 4pm when Dave had a scorching run, and after a slow fight I netted Tatty Tail for him at 31lb 5oz. Dave was well pleased, because he'd had it on his own flavour – garlic and smelly cheese – the jammy git. We'd also had quite a bit of success fishing the small lake, with Dave taking a mirror of 21lb-plus, and I'd had a common of 17lb and a couple of doubles to add to the action. November came, and I joined Dave and Russ on the high bank, Dave was short-range fishing in peg 46, and Russ and I were long-range fishing in 47 and 44. Dave was first in at midnight after a 25-minute fight with a lovely 28lb 4oz mirror. The good old kettle was on when Russ was in too... this was turning out to be a good night! Ten minutes later Russ netted a 23lb 1oz mirror, his first winter fish. I on the other hand had no action till 4.30pm the next day when I had a plump 19-pounder, quickly followed a 14lb mirror, followed an hour later by a 26lb 9oz mirror, which rounded our successful weekend off perfectly.

December saw me have a recap-



26lb 9oz.

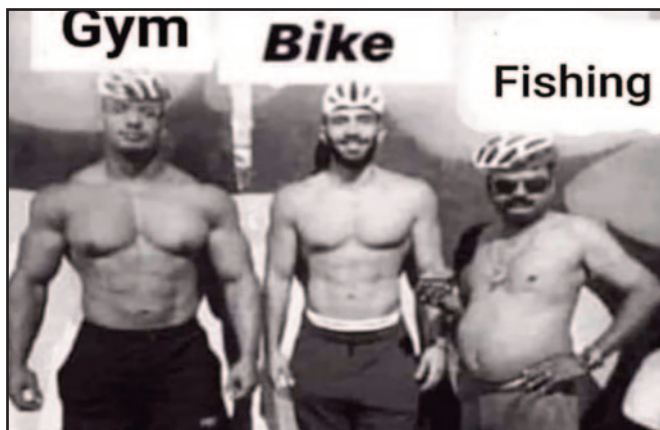
ture of Tatty Tail at 30lb 8oz and a wild carp of 6lb on Christmas Eve morning. What a Christmas present that was. After a gallon of beer and more food than I care to remember during the festivities I was back on the lake with Russ. Dave, however, had been led astray by a young lady, which, understandably, he seemed to find much more interesting than fishing. Anyway the day after Boxing Day, I had two fish in a matter of minutes, both mirrors, of 25lb 8oz and 24lb 8oz – what a brace! But there was no other action for the rest of the stint. The following weekend saw a nice mirror of 23lb 2oz, a grand total so far of 51 fish for the two seasons, so needless to say I was very pleased with my efforts.

1991 has turned out quite slow for me on Hyde, but the one run I did have resulted in a 36lb 4oz mirror, which is now the new pool record. Not a bad note to finish this article on, is it? I'm not doing the winter on Hyde this year, but I have really enjoyed all the hours over the seasons I have spent up there with some really good lads. ■



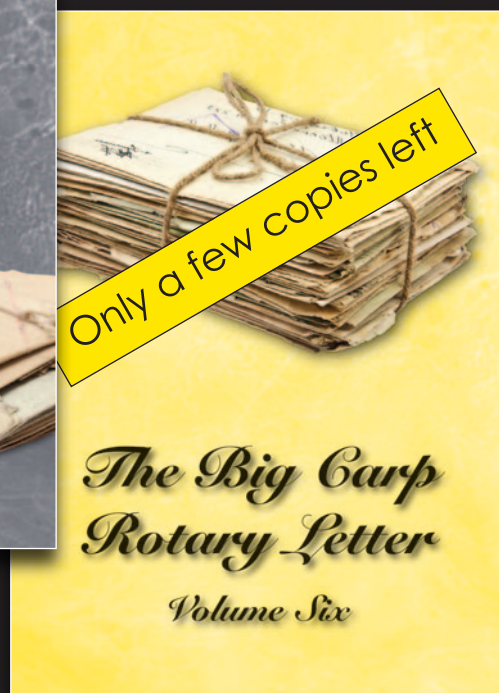
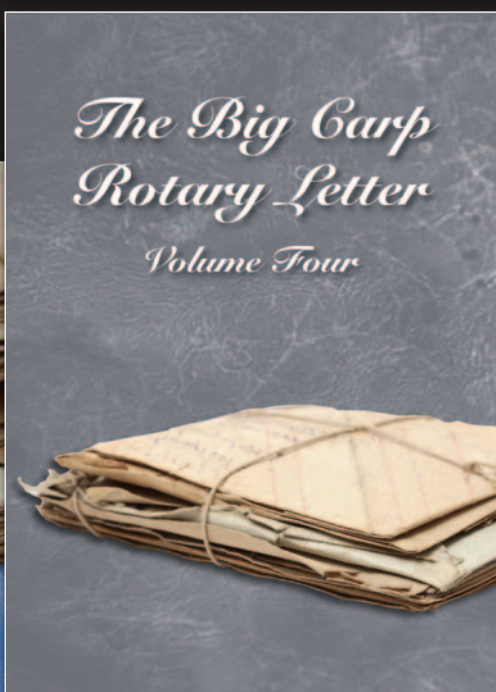
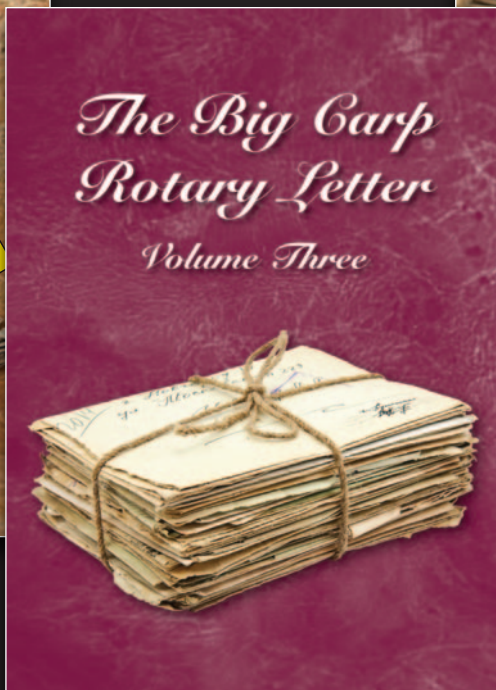
The new pool record at 36lb 4oz.

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Two PBs in a Weekend

By Tim Rowland

Being usually a weekend hero, arriving at Linch Hill on a Friday night after work and getting the pegs that no one wants or that are devoid of fish is standard for me. Being a busy family man like most of us, I treated myself to some precious annual leave and took the Friday off, meaning I could get down Thursday night after work. I've been fishing Linch for two-and-a-half seasons now and met some cracking lads. After scoping out the lake that Thursday night there was a peg free next to my friend Rob Allen. Both of us have had a tough time over the winter on Church and were waiting to get off the mark for 2016.



23lb common



Ironing Board.



Toe Jam.

Friday Morning was a great wake-up call with an excited Rob Allen asking at first light to do some pics of a cracking little unmarked common he'd caught. I was so pleased for him because he's put as much effort into Church as I have over the last few months. After the photos were sorted and the common was back safely, I got the kettle on. By this time it was 10am, and the morning sun was beaming down, so I thought run time was over. Rob and I were talking about the amount of nights I'd done without a fish and then the Steve

Neville was ripping off. Both of us were still in our waders, and waded out into the margins straight the way. After a long, slow, deep-water battle I could see my leadcore and the tail 3½ft behind it!! I knew it was a good'un, and Rob with the net looked back at me with a face that said, "Don't lose it!" Eventually I slipped it over the net cord, which was a huge relief. Looking in the net for the time we saw the awesome Toe Jam! Watching the scales going round to 42lb was epic – a new PB, and a Linch soaking commenced!!

Friday night was quiet, and Saturday morning wasn't looking great with a flat calm lake in front of me, so breakfast time at Julie's Café it was... Saturday night was quiet again, and Sunday morning came quickly around. I was up at first light watching the water, noticing I was getting liners from carp under my rod tips!! Several went through and weren't bothered brushing up against the lines. I wound both rods in and put two of my faithful hand rolled Krill cork ball pop-ups on, which I soak in L-Zero 30T. Lowered both rods in the





OO Fish.

shallow margin, and I went next door to have a brew and keep the noise down in my peg. After 20 minutes, one of my Nevilles absolutely melted! Leaning into my rod, I knew it was a good'un! In all the excitement, I waded out waist deep in my clothes. This fish was angry and was looking for every snag going!!

At one point it just flat-rodged me and stripped 30 yards for fun! I was just a passenger! After a great battle I saw another chunk go into the net! I couldn't believe the weekend I was having!

With great care, taking the carp from the water to the unhooking mat I could see it was the Ironing Board, a proper rare one, and one I thought I'd never catch! Seeing the Board on my unhooking mat was a buzz I'll never forget. The Reubens went round to 45lb 6oz, a PB mirror too – unbelievable! Having my pictures taken with the Board, I was just speechless!! After slipping him back safely, it was a pleasure packing my kit up and walking back to the car park with a massive smile on my face!

After getting on the fish the week before I had to book another Friday off work. Arriving on the Thursday night and finding all the pegs with fish showing in front of them wasn't the

best start. However, Friday morning I noticed a matey boy packing up, and I was round like a rat up a drainpipe to get a bucket in there (standard practice I guess for a busy day ticket). The first two nights were quiet, which was frustrating when I knew fish were there. I kept the Krill going in each day – not loads, but enough for a bite each day.

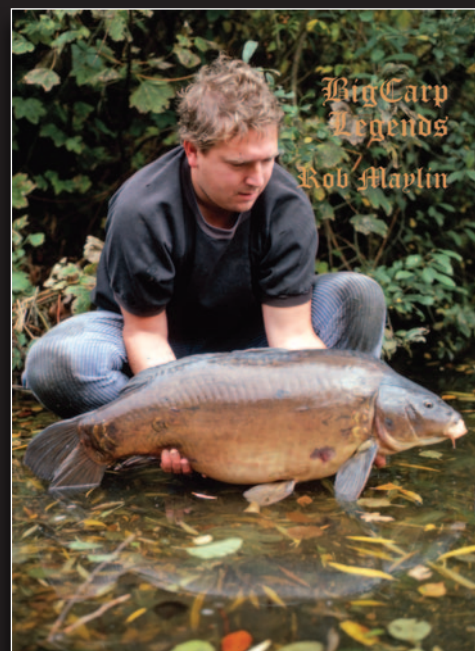
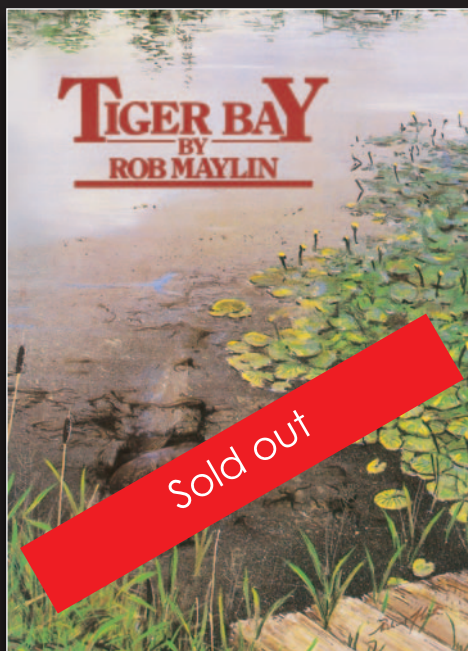
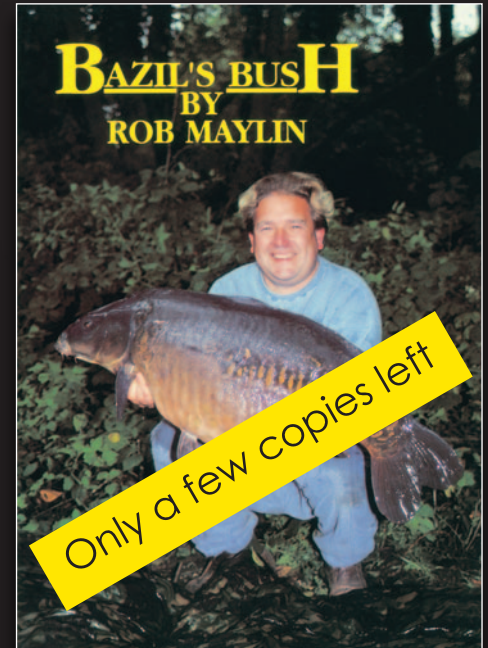
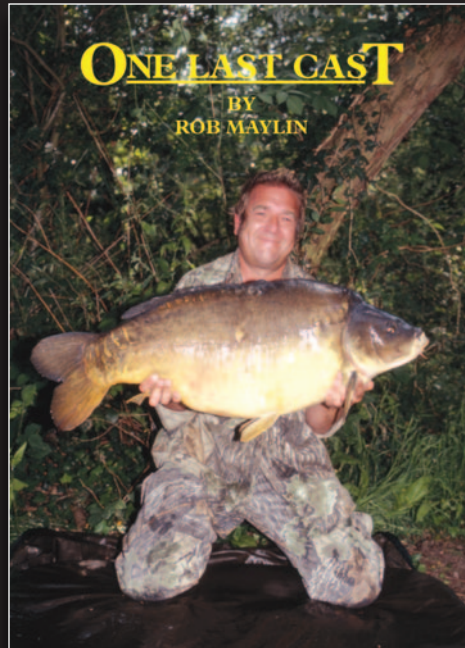
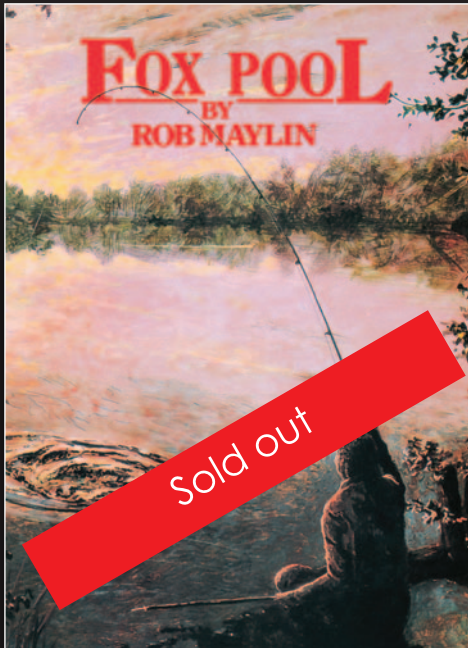
On the last night, the casts all got a good drop, and I tweaked a couple of bits with my rigs too. At first light I had another ripping take!! After

another long, hard battle and getting him out of the weed several times, with some steady hard pressure I could see a lovely mirror fall into the net. Turning him over in the net and seeing the round O-shaped scales down the side, I knew it was the OO Fish. I photographed this fish at the back end of last year for my good friend Scott Philips, and to see it in my net was awesome! The scales went to 33lb 4oz, but to be fair the weight didn't matter – the long, dark, scaly mirror was an honour to hold. ■



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