

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



Fond Memories by Matt Hart
Two Sessions on Pepper by Barry O'Connor
Revenge by Elliott Gray
Floater Fishing by Levi Rees
The Big Girl by Dan Huskinson
Harris by Paul Hessletine
Etched in Time by Leigh Leavesley

The Magic Wand Maggots by Lee Kidd
Farlows (Part 3) by Daniel Daneshi
Mystery Lake by Alan Gale
West Stow Country Park by Mark Baker
A Previously Trodden Blackwater Path (Part 1) by George Loughlin
The Journey... by Alan Chowles
Good Looking Carp by Jon Quinn
Vagrant Antics by Chris Eaglestone



ADVERTISING AT REALISTIC PRICES

info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk
Over 35,800 email subscribers

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	ABBAY
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 326

BEAUTIES and BEASTS

**Barry Oconnor
– A Tale of
Two Sessions**

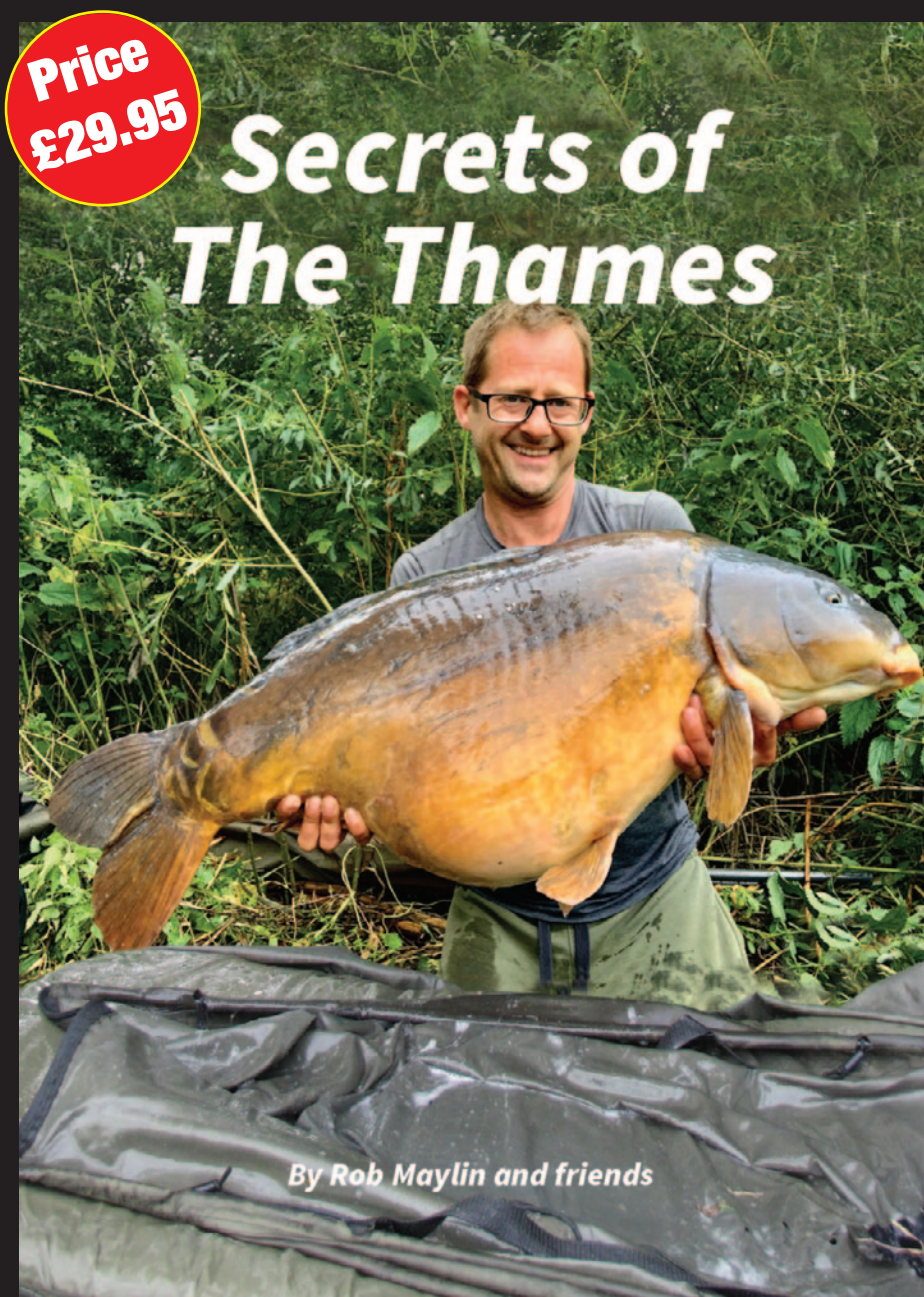
**Matt Hart
– Fond
Memories**

Dan Huskinson – Chasing the Big Girl
Leigh Leavesley – Etched in Time
Levi Rees – Summer Evenings
Paul Hessletine – Harris
Elliott Gray – Revenge
Comprehensive Country-wide Water Reports

Still the proper carp angler's favourite read

NEW FOR 2023

SECRETS OF THE THAMES



The River Thames flows through southern England. It is the longest river entirely in England, with a total length of 215 miles (346km) and the second longest in the United Kingdom, after the River Severn. While it is best known for flowing through London, the river also flows alongside other towns and cities, including Oxford, Reading, Henley-on-Thames, and Windsor.

The river gives its name to three informal areas: the Thames Valley, a region of England around the river between Oxford and west London; the Thames Gateway; and the greatly overlapping Thames Estuary around the tidal Thames to the east of London and including the waterway itself. Thames Valley Police is a formal body that takes its name from the river, covering three counties.

In an alternative name, derived from its long tidal reach up to Teddington Lock in south west London, the lower reaches of the river are called the Tideway.

It rises at Thames Head in Gloucestershire, and flows into the North Sea

via the Thames Estuary. On its way, it passes through London, the country's capital, where the river is deep and navigable to ships; the Thames drains the whole of Greater London. Its tidal section, reaching up to Teddington Lock, includes most of its London stretch and has a rise and fall of 7 metres (23ft).

Along its course are 45 navigation locks with accompanying weirs. Its catchment area covers a large part of South Eastern and a small part of Western England and the river is fed by 38 named tributaries. The river contains over 80 islands. With its waters varying from freshwater to almost seawater, the Thames supports a variety of wildlife and has a number of adjoining Sites of Special Scientific Interest, with the largest being in the remaining parts of the North Kent Marshes and covering 5,449 hectares (13,460 acres).

By far and away the largest carp water in UK. Now sit back and enjoy just a few of its many secrets.

Order your copy now, only 500 copies produced, so be quick!

Available Here - <http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk/buy-books.html>



Beauties and Beasts

The theme this month is Beauties and Beasts and do I have a collection of articles that fill those criteria. Not only some of the best-looking carp in the country but some of the biggest too. So, let's start this month on a venue crammed with carp that meet our requirements and an angler that knows more about the place than anyone. I am of course talking about Cottingham Lakes and none other than Barry Oconnor. Barry and his son Benn, have fished this place for years and what they have not caught is not worth mentioning. Their stock is legendary, in fact Cottingham has come top of the Big Carp Top 10 awards for the past seven years, no wonder our readers vote for this place, the carp are simply amazing.

Next up is Dan Huskinson who has been 'Chasing the Big Girl'. A huge common over 60lbs, not only a beast but one of the most amazing looking commons we have ever seen here at headquarters. There is something magical about a truly big common and this one tops the list.

Leigh Leavesley's article 'Etched in Time' starts in March of this year when a ticket for Swarkestone, a gravel pit which lies in the east midlands, came up for grabs. As midlands' gravel pits go, this place is just about as famous as they come. Steeped in history, it's been fished by the who's who of midlands anglers since records began. Not only that, but its residents are some of the best lookers around!

Levi Rees makes his third appearance in Big Carp this year with a look at 'Summer Evenings' and of course a bit of floater fishing. My favourite method, and one that will be sorely missed once the colder weather appears in a couple of months. Good to have you back Levi.

Speaking of regulars, our next contributor needs no introduction, Matt Hart has been a regular contributor for years. He's been a bit busy lately forming a new bait company, Halo Baits and let me tell you something, this guy can catch 'em and he knows his stuff when it comes to carp bait, so if you are looking for a change now the autumn is upon us, get in contact. Great bait at great prices. See his advert in this issue.

That only leaves Paul Hessletine and Elliott Gray, one is the story of a beast, a monster in fact, called 'Harris'. The other a tale of 'Revenge' and a beauty from the Reading carp Mecca.

Finally, our 'Comprehensive Country-wide Water Reports', these are certainly very popular according to our readers. Our own 'Carp Talk' section with all the biggest and best carp reported over the last few weeks.

I'll end this month with a bit of news on two special issues of Big Carp I have been putting together over the last few months. An Old School edition and a River Thames edition. I asked quite a few people if they would contribute. A lot said yes, and some did an article very quickly. Others said they would do it but they were busy right now, so could I give them some time? Of course, I said no problem, work or family, even fishing comes first naturally. The outcome being, is that I don't have enough articles to complete either magazine yet. So, if anyone reading this has a piece they would like to submit, send it to info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk. As soon as I have enough new material, I will bring them out.

However, over the past 3-4 years I have been compiling a couple of new books for our series and these will be out in a couple of weeks. Only printing 500 copies of each. They are superb books, one Old School Volume 4 and the other Secrets of the Thames. You can find them in the Big Carp Website Shop. Signed copies available, I suggest you get one now if you want one. If the others are anything to go by, they will not be around long, and there will not be a reprint.

If you are looking to advertise in BC or FL drop me a line at info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk I have some great deals to end the year.

Tight Lines

Rob Maylin

Exclusive

30 **Fond Memories**

By Matt Hart

40 **Two Sessions on Pepper**

By Barry Oconnor

48 **Revenge**

By Elliott Gray

50 **Floater Fishing**

By Levi Rees

58 **The Big Girl**

By Dan Huskinson

72 **Harris**

By Paul Hessletine

74 **Etched in Time**

By Leigh Leavesley

Big Carp Promotions

36 **Oak Lake Fishery**



Cottingham's

Editor/Publisher

Rob Maylin

Bountyhunter Publications

44 Herbs End

Cove, Hampshire

GU14 9YD

tel: 07768 731425

email:

bigcarpstudio@hotmail.co.uk

Design & Production

Colin Spray

Advertising Sales

Bountyhunter Publications

44 Herbs End

Cove, Hampshire

GU14 9YD

mobile 07768 731425

BIG CARP 326

October 2023

Not to be stored or reproduced by any means, in any form, without the written permission of the publisher. Failure to obtain permission to reproduce material may result in legal action. Articles that appear in Big Carp Magazine are the property of Bountyhunter Publications and may be used in other publications as they see fit.

© **Bountyhunter**

Publications 2023

Front Cover

Roy Cansdale with a cracking

53lb 2oz from DDAPS

Bennett's Lake .



News & Reviews

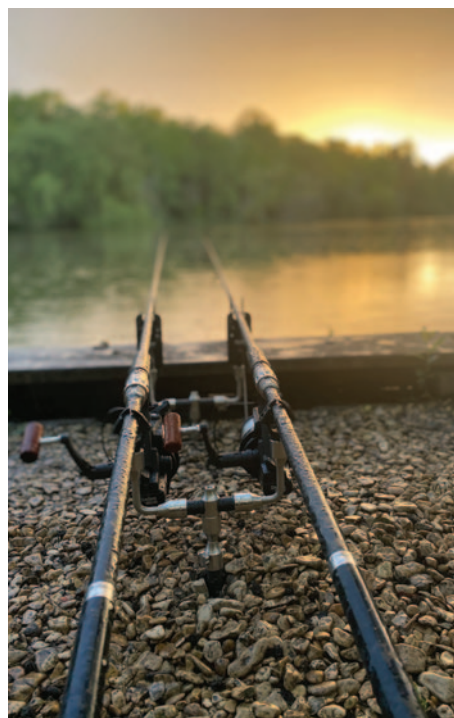
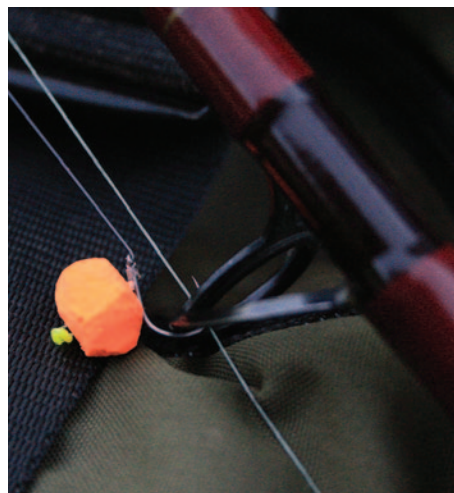
6 **Shockleader**

What's happening in
the carp scene

16 **Tac-Tec**

Latest product reviews

- Selk'bag
- NiteWatches



Advertising Index

Bountyhunter 2 Kudos 5 Ledlenser 9 Bountyhunter 14 and 15 Selk'bag (Whitby) 19 Halo Baits 33

Oak Lake Fisheries 36-39 Bountyhunter 43 Bountyhunter 53 Reuben Heaton 57 Coole Acre Lake Fisheries 61 Iktus 65

Cottingham Lakes 69 Bountyhunter 80

Limited edition

Collectors Edition Billet Alarms

Less than 100
will be made



Custom made to your
preference in the UK



These have been a well overdue project we have wanted to complete for many years.

The concept of producing a range of our own alarms from scratch though was something we believed had to be fulfilled no matter how much time this was to take. We have spent our time buying components for board productions and testing, stock piling materials for machining cases and rollers etc, in preparation for one day being in a position where these can be offered out to our customers. Roll on 5+ years, and we are now happy to release the first 'collectors edition' of our very own custom alarm...

Limited to 30 sets/90 individual alarms (alarms will be supplied with paperwork confirmation of numbers) – once we reach this total, there will be no more made of this edition

This edition of alarm is a standard/non remote alarm for a reason. These are a limited first edition build of a standard hard wearing alarm, which will do what it needs to do – scream like hell when the roller moves – being encased in anodized aluminium, offers an – extremely hardwearing alarm – these are not suited for a remote set-up – there is the prospect/potential of remote converting, but range would be extremely poor and certainly not advised for this edition.

Find us

Follow us



Online purchases –
www.kudostackle.com



Email –

info@kudostackle.com

WhatsApp/text/Telgram

0776020260148

ShockLeader

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

Peatmoor Lagoon Pollution Disaster

Hey everyone, hope everyone is well. I don't know if any of you have heard about the disaster, we have had on our lovely park lake, Peatmoor Lagoon, here in Swindon. Tuesday 1st of August we had reports from dog walkers of hundreds of dead fish around the lake.

When we arrived at the lake, the hundreds had turned in to a thousand with thousands more gasping for air. Pike, carp, bream, tench and more, lost in a heart-breaking disaster.

Years and years lost in such a short period. Devastating. The Environment Agency we're quickly on-site taking samples and testing. Confirming a major oxygen crash due to possible pollution. Oxygen levels got down to 8.2 and 2.4 in some places.

Aerators were deployed around the lake with 48hr monitoring. The number of dead fish kept rising and rising over the first 72hr.

A major clean-up of the dead fish from in and around the lake from all members and even the public. We have borrowed aerators, loaned from other fisheries and water pumps. We had members camp at the lake for



eight days straight after the Environment Agency left.

To maintain monitoring topping up generators, feeding what's left of stock and removing any more dead fish. We have set up a go-fund-me page as we need as much help as we can get to be able to restore such a beautiful park lake and restock the years and years that have been lost.

Please if you can help us, please

donate, whether it's £1, £5, £10, or £100, it will all be very much appreciated and very much thanked. Below is the link for go-fund-me links for a few videos Link for Facebook page. Thank you for taking the time to read this.: <https://gofund.me/81b6bcc6> <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZGJp6yU7k/> <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZGJp6PbfS/> <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61550352233521>. ■



Angling Trust and Weihai Julia announce trade partnership to protect the environment

The Angling Trust is delighted to announce that Weihai Julia, one of the world's leading original equipment manufacturers (OEM) supplying carbon fibre products for fishing and water sports, has become our latest Trade Associate partner.

As part of the agreement, Weihai Julia will support the vital work of the Trust to protect waterways and the environment for the benefit of fish and fishing, and efforts to grow fishing in the UK.

Founded in 2008 as a family business, the company designs and delivers exclusively to the most recognised brands in the fishing industry. Italian-owned with its manufacturing base in China, Weihai Julia prides itself on producing high quality products and an excellent development strategy that result in outstanding performances for its customers.

Alberto Solza, Weihai Julia's head of marketing and sales, said the Angling Trust shared the same aims as his company in wanting to protect the environment now and in the future.

"The main reason why we have become Trade Associate members of the Angling Trust is that we want to be the first OEM to support direct actions on the environment and support campaigns to spread fishing in the UK," said Alberto.

"We identified that the Angling Trust is committed to achieving the same aims as Weihai Julia and shares a common goal in protecting the aquatic environment. I would like to see more OEM support angling in the UK as we all have a direct interest in fishing continuing to stay strong."

John Cheyne, Angling Trust's Head of Marketing and Membership, said: "Weihai Julia might not be a



household name in the UK, but they produce high quality products for many of the best known fishing tackle brands around.

"We are delighted that they have joined the Angling Trust as Trade Associate members and I look forward to working with Alberto and the team on our Anglers Against Pollution campaign and other initiatives to protect the environment."

Carbon fibre fishing tackle is one of Weihai Julia's core businesses and has evolved using lighter, stronger, and stiffer materials, even developing custom made formulations. Currently, Weihai Julia are active in pole, carp, match, feeder, trout, and predator fishing. They also produce carbon fibre equipment for windsurfing, sailboating, stand up paddling and wing-foiling.. ■



Chris Ball, one of the carp world's great ambassadors

Recently we heard the sad news we never wanted to hear. The Carp world lost one of its greatest ambassadors. Chris Ball passed away peacefully on Monday evening. Although we all knew it was imminent, it didn't lessen the impact of losing not only our president, but a man we all regarded as our friend.

Upon meeting Chris for the first time, it didn't take you long to realise you were in the company of a special person, his whole persona just screamed good guy. He was well spoken, charming, respectful, he just had all the qualities you'd look for in a good guy.

I first met Chris about ten years ago at one of our Sandown shows. Chris had volunteered (as he often did) to be MC and compare for the slideshow and talks at the show. On the Saturday evening of the show, it was traditional for the Carp Society team to go to the Chinese as a way of thank you to everyone who was helping us out at Sandown. This particular year Chris came along, and I was fortunate to be seated next to him. The next 5 hours just blew me away. Now this won't come as a surprise to anyone that knew Chris, but he never stopped talking for the whole 5 hours, give or take a few seconds here and there to get a bit of crispy duck inside him.

There are not many people in this world (certainly not in our Carp world) that you could listen to for 5 hours non-stop, but to be honest if Chris had of gone on for another 5 hours, (which knowing Chris as I got to, wouldn't have been a problem for him) I don't think I'd have ever got bored. Of course, the talk was all Carp, but it wasn't the run of the mill Carp stuff, it was fascinating, and his delivery was only upstaged by his knowledge (and recall). I genuinely don't think I've met anyone who knew as much about anything as Chris knew about Carp and Carp fishing. I remember saying to someone the next day that Chris could go on mastermind and not get a Carp related question wrong if he sat in the chair for 24 hours. He'd start off telling you a story about someone catching a 16lb'r in 1963 and by the time he'd finished that story you'd know the history not only of that fish, but the rod it was caught on and the net it was landed in. His knowledge was,



I'd say, second to none. Like I say, he blew me away that night. I met Chris a few more times during the next few years and he'd always come up to me and ask how the fish in Horseshoe were doing and ask if anyone was having them off the top. Surface fishing, of course, being Chris's main passion.

Following the shake up at the Carp Society in 2015/16 our paths crossed more frequently. Chris was one of the guys who stood up to be counted at the EGM and became more involved in the following years, culminating in him become president, a position I know he was immensely proud of holding. He was also the instigator of turning the lodge here at Horseshoe into a museum for Carp fishing, furnishing it with a variety of objects and memorabilia. It was on one of his visits to Horseshoe that he brought his good friend Len Arbery. Now I mentioned earlier that I thought Chris's knowledge was second to none, that was before I met Len. I'm not saying Len knew more but I bet it was a close thing, but that's neither here nor there, because combined, well, if you knew them, you'll know what they were like together, just phenomenal. They came to Horseshoe together a few times, each time bringing items for the museum and each time they'd run me through the history of each item.

I did manage to sit them down on a couple of occasions and record two episodes with them for our Carp Radio podcast and they didn't disappoint, not at all. Individually they

were both fantastic but together they took it to another level. The friendship, comradery, knowledge, just everything about the pair of them together was class. Again, all I can say is they blew me away. If we can take any comfort from Chris's passing, it's the hope and believe that him and Len are together again.

On a more personal note, my favourite ever fishing related memory is down to Chris. I mentioned earlier about interviewing Chris and Len for the Carp Radio. After one of the interviews Chris casually mentioned I should interview Chris Yates, my first thought was "Yeah, in my dreams". But low and behold Chris (Ball) phoned me a couple of weeks later and said he'd spoken to Chris (Yates) and sorted it for me to go to Chris Yates house and interview him. To me, that was like being granted an audience with the Deli Lama. Unbelievable.

Anyway, the day came for me to set off to Chris Yates House, I was due to meet Chris Ball a mile or so away from Chris Y's house. I don't mind telling you I was nervous as a kitten, all the way down I was saying to myself "Don't say anything stupid, don't say anything stupid". I met up with Chris B and we made our way to Chris Y's house. I think we must have woken Chris Y up because after a couple of knocks on the door Chris Y's head appeared from the upstairs window and said "Hello". He came down and let us in, Chris B introduced me, and Chris Y said "welcome, let me introduce you to Mr Green". Mr Green of



**35%
OFF**

GO TO
ledlenser.co.uk
USE CODE **FISH35**

POWERPACKS



HEADLAMPS



LANTERNS

POWERUP CATCH **BIG**
ENJOY **NATURE**
STAY **SAFE**

course being Chris's first fishing rod (I think, I hope) and probably the most famous fishing rod in history. But what an introduction and what a start.

Chris's house is a little cottage in a lovely little village, his garden was full of growth and inside the house was very warm and homely, and as I sat

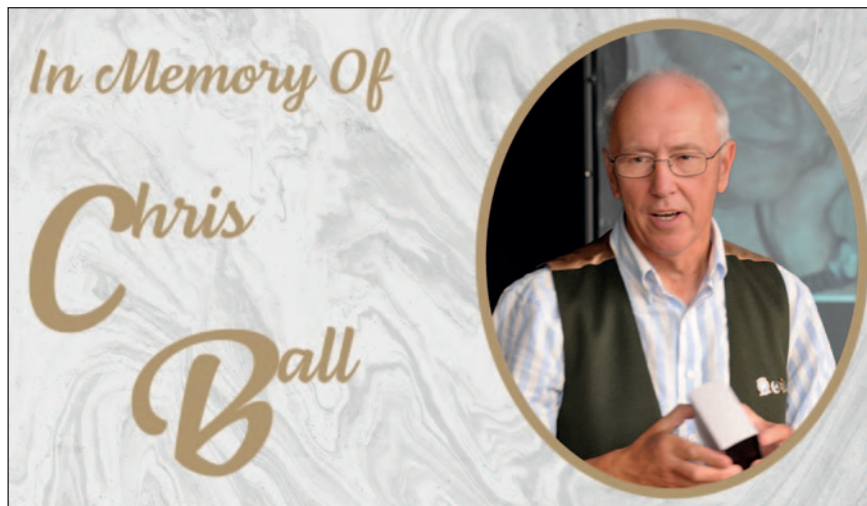
there with them both I couldn't help but feel like I was in the heart of the Shire, it really was quite surreal for me. If you can picture Bilbo, Frodo and Gandalf sat in Bag End, then that's exactly where I was. We were probably more like Compo, Foggy and Gleggy sat in Nora's in reality, but to me we'll always have been in the

Shire. To cut a long story short, the day went amazingly well, it was nothing short of brilliant and an experience I will never ever forget. I thanked Chris B every time I met him afterwards, but I'll never have thanked him enough. Sadly, I'll never get the chance to thank him again, and that saddens me. ■

A tribute to Chris Ball

No matter how long one has been around, confronting sad news and loss is never easy. Chris Ball has been my personal friend since the early 1970's, and today as Chair of the Carp Society, I have to pass on the sad news of his passing, after a short, but difficult battle with Cancer.

The Carp Society has not only lost its President, Carp Fishing and angling in general has lost a great angler, a huge and enthusiastic influencer, writer and angling historian. Most of all the world has lost a lovely person! Over many, many years Chris has been my and many others 'go to person' whenever we wanted an answer to a Carp Fishing question and I doubt anyone will ever quite replace him in that regard. That he always gave time and respect to the questions we all asked is to his eternal credit. He became a huge part of the 'fabric' that holds Carp Fishing past and present together. I know he will always be remembered by the many who knew him and I'm sure I'll not be alone in shedding a tear at his passing. Back in the 1980's when we all used to gather at Dunstable for Carp Society Conferences, until the present times at Sandown and Horsehoe, his influence via Carp Fisher,



Chris Ball with Derek Stritton at Horseshoe Lake event in 2019.

Carp Talk, Carpworld, six books, talks and slide shows, work with the B.C.S.G, Chris has always been there. Memories of him will without doubt be cherished for many years to come.

Thoughts and huge sympathy to his wife Lynne and the family at what is a very sad time for them. Go forward on your journey my friend, and be assured of the huge contribution you have made and the lovely memories you leave with so many of us. God bless and God speed from everyone at the Carp Society.

Derek Stritton.



Chris Ball centre with Derek Stritton, Len Arbery, Kris Ford and Mike Wilson 2018

Chris Ball Triubute – from Tim Paisley

Writing tributes to friends who are no longer with us is a source of mixed feelings: you are flattered to be asked, particularly in the case of someone with so many literate friends as Chris Ball, but sad that such a posthumous reflection has become necessary. When I started assembling some thoughts about Chris it became clear that it was not going to be easy to come up with a condensed version of his life. Where to start? Musician, writer, author, publisher, BCSG and Carp Society stalwart (President of the Carp Society at the time of his death), successful carp angler, floater-fishing guru, in-demand emcee and auctioneer, raconteur, cane connoisseur, 'vintage' tackle collector - and photographer... In the interests of brevity something had to give and I decided to focus on Chris the archivist, and Chris the writer.

On reflection I had known of Chris for as long as I can remember. I had actually known him since 1987 when I met him and Fred J Taylor – and befriended them both - on the same day at a Carp Society conference when Chris was the recipient of the lovely carved, cased, Clarissa carving following his success in the inaugural Society quiz. I launched Carpworl in



Chris Ball and the late Len Arbery.

1988 and Chris became a regular contributor throughout the thirty-plus years of its life. In 1994 Chris, Kevin

Clifford and I joined forces in the launch of the weekly Carp-Talk. It thrived for twenty-four years until it felt the chill of Internet intrusion and fell by the wayside. In its lifetime it had become an institution and unless the world of publishing changes dramatically it will always have the distinction of being the only weekly carp publication in the world. It will almost certainly have the distinction of aspiring to the most editions published by a single carp title – 1231. (A monthly magazine would have to survive for over 100 years to match that statistic!) In 2000 Chris, Kevin and I again joined forces and compiled the book *A Century of Carp Fishing*, a deadline-threatened project we looked back on with no little pride.

By the time Carp-Talk was launched in 1994 Chris was already an author following the publication of *The King Carp Waters* (1993). This was followed by *Best of the Famous Catches* (2012), *Historical Carp Waters* (2017), *Historical Carp Waters II* (2020), and the embryonic *Ashlea Pool* (2023). With his *Ashlea* book ready to go to the printers at the time of his death as an archivist I guess



Chris Ball introducing Tim Paisley at the 2018 Horseshoe open day.

Chris would not have been unaware that as an author he joins the famous angling carpers of the past who have had books published posthumously, John Norman's *Coarse Fishing With the Experts* (1957) and Derrick Davenport's *Fishing for Life*, 2010.

Add to his published books his contributions to numerous other books and regular magazine articles and it is evident that as the years went by his writing output became increasingly prolific.

Chris the archivist/raconteur was a force of nature. At shows he exuded carp-fishing memories and invariably had a crowd around him listening to his illustrated memories of days of yore.

He could talk authoritatively about historical events, and from personal experience of the early-seventies' BCSG meetings at the Crooked Billet



Chris Ball with Tim Paisley.



Chris in his carp den when I compiled a big interview with him for *Carpworld* some years back.



In 2000 Chris, Kevin Clifford and I joined forces and compiled the book *A Century of Carp Fishing*, an ambitious rush-to-deadline project we looked back on with no little pride.

Chris the angler, archivist and cane-rod buff with a 23lb floater-caught common from Redmire Pool in the late 80s.



Sadly no longer with us; Fred J Taylor, Chris, Brian Mills and Len Arbery on the Carp Society occasion at which I met all four in 1987.

Chris's vintage tackle obsession included his love of significant cane rods. This is the collection at the time of compiling the big interview.



onwards, because he was there, and had a myriad of carp fishing facts and statistics at his fingertips. In my immediate circle Chris and Kevin Clifford were the archivists I turned to on many occasions to scrounge pictures, or check facts. As an author Chris was unusual: in an era when many carp-fishing articles are thinly disguised ego-trips, or based solely on personal experiences, his published work was almost invariably about other people's achievements.

Chris was a personable family man with wife Lynne being a tower of strength throughout his life. I have enjoyed his company down the years, and cherish the memory of the achievements shared with Chris and Kevin Clifford. Chris's contribution to life, and the world of carp fishing has been unforgettable. He has earned his rest, and his prolific writing output will ensure that his memory will live on.

Chris Ball Tribute – from Bill Ward

I first got to know Chris, albeit then fleetingly, when he attended one of the early Horseshoe Junior Carp Schools where he held the youngsters and instructors spellbound on the road bank of Summer Bay with his masterclass of how to tempt and take fish from the surface in his inimitable 'Bally' fashion.

Chris's knowledge of our pastime is legendary, with his books, archive, always entertaining personal appearances, presentations and a very appreciated master of ceremonies at Carp Society Shows, auctions and angling events up and down the country. He reset the bar for how Carp Angling heritage evolved ever since Chris Yates embedded the Redmire expectation and excitement in anglers minds, bringing Carp to the forefront of an anglers quarry along with other like-minded 'Dick Walkers'. As President of the Carp Society Chris will be rightly and fondly remembered for his immense contribution to Angling.

The picture below is from an original, taken by Chris's own hand, and I believe to be his first of a tail-walker, saying as much about him as it does now about him being a free spirit.

Kindest regards, condolences and commiserations to Chris's family and friends. Bill Vice President. ■

Raffle Prize Donations

Hello there my name is Dan Stevens and I was wondering if you may be able to help me in any way.

I fish a small club water in Kent with around 65 members and one of our members daughter has been diagnosed with brain cancer. The family have been paying for her treatment for the last 12 months at £2000 pcm and are now struggling to meet that. I have set up a charity carp match at the club water on the 30th of September and was really hoping for a donation towards the raffle of any sort if possible.

So far, I have confirmed donations from: Julian Cundiff, Big Carp Magazine, Free Line Magazine, Jake @ Solar Tackle, Dan Hawkes Ridgemonkey, Kieran Ryder at One More Cast, Hoggy @ Squirrels Nuts, Kudos

Tackle, Joe at A2 Baits, Josh at Korda, ESP, Ben at Parker Baits, Alfie Willingdale at Nash, Gardner Tackle, The Tackle Box Dartford, Maidstone Angling Centre, Gemini Tackle, Thinking Anglers, Willy's worms, Total Carp Magazine, Linear Fisheries, Go Outdoors, Hinders Bait, Enterprise Tackle, Navitas, Baylys Baits. A few local day ticket waters have donated too.

Extremely cheeky of me but I was really hoping I might be able to add you to the list?

I fully understand you must get inundated with this sort of stuff, but if you don't ask you don't get. There is already a go fund me page set up etc, so I can confirm this is not a scam – if this is something that you may be able to make a small donation.

Many thanks Daniel Stevens ■



CHARLIE KEEN

FUNDRAISER

ANGLING RAFFLE

The angling trade has pulled together to support this amazing cause and provide us with thousands of pounds worth of prizes

TICKETS £10 PER STRIP

Tickets available from Danny Stevens through Paypal only using danboyr5@gmail.com



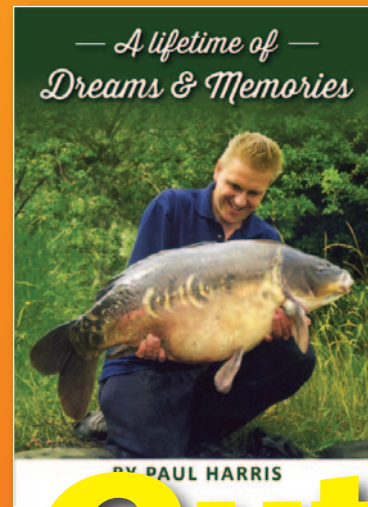
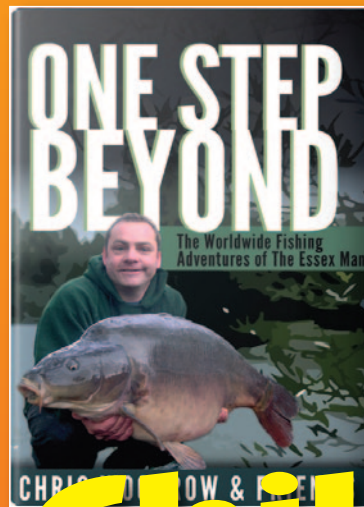
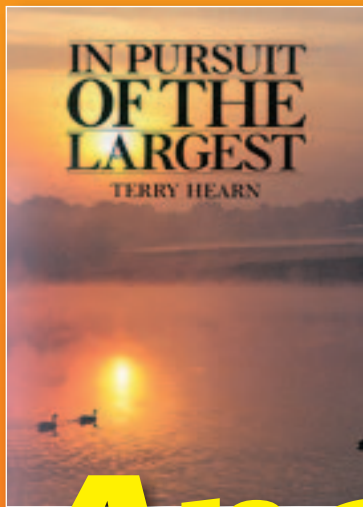
To read Charlie's story visit the justgiving page:
<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/charlie-keen>



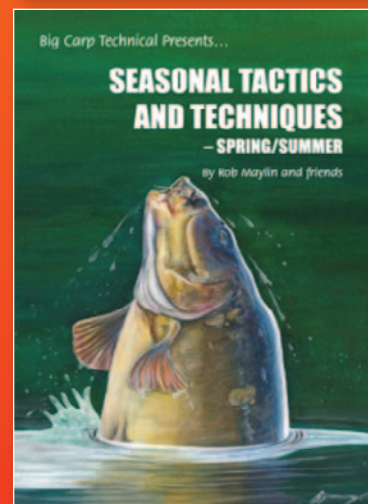
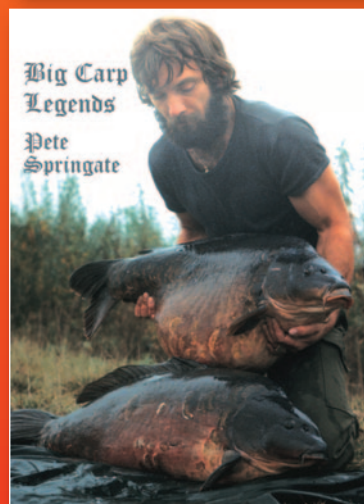
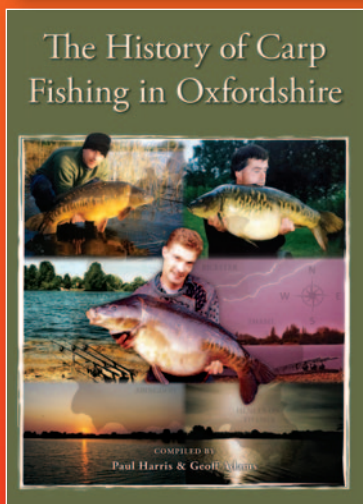
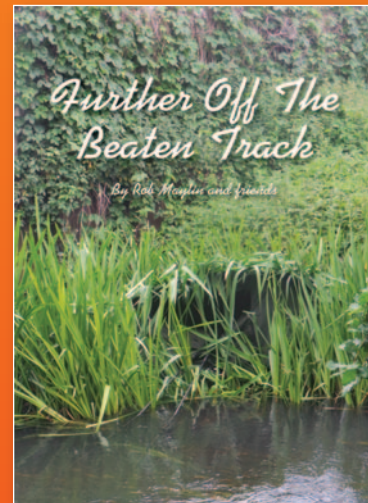
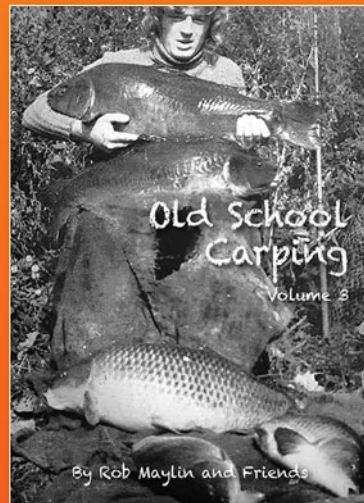
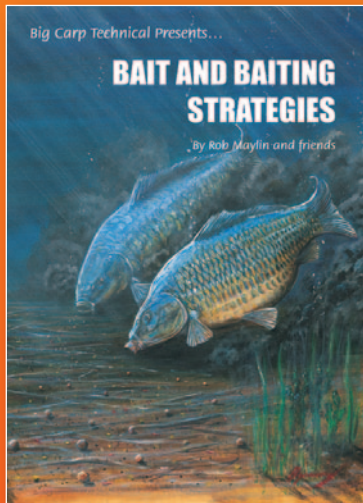
The Tackle Box



Bag Yourself a Score

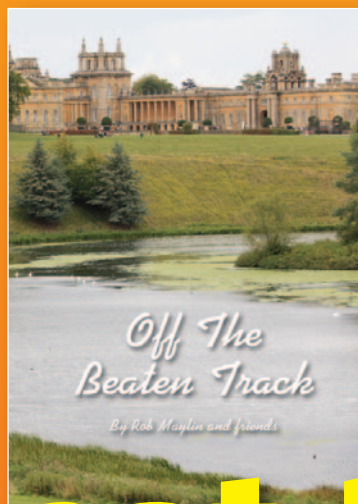
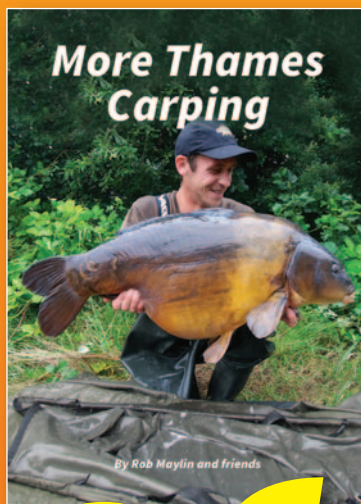


And Chill Out with

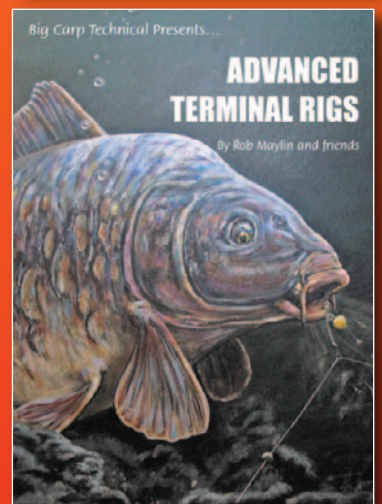
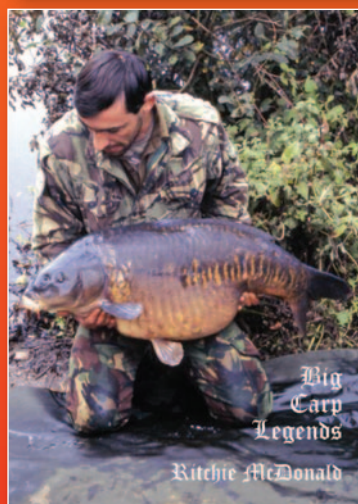
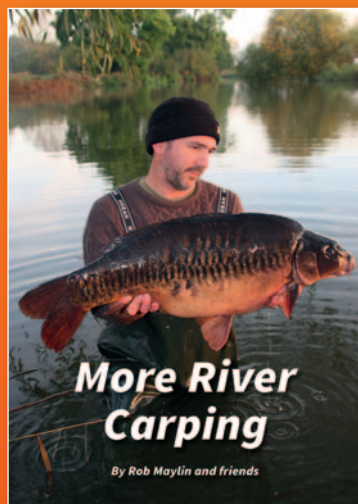
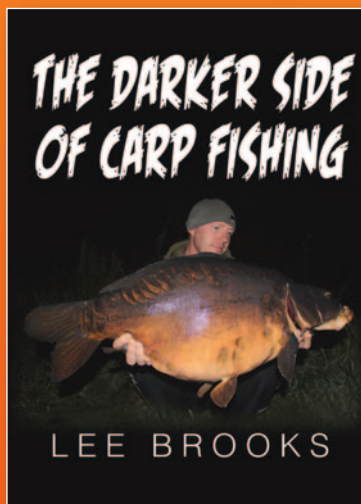


NEW BOOKS www.bigcarpmain.com NEW AND OLD BOOKS: www.ebay.com

Summer Scorchers



With a Great Read



gazine.co.uk/online-shop.html
.co.uk/usr/rarecarpbooksunlimited

Our monthly reviews on products currently on the market

In this issue:

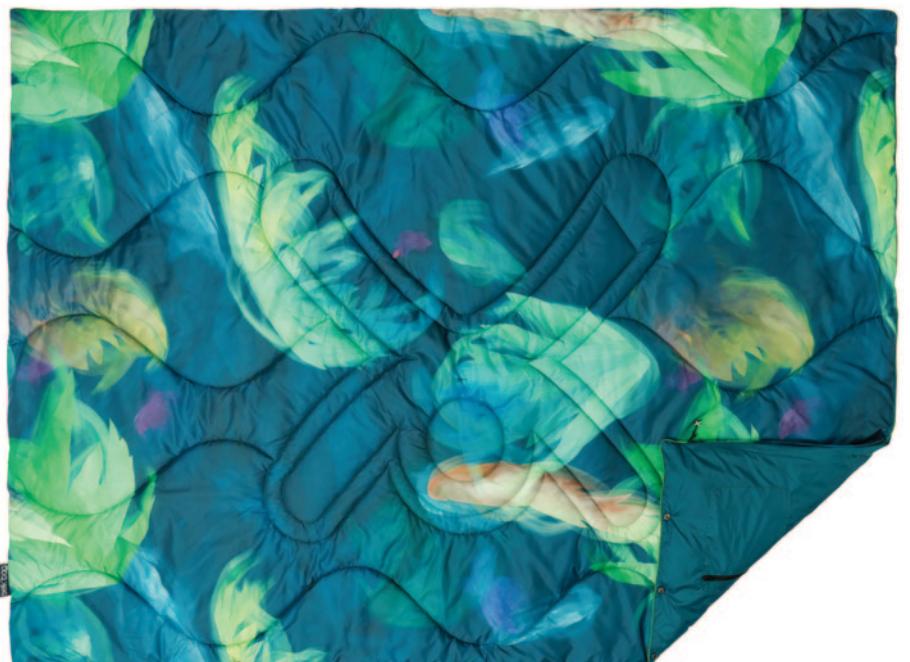
- Selk'bag
- Nite Watches

Selk'bag launches new wearable blanket made from 100% recycled materials

Wearable sleeping bag brand Selk'bag has launched a new camping blanket, crafted entirely from 100% post-consumer recycled materials. This extension to the Selk'bag range combines exceptional comfort, versatility, and sustainability, designed as the perfect companion for a wide range of outdoor adventures.

The Selk'bag blanket showcases brand's commitment to reducing environmental impact, without compromising on quality or performance. The shell, insulation, zip, and zip pull are all made from 100% recycled polyester, equivalent to 65 discarded plastic bottles. Selk'bag blankets are free of PFAS, thanks to the absence of a DWR coating, making them safer for users and kinder to the planet. This is the first camping blanket to achieve the OEKO TEX STANDARD 100 certification.

A standout features of the Selk'bag blanket is its versatility. With the ability to convert into a poncho with front



poppers and a handy internal zipped pocket, wearers can enjoy freedom of movement while keeping their hands free. Whether cooking over a campfire or stove, moving around the campsite, or enjoying a beverage under the stars, users can stay warm and snug without sacrificing convenience. The Selk'bag blanket easily packs away into a convenient pillow when folded in on itself, which has two sides to cater for varying temperatures. One side has a 'shaggy' fleece face for optimal cosiness during colder conditions, while the smooth fabric on the other ensures comfort when it is milder.

Machine washable, Selk'bag blankets are made from 100% recycled 30D ripstop polyester fabric, while the insulation is made from 100% recycled 3D hollow fibre siliconized synthetic material (240 gsm), providing excellent warmth. The entire blanket weighs just 0.9kg, making it lightweight and easy to carry. Available in one size, the Selk'bag blanket is available in four nature-inspired designs: 432Hz, Dulces Suenos (Sweet Dreams), Hotel Mil Estrellas (Thousand Stars Hotel), and Senderos (Trails). It retails at £79.95 and is available from www.selkbag.co.uk/products/senderos-blanket. ■



NITE Maverick MEGAN HINE

NITE Maverick MEGAN HINE is no stranger to testing herself in unforgiving environments and therefore was the perfect choice to put the Atlas through its paces as it accompanied her to Malaysia and Panama just months before its launch.

"The Atlas was thrown in the deep end literally as it accompanied me out of the jungles and islands of Malaysia and Panama on a recent location scout for a TV show. In and out of air conditioning and high humidity levels... Bashed on rocks and in and out of salt and fresh water as I measured depths for cliff jumps and explored remote jungle rivers. Not a scratch or any misting up."

As an elite expedition leader, survivalist, and wilderness expert, we're elated with her help for this ultimate watch test.

Megan's latest project is the launch of @psyche_media_solutions, which delivers specialised support and training for media organisations and individuals working across the Globe in remote and extreme wilderness environments.

"When so much of my life is spent on the road, doing this as part of a creative, supportive team is exhilarating, whether solving the logistical complexities of remote shoots or building relationships with local teams. I'm excited by this new endeavour."

Her life is a tapestry woven with daring exploits that surpass physical and mental barriers. And she understands the value of time, not as an abstract concept but as a reminder to seize every moment and embrace the wonders the world has to offer.

Her relentless pursuit of exploration serves as an inspiration for individuals yearning to break free from the shackles of routine and embrace extraordinary experiences.

Megan has proven The Atlas stands the test of the elements and will endure any adventure. © 2023 NITE Watches UK

NITE Watches Unit 14 Silver Business Park,
Airfield Way, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 3TA United Kingdom. ■





Snap 450 RW

Multi-use Light Kit

Snap's unique design features a magnetic head unit that can be easily and intuitively detached and reattached to its base, empowering it to become the ultimate multi-use light. Snap can be worn as a traditional headlamp, used as a handheld flashlight, or fastened to any metal surface to brighten the area around you or your workspace. Snap is now brighter than ever at 450 lumens and features three modes: a fully dimmable spot beam, a flash mode, and a red LED to preserve night vision.

The Kit includes a two way carabiner mount and clip for use as a lantern or attachment to your pack, as well as a handlebar attachment to mount to your bike or any similarly sized pole!





Leigh Leavesley catch report

First few sessions on an 80-acre midlands gravel pit, some of the better fish so far.



Sam Jacobs with a new PB weighing 52lb 4oz, caught from the Car Park in Yateley on one of our GPB1 pop ups. Sam has had a truly incredible spring, banking numerous other 40+ from both the Car Park and Hollybush utilising our GPB1. Neither being easy lakes.





Liam Ledger catch report

SWS bailiff Liam Ledger with the queen of Larky 2 weighing a touch over 53lbs. We couldn't think of a man who deserves this capture more than him!



Shane Bundock catch report

Not a lot of details with this one, but congratulations go to Shane Bundock with a UK 48lb mirror, caught on a test fishmeal boilie. Awesome carp, don't you agree?



Lee Nobbs catch report

Second bite of the morning, a 44lb 2oz Lee Valley mirror, again Mainline Baits cell over Carbon Baits hemp and maize, terminal tackle from Incredible Tackle and 4oz dumpy distance leads from Bartons Leads.



Sam Jones catch report

A familiar face around the Reading scene, Sam Jones is no stranger to a few big carp and here's one from what became a great spell of angling during his latest dabble in the area.



Ben Samari catch report

After deciding not to fish for a while as the syndicate is closed for a month Ben Samari thought he would head down to the Folly for a quick night. What a good decision it was too landing an absolute banger. "This place does hold some incredible gems I think I've avoided it for so long as I've been distracted on the other syndicate" Ben said "Might have to do a short summer campaign on here." After another trip Bens luck continued banking another 40 with Moon Scale weighing in at 44lb 10oz along with another 2 x 30's and a 29. Awesome, mate.



Jonny Robins catch report

Team member Jonny Robins has been a regular visitor to Cotswold Water Park gem Churn Pool over the years, and can now count himself as the lake record holder after his most recent session! This awesome mirror, known as The Big Lin, certainly put a smile on his face when he slipped his net under it, sending the needle on the scales round to a whopping 42lb 8oz, which is not only the lake record for the water, but a new personal best for Jonny too!





John Finbar Cash catch report

Weeks of hard graft prepping a zone during the close paying dividends for John Finbar Cash... Cashy had an unbelievable first 24 hours which was topped by this absolute brute of a mirror known as the Unit at 52lbs and ounces.



Bank Tackle Team Member Darryl Tilling...

New UK PB. Only Went and bagged one of the big girls at 52lb 1oz. It had been slow going on the lake but made a couple of changes and sat it out. Then from nowhere BOOM!!!! Caught on a hinged stiff rig. All Bank Tackle components. Happy days. Congratulations on your new PB Darryl!! What a capture!!



Chris Barnes catch report

Chris Barnes with a very hard-earned prize, Big Ears at 51.04 from Roach Pit.



Liam catch report

INSANE 50.14 Cotswolds capture by 15-year-old Liam. Fishing with the formidable One More Cast Cassien Hook, Bloodliner Aligner and Blend Fluorocarbon D-Rig!

This is surely one of the greatest captures from a young angler in the UK? A historic moment and a memory that will live with Liam forever. They don't get much better than this champ!



Ricci Connolly catch report

Fishon Tackle Shops Ricci Connolly with a trio of recent beautiful Masons 40lb+. All caught on a combination of our GPB2 & S2 hookbaits fished over his own shops' particle and Krill boilies. Ricci literally never stops catching stunning big carp, always on very limited time too.



An Overwhelming Spring – Charlie Ferris

'Having had a week on holiday with the Mrs, it meant a week away from the lake at prime time and if I'm honest, the lake was always on my mind. Upon my return, they were yet to spawn and with the new moon cycle coinciding for my next trip, I knew it was game on. Arriving to the lake after work, I managed to plot up in a good zone, covering a nice weedy area in the open water. My usual spinner rigs were deployed, three tramlines on a spot, with a decent hit of boilie crumb over the top. The bite came earlier than expected, around 10:30 in the evening, when the big common was mine. At 47lb 3oz, it was the ultimate buzz! Spicy Squid Goo'd hookbaits were mounted on size 4 Kamakura Wide Gapes, with 25lb Boom sections fished on Heli Safes. Simple tactics that have been hugely effective for Charlie this spring!



Ben Steiger catch report

NEW PB and First UK 40. Just as the sun was setting, my right-hand rod off the end of an island which had done most of the bites was away again! It soon weeded me up, so I hopped in the boat and made my way towards the fish, as I got closer, I soon realised it had actually gone around the island, but luckily there is a pole to allow for this. In amongst the trees, I couldn't use the rod to play the fish any longer so I grabbed the snag leader trying to work out where the fish was, when a big long flank popped up it wasn't the most graceful netting, but while hand lining it, I bundled it into the net, along with a cluster of branches and weed that it had found! I got back to the bank and could tell it was a good upper 30 again at least, Mozza did the honours with the weighing and it went 40lb 3ozs. Absolutely buzzing!



Adam Dawes catch report

Daiwa consultant Adam Dawes has had an absolute red-letter session on his syndicate water. Adam explained "Probably the best session I've ever had! 4 fish on a 36-hour trip on my Lincs syndicate is always a good result, but to have a mid-thirty, two upper thirties and a 41lb 7oz was a bonus to say the least. As with most of my fishing on this particular syndicate I was fishing at range. Using my 13ft Basia x45x 3.75lbs paired up with the 20 Tournament Basia 45 SCW QD reels made the job easier. The ultimate combination!!!!" Well done Adam.



Adam Penning catch report

After a last-minute opportunity arose which meant fishing on the exclusive Church Lake in Essex, Adam Penning wasn't going to turn down the chance. A fish known as 4x4 was the result, all 43lb 10oz of it!



Gaz Dillon catch report

Swirly common at 44.4 from lincs syndicate part of a 26 fish catch with 14 over 30. Lots of #jhbait klf used pineapple N-Butyric pop ups over the top #ridgemonkey.



Craig Hamp catch report

Took a week of work to fit in with the full moon phase and pressure drop this week! It was nice to Angle midweek rather than my usual 48hrs on the weekend. It turned into a red letter sesh fishing 5 different swims I got amongst them managing 13 fish 5x30s including a 35lb common and 35lb mirror 4x20s a few doubles and a 20lb catfish. Shout out to Amy Hamp for supporting my Angling. Here's a few of the better ones



Ches Boughen catch report

Well, what can I say, if catching the three 30lb silt pigs wasn't enough, the carp gods chuckled me a 42lb too, to make it that little more special, there is no track record of it ever being caught before, obviously I can't guarantee that, however I've asked all the locals/regulars who tell me they have never seen it before. Anyway, to make it even better than that this wasn't the biggest of the session and I went on to catch my PB common carp at over 50lbs, which TBH it means more to me than any other capture for so many reasons which maybe one day I will talk about and show you?! Anyway, for now check this bad boy common out, old English hard fighting power house, that jumped out the water at 140 yards out like a Dolphin, I've never seen such a size fish do that. Proper lake and proper fishing.



Dave Fuige catch report

First trip to my new water and was well rewarded with this stunner at just over 43lb.



Nick Martin – a brace of forties

After a little break away from using Trent Baits Nick Martin felt he needed his confidence back in bait so he placed a big order for our mega Liver Specials. Nick headed off to big fish water Grenville for 48 hours and it couldn't have gone better for him when he banked these two huge mirrors of 43lb 2oz and a beast just shy of 50lb. It was great to receive an email from Nick expressing his thanks at restoring his faith in his bait. Absolutely mega Nick and your more than welcome



Chris French catch report

It is that man again Chris French fishing the awesome Creedence Fishery in Essex. Just take a look at this mental looking mirror caught over a mix of the Red spicy fish and the Tuna and Garlic, what a combination and what a fish, well done Chris.



Richard Salvidge catch report

Richard Salvidge with the impressive big Linear from Wellington Country Park weighing 46lb6oz. One of the carp Rich dearly wanted to catch, he managed to land it this past weekend on one of our white S2 balanced. Well done Rich, good angling as always.



Danny Huskinson catch report

New UK PB! One of Frimley's gems at 42lb 2oz. Proper chuffed.



Dave Pullin catch report

Well, I got up at daft o'clock and took the drive down south to bluebells lakes in Peterborough. With the intention on fish the hardest lake on the complex called Swan. Had a wonder round and got in a peg on the windward side just after a guy pulled out, I was absolutely goosed after the drive so I didn't get my rods out until about 3ish. Then at about 5pm I got a screamer of a run after a very had fight an absolute amazing fish went over the net. It was a fish called the perfect common that rarely comes out at a new PB going 51lb 8oz. To say I'm buzzing is an understatement.



VS Fisheries catch report

The big one from DDAPS Bennett's Lake fell to Roy Cansdale at a very impressive post spawning 53lb 2oz recently! With progeny of this bloodline available throughout our year classes there is little doubt they will become big fish in the future like this one. Fish from 3" to 24lbs still available to be reserved for delivery this coming winter.



Lake Record for Darren Lamey!

Following on from a successful spring, Darren concentrated his efforts, baiting the top end of the pit, a deeper zone that is usually left alone through the warmer months. Baiting with crush and chopped @mainlinebaitsofficial Cell and Hybrid, soaked in Hemp and Salmon oil, Darren knew baiting through the close would keep the spots prime. When the lake re-opened following spawning, he was keen to get down this end, where he positioned 3 rods onto the baited patches, rigged up with spinner rigs set with Clear Heli Safe leaders and 4oz leads, 5-inch Kamo Kontour booms and size 4 Wide Gapes on PTFE Spinner Swivels and Medium Kickers. After the morning bite time passed, Darren decided to re-do the rods, feeling something should have happened. A tench soon after the recasts filled Darren with some level of confidence, and soon after, he was away again, this time a powerful carp was the culprit, a deep bodied 30lb mirror. Whilst the fish was sitting safely in the margins, sulking in the SpringBow, the other rod was away, and as Darren lifted, he knew he was into something serious. The rod was bent from the off and Darren could feel immense weight on his arm as he guided the fish slowly toward him, each time it fought back he'd calmly allow it to take line. Eventually, she broke surface, revealing a huge set of dark shoulders as Darren guided her into the net. A Cambs beast, at 59lb 7oz, it was a new lake record and personal best for @darrenlfishing!



Robert Mitchell catch report

Through 2016 into 2017 was a spell of angling I doubt I will ever experience again. The whole campaign was just incredible, mega place, mega carp, no rules and likeminded respectable anglers. That morning of the 18th March '17 when I'd just give my braid a twitch to clear the debris from my lines that had gathered due to the strong south westerly which had been blowing all night and morning, I cleaned them off step back and the middle rod signalled a steady powerful take, upon lifting the rod high above my head I was met with a rod buckling weight and one of the most savage battles I've had. After surging for every snag around the island margins and snaggy bays for what felt like a lifetime. I finally had her coughing water and the biggest carp I've ever caught rolled into the net first time of asking! Unlike when I lost her in the August before. But this day I come out on top. A capture I don't know if I'll ever top! Thanks to the selection of Friends that shared my magical time with her. Unfortunately, nothing last Forever! The Big Girl 43lb 2oz.

Fond Memories

By Matt Hart

I was at a bit of a loss as to where to fish the winter last year 2022 and just by chance I was driving along the M25 Essex bound when the Essex Manor popped in my head, I fished on this syndicate for a couple of seasons many years ago, it's a fantastic lake with some huge carp, And if you don't know probably one of the most famous lakes in Essex, I quickly messaged the owner Steve, he came back to me immediately and said I could have a ticket, yes I thought! this could work out nicely

I got off the mark extremely quickly on the winter ticket taking a fish within an hour of being back that first trip, an absolutely stunning fish at

just under 43lbs Called "The Tiger Linear", I landed this from a swim called "The Flat" It used to be a very popular swim, located in the middle of the lake, but apparently left alone a lot now, "I might concentrate a bit of time in there I said to myself", like I did on previous years taking lots of fish.

Everyone fishes the manor quite differently to varying results, I've personally learnt from my experience on there, that fishing over a very small amount of baits did the trick for me, literally 12 boilies that's it! don't get me wrong I used to bait heavy when leaving, putting out 10kg of bait when packing down was not uncommon, then coming back the following

week, to try and get back on the spots and straight back to the 12 boilies approach, it worked a treat for me anyway, taking probably half the stock of the lake angling like this, the power of prebaiting.

I got back in the flat swim again the following week and wrapped up the rods on the baited areas, literally it's close in work on this lake often fishing no more than 7 wraps, I was fishing tight to sunken reeds, it's quite boring angling but the sheer size and quality of the stock keep it entertaining, I took two more fish this trip using the prebaiting method an oddly shape common called pop rib at around 35lbs and an old friend and one of the finest linears around the



December fish.



Pop rib common.



Stella.



Tiger linear.



Big Lin.



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.

Skunkz Range

The New Skunkz range Pop Ups from us at Halobaits is nothing short of amazing!

These ultra buoyant pop ups, have a totally incredibly unique smell, citrus based with a creamy undertone, with a secret palatant, probably the best smelling pop ups range we have ever come across!!

Already proving to be devastating and irresistible to carp on waters across the UK.

Currently made in White, Yellow, Pink in 12mm and 15mm.



Website: www.halobaits.com
Email: sales@halobaits.com
Telephone: 01689 862875
See us on  Facebook



big Lin, this fish is ancient now and her best years are past her, but she still looks fantastic and fought with the energy of a fish 20 years younger, this dark leviathan bent the Reuben's round to 38lb.

I took a few more fish before the big freeze took over putting a lid on the lake which put an end to proceedings just before the end of the year in December.

Now I don't know about you, but for me the winter was a well-drawn out affair that was just lingering around! I think I got a couple of trips in around March which were uneventful, but what I really wrote this article about was the story of how my winter ticket ended.

So, I had spent the winter months away from the lake playing around with recipes and ingredients for making Bait something I've done a lot of within my 35 years carp fishing, so armed with my new fishmeal bait and some absolutely awesome citrus pop ups, I've gone back to the lake full of eagerness in April for my last trip to the manor before the ticket ended.

The lake always used to wake up early April, then fish like crazily good, before going back to normal proceedings, and I was hoping it would happen on the last trip for me.

I arrived at the lake just after first light, it's such a great time to spot fish and to setup on them, there was someone pulling into the gate and a quick gesture of "I will lock the gate mate" was made as I followed behind in my van to the parking area by the gate shed, grabbing a net sling and mat out the shed with the angler I didn't recognise, the lake was busier than normal I thought, and off I went with my bucket in hand, it was horrendous weather 50mph gusts, heavy rain really stormy, you know one of them trips where you can't help but hear the creaking of the trees thinking any minute now that's crashing down!

I lapped the lake, not taking my eyes off the water for moment, I was looking up the reed line near a swim called middle pads and I saw a fish just pop out up to the gills no sound literally no ripples, if you weren't

watching at that precise moment, you would never have known, that will do me I thought.

With a bucket reserving the swim I went to get my gear out the van, it was hammering it down with rain, I pushed the barrow the hundred and Fifty or so yards to the swim getting absolutely soaked in the process, the bivvy went up first to try my best to keep everything dry and out of the elements, and I literally sat inside the sanctuary of my tempest for over an hour before I could do anything the weather was so bad I remember thinking this is not fun!

Eventually there was a gap in the rain, and I seized on the moment quickly dispatching two of my three rods into position, with my new citrus pop ups, over you guessed it 12 of my finest fishmeal boilies, then all of a sudden a big gust came out of nowhere ripping my bivvy out the ground, and blown hard and wedged in between a bush and a tree 10 yards behind the swim! I looked in horror as I grappled the bivvy down from the tree, to the laughter of people oppo-



Chunk Manor.

site, and spent the next five minute looking for the pegs that got thrown around, I managed to peg it down again, using bank sticks, even distance sticks banged in at angles, the wind was that strong, finally I got the third rod out, and retired back to the bivvy feeling defeated and swearing for fun about the weather and conditions and why did I bother!

Literally almost immediately after fishing my bivvy issues, my left hand rod which hadn't even been out anywhere near an hour, this erupted into life down the left hand margin where I saw the fish show earlier, I managed to pump the fish out of the danger area of the reeds relatively easy, which was my main concern initially, then within a few rod lengths it was plodding deep, and staying there, my efforts to lift the fish from the bottom was in vain, I knew it was a good fish then, my friend Dave came around to help as he saw I had a fish on, as soon as the fish surfaced we could see it was her, another old friend "Stella"

"Busy down here Dave "I said

"Start of the new season always going to be".

"Do what? I thought the ticket ran

out in a few days".

"Oh nooooo" (a bit more graphic).

We weighed her and she bounced around 44lb like I mentioned I previously had her years and years ago, but weight was irrelevant as she such an iconic fish, I remember seeing her grace the cover of Carp Talk a few times all of them moons ago.

But rocking up and having Stella in an afternoon when my ticket had expired was taking the mickey!

I immediately phoned the head bailiff who did in fact confirm that the ticket had expired.

So, I literally packed up immediately, and got somebody to let me out the gate, knowing I'd temporarily shattered the dreams of 40 members by unknowingly poaching the queen of the lake!!

I phoned the head bailiff on the way home apologising for what happened and to explain to Steve the owner that it was in fact a genuine mistake. Oooops

The manor holds some fond memories for me, not just the fish that are immense, I've met some great friends also on the lake from the seasons years ago I had fished it. ■



Citrus pop-ups.

Carpy Humour



Oak Lakes Fisheries

www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk



Oak Lakes Catch Report Special!



15lbs 8oz ghost common for guess who!



16lbs common for Gary Pearman Cracking looking carp Nice one.



Lovely 24lbs mirror caught on the day ticket lake.



This happy angler on the day ticket lake sent us this photo of his new PB at 29lbs. Well done, nice catch.



Oak Lakes member Gary Pearman is in his own words buzzing after catching Jensens Common, a bit down on weight after spawning at 34lbs 14oz.



24lb 4oz grassie for Gary AM Baits Pearman. Nice fish.



A weekend catch, what a cracking carp weighing in at 23lbs. Nice one.



Nice 22lbs 8oz carp from the day ticket lake.



Frank Chappell and nephew Dan having action on the Day Ticket Lake).



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.



26lbs 10oz common for Richard Draycott aka Buddha. Stunning looking fish.



Craig Barnaby Gentry had this cracking 22lbs common on the day ticket lake. Well done Barney.



30lbs 7oz mirror carp for Gary Pearman on his old faithful AM Baits caviar and black pepper. Nice fish.



Gary Pearman has had a cracking few days with over 30's being a regular feature with this latest catch a 35 lbs 2 oz mirror.jpg



Gary Pearman still smashing it!



Gary Pearman with his caviar and black pepper from A M Baits lands another cracker this time smaller at 18 lbs 4 oz.



Some nice catches on the day ticket lake for Greg Chappell with his son Frank and nephew Dan with a bit of professional photobombing.



He might be soaking wet but Mark is very happy to land this 20lbs common.



Caught again by Gary Pearman using A M Baits this grass carp at 24lbs 10oz. Must be nice to be retired!



Gary Pearman and AM Bait Services strike lucky again landing this stunner at 17lbs on the nose. Poor Gary the catch disturbed his dinner.



Gary Pearman and AM Bait Services successfully pair up again to land this 20lbs linear mirror.



Richard Draycott has caught this stunning mirror weighing 31lbs 6 oz. This is top angling at a top fishery.



Richard Draycott has landed another stunning common at 24lbs 10oz. Great catch Buddha.

OAK LAKES FISHERIES SOUTHMINSTER



Mid-double mirror fishing the bay swim. A happy Levi



Craig the carpet cleaner fishing swim 2 on day ticket lake has today caught the carrot at 13 lbs 10 oz. Photo thanks to Gary Pearman who was walking by.



Richard Draycott caught the long common last night at 31lbs 8oz. Nice one Buddha.

OAK LAKES FISHERIES SOUTHMINSTER



George Waterhouse caught 15 carp in a 48 hour session, great result .



This happy young angler has a new PB after landing this cracker at 17lbs 8oz. Well done. Photo courtesy of his proud Dad.



George Waterhouse who fished the day ticket lake at the weekend.



Good start to the session 32lbs 8oz mirror for Greg Chappell in the Blackberries swim on Pipe lake.



Gary Pearman said another gnarly old warrier and an old friend using his old faithful AM Bait Services.



Absolute cracker for Simon Shardlow weighing 33 lbs 6 oz. So not just Gary catching the lumps! Plenty of 30's coming out. Nice angling.



19lbs 14oz common with a taste for black pepper and caviar landed by Gary Pearman. Time you went back to work Gary.



Absolute stunners being caught lately the latest reported to us being this 28lbs 12oz mirror caught by Gary Pearman and his faithful AM Baits.

A Tale of Two Sessions

By Barry Oconnor



Other than fishing in matches on Cottingham's Lake Pepper I hadn't fished a social session on Pepper for a while.

On a whim I decided to pay Cottingham a visit. The idea being perhaps I could catch a late winter thirty. The day soon arrived and I excitedly set off for Kent. On arrival at the lake, I found it wasn't busy and had a choice of three swims. I settled for one of my favourite swims on New Pepper. Although it wasn't busy at the moment, I knew it would be later on. Anyway, I went about the usual business of setting up camp and preparing my rods for the forthcoming session. It's two rods only at Cottingham so it didn't take me long to set them up. It's worth noting at this stage that a minimum of twenty-four inches of tubing must be used and also, it's micro barbed hooks only, no barbless hooks are to be used. With that done it was time to think about hook baits. Being sponsored by Individual Baits or Steamies as they are also known I'd brought a selection of their baits along with me. For those that don't know, Steamies as the word suggests are boilies that are steamed and not boiled. As most cooks or chefs will tell you any food items that are steamed will retain their flavour as opposed to being boiled where they would lose a lot of their flavour. Not thought of it before but makes sense when you think we're trying to attract carp to our baits. Smell plays a big part in our fishing.

My strategy was to fish one rod on TNT (tiger nut and toffee) and the other on a yellow Pineapple and Butyric pop up. Before casting the hook bait to my chosen spot, I

(Top) I use a lot of this.
(Middle) Rocket fuel was used to soak the bags and sticks.
(Bottom) I was using 12mm boilies.



attached a small pva web bag containing 3 or 4 TNT boilies. Sometimes it could be a bag or sometimes a stringer. I use Castaway pva for all my fishing as I believe it's one of the best out there. Of course, you can use any pva your happy with. Except for zigs I never cast a hook bait out without attaching a pva web bag with something in it. Whether it's boilies, pellets, ground bait or hemp to name a few.

On this occasion it was boilies and once I'd made the bags up, I dropped them into a small pot and covered them with TNT booster dip. These

had been soaking for about an hour while I got set up but I will leave them soaking for the duration of the session. I make more bags up as I use them and drop them in the dip. Sometimes I'll have two or three pots with different dips in them with bags soaking in them. Being prepared for the session ahead has always been my forte whether at home or on the bank. The first rod with the TNT on was cast about a rod length from the bank of an island. I then catapulted ten boilies around it. I never use a lot of bait at Cottingham. In my experience loads of bait is not the way forward. Yes, on the odd occasion it might work for someone but it is not the norm. My other rod with the pop up on went mid water between an island and my bank. This too had a pva bag attached to it. Before casting I liberally sprayed it with Pineapple Oil. This stuff has a strong smell and clings to the hook bait and pva bag.

This gives a high attraction to my hook bait, in this case the pop up.

When fishing a new venue, it's always beneficial to use a marker or lead to plumb about. Or if the venue allows it, you can use a bait boat with an echo on it to map the swim out. Once this information is gathered, I usually jot it down for future reference. It can pay dividends on further visits. Because I have fished at Cottingham on Lake Pepper and Lake Christine for many years now I don't need to use a marker (bait boats are now banned) to find my spots. In any given swim on these lakes, I know where I should be casting to. You can never have too much knowledge when it comes to carp fishing.

I settled back to chill out and take in the atmosphere. The weather was cold, overcast with the forecast of rain. The trees were still in their winter browns and it was decidedly cold. As evening approached, I redid the

(Above left) My bags were left to soak in TNT booster liquid.

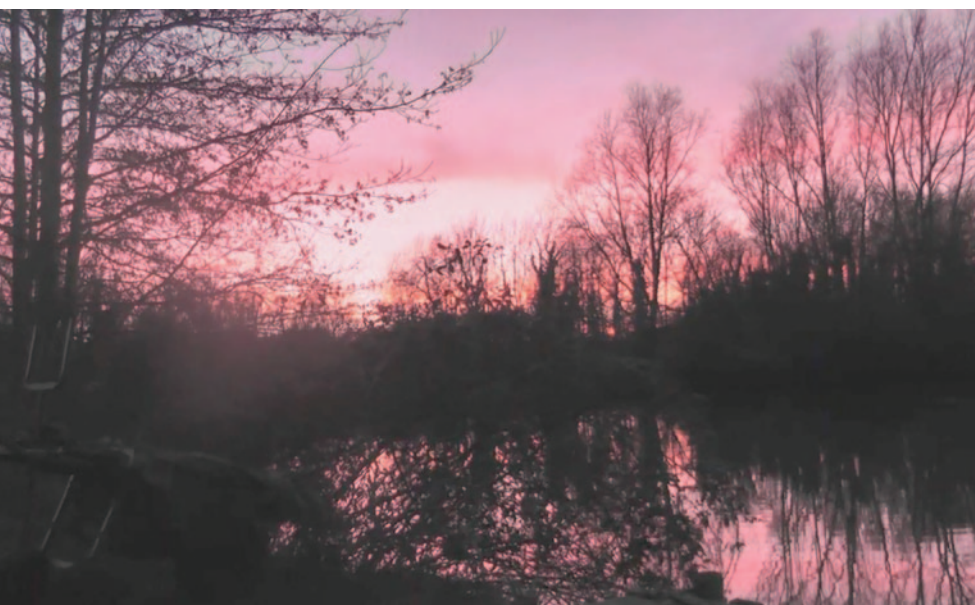
(Above centre) Tubing must be used on Pepper.

(Above right) The pop-up was sprayed with this oil.

(Below left) These hooks are very sharp.

(Below right) Small PVA web bags were attached to the hooks.





rods and refreshed the hook baits. Nothing happened and night time was soon upon me. Other than a couple of liners the night went by without incident. The morning bite time never produced anything either. A rethink was in order so I reeled in. I kept with the TNT on one rod but changed the pop up to a bottom bait. I changed it for a Krill and Bloodworm boillie. Again, I made up some pva web bags containing the Krill and Bloodworm boilies and put them in a pot containing Krill and Bloodworm dip. After a good soaking I put this hook bait and pva bag very close to a point on an island. The TNT rod went back on the previous spot. Both had ten boilies put around them. Again, evening and night came and went without any dramas. It wasn't until first light on the last day that one of my alarms rattled off. Something had taken a fancy to the TNT hook bait and was charging off with it. It gave a good account of itself and after what seemed ages but in reality, was about ten minutes, it succumbed to the net. In the net it looked a decent carp. The scales recorded the weight as 29lb 10oz just a tad short of the thirty I'd hoped to catch. Nevertheless, I was well happy with it. That was it for this session. Never mind there is always next time.

Well next time came a few months later and once again I was on my way to Cottingham. This time Lake Pepper was very busy although I did manage to get straight back in the swim I'd left on my last visit. This was a plus because my rods were still clipped up to the spots I was on last time. The weather was unduly warm but rain was predicted for later. As if we haven't had enough rain. The trees had transformed from winter browns to Spring greens within the few months I'd been away. It didn't take long to get my rods out on the spots. I stayed with the TNT on one rod and I thought I'd try the Pineapple pop again on the other rod. Again, pva bags were attached to the hooks before casting. I was going to fish exactly the same way as I did on the previous session. After all I'd caught

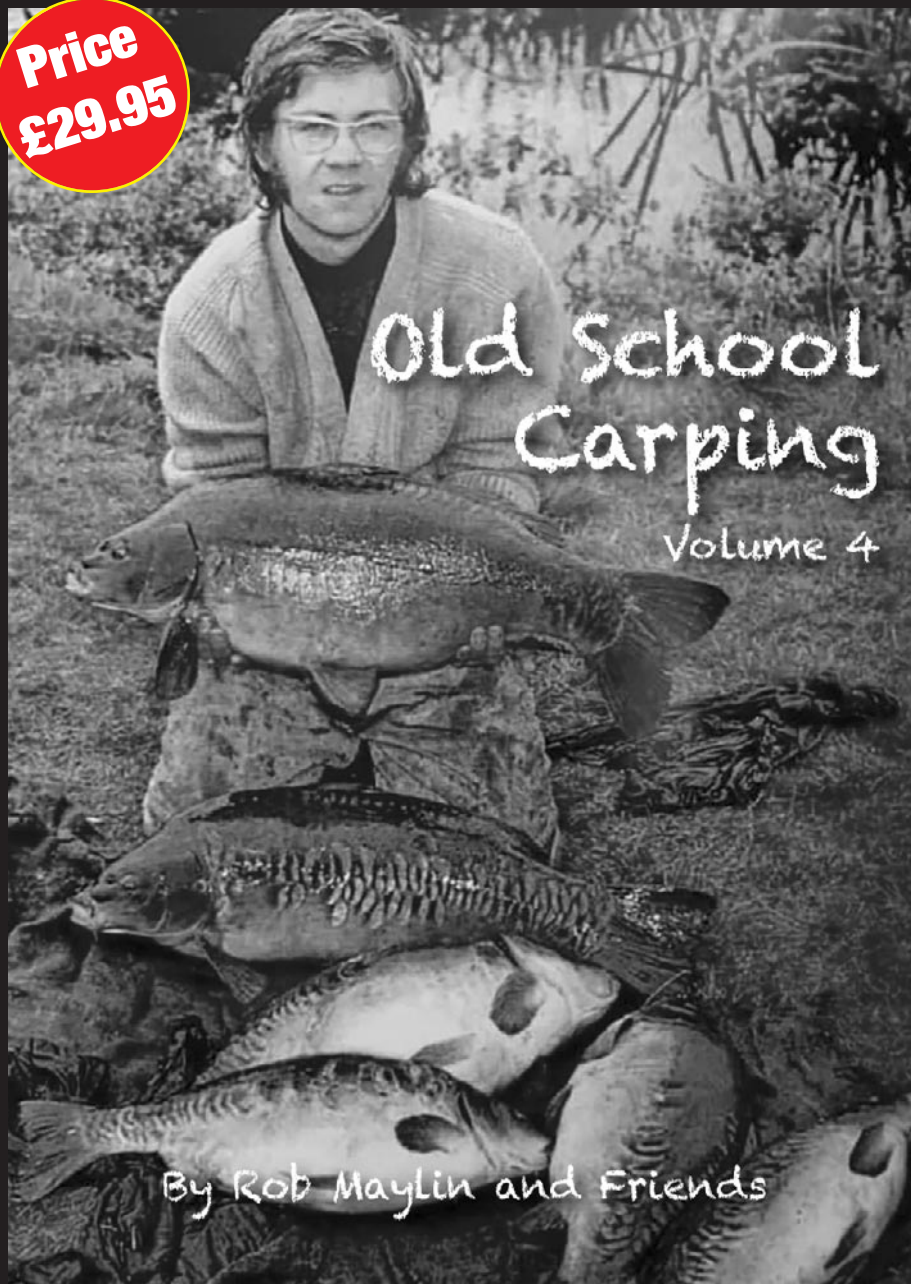
(Top) My traps were set along this island.

(Centre) The swim in winter.

(Bottom) In the evening the sky gave a colourful show.

NEW FOR 2023 OLD SCHOOL CARPING VOLUME 4

Price
£29.95



The 'Old School' series has become one of our most popular sets of books we have ever published. It appears that, in this fast-moving society we find ourselves, more and more anglers are keen to look back at how things used to be, where it all started, before the commercialism that now controls our angling, before the 'sponsored angler', before Facebook, the Internet, or even mobile phones! However, did we survive? It certainly was a very different sort of carp angling to today's high pace, remote control, Snapchattling, wannabe blogger's world we find ourselves in.

Our contributors to volume 4 are the unsung heroes of that bygone age who were catching carp years ago before the hair rig when not everyone could catch them quite so easily.

But the big difference between the line-up for this volume is that these anglers' names may not be known to you. Unlike our previous volumes this one is not all about the famous anglers of this time. Volume 4 is about many of the very successful anglers who did not seek fame by publicising their catches at the time.

Anglers who smashed their venues and the record books but kept quiet until

now. So, let's take a look at what Volume 4 has to offer, and why I consider it the best yet. Here is a brief synopsis of volume 4's line up and what their chapters are about. A Brief Moment in Time by Kevin Grozier, My Early Carp Life by Anthony Rogers, A Tale of Two Twenties by Dave Miller, Back to the Old Days by William Lovett, Blackroot Pool by Brian Ingram, The Old School Scrapbook, The Seventies by Christopher Davis, Yateley North Lake June 1985 by Nick Peat, Early Carping Memories of Broadwater by Phil Martyn, The Tale of a Twenty Pounder (My first) by Steven Hall, Looking Back – Old School by Steve Fisher, Early Seventies Carping by Gerry Giles, My Introduction to Carp Fishing by Lee Fisher, Billingsgate in Focus by Kris Ford, Old Skool Carping by Paul Tidiman, 'Billy' the Mirror, Church Pool, Patshull by Tim Thornton and My First Doubles by Stewart Crowther.

A fantastic, 'one off' collection of tales from a bygone age from many of the most successful but most secretive anglers of the good old days.

Order your copy now, only 500 copies produced, so be quick!

Available Here - <http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk/buy-books.html>

Exclusive A Tale of Two Sessions



one on that occasion so it seemed daft not to. I'd not seen anyone to find out how Pepper was fishing. Sometimes Pepper can be prolific and on other times it can be hard going. Well, I'm here and I'm going to make the most of it come what may.

My end tackle which I haven't spoken about yet consisted of a Deception Tackle size four D-X Curve hooks tied to five inches of Deception hook link. Shrink tube was placed over the eye of the hook and steamed to form an angle. A small piece of silicon tubing was placed on the shank of the hook to trap the hair. I do this almost every time unless fishing conditions predict otherwise. The rest of my set up consists of Deception lead clips and tubing and finished off with 3oz square SM Leads. SM Leads are brilliant. If you have trouble with the coating coming off your leads then change to SM it doesn't happen with them. I always use square leads on small venues where long range casting isn't needed. When I catch a carp or reel in, I inspect the hook point for any damage. If the point has become blunt for any reason, I sharpen it. If the damage is too great, I replace the hook. It's always a good idea to get in to the habit of checking your hooks for sharpness. You don't want to lose the fish of a lifetime because you didn't.

The predicted rain made an appearance, in fact it was raining on and off but not in the downpours they had forecast. It was only light rain. Perhaps it would help the fishing situation. I don't know if anyone else had caught. With the greenery coming back on the trees it was difficult to see other anglers. No one had been round for me to ask. The session seemed to be going on the lines of the last one, slow. I once again refreshed the baits in the evening and late morning of the session, sticking to the same hook baits. On the last morning in the early hours just before sunrise I had a couple bleeps which awoke me. I had been getting some liners in the night some of which had me out of my bed chair. Because of this I didn't get too excited about it. The alarm sounded again then stopped and then

(Top) It fought well.
(Centre) In to the net it went.
(Bottom) It's two rods only on Pepper.



29lb 10oz of fighting Mirror.



Reverse side of the 29lb 10oz Mirror.

went off again. I casually got up and went to my rods. The tip on my left rod was bouncing which was causing the single bleeps. I pulled the line tight and lo and behold I could feel something on it. I lifted the rod and pulled into whatever was on the end. All hell broke loose. The rod was nearly wrenched out of my hand. The carp went on very powerful arm aching runs. If I didn't know better, I would have thought it was a cat (There aren't any in any of Cottingham's lakes). It was taking a long time to get it in and I started thinking I might have foul hooked it. Every time I got it near the net off it went again. My arms were aching from the battle that ensued. Gradually I managed to get it to the net and as it kissed the spreader block, I could see it was a lump. I unfolded the net and could see my D-X Curve hook had got him square in the mouth. It was dark when I started playing this carp but it was daylight when I finished. On the unhooking mat it was huge. The hook hold was very good which tells me my rig was working well. I got the scales, weigh sling and tripod ready for weighing it. I hoisted the weigh sling up with the carp in it and hung it on the scales hook. As the scales took the weight the dial whizzed round and settled at 41lb 10oz. What a chunk and on the last morning too, same as on the previous session. My friend Cameron was fishing on Christine so I phoned him and asked if he would come and take some photos for me. Cameron arrived and we set about doing the pics and some filming. With the photographic work done the carp went back none the worse for its ordeal.

That was it for this session. The two sessions had produced a 29.10 and a 41.10 both Mirrors. I was well pleased with what I'd caught and can't wait until I can get back.

If you would like to fish on Pepper all the bookings are done online. Just go to www.cottinghamlakes.co.uk and you can book a session. Good luck who knows I might even see you there. ■

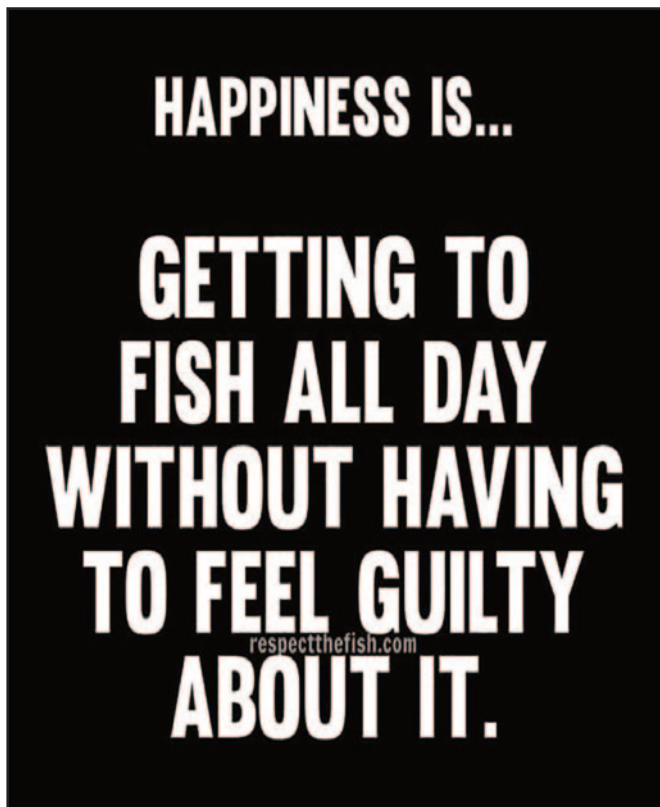
(Top) Pop-ups work well on Pepper.
(Centre) The TNT has a nice smell to it.
(Bottom) The coating doesn't come off these SM leads.






What a beaut. 41lb 10oz.

Carpy Humour



15 BEST TIMES TO GO FISHING

1. WHEN YOU NEED TO CHILL OUT.
2. WHEN YOU NEED SOME EXCITEMENT.
3. WHEN YOU WANT TO BE ALONE.
4. WHEN YOU WANT TO HANG OUT.
5. WHEN YOU NEED A LITTLE FRESH AIR.
6. WHEN YOU NEED A LITTLE EXERCISE.
7. WHEN YOU WANT TO RELAX.
8. WHEN YOU WANT TO BE CHALLENGED.
9. WHEN YOU WANT TO CONNECT WITH NATURE.
10. WHEN YOU WANT TO CONQUER NATURE.
11. WHEN YOU HAVE THE DAY OFF WORK.
12. WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE THE DAY OFF WORK.
13. WHEN YOU'RE A KID. 
14. WHEN YOU CAN TAKE YOUR KIDS.
15. ANYTIME THE FISH ARE BITING.

Revenge

By Elliott Gray

After previous challenging trips to Reading's Junction 12, Elliott returned to make amends, where all was forgotten when he netted this classic J12 mirror. Big apple slice scales and chocolate brown, it was the sort of carp he wanted.

Taken from right in the edge, over just a small offering of bait, enough to get a bite, Elliott used his favoured rig, incorporating a size 4 Wide Gape X, with a long shrink tube kicker line-aligner style and a no.4 split shot positioned on the break of the N-Trap coating, not only anchoring the rig on the bottom, but also helping quickly turn the hook into place.

Keeping mobile, looking for opportunities in the edge and fishing for a bite at a time working well, classic summer tactics. ■





Exclusive

Summerevenings

Written by Levi Rees

The longer days and warmer water only signal one thing for me and that's floater fishing before work (pre 7AM) and after work (after 4 pm) it's always a struggle because energy is low after a real hard day's graft in the sun but I know pushing that little bit harder will reap the rewards .

I love my floater fishing because I don't need a lot of time , time for me is hard to come by as I lead a busy life but with floater fishing you only need an hour or so , sometimes all you need is ten minutes in the right spot , I've had bites in the past after finding fish as quick as five minutes after casting out .

I tend to travel as light as possible so everything I need tackle wise in a bucket so normally that's tackle,bait,mozzi spray and scales. I

(Right) Gardner surface tackle I use.
(Below) Surface caught common.





Linear off the top.



The fully.

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.

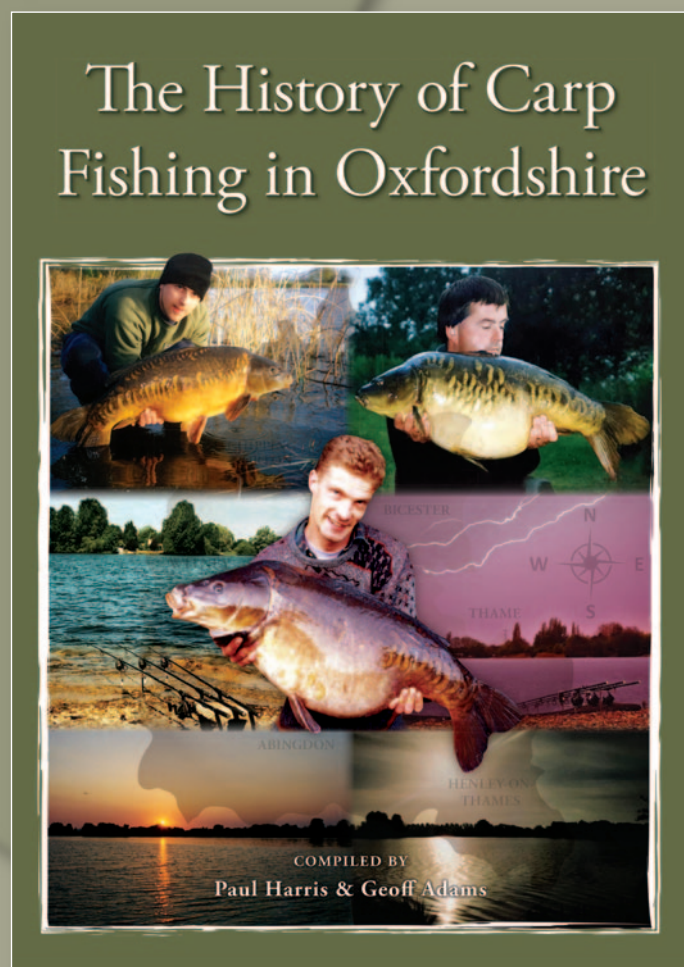
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing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



CARD: 07768 731425

PAYPAL: www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk

AVAILABLE THIS AUTUMN

like to carry my gear with me when looking for the fish because in the summer the carp are very mobile so if you find them and have to run back to the car by the time you've come back they would of done the off, Like I've found out the hard way !.If the opportunity is there you need to take it especially when you're sight fishing for target fish . One rod and net in the mat is all you need along with a good catapult and a bait caddy , the bait caddy comes into its own floater fishing when you're constant putting bait out . The caddy I use can be divided into two so it's really handy I can use two different sized mixers or I could use one side for mixers and the other for some small bits of tackle like hook links and hooks . In my bucket I carry two different kinds of mixers so of late I've been using Krill floaters along with Tesco's own mixers I find the mix of what I'm feeding offers the carp a better selection of something they'd want , a bit of a buffet feeding sce-



Rigged up.

nario. I oil these up with salmon oil and some squid smart like from main-line to help when the wind gets up and with some additional attraction .

I've had my best success on quick

sessions where I've finished work and nipped over the lake for a look , finding them and then having such a good chance I couldn't resist fishing for them . Its always a good idea to



Dark mirror off the top.

keep the floater gear in the car during the warmer months, I tend to keep it in the car from April onwards.

I find a lot of articles where anglers say you need to feed and get them confident before fishing for them but sometimes it can be the wrong way to go. I've found from watching the fish you can assess weather or not you can nick a quick bite or you'll have to sit it out and feed for confident bites. The quicker bites have always been from the ones I've found feed with serious gusto normally loners.

One fish I caught not long ago was a lovely linear which was a loner and was feeding hard on its own so I opted to cast out early and it took the hook bait straight away. I struggled on the hook set with overhanging trees above me and all over hanging willows shooting out into the lake, as soon as it surged off into safety I had to get in the lake to land the fish but

on netting I nudged the fish gently stirring it up into a n even more frantic battle over shallow water. Even when sorting the fish out on the mat I'd keep trying to get mixers out so the chance doesn't die a death. After the stills I got the rod straight back out and went on to catch another, same scenario again when I had to get into the lake to land the fish. A long common with some battle scars a real character and most probably an older resident of the lake. The fight with this fish was hard and dragged out, on light gear and small hooks you can't rush these things so patience is key. With the fight being so explosive and prolonged it spooked the other feeding fish from the area and killing the situation completely. But for a couple of hours after work you can't fault the result.

A part of my floater fishing gear is my moszi spray, there's nothing worse than getting the fish feeding

and then you start getting mullered by the mozzis and midges taking your concentration away from the task in hand and ruining your evening. I tried all the ones you could buy and they never had the effect I wanted so after my pal mentioned that he had bought some neat citronella I jumped on the chance to get some too, it was 100% pure citronella liquid and strong stuff too! I mixed this with water and put it into a spray bottle and I can honestly say its better than what's on the shelves, the effect it has is great and it keeps my head in the game on those summer evenings where they are eating you alive.

My tackle has evolved over the seasons as tackle has evolved, I used to hair rig my floaters but since I've started using a zig screw I find I get more bites purely because I can change the colour of my hook bait quickly adapting to the situation and finding out what they want. I've



The big common.



found Gardner's zig link is a very good hook link either in the 10lb or 12lb along with their incisor hooks in size 8,10 or 12s.

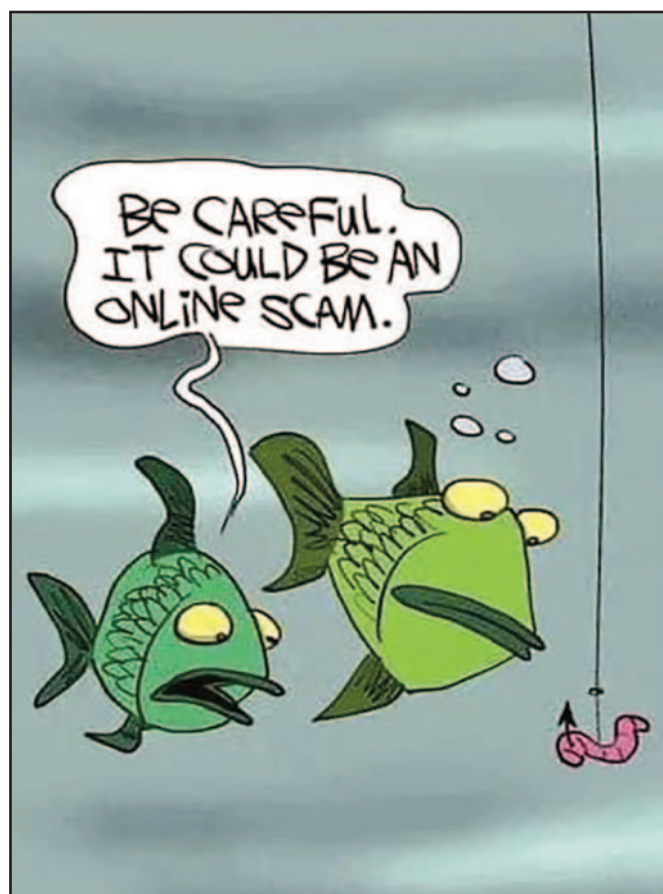
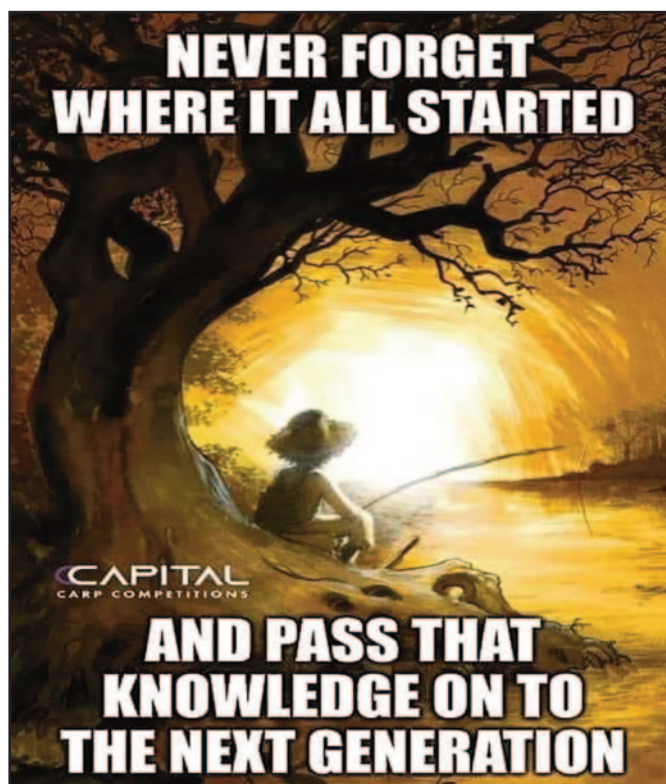
Over the years I haven't seen many anglers fishing on the top and when asking people they turn their nose up to the chance . I always think the amount of bonus fish a season I end up catching from floater fishing as to

the ones I wouldn't of caught if I never bothered . If you haven't done it you need to try it because it's going to get you those extra bites .As the seasons go on I only get more fixated on the floater fishing and I think it'll only get worse as time goes on. ■

(Above) Mainline squidsmart liquid.
(Right) Mainline salmon oil.



Carpy Humour





**Fine quality fishing tackle
since 1857**

www.reubenheaton.com

For more on Reuben Heaton, Sportscale & RH brands
call 01455 293000 or email info@reubenheaton.com

Join Reuben Heaton on Facebook for all our latest news

REUBENHEATON



EAGLE CLAW
TROKAR



**Exclusive distributors for eagle claw
brands in the UK and Ireland**

Exclusive

Chasing The Big Girl

By Danny Huskinson



Where do I start? I still don't think it has sunk in what an amazing week I had. It has most definitely been my best weeks fishing in France so far, I have been chasing that big 60!!

For around 6 years now, I've been going out to France two to three times a year and on multiple occasions catching plenty of 40's and 50's so this time again my goal was to try for that. I knew there was a good chance of that as where I was going has around 10x 60lb fish and 3x 70lb fish.

Myself and 11 others arrived at the lake around 12pm, we all had a good walk round and it didn't take long to spot a few carp up in the shallow end of the lake which ranged from about 9ft deep to 2.5 ft in the shallow end. Before arriving I had in my head that the fish were going to be close to spawning and that it was very risky time to be going to France. With this in mind, I decided I would probably try and get up in the shallow end as this is where they would be coming to spawn.



Then it came to the worst part for me on a group trip - the draw! I was pretty gutted when I pulled out number 11 out of 12 and was pretty adamant that my swim was going to go pretty soon. However, when it

finally came around to me choosing that swim was still available so I was buzzing and couldn't wait to get there and set up. The only downside to my choice of swim was that it's out of the way of any other swim so I did





spend most my week by myself and not being able to have as much of a social with the lads.

Once I was all set up, I found my spots I was happy with and I decided to use a very small amount of bait,

only putting a handful of mainline 15mm link boilies and half a hand full of crushed boilie over each rod and just fished a trimmed down link waffer over the top. We all know that every angler before going to a new lake tries to do as much research about the lake as possible and all I could find on this and what even the owner advised was to use very small hooks. Size 8 not my first choice of hook size so I was a bit nervous using such a small hook.

As the light started to drift away on the first evening, I heard a big crash quite far away down in the little bay I was in then a few moments later the same again and it sounded like a very good fish so I had to reel one of my rods in quick and put one over in that direction. It turned out to be around 28 wraps where this fish was showing but once the rod was out on that spot it didn't take long, about 20 minutes and the rod was off!!

From the moment I picked the rod up I knew this was a decent fish it was just holding the bottom and just plodding, something we all know the big fish do! It gave me a very good fight and didn't want to give up too easily but after about 10-15 minutes it was ready to net. As its head come up you could see it was a very good fish but as I went to slip the net under-





Coole Acres Fishery

Premier Cheshire Day Ticket Complex

Coole Lane • Nantwich • Cheshire

CW5 8AY



We have three well stocked lakes catering for anglers of all abilities and preference. Lodge pool, Spanner lake and our specimen lake, Fox, offer something for everyone.

- Carp up to 32lb and Catfish to 49lb 12oz.
- Café serving hot and cold food.
- Showers available for overnights.
- Designated car park for anglers located directly between lakes.
- Toilet block with male/female/disabled toilets at the car park.
- Disabled pegs at two coarse lakes and 12 bark chipped pegs available for overnighting at the specimen lake.



Visit us on Facebook

www.cooleacresfishery.co.uk

07899 735052

cooleacresfishery1@gmail.com







neath the hook pulled I was gutted. I have never actually felt that deflated over losing a fish before, it really took it out of me.

After a while I picked myself up and got the rod back out on the spot and was woken around 2am by the same rod with fishing 28wraps with a fluoro carbon line. There was quite a bit of stretch in the line so the bites were only single beeps and the bobbing would just raise to the top so I lifted the rod and I was in again, this time we managed to slip the net under. I was super chuffed when I looked in the net to see what was a 45lb linear. The next morning I managed another two bites from one of my other spots but I ended up losing both of these again to hook pull. Adamant it was because of the small hooks, I decided to change all my hooks over to a size 4 which gave me a bit more confidence.

Over the next 4 days the bites just kept coming and no more hook pulls. My rig was a very simple rig but it was working. It was made up with 8 inches of Korda 20lb soft N trap and a size 4 Choddy with a medium kicker.





Over the next few days I ended up landing 5x fish to 40lb 4x fish to 30lb 6x fish to 20lb and 1x fish to 17lb. I was blown away really but that first fish I lost was in the back of my mind all week.

On our last day, I reeled the rods in around 10am and put about 50 boilies spread over the 3 rods then went for a shower and thought I would go round and see everyone. I kept my rods out the water for a good few hours after chatting with all the lads saying what a mega week I've had; I almost felt a bit ungrateful as all I kept saying to them was I'm just a bit gutted another year is going to pass without having a magic 60!! As with other things going on this year, I was only going to be getting one French trip in but as we all kept saying there's always a next time!

After having my rods out the water for about 4 hours I thought I would go back and put them out again for the last evening. I got them all back out perfectly and decided to go for a little lie down on the bed but within 15 minutes my middle rod was off. When I picked the rod up, I instantly knew this was another very good fish like





FISHING RESORT



[https://naxiresa.inaxel.com/etape1-criteres.php?
compte=iktus&lang=2](https://naxiresa.inaxel.com/etape1-criteres.php?compte=iktus&lang=2)



the first one I lost. With no messing around, I slipped my waders on and got into the lake to minimise any chance of losing this one. After about a 10-minute battle it seemed like it was ready, it's head came up and oh my days this thing was massive!!

With nerves from losing the first big one and from just seeing this was massive I called over to a friend of mine across the lake, Shaun nickname (the sheep), that I needed his help. I couldn't lose another big fish! After seeing that my legs were like jelly Shaun got in his waders and come in the water with me. This I no exaggeration when I say the fight carried on for at least 30min with it almost seeming like it was ready multiple times but it had different ideas!! In the years I have been fishing I have never heard of a fish stopping mid fight and just sitting on the bottom and not moving, it was a very strange thing to witness. It just used its weight and sat there not moving, 3 times it done this then went off again for another few minutes which felt like a lifetime.

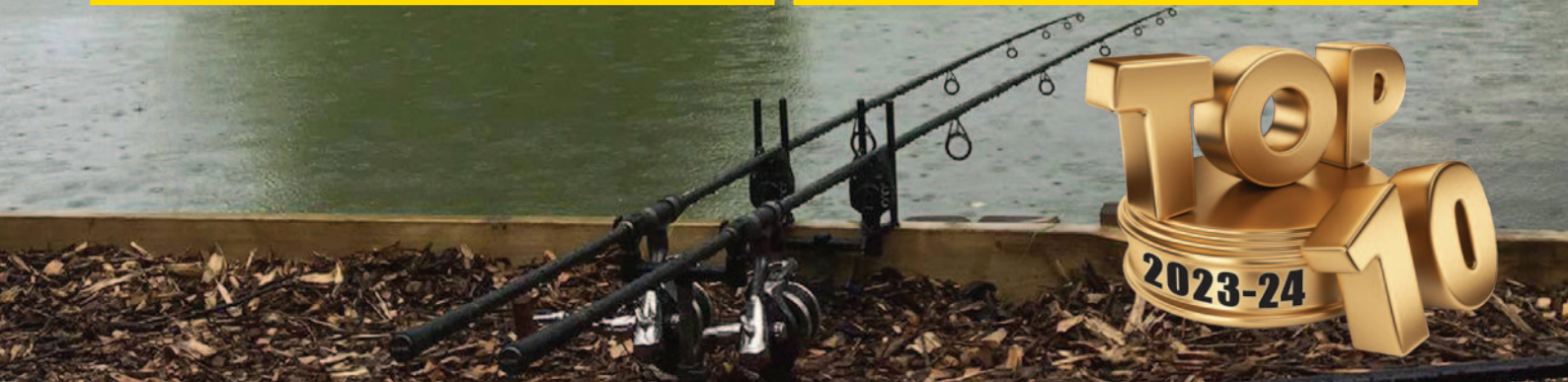
Would you believe It, me and Shaun are out in the lake and all of a sudden we can hear my other rod screaming





BIG CARP TOP TEN

Carp Fisheries



Web: cottingtonlakes.co.uk
Email: cottingtonlakes@outlook.com
Tel: 01304 380691



The Big Girl at 69lb 8oz.



The Big Girl at 69lb 8oz.



off, I have now had a double take - absolute carnage! Shaun had got the other rod and now we are both out in the lake playing fish. His one was ready quite quickly but as we were about to net it, the hook pulled. In a way it was probably a good thing as we could now continue to concentrate on the big one I had.

In the end we managed to slip the net under what I can only describe as a monster! It barely fitted in the net, we both took a look over the cord and straight away knew I had bloody done it I have finally had the 60lber !!!!!!! I was screaming and shouting like a little kid.

Most of the lads knew it was something special and reeled in to come round and share this moment with me. We began to unhook the fish and get it moved into the weigh sling, it barely fit and we were blown away how long it was.

We got it onto the scales and I just couldn't believe it, a 69lb8oz common I had done it !!!! What a way to finish an amazing week, the boys decided a PB bucket wasn't enough so they all chucked me in the lake fully clothed but I couldn't care I was over the moon!! ■



Harris

By Paul Hessletine

Here she is Harris at 60lb 14oz as many will know I've been after this fish from Rosemere! "It's the reason I first joined" Well when I finally seen her in my net I really was overwhelmed, elated, the emotion was off the scale.

This capture also meant that I'd now completed the full set in the UK up to my current PB Marshalls at 70lb 8oz never in a million years did I think this possible when I switched over to the carp fishing scene in 2009! I caught her on my terms and how I wanted to catch her, also when I wanted to catch her as well.

The Maxi Nut from Key Bait Solutions is a proven big fish bait and





that's what nailed her in the end. Cold water tactics not feeding loads of whole baits but feeding boilie crumb/matching pellets fishing a 12mm barrel wafer over the top. I'm a big fan of using small baits all throughout the year I just think them bigger more weary carp pick the

small bits up with more confidence as they are less likely to have a hook in them 'Logical Thinking' does go a long way!

You don't need to spend thousands on rods and reels in actual fact I've been using the Exodus Pro 12ft Rod's coupled with the ACR12000 Reels for

just over a year now and they really are a good quality product that's built for the angler that puts them through their paces.

Both are classed as budget items as well but it's hard to believe just how cheap they are especially on today's market! ■



Etched in Time

By Leigh Leavesley

It was a Tuesday morning in July as I sat on the banks overlooking a big windswept Gravel Pit. As I'm sat in the comfort of my bivi with a hot mug of tea in hand, looking out across this vast sheet of water, waves lapping against the front of the swim, i listened to the pitter-patter of rain and decided to tell the tale of my spring campaign on a new water. My ticket began in March of this year. Swarkestone gravel pit lies in the East Midlands, this was a water that had been on my radar for many years, even more so now that I live in the Midlands so when I was offered a ticket I jumped at the chance.

Swarkestone, located in the Derbyshire countryside is a gravel pit of around 80 acres. I'm not sure when the quarry stopped using the pit but as is often the case it was filled with



The view from Home Alone.



My first Swarkestone carp, the Foster Fish.



The second fish I caught, 30lb.

water, fish were introduced and fishing allowed. A few clubs have held fishing rights throughout the years but the current syndicate took on the lease in 2014. They began developing the pit and started to introduce carp annually, some of these stocked fish are now reaching weights of up to 40lbs+.

The gravel pit boasts all you'd ever want; masses of crystal clear open water, bars, sunken islands, deep areas, back bays, snags, islands, shallows and even a sunken barge. A carp anglers paradise with its tree lined banks and abundance of wildlife, truly a water etched in time. It's really hard to explain, I've seen pictures but until you finally walk around this mighty pit it's hard to understand how special this place is. The work that has gone into developing the syndicate is an astonishing achievement. All swims have been rejuvenated and it has been fully otter fenced, ensuring the security of anglers and fish alike. Alongside this they've also had a stone track laid so you can drive around the entire pit and park behind every swim. This makes moving swims a joy rather than the mighty

task it normally is on a gravel pit of this size. There are around 250 to 300 carp in this Gravel Pit so it's not particularly highly stocked for 80 acres however that is plenty to go at, meaning I was going to have to work for every fish. The fish are a mix of big dark commons, scaly mirrors, a hand-

ful of old original leathery mirrors and a few commons. Sizes ranging from small stockies to mid 40s, I couldn't wait to get started! Let the journey begin!

It was not until April 4th I had my first visit, I'd decided to miss March due to weather conditions and trips to



Views from Punishers point.

other waters that were already arranged. Excited about my first trip, I'd set my alarm for 4am to miss the morning traffic and be there for first light. Waking well before my alarm as is the norm, I jumped in the shower, freshened up and was out the door. The journey went in a flash as so many thoughts were running through my mind. Approaching the final stretch I travelled across the historic swarkestone bridge. I arrived at the gate and fumbled as I put the code into the combination lock, eager to finally lay eyes on the water I had been thinking so much about.

The first day was spent exploring and searching for signs of fish. After several hours of searching to no avail, I decided to settle in the swim known as 'home alone' as it's known to have good form. To cut a long story short this first session went by in the blink of an eye with no fish to show. I was expecting that however given it was my first time at the pit.

Moving forward, a week later I was back. I decided to change tactics a little, to learn as much as possible about

the lake and to fish a different swim on each night for my 4 night session. This would mean I could spend as much time as possible mapping out as many swims as I could. It was becoming apparent that at this time the fish were not giving themselves away and were difficult to locate. In all honesty I think they had other things on their mind and this session ended the same as the first, as a blank, but the knowledge gained would definitely hold me in good stead for the future.

The next session I'd finally managed to locate some fish in a swim known as muddy point. Confidence was high as I knew I was getting closer to that first bite. The first night came and went, I listened to fish crashing in the distance as I struggled to fall asleep. I soon awoke to the dawn chorus. I thought my chance had come and gone but about mid morning my left hand rod burst into life with the sound of a one toner. As I picked up the rod I couldn't believe how far the fish had already travelled. I applied pressure and we struggled

for a time, unfortunately the fish gained sanctuary in the shelter of the trees overhanging the Island. After a stalemate of about 20 minutes, something finally gave and the fish bow waved out into open water. As the fish finally began to approach the net, the line went slack and my heart sank. I knew the hook had pulled. Slumped at the front of the swim with my head in my hands I was gutted that I'd lost my first swarkestone carp. Losing fish is never easy but when it's the first on new water, especially a tricky pit like this, I knew it would take a while to get over. After the commotion of that battle the fish seemed to move out of the area. I decided to spend my last night remaining in the swim, in the hope they would return but unfortunately this did not happen. On returning home after that trip I couldn't wait to be back to even the score as I was starting to feel more confident in my approach, knowing that it was having the right effect. When starting new waters it's always a bit of trial and error and adapting to find what works



Mid 30 big black common.

and I was starting to see my efforts rewarded.

As I was planning my next trip my previous suspicions were confirmed and the fish had decided to commence their annual ritual of spawning and the pit was closed for a period of time. Eventually the pit reopened, I left it a week or so due to the extra pressure the fish would be under as anglers returned after the closure. Stepping foot back on the pit after all this time, it was like a whole new water now that spring was in full swing and colours had changed from browns to greens. It seemed like a whole new world and locating fish had become a lot easier as they seemed happy to show themselves. I managed to locate some fish in the swim I'd fished in my very first session, home alone and decided that was a good place to start. Rushing to set up, I got my rods out as quietly as I could so as not to spook the fish. The first night came and went without so much as a beep. Fish seemed to have backed off me a little so I decided to put out a big bed of bait and wait. The next couple of nights were just as quiet as the first but on the final morning as I began to pack up, my right hand rod screamed into life. From the second I picked the rod up I knew this felt like a decent fish, slow, heavy plodding. Every time I gained a bit of line, it took some back. This took a bit of time until eventually the fish began to tire. As it inched toward the net I was praying it didn't come off. This time however, luck was on my side and I slipped the net under a big, dark, scaly mirror. The relief I felt landing this fish after losing the first one, I was on such a high, the buzz from the first fish from a new water is one you will always remember. Staring down into the net it was a fish I recognised from pictures and one of my targets, known as The foster fish. I couldn't quite believe it, what a feeling, what a moment. On the scales this incredible mirror went 35lb 4oz, well down in weight through spawning but weight is irrelevant. I was elated to be up and running especially with such a special fish. The drive home was much different than the last.

It was not long before I had made plans to return, buzzing to get back after a quick trip to collect some more bait. A few days later I was back, after a few laps it was obvious the fish



Boats as seen from Punishers Point.

were still in the same area, out in front of home alone but unfortunately there was an angler already there so I decided to set up opposite in muddy point. After getting all my gear sorted I was just about to get my first rod out, when I noticed the angler in home alone was packing up. A quick decision had to be made, stay or pack everything up and move. It took me about three seconds to make the decision, gear back in the car by now it was midday and red hot. What a mission that move was! I was sweating and exhausted but I knew I had to move, it could of been so easy to stay where I was but effort equals reward.

I was soon set up, rods out and slumped in my chair but happy knowing I was on the fish. After a quiet afternoon I decided an early night was in order after the morning's efforts, I was soon in the land of nod. The next thing I knew it was morning, opening my eyes to the first rays of day light shining through the trees, when all of a sudden my right hand rod screamed off. Quickly rushing to get out of my sleeping bag, I was soon bent into what was a torpedo of a carp, stripping line off the reel at will. What a fight, run after endless run, my arm was burning by the time it gave up but finally my second fish was in



Another of the view from home alone.



The Ghosty common caught on my last session.



A 32lb fish – part of my nine fish hit.

the net! A long lean thirty pound male, a solid fighting machine. After a few pictures he soon was slipped back into his watery home. The rest of that session came and went, landing a small stocky and unfortunately losing one. This trip had drawn to a close. On returning home, I knew I had time for one more session before I would be having a short break to go on a family holiday.

So I planned this session around a new weather front. There was a big south westerly coming in, mega low pressure, perfect! I was pushing it a bit close but a four day session was planned from the Sunday to Thursday as I was due to go on holiday on the Friday. Sunday soon came around and I was heading down the motorway. Arriving, I could see there were only a couple of anglers on, giving me so many options. I knew the day before the fish had turned up on the new wind and a few had been out. With this in mind I decided on a swim that covered a lot of water but not right on the end of the wind as I thought the fish may have backed off a bit due to angling pressure.

Before committing to the swim

known as punishers point, I stood there for a while contemplating if I should stay here or get on the end of the wind, when suddenly a fish boshed out directly in front of me. That definitely helped with my decision, getting the rods out the car, I soon had my marker rod in hand and managed to find a few spots. Pretty quickly I had my rods and rigs on spots I was happy with. Finally fishing and on fish, as evening approached I was confident! Tucked up in bed and fast asleep, the night quickly passed.

Just as I was opening my eyes to the dawn chorus there was a single beep on my left hand rod. Sitting bolt upright there was another, once my shoes were on I wandered to my rod in the half light of dawn, still half asleep. As I got to my rod I stood watching the hobbin. Suddenly the spool was spinning, alarm screaming and I was into my first fish of the session. After a spirited fight and a few hairy moments with the line grating on the marginal shelf, a dumpy 20lbs mirror lay at the bottom of my net. A few quick snaps were taken, as I was slipping the fish back into the water,

suddenly another rod burst into life. As I picked up the rod and bent into the fish, instantly I could tell this was a completely different fight. Knowing I was attached to a big carp the nerves kicked in. This fish did not want to give up, a typical big fish fight. As I gained a bit of line it fought back, encountering a few weed beds along the way.

But luckily things went my way and it was soon in the folds of my net. I peered in, moving the weed out of the way I could see a big, dark common laying there beat. This mid 30lbs common was one of my many targets and things were definitely starting to come together a lot quicker than I'd expected. I would've been happy with this but what happened over the next few days was totally unexpected. Landing another 7 fish, to 34lbs which included a rare visitor to the bank, known as the ghosty Common. What an unbelievable start to my campaign on swarkestone gravel pit! But for now, it's time for a holiday. I will soon be back and can't wait to see what the rest of the season has in store for me. Tight lines, until next time. ■



One of the nine fish from my most recent trip.

LIMITED EDITION • SIGNED AND NUMBERED

Legendary Carp Paintings



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



www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk

LEVIATHANS AND LUNKERS



A PREVIOUSLY
TRODDEN
BLACKWATER
PATH
GEORGE
LOUGHLIN
WEST STOW
COUNTRY PARK
MARK BAKER
THE MAGIC
WAND
MAGGOTS
LEE KIDD



VAGRANT ANTICS
CHRIS EAGLESTONE
GOOD LOOKING CARP
JON QUINN
THE MYSTERY LAKE
ALAN GALE
THE JOURNEY
ALAN CHOWLES
FARLOWS
DANIEL DANESHI



Free Line THE BIVVY

Rob's Ramblings

FREE LINE MAGAZINE



Editor/Publisher

Rob Maylin

Bountyhunter Publications

44 Herbs End, Cove, Hampshire

GU14 9YD

Telephone 07768 731425

Email: bigcarpmagazine@hotmail.com

Advertising Sales

Rob Maylin

info@freelinemagazine.com

catchreport@freelinemagazine.com

advertising@freelinemagazine.com

www.freelinemagazine.com



Also available this month,

Big Carp Issue 326

Miss it and miss out!

Save The Date!! 9th & 10th September 2023 Mousehole Lakes

@everyone we have conformation from Nash Tackle podcast legend Hassan Khan will be attending the 48hr event at Mousehole Lakes. The dates for this are also now confirmed for 9th & 10th September 2023! Unfortunately, availability for August wasn't possible so we have moved slightly forward!

We are also waiting for the team from Deeper to confirm their attendance with all the fish finding sonar equipment too! We will also have full attendance from Joff Terry and his CarpBasics team! Mega mega event! They will be on hand to assist for the two days! Photography and videography! We also will potentially have the assistants from David Moir for some awesome drone footage of the days too! There's a few more guys we have asked if they are free including Fish with Carl Smith and some more "Celebrity Anglers" but we'll keep you updated as they confirm whether they can or can't attend.

Undoubtedly this is going to be a big event and more details will be released soon with an events poster that we'd love for you all to share across your social media platforms to help spread the word.



Welcome to Reflections Angling



We are a charity that helps children and adults of all abilities and skills learn how to fish and to expand their knowledge whilst fishing. We offer beginners classes for children and adults who haven't fished before and we also offer junior classes for anyone who would like to expand their knowledge. You don't have to worry about equipment as everything is supplied for you, just bring snacks and drinks.

All our classes will be taught by qualified coaches and knowledgeable volunteers who have many years of fishing experience and have gained a fast number of skills and knowledge between them. Our aim is to make this experience available to all so please don't let the cost of living stop you from applying, give us a call and we can chat. Please call Alison or Dave on 07956 043922 if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing you on the bank.

Tackling Minds

ANNOUNCEMENT – RESERVE YOUR TICKET – WE ARE DOWN TO OUR LAST FEW for Tackling Minds' carp fishing social extravaganza. Get ready to cast your lines with Tackling Minds, along with legend carp anglers of the country – Joe Turnbull, Mark Foster, and Hassan Khan. Enjoy an unforgettable experience at the scenic Tar Farm (Lakes 5, 7 and 8 – an extra lake added due to high demand) on the Linear Complex, from 6th to 8th September 2023. You'll have the unique chance to fish shoulder to shoulder with angling legends and gain insights from them, or just sit back and absorb their top-notch advice to boost your fishing success. An incredible opportunity to learn from the pros! Moreover, we've arranged a tantalizing BBQ and breakfast, showcasing prime meat cuts from the best butchers in the country – an event within the event! Plus, beverages are on us! Adding to this, our skilled media crew will be there to capture every second of this event using cutting-edge videography and camera gear. We promise to share images of you with the angling experts, ensuring you cherish this experience for a long time. And there's more! Each participant will be gifted a fantastic goodie bag filled with products from the top tackle and bait brands. The goodie bags alone make the social worth attending. This social aims to unite the Tackling Minds Community and to shed light on the positive effects of fishing on mental health. We aim to promote fishing not merely as a hobby or sport, but as a potent means for individuals to combat mental health challenges. Seize this extraordinary chance! Secure your tickets below <https://buytickets.at/tacklingminds/881995>



Carp Chat Carpy News4

Carp Scene Reviews14

ARTICLES

The Magic Wand Maggots *by Lee Kidd*20

Farlows (Part 3) *by Daniel Daneshi*28

Mystery Lake *by Alan Gale*42

West Stow Country Park *by Mark Baker*44

A Previously Trodden Blackwater Path (Part 1) *by George Loughlin*54

The Journey... *by Alan Chowles*72

Good Looking Carp *by Jon Quinn*88

Vagrant Antics *by Chris Eaglestone*92

Angling Trust launches 'Fishing for Good' 5-year plan

The Angling Trust has launched its vision for fishing and the environment in its five-year strategic plan, Fishing for Good 2023-28.

Through the pillars of campaigning, participation, competitions and supporting grass roots clubs and fisheries, the report outlines how the Angling Trust will play a leading role in achieving key goals that will enrich and benefit fishing including: Increasing recognition for the sport and promoting the joy that fishing brings and its proven benefits for participants and the environment.

Combating pollution, over-predation, abstraction, and other threats to fishing and the environment. Promoting the mental health and wellbeing benefits of angling to the wider community. Improving angling access and creating new opportunities for people to enjoy fishing.

Protecting the legal right to go fishing and challenging recreational and commercial over-exploitation of fish and the environment. Supporting efforts to combat illegal fishing and fish theft. Increasing the diversity of

participants and ensuring our sport is welcoming to all.

Creating opportunities for all to take part in competitions from grass-roots to elite participation. Ensuring good governance and safeguarding, so that everyone can enjoy our sport in a safe environment.

Establishing role models and pathways to participate through coaches, volunteers, and community leaders, both locally and nationally.

Jamie Cook, Angling Trust CEO, said: "Anglers have a unique connection to the environment. Our ability to participate is dependent on access to healthy aquatic environments with strong ecosystems of wildlife.

As a result, anglers have done more for conservation and preservation of the environment than almost any other independent stakeholder.

"Despite this, angling faces threats, as do the environments we depend upon and the fish we dream about.

The community requires a voice on big issues and our collective scale is not reflected in our level of influence as anglers – Fishing for Good seeks to



change that.

"Fishing for Good lays out a plan for angling and the community.

It is designed to provide clarity of the role and priorities of the Angling Trust and how we are focused on delivering against the core pillars which define our pastime and will support growth, representation, and visibility at all levels.

"This is not a journey we are on alone and this plan lays out how, by working together, anglers, clubs, fisheries, coaches, volunteers, partners and investors can collaborate and deliver greater impact.

Ultimately, this is a vision for all within angling, whether it is in salt-water or freshwater, game or coarse, for competition or pleasure.

More information: David Brookes, Communications Manager david.brookes@anglingtrust.net 07496 876996. ■



World famous chalk streams will benefit from expanded Environmental Farmers Group

Thirty-one farmers of the Test and Itchen catchments in Hampshire are set to join the 147 neighbouring farmers already supporting the Environmental Farmers Group (EFG) making 178 farms, covering 81,344 hectares, the largest initiative of its kind.

The EFG was set up to help its members navigate the carbon, phosphate and biodiversity offset market, giving them an opportunity to replace the loss of subsidy by implementing conservation measures on their land to mitigate developments elsewhere.

Simon Packer, director of regional planning consultancy Turley, welcomed the news: "The EFG is a very interesting and encouraging initiative and I'm pleased to hear that the Test and Itchen Group is joining the cooperative.

"There was an increase in nutrient mitigation schemes in the area a couple of years ago, but the credits available are rapidly being consumed and I'm not convinced there is sufficient alternative capacity coming through.

I can also see strong evidence of increased demand for off-site biodiversity offset solutions.

"Environmental track record and clear goalsThe group's expansion will make restoration of rare chalk stream habitats a key component of the EFG's three principle aims of biodiversity and species recovery, clean water and net carbon zero farming by 2040. The farmers involved already have a proven track record of delivering measurable improvements on the ground.



Joe Edwards, manages the Middleton Estate, which has dramatically improved the water quality along its three-mile stretch of the Test.

He said: "We set out to recover the river combining a wide range of measures including bringing back ranunculus and other habitats that the insects will naturally thrive in and encouraging wild brown trout reproduction.

"The result was when we tested the water for 300 chemicals, it showed that the water's cleaner when it leaves Middleton than when it entered.

"There are other private land managers on the Test who are starting to think about implementing similar management and I believe the EFG's conservation plan, led by GWCT

Chief Exec Teresa Dent, will succeed in protecting the river.

"Improving water quality will be a central aim, but the two catchments have many other spectacular natural habitats and species, which need protecting and enhancing, including rare chalk downland wildflowers.

James Hewetson-Brown runs Ashe Warren Farm near the source of the Test.

Alongside his arable operation he and his wife Claire set up Wildflower Turf Ltd. Watch and listen to James explaining the benefits of being part of the EFG.

James said: "Recently research showed that half our native plants have declined over the past 20 years.

Hampshire chalk downland is famous for its wildflowers and we have encouraged their return through managing margins round the edges of our fields.

"The EFG has great potential to unlock funding to create new and better networks of these type of measures and restore wildflowers to the countryside.

"Farmers are in so many ways best placed to deliver really good biodiversity because they have the equipment and practical understanding to make it work and by joining together, they can achieve it on a scale that will make a real difference.

"The EFG cooperative is a groundbreaking, farmer-led approach to landscape-scale conservation.

As well as meeting the challenges of nature recovery and climate change on a huge scale, it will support farmers to deliver increased food



Along this stretch of the Test, on the Middleton estate, a tree has been cut and left in the river to provide nursery for young trout. c.GWCT.

security through a blend of public and private funding, which would otherwise be difficult for individual farm businesses to access.

While benefitting from being part of a larger cooperative, the Test and Itchen group's local knowledge and cultural identity will be key to its success. Many of the families involved have farmed the same land for generations representing centuries of continuous connection with the local countryside.

They are experts at delivering practical land management and personally invested for the sake of future generations. Supported by a scientific organisation The EFG is convened by the GWCT, whose scientific research lies behind pioneering agri-environment schemes.

GWCT Chief Exec Teresa Dent said: "At the end of 2022 the Westminster government set out its legally-binding environmental targets.

For instance, it wants to reverse declines in species abundance by



This artificial island made of willow withies created on the Middleton estate is helping to increase the rate of flow of the River Test c.GWCT.

2030. At the same time there is an imperative to increase UK food security.

"We applaud these ambitions but note that government is going to

need to harness the environmental delivery of the farmers and land managers, the Working Conservationists, who look after the 72% of land that is in private stewardship in England.

"The addition of the farmers of the Test and Itchen to the EFG is an important step on the way to achieving this.

We just need every farmer to improve on their previous best and the combined effect of them working together could be significant.

"Accredited by a trusted body, brokering a blended finance model! The environmental auditing and monitoring of EFG projects will be carried out by Natural Capital Advisory (NCA).

Funding will be a combination of public money in the form of Environmental Land Management Schemes and private finance from sponsorship, green investments and offset markets.

NCA chief exec Christopher Sparrow said: "In an often confusing and uncertain emerging market, which requires long-term commitments, landowners and investors can be reassured that NCA has the right professional experience to deliver the highest quality advice and ongoing monitoring service.

"Our partnership with EFG will appeal to investors who want to see tangible guaranteed environmental outcomes and contribute to the restoration of some of our most iconic landscapes, places they can visit to see the improvements for themselves." ■



Joe Edwards, manager of the Middleton Estate c.GWCT.



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.

Skunkz Range

The New Skunkz range Pop Ups from us at Halobaits is nothing short of amazing!

These ultra buoyant pop ups, have a totally incredibly unique smell, citrus based with a creamy undertone, with a secret palatant, probably the best smelling pop ups range we have ever come across!!

Already proving to be devastating and irresistible to carp on waters across the UK.

Currently made in White, Yellow, Pink in 12mm and 15mm.



Website: www.halobaits.com
Email: sales@halobaits.com
Telephone: 01689 862875
See us on  Facebook



NATIONAL FISHING MONTH and TAKE A FRIEND FISHING are back for 2023

From 29th JULY to 3rd September 2023

The Angling Trade Association (ATA) is proud to announce that National Fishing Month is back with a new launch event for 2023.

A celebration of angling in all its forms, National Fishing Month 2023, in conjunction with Take A Friend Fishing, and our Get Into Fishing at the Game Fairs launch event at Ragley Hall, Warwickshire 28th – 30th July, represents the ATA's biggest angling engagement support programme yet. With more content than ever, more features more interactive tools and more great prizes to be won in weekly competitions, both new, current, and lapsed anglers can engage and reconnect with the pastime of angling.

Supported by top angling brands, TV fishing celebrities including Paul Whitehouse and Jeremy Wade, and many more associations connected to fishing and the angling environment, this summer's NFM extravaganza means that anyone can take time out to experience the wellbeing and ben-



efits of angling provided by major industry stakeholders whilst being entertained, coached, and maybe even catch a fish or two along the way.

Information Hub

In support of the above, ATA has designed a fully interactive media hub that provides you with all the information needed including downloads, useful contacts, links, and image resources. Our information hub facility will grow as we update with new resources, the latest updates, and newsflashes on exiting new

developments.

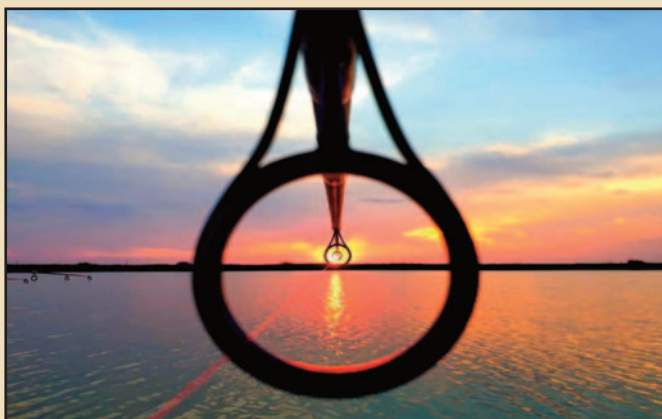
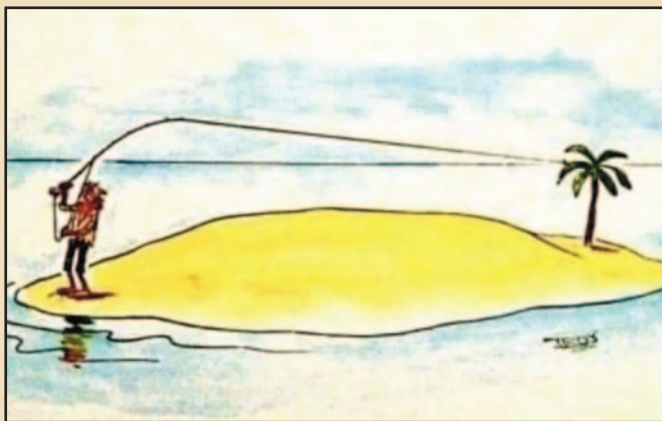
NFM/TAFF/GIF MEDIA INFORMATION HUB

The Angling Trade Association is committed to long term investment in angling to ensure access to angling for all. Get into the fishing habit with National Fishing Month and Take A Friend Fishing and take time out to connect with nature. You won't be disappointed.

Andrew Race, Chairman of Angling Trades Association,

Creators of National Fishing Month Initiative. ■

Carpy Humour





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:



Save £££s on DFDS ferry crossings - members only discounts to France, Amsterdam and a mini-cruise

Save £££s on DFDS ferry crossings - members only discounts to France, Amsterdam and a mini-cruise

Our new member partner DFDS have been voted the world's leading ferry operator for 12 years in a row - so you know you are in safe hands. Whether you are looking to book travel for your fishing trip, holidays for the family or superb mini cruises, our DFDS partnership gives you access to Europe with fantastic discounts! Simply login to your Members Dashboard to access fantastic offers including: 10% off Dover-France ferry crossings - car & up to 9 people. 15% off Newcastle-Amsterdam ferry crossings - cabin & vehicle. 33% off Amsterdam mini-cruise cabin - with breakfast included. ■



Anglers Against Pollution hits 2,000 samples milestone

The Angling Trust's Anglers Against Pollution campaign has reached a significant milestone with the 2,000th water quality sample taken from UK rivers.

The Water Quality Monitoring Network launched as a pilot project on the River Severn in May 2022 and was rolled out nationally just two months later. It currently involves over 470 volunteers from angling clubs taking samples from their local waters to better understand water quality and potential pollution issues.

The 2,000th sample was taken by voluntary bailiff Jonathan Swan on the River Chelmer in Essex and showed that phosphate levels exceeded the Water Framework Directive while nitrates were at the trigger level. ■

Tell us why you enjoy fishing so much!



The Angling Trust is supporting an Environment Agency marketing campaign to get people back into fishing. We know there's loads more to fishing than just catching a fish. Peace, headspace and relaxation are just as much part of the experience, as is tranquility and the feeling of being in nature.

To help shape the campaign, it would be very helpful if you could spare 5-10 minutes to share what it is you enjoy about fishing. ■

Fish Legal and Angling Trust at UK River Summit



Penny Gane, Head of Practice at Fish Legal, Jamie Cook, CEO of Angling Trust, and Jim Murray, Actor and Founder of Activist Anglers, were among the guest speakers at the UK River Summit, held earlier this month at Orvis Kimbridge Beat on the banks of the River Test.

The event brought together some of the country's most influential environmental experts to talk about the state of rivers in the UK and the action needed. Topics included water scarcity, agricultural and sewage pollution, and the environmental impacts of industrial practices in the countryside. ■

Is this the greatest prize in carp fishing? We think so!

Hosted by Reading & District Angling Association at their premier water Junction 12, the Angling Trust's Ultimate Carp Social prize draw gave four anglers the chance to win a 48-hour session of a lifetime.

Big thanks to Fink Food Fishing for providing an amazing BBQ because what's a social without top tier food?

Thanks also to Terry Hearn, Nick Helleur, Oz Holness and Tom Stokes for giving their time and to all of you that bought a ticket, supporting the work the Angling Trust do to protect fish, fishing and the environment. ■

How we can help clubs & fisheries - download handbook



The Angling Trust has published a handbook outlining how we can support clubs and fisheries through advice, resources, and practical help. Much of our work to support clubs and fisheries is assisted with funding from fishing licence income through our contract delivery with the Environment Agency. However, many other ways we engage with clubs is funded through membership fees paid by clubs, fisheries, organisations, angling trade partners and individuals, including our fight against pollution, over-abstraction, angling bans and other threats to our sport. ■

Two freelance roles available for Catchwise surveyors



Catchwise will be the biggest single study of sea angling undertaken for over a decade - and you can be part of it. The aim is to deliver a site-based, face-to-face survey of shore anglers and those fishing from private boats and kayaks across England and Wales. Surveying will be delivered by 11 contractor surveyors with up to 150 volunteer citizen scientists assisting the research.

The Angling Trust is seeking two highly motivated, organised and experienced individuals for the final two surveyor roles available on freelance/self-employed contracts for the South West (ideally based in Dorset, Somerset or Devon) and South East (ideally based in Surrey, East Sussex or West Sussex). ■

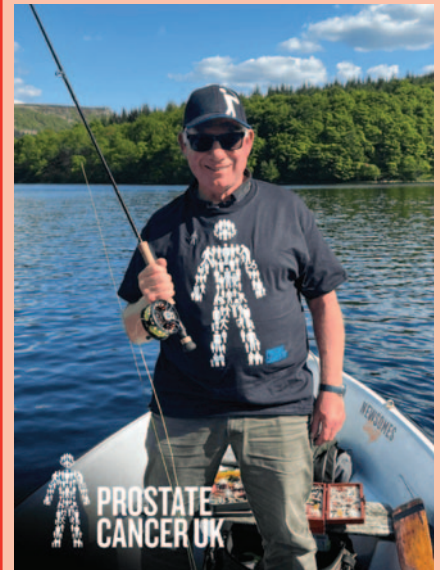
Silver for Raison as England go so close in the Euros



England captain William Raison led from the front at last weekend's European Championships in Hungary claiming the individual silver medal in a tough competition which saw the team fall just four section points shy of bronze.

William, who took the bronze at the same event last year, was one of only two of the 149 anglers fishing to win their sections on both days but lost out on the gold on a weight countback to Slovakia's Jan Samel. ■

What do you know about prostate cancer?



It's the most common cancer in men: 1 in 8 men in the UK are affected.

You're at a higher risk if you're over 50, or you're black or your dad or brother had it.

Prostate cancer can be curable if it's caught early. However, most men with early prostate cancer don't have symptoms.

That's just three reasons why Prostate Cancer UK is working tirelessly to invest millions into research to find better ways to diagnose and treat prostate cancer, offering specialist support to people living with the disease, and spreading the word about men at risk.

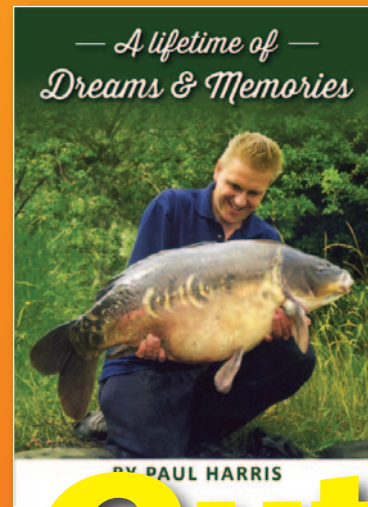
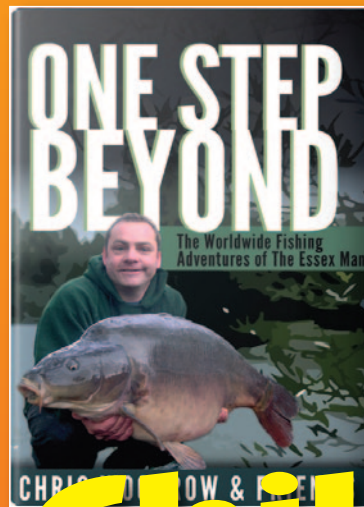
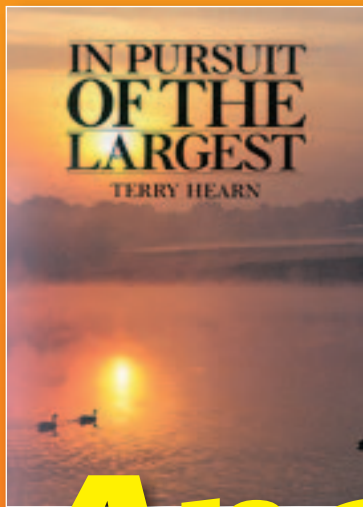
You can help, too. Check your own risk of getting prostate cancer using their 30-second online tool below - and share the risk checker with fellow anglers.

Angling Trust - supporting the work of Prostate Cancer UK. ■

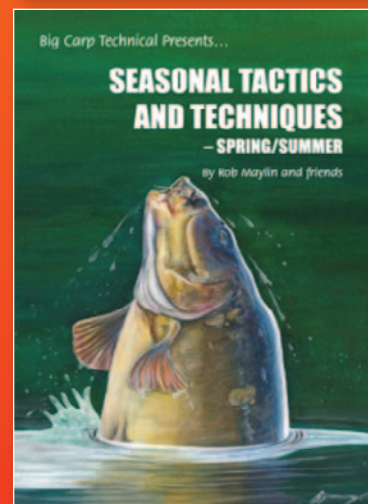
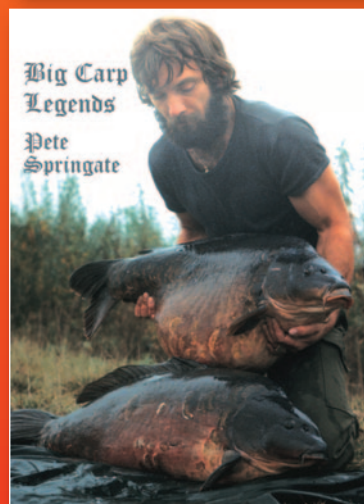
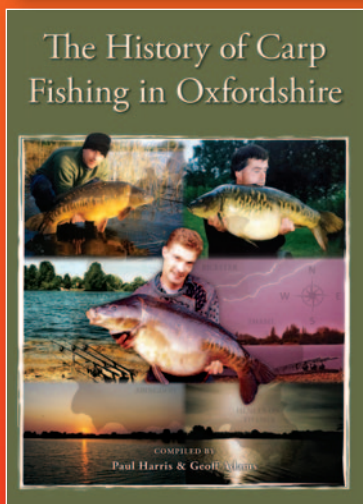
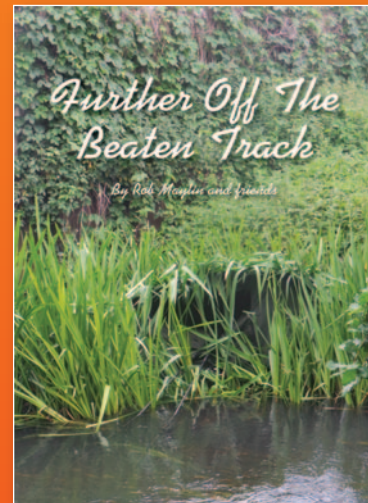
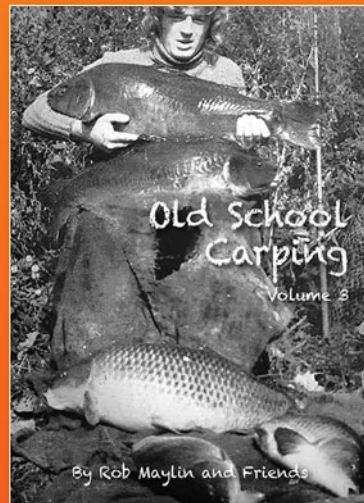
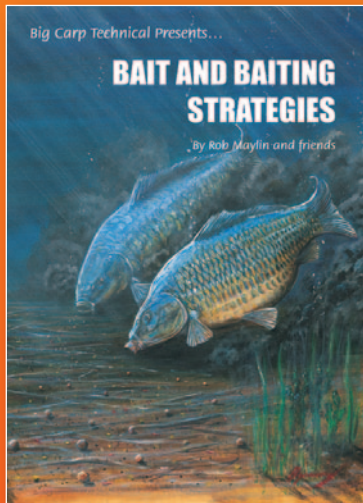
All your fishing info on one map!

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. ■

Bag Yourself a Score

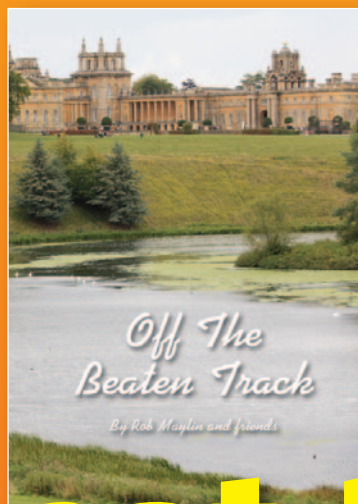
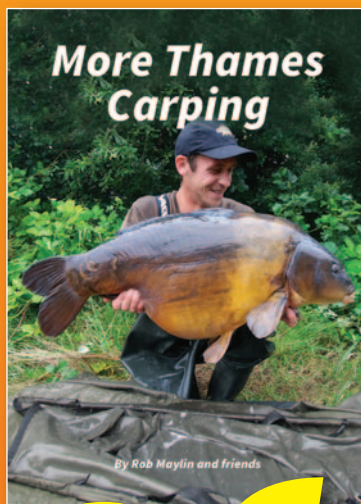


And Chill Out with

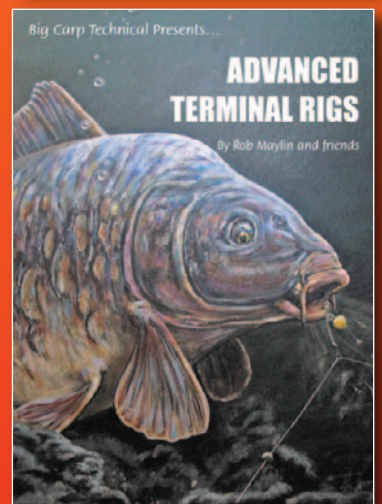
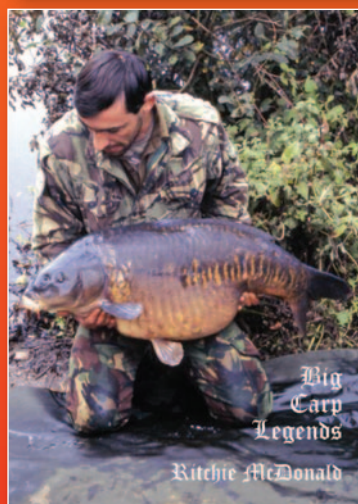
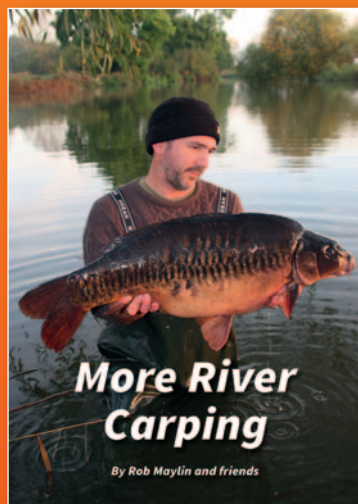
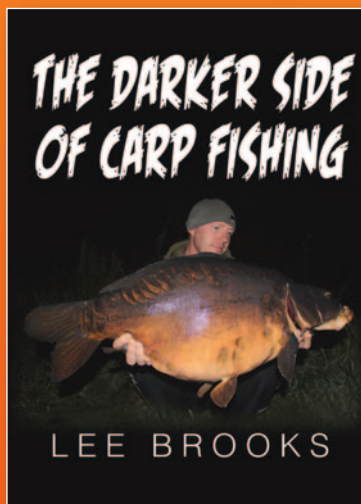


NEW BOOKS www.bigcarpmain.com NEW AND OLD BOOKS: www.ebay.com

Summer Scorchers



With a Great Read



gazine.co.uk/online-shop.html
.co.uk/usr/rarecarpbooksunlimited



HEATED SLEEPING BAG SB9 JUST £119

1. UNIQUE MODULAR HEATING SYSTEM

Standard configuration: 2 heating elements, maximum power 4W per pad.

2. UNIQUE MAGNETIC QUICK RELEASE BUTTONS

Six magnetic quick release buttons hold the top of the sleeping bag together when the zipper is partially open but allow lightning fast opening on a run.

3. EASY TO MACHINE WASH

Features a wrap-around zipper. You can separate the top layer from the bottom layer and easily machine wash.

4. THOUGHTFUL DESIGN WITH LOTS OF DETAILS

Fits 6-leg or 8-leg cot chair. Supplied with high quality bag.

5. LIGHTWEIGHT BUT WARM

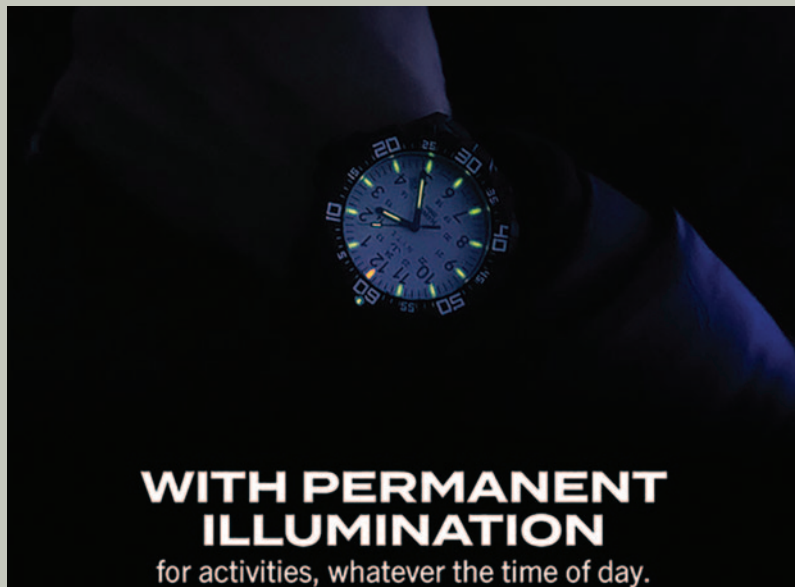
25% more compact than some other 5-season sleeping bags



BLACK, ORANGE, BLUE OR WHITE;

a colour for every scene

**THE HILLS, VALLEYS, PATHS AND
TRAILS ARE WAITING FOR YOU**



**WITH PERMANENT
ILLUMINATION**

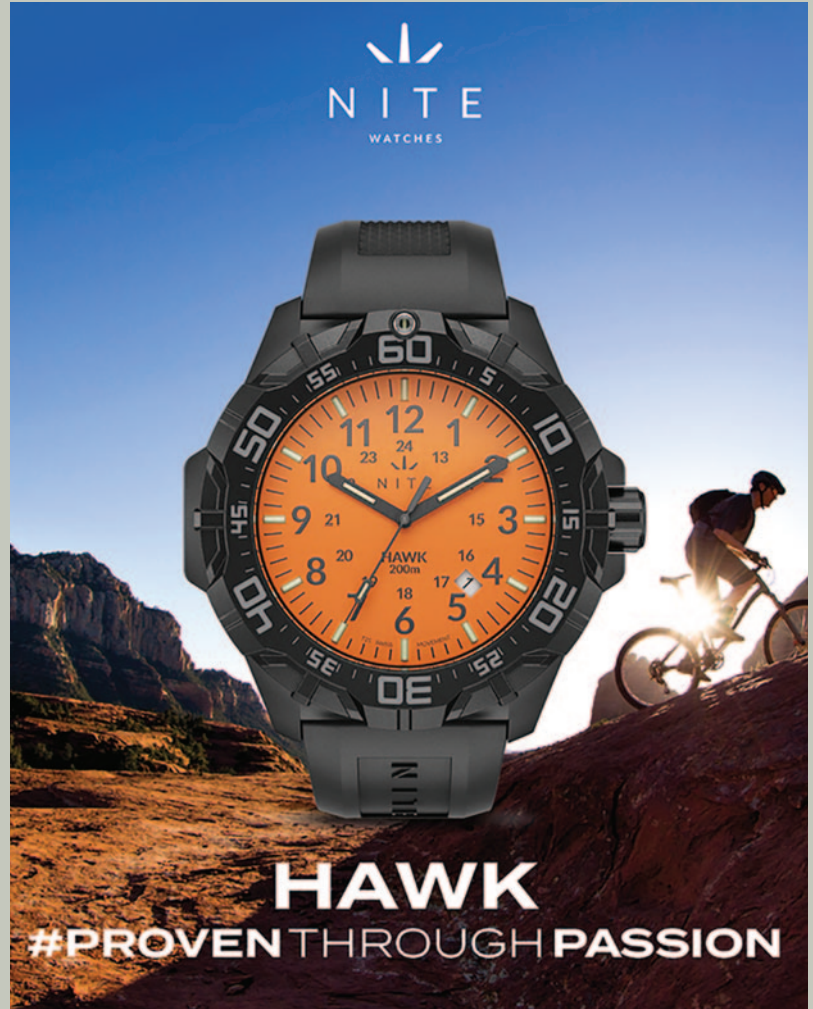
for activities, whatever the time of day.



**EXPERIENCE YOUR
ADVENTURE WITH
THE HAWK**



**WHETHER YOU'RE
RIDING, HIKING OR
CLIMBING**



Have you already seen the RT7 Reviews?

Pretty impressive, right? We're over the moon with all the positive feedback we're getting on the RT7 from all sides.

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

We're always here to help you find the perfect bait boat configuration for your fishing needs. mTime to elevate your carp fishing game to the next level now – with the RT7 All-In-One Baitboat Set

RT7 Carpology Magazine Review!

RT7 Baitboat impresses at Nash Days 2023! Sneak Peek: James Armstrong tests the RT7 bait boat!

Best regards from CL Headquater, Simona BauerCarpplounge Tackle // Executive Assistant & Accounting Manager (EU/UK)

The RT7 is the most hyped new product of 2023.

Carpology's experts wanted facts:

Is it really a game-changer, or just completely overrated?



Here are some teaser quotes from the review for you: "Is the RT7 as good as we hoped? It's even better! The electronics are second-to-none, and the build quality is like Rolls-Royce!"

"Truly impressive: RT7 All-In-One - Luxury, tech-packed bait boat and this thing is clever - real clever!"

"Until you try the RT7 yourself, you can't fully appreciate just how good it is."

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

RT7 Baitboat impresses at Nash Days 2023!...more than 100 RT7 test drives in just one weekend!

Here are some teaser quotes from the review for you: "Didn't think I needed an upgrade, but the RT7 test drive changed my mind! Finally, there's an intuitive and user-friendly technology that everyone can use!"

"Who needs a manual when you've got the RT7? I feared I'd have to learn everything again, but the RT7 is incredibly user-friendly!"

"I was always worried about complex high-tech bait boats, but the RT7 Control is remarkably intuitive and so easy to use - even for non-techies like me!"

Sneak Peek: James Armstrong tests the RT7 bait boat!

"Ready for a game-changing bait boat? look no further than the RT7"

Als langjähriger RT4 V4 Besitzer wollte James genauer wissen, warum unser neues RT7 solche Wellen in der Szene schlägt. Bei seinem letzten Besuch im Carplounge UK Shop hat er die Chance genutzt und das RT7 einen Tag lang an unserem Testsee auf Herz und Nieren zu testen.

Für seinen Youtube-Kanal hat er seine Eindrücke auf Video festgehalten - das ab sofort online ist!

"Das Größte für mich ist der AIC-Controller, für das Handling muss man jetzt kein IT-Experte mehr sein! Jetzt kann jeder ohne Lernphase das volle Potenzial aus dem Raymarine QHD-Echolot und Mapping heraus holen, was definitiv für mehr Erfolg am Wasser sorgt!"

Read More...



...did you know? we offer a worry-free payment plan with just a 500€ deposit and the rest paid when the boat is ready for delivery. Plus, you have 30 days to test the boat and if you're not satisfied, we offer a full refund

P.S. Stay tuned for a detailed video review of the RT7 from Carpolounge's product testers where they go in detail. Follow #Carplounge and #Carpology on social media for the latest updates and insider tips.

GAME CHANGER?

RT7 Bait Boat and All in one controller.

Regular readers could not have missed a new comer to Big Carp this year..... Carplounge and their RT7 Bait Boat and All in one controller.

A huge, highly colourful advertising campaign across all the platforms and magazines plus several editorial features in Big Carp and Free Line including: in April - Why should I use a bait boat? - What the experts said. In May - Custom Paint Jobs - Finance Option - Free All in One Controller Case, and in June - Flagship

CarpLounge UK Store Spot Light. Add to that field test reviews in both magazines and social media. Here is our honest review on what has been referred to as 'The Greatest Boat on Earth!'

Many carp anglers are still not fans of remote-control bait boats, in particular, many of the old school. But is it the boats or the ethics of their owners that is the problem?

There is no doubt that you will catch more carp using a boat in some situations than without. Even the greatest carp anglers in the land will confirm this and, in most cases, have used them to overcome, otherwise impossible problems. The accuracy, the distance, the stealth and the ease make using a boat essential in some scenarios. Even our editor has succumbed to their attributes when the





Snap 450 RW

Multi-use Light Kit

Snap's unique design features a magnetic head unit that can be easily and intuitively detached and reattached to its base, empowering it to become the ultimate multi-use light. Snap can be worn as a traditional headlamp, used as a handheld flashlight, or fastened to any metal surface to brighten the area around you or your workspace. Snap is now brighter than ever at 450 lumens and features three modes: a fully dimmable spot beam, a flash mode, and a red LED to preserve night vision.

The Kit includes a two way carabiner mount and clip for use as a lantern or attachment to your pack, as well as a handlebar attachment to mount to your bike or any similarly sized pole!



fish are all held up on features 200+ metres away and even he can't cast that far!

Like everything in life, the best is going to cost you. And the price ticket on these beasts is not small. But there are payment options and if you are going to use a boat you may as well get the best available. These are the ultimate in bait boat technology, just look at the portfolio of who is using them, and everyone says the same thing.....Amazing, a real GAME CHANGER!

We have lots more to say about the RT7 including: All in One Controller Review, RT7 Bait Boat Catch Reports, Getting the Best out of your RT7, What Top Anglers say about the RT7, Get an RT7 for Christmas? we have a



Location is without doubt the most important aspect of carp fishing -

it's 98% Location, 1% Bait and 1% Rigs!

DANNY FAIRBRASS



deal for you, New Year Special - Why you should start the Year with an RT7, Big Carp TOP 10 issue comments, New Season Special - Prebaiting with the RT7, RT 7 Bait Boat - One Year On,

Tactics and Edges with the RT7, RT7 Monsters and Myths.

Keep looking in Big Carp the longest running carp magazine EVER with the biggest readership EVER! ■

A WORLD RECORD HOLDER

Extreme athlete and adventurer, Jake Best is no stranger to putting himself through grit and hustle, to achieve extraordinary results. His journey is a testament to the power of pushing limits, embracing versatility, and making a difference for others.

Here are just some of his feats:

- Running 100 kilometers along the coastal path while carrying 35 pounds of weight in support of the Felix Brown charity.
- Cycling 1000 miles in just 7 days to contribute to the fight against cancer through the FFC charity.
- Conquering the height and dis-

tance of Ben Nevis while carrying a 15kg computer, all in aid of the DAFA charity

- 4 x continuous marathons over the Jurassic coast in 28 hours
- Setting five world records in the 5km, 10km, half marathon, full marathon, and furthest distance covered while carrying 40 pounds, supporting Rock2Recovery and the SBS Association.

His Next Challenge?

An official Ironman triathlon world record attempt while carrying his renowned 40-pound Osprey Pack.

To enhance his training, Jake

recently participated in a triathlon-focused training camp in Majorca, Spain, organised by NITE Watches, one of his sponsors.

With a water resistance of 100 metres, the ALPHA 229T100 fearlessly accompanies him on underwater adventures, while the scratch-resistant sapphire crystal protects its face from everyday wear and tear.

It's a fusion of elegance and resilience that exemplifies NITE Watches' commitment to quality, and one Jake is proud to wear on his adventures.

What's your next adventure?

JAKE'S WATCH OF CHOICE?



Petromax Cooler Backpacks deliver portable refrigeration outdoors

Outdoor, camping and bushcraft brand Petromax has extended its range of cooling products with the new Cooler Backpack. Designed for easy transport during outdoor excursions, the robust backpack will keep provisions cool for up to six or eight days, reducing reliance on power while in nature.

Available in capacities of 17L and 27L, the Petromax Cooler Backpack has been engineered to deliver extremely long cooling times, just like the brand's proven Cooler Bags. The pack is ideal for camping, fishing trips, or other outings where electrical power isn't available. The construction and materials ensure that ice cubes or cold packs can be safely stored so that food and drink stay cool, even during longer trips.

Designed to maximise storage, the small backpack can comfortably hold six 1L bottles upright, side by side. With a six-pack of cans, there's still enough room to accommodate food items and ice cubes. Meanwhile, the large capacity backpack can hold 13 1L bottles lying down. Thanks to the large waterproof front pocket, two side pockets and two mesh pockets, cutlery and other essential items can be safely stowed away and conveniently transported to the next stopping point or campsite.

With a weight capacity of 8kg or 15kg respectively, carrying comfort is integral to the Petromax Cooler Backpack design. The soft back padding delivers comfort on the move, while two padded shoulder straps and an



adjustable chest strap distribute the load evenly. On the larger pack, an adjustable waist strap provides additional flexibility of fit.

The durable nylon fabric is water repellent and is weather resistant while the waterproof zippers prevent rainwater from entering or melt water from escaping the pack. Like all cooling products in the Petromax range, the Cooler Backpack boasts a range of useful features, including an integrated bottle opener and elastic tension straps for securing additional equipment, making it the ideal companion for a wide range of outdoor adventures.

The 17L Petromax Cooler Backpack is 51.5 x 37.5 x 31cm, weighs 2.4kg and retails at £169.95. The 27L bag is 54.5 x 44.5 x 34cm, weighs 3kg and retails at £199.95. Both backpacks are available in a choice of Sand, Olive and Grey. The Petromax Cooler Backpack is available at <https://berryuseful.co.uk>. ■

The Magic Wand, Maggots and Two 40s

By Lee Kidd

I had been a member of a club water in the Lee Valley area of Hertfordshire for two years but rarely fished there. It was a sought-after ticket courtesy of its richly-prized residents. Life commitments had come before my fishing, apart from the odd session here and there. That all changed during a social when I landed a 20-plus common affectionately known as Wonky Tail from the edge on a single Scopex Squid boilie. The bug had returned.

This is an account of my time on this magical little water. I am not an angler that has been lucky enough to reel off tales of dozens of big fish captures, but, even if I was, here are two that will live with me for the rest of my carp angling days.

With respect to my fellow members, I will not name the water, but it is four acres and deep with some margins dropping to 15ft in places. There are plenty of fallen trees and big snags that litter all four banks. It is weedy and rich in natural food, so the fishing can be tough. The snags and trees provide sanctuaries that cannot be fished easily and are almost cut off. Obviously, carp love these areas. It gives them their privacy and protection and that makes the hunt even more difficult.

The two fish I had set my heart on landing were the Long Common at between 40-45lb and the elusive C-Scale, which I knew was around the 42lb mark. There were other lovely looking fish to go at, including Coins, which was a mid-30, plus a couple of other big commons, and a fair stock of pristine twenties. The common, although bigger, was a more regular



Scoop.

visitor to the bank, but C-Scale was a once or possibly twice a year caught fish that certainly didn't like its photo taken.

The Plan

Like others, I thought constantly about the two big'uns and Coins. Anything else would be the rungs on the ladder to these special fish. Being a club water in the Lee Valley it was busy most days of the week. I had started to learn about the lake through several visits, and the little patterns and knowledge began to grow a little clearer. One obvious characteristic was that there were areas of the lake that nearly always produced the bigger fish. I decided to stick to those areas as much as I could. I picked three swims that I would always try to get into and keep fishing them regularly.

It was late October, and I was about to start three months' gardening leave due to a job change, but had no intention of doing any gardening! I

planned to fish for two nights during the week, as it was much quieter, and I could fish where I wanted. I was keen to change my approach, as I had a fair idea how the others members were targeting these areas. I also believed that the two bigger fish could be tempted quicker on an alternative trap. I decided maggots were the way to go, as I had not heard of anyone using this method over there.

The maggots were boosted up to give them even more natural attraction and appeal. I decided bloodworm products were the way to go.

Making the magic mix

During my time on the lake I have used white, red and mixed red/white, and the Long Common was caught over mixed coloured maggots, so I have not found a certain combination to be more productive than other colours.

The only thing I did find is that the reds show up better on gravel or harder spots and the white in



View from bank.



amongst the weedier areas. My favourites are mixed red and white. Another theory is that if using live maggots they may feed on the mix therefore making themselves taste even tastier to Mr. Carp!

When I prepare the mix and bags, I first add a generous helping of the Bloodworm or Krill liquid around on top of the maggots in the bucket and mix in with a stick. I then add some rock salt, the stick mix powder and other ingredients and mix together with both hands. Then Supospice is then added but be careful not to use too much, as it is quite potent. It is all mixed up into a slightly wet, smelly mix and added to the PVA bag.

I put some mix into the bottom of the bag followed by an additional layer of rock salt, and another layer of mix. I then dangle the rig and lead into the bag then pour some of the bloodworm liquid in over the rig into the bottom of the bag. I then repeat the same until the bag is full and pack it tight. One thing that really helped me later on was the Fox Rapid Loader, a great bit of kit that helped me pack the bags tighter and cleaner.

The bites were instant, and I caught some stunning carp leading into the autumn including a gorgeous fish called the Pea Common on a cold, windy night, which went just under 30lb, and a gorgeous linear of low twenty. The mix was used in large

PVA bags with a 4.5oz or 5oz flat inline lead fished drop-off style and short hooklink of 2-3 inches. I used 5-7 imitation maggots threaded onto a basic hair rig. Now, these little babies float, so they were critically balanced against the weight of the hook. At first I was either walking the bag down the bank or dropping it onto a spot in the edge or casting. This was all good, but there was an obvious problem. If the fish were already in the swim, or if I had a bite, I would have to recast, and the resulting disturbance would sometimes kill the swim in an instant.

This is when I added a baiting pole to my armoury. The pole, or magic wand as it proved to be, allowed me to get right under the trees and snags that I could never cast to and where the fish felt more comfortable, and, more importantly, where they fed confidently. I could also reposition the trap quietly. This soon became a massive edge because I started to get multiple takes. I developed a regimented process with the pole and maggots, and it helped with fishing the same swims.

It was now the 30th December, and the winter had been very mild, which suited my time off, but that particular evening was cold and wet. The rods were put into position using the magic wand, and I enjoyed a few cold beers with my friend Kaine who had popped down to visit.

It was early the following morning when the alarm signalled a few bleeps. I knew it was a bite because of the slackened line so jumped on the rod quickly. As soon as I connected, the fish flat-rodged me and tore through the corner of the snag and out into the open water behind. When I started to gain momentum the line pinged free from the snag, and the fish turned towards me. It was now powering slowly out in front, left to right, then back, stripping line from the reel.

Then, after a few long, powerful lunges under the rod tip the fish came to the surface, and I scooped it into



(Top) 20lb-plus mirror.
(Left) 23lb linear.



**35%
OFF**

GO TO
ledlenser.co.uk
USE CODE **FISH35**

POWERPACKS



HEADLAMPS



LANTERNS

POWERUP CATCH **BIG**
ENJOY **NATURE**
STAY **SAFE**



The Big Common.

the waiting net first time.

It was over, and I was buzzing, just taking in the moment. Those minutes between netting a big one in the dark and peering down into the full net is something I will never forget. I pulled my head torch from my pocket, and there looking back up at me was the distinctive C-shaped scale under the glow of the headlamp.

I shout, "Ceeeee Scaaaaaale!" as loudly as I could, even though I was the only one on that night! He looked dark and massive and was clearly a new personal best for me. I didn't know what to do with myself. The

previous evening, Kaine and I were only jesting about him doing photos.

With the elusive mirror recovering, I called Kaine who was driving to work so was very close by. As all carp mates do, he made a short diversion to the lake to fulfil the promise of photos within a few minutes. I really wasn't expecting to catch C-Scale at all, let alone before the common, and it had never been caught so late in the year. He weighed 42lb 8oz and was in absolutely amazing winter colours. It really was a rare visitor to the bank and the perfect end to my gardening leave. It hadn't been caught for a fair

amount of time before and wasn't caught for 16 months after either, which made the capture even more special.

The new job I started didn't work out, so I had a bit of time away from fishing to get my career back on track and get up and running with a new company, which I am pleased to say I am still with now. When I returned to the lake, I spent the small amount of time I had catching some lovely carp and didn't really blank, which was nice. They including some of the characters of the lake, but I was still obsessing about that big common.



Rig.



The Pea Common.



C-Scale at 42lb 8oz.



Fireworks Night

This was to be my last night on the lake before moving my family to Cambridgeshire. We had decided to move the family up there for the better schools for our two children (we now have four including identical twin girls). There would be country living, and we could get a bigger property for the same value as we had in Hertfordshire.

I got to the lake late, and the light was fading, but the Boards swim was free and warm from my previous session a few days earlier, so I jumped in there. I followed the same process on both rods using the pole, and four pints of mix was put over the top by hand.

There are some sailing clubs and other social venues close by, and, from the sound of it, they had all organised fireworks displays on the same night. The only way to describe it was like the scene out of a Hollywood war movie, with bangs and cracks that sounded like gunfire lighting up the lake from 6pm until the early hours. No way would I catch after that lot.

The next morning I was eating my Cornflakes, contemplating the travelling I would have to endure to catch the Big Common when, at 7am, the rod in the snaggy margin under the

tree bounced slightly. It was definitely a bite, and I jumped onto it quickly and held the rod deep down under the water, reeling hard to get the fish out into the safety of open water. The line zipped through the water, and I slowly lifted the fish through the layers with my rod bent double and maxed out. Then I saw the massive frame of a big common.

My heart was pounding, but strangely I stayed calm even though I knew what was on the end, and after a few tense moments the fish was in the net. I dropped the rod, looked down in anticipation, and there she

was in all her glory. I caught her when I least expected to after the most horrific noise of the fireworks the night before. The scales went round to 40lb 10oz of Lea Valley carp history. Word got around, and I had some really great people and respected anglers to share the experience with. It was raining hard and it was cold, but I didn't care. I got the customary bucket of water in the face and a memory I will never forget.

A few days later I moved to Cambridgeshire, and I have yet to return. As for Coins, it is still there and it's a case of "the one that got away". During the summer months before I caught the Big Common I was lying on the fallen tree, which makes up the big snag in a swim called the Beach, watching my rig, and the Coins kept swimming over my rig and feeding very sparsely on the maggots but not for too long a period. It was in and out of the snag, and later that afternoon I had a take that I just couldn't hold onto and lost in the snag. Unfortunately I suspect it was Coins because I had not seen any other carp around that day. So I missed out on that one I really wanted, but I am planning to go back for her next year. She could even make 40lb soon, and is as beautiful as ever.

The famous Big Common has since passed away, which is sad, but she has touched many carp anglers' lives during her long years, so will fondly live on in our memories and photo albums forever. ■



(Top) Another view of C-Scale.
(Right) Dark mirror.

Limited edition

Collectors Edition Billet Alarms

Less than 100
will be made



Custom made to your
preference in the UK



These have been a well overdue project we have wanted to complete for many years.

The concept of producing a range of our own alarms from scratch though was something we believed had to be fulfilled no matter how much time this was to take. We have spent our time buying components for board productions and testing, stock piling materials for machining cases and rollers etc, in preparation for one day being in a position where these can be offered out to our customers. Roll on 5+ years, and we are now happy to release the first 'collectors edition' of our very own custom alarm...

Limited to 30 sets/90 individual alarms (alarms will be supplied with paperwork confirmation of numbers) – once we reach this total, there will be no more made of this edition

This edition of alarm is a standard/non remote alarm for a reason. These are a limited first edition build of a standard hard wearing alarm, which will do what it needs to do – scream like hell when the roller moves – being encased in anodized aluminium, offers an – extremely hardwearing alarm – these are not suited for a remote set-up – there is the prospect/potential of remote converting, but range would be extremely poor and certainly not advised for this edition.

Find us

Follow us



Online purchases –
www.kudostackle.com



Email –

info@kudostackle.com

WhatsApp/text/Telgram

0776020260148

Farlows

Part 3 by Daniel Daneshi

Jan-Feb 2015

January came, and I had a chat with Lewis about which targets we had set ourselves. We both said we would like to beat our PBs and also all the guys had set themselves another target of a 30-plus fish from Farlows. I also personally wanted one of the bigger scaly mirrors from Lake 2. I say bigger, as for the lake 16lb/17lb-plus is a good sized fish. This is the great thing about angling and what makes it so individual. We can all have targets that are different from each other, whether it is targeting big fish or small fish or something completely different. A little pet hate of mine is when you see people posting pictures of 25lb carp and the words, "I only

managed a small one today," but each to their own.

After a little break, I was looking forward to having a go on Lake 2 for a few months to try and bank a couple of the scaly mirrors. Lake 1 was really starting to get a lot busier for the time of year. I think this was down to a few things... One would be the special offer the lake had introduced – three days for the price of two – and secondly a lot of people were falling in love with the lake just as much as we had done on our first visit. Still, most weekdays I would end up having Lake 2 to myself again, which is maybe another reason why I enjoyed it on there so much. I had a few fish, but still had not banked one of the scaly ones that I wanted, and Lake 2

was always going to be about catching as many as I could and hope the scaly one I had in mind would come along.

March-November 2015

March came, and it was time to head back onto Lake 1 to do a little homework for the upcoming match and start my hunt for a few more stunners and hopefully another Farlows 30. First session back I ended up in Blanker's for a night. This was my third time in there over the years, and I had yet to blank in the swim. I continued the run with a 27lb 2oz mirror and a 24lb 8oz mirror, which was a great start to the year. A week or so later it was Lewis's turn to get a ses-



Shark fishing – 2015.

sion in. He arrived on a Sunday just for the night, as he was pulling off early Monday for work. He also managed to bank two fish, one being a 20lb common and the other a 33lb mirror, so that was one of his personal targets for the year already crossed off the list.

The same week Jon and I planned to do a night together, and when we got down to the lake, the swim Lewis had the 33lb mirror from was just coming free. The guy had blanked from Monday through to Wednesday. The way the weather was, I expected the area to have a few fish in, and it still looked good for a bite, so we doubled up in there. It did not take too long before Jon was into the first of the session, and it was one of the Farlows stunners with big apple slice scales. Not long after returning the fish the rod was away again. This time the rod was doubled over, and we both had a feeling it was a better fish. After a good fight, I netted the fish, and when I saw it I thought it looked a decent size. I unhooked the fish and held the net in the water while he quickly got the rod back on the spot. Then we weighed her, and she went 31lb 8oz. Jon was over the moon, as it was his first Farlows 30. We took a few photos and a video and put her back.

About 30 minutes later I managed to get in on the action with a 20lb mirror, and that continued. Jon had another fish, this time a double, which he let me have a little play on, as he had new 2.5lb test curve rods and the fight on them felt epic. It was now only about eight o'clock, and we had only been fishing four or so hours. We ordered a bit of food, and while waiting, my rod was away again. I hit into it, and the fish did not fight much at all. It was up on the surface from about five or six rod lengths out, but I could not really make out how big it was due to it being dark. Jon netted her and said, "Daniel you got a 30 too, mate, and it's bigger than mine." We got her weighed, and to be honest she looked a lot bigger, but went 30lb 2oz in the end. I was over



the moon with that, and our dinner turned up not long after. We were both buzzing, and with Lewis's 33 mirror on Monday, it was a great week for us. During the night I had no more action, and I think Jon added two more. I pulled off early for work; Jon was going to stay on for two more nights, and I think Paul was going to join him on Friday.

Still buzzing about three of us having 30s, I got a call on Saturday morning from Paul to say that he had a 34lb-plus mirror in the net. I quickly got dressed and got myself to the lake as quickly as I could to do the honours for him. The fish was stunning

and one that I had not seen out before. It was another Farlows moment that will stick with me forever, as it's not every day a group of friends each have a 30 from Farlows in the same week.

Our next trip to Farlows was for the Eric's Angling Championship qualifier. We arrived there early, walked a few laps of the lake and wrote down our choices of swims, from first choice to last choice, and then went back for the draw. You would never

(Top) 27lbs 2oz – first session – 2015.

(Below) Competition 2015 fish that helped us make the semi-final.





have guessed it but our luck was in, and we were pulled first out of the hat. Our first mistake of the weekend was that we picked an area that we did not know as well as our second choice, but at this point that lesson was not learned. We set up and the hooter went.

Every minute the rods were in the water we were thinking of ways to get a fish and onto the leader board. Maybe to a degree we were over-thinking things and making changes too soon. On Friday night we had a chat and Paul and Jon also popped up to support us over the weekend. They said, "Just do what you would on any other session and you boys 100% will get through – stop over-thinking!" So Lewis and I put two rods on an area that we'd had a couple of fish from before. The plan was to just top them

up every few hours or so. The other two rods we were going to try on different things to try and find out what the fish wanted and if they were going to play ball.

In the early hours of Saturday morning, one of the long distance rods was away, and I hit into it. After getting it close in, the hook pulled right at the net. I have never been more gutted. Saturday came, and the top of the leader board were on around four or five fish, the second two fish, third one fish and fourth one fish. We again worked the water with zigs to see if we could find a level the fish may have been sitting in, but no luck, and it was much of the same around the lake. Early Sunday morning the same rod as before was away again, and this time Lewis hit it. I really didn't want to know to be honest, as I still



had the lost fish on my mind, but I was so glad that Lewis hit the rod. During the fight I don't think we said a word to each other, and then boom she was in the net. Fourth place was currently on around 12lb, and this fish weighed at 21lb 8oz, pushing us into a qualifying position.

The last six hours went really slowly, and we just kept looking at the leader board and hoping for another one or two, as it had not fished great at all, and that would 100% be enough. Ten minutes before the hooter went, the pair next door to us in open water were into a fish, and I was just hoping that it was under 21lbs. As they netted the fish I was feeling really nervous, but fortunately for us it was only around 16lbs, and we were through to the semifinal. When packing up Paul and Lewis were talking about rigs. Lewis had dropped one in the margin for Paul to look at, and he slipped and ended up in the lake. A few laughs were shared about this, and this was the first time a non-competitor had gone swimming in the lake on the hooter. What a rollercoaster of a weekend, and I still to this day do not know if I enjoyed it or not. It's a great buzz being on the leader board, but my brain was doing overtime over-thinking things, but lesson learnt, and on to the next stage.

In April, and with new stock in Lake



(Top left) Corey and Frankie enjoying their fishing in 2015.

(Top right) Corey 2015.

(Left) Corey with a Lake 2 mirror in 2015.

CARP Watching

These specially commissioned paintings are now available to purchase due to popular demand. Available in three different sizes once framed in either a Perspex clip frame or light wood natural frame and looks amazing.



No.1 – THEY'RE 'AVIN IT!

It depicts the typical 'heads down tails up' scene, which occurs beneath the surface when the carp are really on the feed.



No.2 – MARGIN MONSTER

It shows a big-framed carp beneath the overhanging tree branches, patrolling the snags and weed beds in its search for food.



No. 3 – CARP ON!

This is what it's all about, the 'take', as our quarry makes its last mistake, the hook goes in, the buzzer sounds, carp on!

AVAILABLE IN 3 SIZES:

A3 - 297mm x 420mm - £15 • A2 - 420mm x 594mm - £18 • A1 - 594mm x 841mm - £22

Postage Rates – UK £7; Europe £15; rest of the world £25

Call 01252 373658 for card payment or go to our website for secure Paypal payment.

www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk



3, I started to take Corey fishing along with Jon's grandson, Frankie. They were loving it, and my fishing took a back seat, as I was getting so much joy from teaching them and watching them progress. Also the other great thing about it was there were no egos and bad-mouthing that you sometimes get from a few bad eggs on the bank and Internet. It was just about

fun and the passion for angling. During this time Lewis also had a trip to another venue and managed to hit his second target of the year, a new PB mirror at 37lb 14oz.

We also competed in the semifinal of the Eric's Angling Championships at Hardwick's and Smith's. We did our best, but the draw really did take us out of the match from the very start.

We came out second from last in the draw and ended up fishing an area we were not confident in at all. This was a bit of a kick up the behind really, as all the time and research we had put in we did not get to use. I'm sure if we did have a top seven draw, then we would have had a great shout at making the final, as our first choice of pegs did just that. Another few lessons learnt about match fishing, and I'm sure we will be giving it a good go again at some point in the future, but we also picked up loads of little tips to take into our personal fishing too.

At the end of April my mum became very ill, and between April and August was admitted to hospital by 999 over 18 times. Our fishing went right to the bottom of our list, and it was just not important anymore. I started to do my afternoon sessions on Lake 2. Funnily enough, I started catching the scaly ones I had wanted and had a few great sessions. I remember one evening when Lewis



(Top) Daniel, 30lbs 2oz mirror. Thirties all around that week – 2015. (Left) Dream day session, 20lbs – 2015.



Dream day session, 32lbs mirror that was braced with the common – 2015.



Dream day session, 40lbs 12oz new PB – 2015.



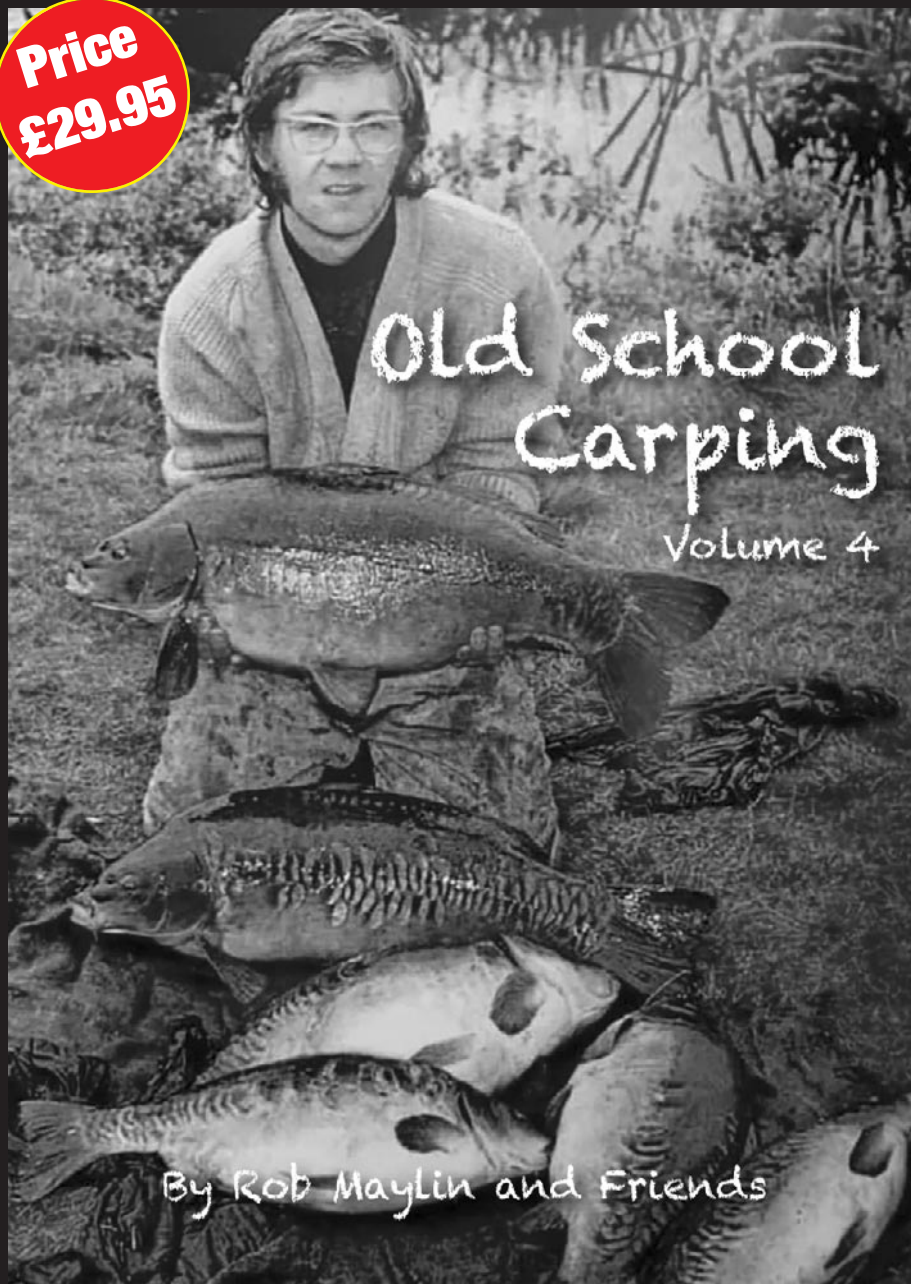
Jon, 31lbs 8oz mirror. Thirties all around that week – 2015.



Jon with a stunner – 2014.

NEW FOR 2023 OLD SCHOOL CARPING VOLUME 4

Price
£29.95



The 'Old School' series has become one of our most popular sets of books we have ever published. It appears that, in this fast-moving society we find ourselves, more and more anglers are keen to look back at how things used to be, where it all started, before the commercialism that now controls our angling, before the 'sponsored angler', before Facebook, the Internet, or even mobile phones! However, did we survive? It certainly was a very different sort of carp angling to today's high pace, remote control, Snapchattling, wannabe blogger's world we find ourselves in.

Our contributors to volume 4 are the unsung heroes of that bygone age who were catching carp years ago before the hair rig when not everyone could catch them quite so easily.

But the big difference between the line-up for this volume is that these anglers' names may not be known to you. Unlike our previous volumes this one is not all about the famous anglers of this time. Volume 4 is about many of the very successful anglers who did not seek fame by publicising their catches at the time.

Anglers who smashed their venues and the record books but kept quiet until

now. So, let's take a look at what Volume 4 has to offer, and why I consider it the best yet. Here is a brief synopsis of volume 4's line up and what their chapters are about. A Brief Moment in Time by Kevin Grozier, My Early Carp Life by Anthony Rogers, A Tale of Two Twenties by Dave Miller, Back to the Old Days by William Lovett, Blackroot Pool by Brian Ingram, The Old School Scrapbook, The Seventies by Christopher Davis, Yateley North Lake June 1985 by Nick Peat, Early Carping Memories of Broadwater by Phil Martyn, The Tale of a Twenty Pounder (My first) by Steven Hall, Looking Back – Old School by Steve Fisher, Early Seventies Carping by Gerry Giles, My Introduction to Carp Fishing by Lee Fisher, Billingsgate in Focus by Kris Ford, Old Skool Carping by Paul Tidiman, 'Billy' the Mirror, Church Pool, Patshull by Tim Thornton and My First Doubles by Stewart Crowther.

A fantastic, 'one off' collection of tales from a bygone age from many of the most successful but most secretive anglers of the good old days.

Order your copy now, only 500 copies produced, so be quick!

Available Here - <http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk/buy-books.html>



Farlows Lake 2015 – me helping stock one of many new carp into Lake 1.

popped up and we had 15 takes in five hours including a whole bunch of stunning fish. Looking back, this was my best run on Lake 2, but at the back of my mind I was always thinking about when the next call would come telling me I needed to go to the hospital, so I was not getting the same

buzz from fishing. I had to leave the lake a couple of times due to this, and as for Lewis, he only came up once on the red-letter afternoon.

On 8th August my mum was again rushed into hospital, and we were told that she had 24 hours at best. She passed away four hours later. I know

this is a fishing write-up and want to keep loads of bits personal, but I can honestly say Lewis and I could not have wished for a better mum. After this there was so much to sort out away from fishing, and we just did not have that buzz.

We went to Wales for a day of shark fishing, which was new to us and great fun, but that yearning to get back out was just not there. We did not really have a push from friends to get out on the bank again, as Paul had the stress of moving home, which it needed a lot of work, and Jon's dad who also suffered from MS sadly passed away not long after our mum. I started to think about fishing again and getting back out around the end of September. I started doing my afternoons every other week again on Lake 2 and just enjoying it as a chill-out. Still to this day Lewis has not got his rods back out, but I'm sure in 2016 he will be back out doing what he loves.

December 2015

Farlows are having a new building built on site for customers, which is going to be a state of the art facility,



Lewis's 33lb mirror – thirties all around that week – 2015.

but while the building is going up staff are only allowed to fish pegs 2 to 5, which may sound great to a customer, but when there are over 18 staff and most of them are only able to do weekends, it's not the best. I would much prefer a choice of 55 pegs over four, but I understand the reasons, and if things are not within my control or I cannot change them, I don't think about them and get on with it.

I started to think about having a go on Lake 1 again and booked myself a day off work for Thursday the 17th December. Thursday arrived, and I was looking forward to the day session. I did not rush, as I wanted to go to the tackle shop first and pick up a pint of maggots to top my baits off with. I got to the lake and all the rods were out by 11am in peg 2, which is a decent swim during the colder months. The whole lake was pretty dead, and by 2pm I could see only two other anglers, both on Scott's Island. I had put a rod out the front, and the other two were cast to a bar that runs across the two islands in Blanker's. I did not see much at all, but did know that Scott's had done a good number of bites in the week, and the wind was going into the



(Top) May 2015, Lake 2 mirror.
(Below) May 2015, Lake 2.

island, which happened most of the time I had success in there. I was not really expecting too much, having been a little out of touch with the lake, but the rod out in the middle slowly pulled up tight and held. I hit into it, and after a bit of a messy scrap due to the fish also trailing another line, I got her in, took the hook out of her mouth, and after a quick photo I got her back.

At about 1pm, Lewis called me to ask how I was getting on. I told him I had one, and he was over the moon, but then started talking about next year and our targets. I told him I

wanted to beat my PB next year and get back into it. He replied, "You're fishing now, mate. Anything can happen any time, but we will do it next year." We set our friendly targets again, and he said he would call me that night to see if I had had any more. At about 1.30pm the angler on Scott's was casting, and his line was going right through the back of the area where I was fishing my rigs, and he also was Spombing out a fair bit. At this point I had lost a bit of confidence in where I was fishing, and the fish had been hammed in that area over the past five days. I started to think they might have moved off. There was a little hole on the first island in Blanker's that had an overhanging bush. I just thought to myself with all the carnage out there, that's where I would go if I were a fish to get out the way. So I brought one rod in and cast it into the hole as tight as I could get it.

I was not happy with the first two attempts, but the third clipped the bush on the way in. I put two Spombs of boilies and maggots as close as I could get it, and an hour and a half later the bobbin hit the floor. I picked up the rod and quickly reeled down to the fish. As I was playing it in, one of the lake's staff, Matt, was walking around. He saw me playing it, so he came over and did the honours with the net. Once in, he looked at me and



said he thought it was a good 20, maybe 30. I was over the moon when he said that. I could see that my hook had come out in the net, and I asked if he minded if I quickly cast the rod back out again before doing the photo. He said, "Not a problem, fella." So I quickly checked the rig and all looked ok, so I cast back in the hole. This time it fell a little shorter and landed more on the area the Spombs had. Matt weighed the fish and it went 32lb. I was over the moon, and when I went to lift the fish up for photos, the rod I had just cast was off again. Matt quickly cared for the mirror while I hit the rod. We could do her photos after I got the next one in. As I was playing this one, I was not really thinking about how big it was; I was just buzzing with the 32 mirror, but then Matt and I saw her turn just before the net. It was a big common on the end. Matt was actually filming, but at this point dropped the camera, grabbed the net, and just kept saying, "Dan, it's a good fish!"

The next time she came up, I quickly pulled her to the net, and she was ours. Matt looked at me and said, "Mate, you've got a brace of 30s!" I walked over to the net for a look and could not believe my eyes; this one was 100% going to be a PB and made the mirror look small. It was around 3pm now, and we were losing light, so I just unhooked her and put the rod to the side. Matt called the fishery manager to come up, and we then weighed the fish. She pushed the



scales around to 40lb 12oz, which was not only a new PB for me, but also a new 40-plus fish for the venue. The rest is all a bit of a blur, as I just wanted to get the photos done of both fish before dark, which the lads both helped me with. Once they were done and the fish were back in the water, I packed up and texted Lewis with the words, "Get in1 Just had a brace of a 32 mirror and a 40-plus common!" I knew he was at work so did not expect a reply too quickly, but the reply came five minutes later with, "Shut up! You're winding me

(Top) Me, Lewis and our mum who passed away in August 2015.
(Above) Scaly Farlows Lake 2 mirror – 2015.
(Left) One of 15 takes in five hours on Lake 2 – 22lbs – 2015.

NEW FOR 2023

SECRETS OF THE THAMES



The River Thames flows through southern England. It is the longest river entirely in England, with a total length of 215 miles (346km) and the second longest in the United Kingdom, after the River Severn. While it is best known for flowing through London, the river also flows alongside other towns and cities, including Oxford, Reading, Henley-on-Thames, and Windsor.

The river gives its name to three informal areas: the Thames Valley, a region of England around the river between Oxford and west London; the Thames Gateway; and the greatly overlapping Thames Estuary around the tidal Thames to the east of London and including the waterway itself. Thames Valley Police is a formal body that takes its name from the river, covering three counties.

In an alternative name, derived from its long tidal reach up to Teddington Lock in south west London, the lower reaches of the river are called the Tideway.

It rises at Thames Head in Gloucestershire, and flows into the North Sea

via the Thames Estuary. On its way, it passes through London, the country's capital, where the river is deep and navigable to ships; the Thames drains the whole of Greater London. Its tidal section, reaching up to Teddington Lock, includes most of its London stretch and has a rise and fall of 7 metres (23ft).

Along its course are 45 navigation locks with accompanying weirs. Its catchment area covers a large part of South Eastern and a small part of Western England and the river is fed by 38 named tributaries. The river contains over 80 islands. With its waters varying from freshwater to almost seawater, the Thames supports a variety of wildlife and has a number of adjoining Sites of Special Scientific Interest, with the largest being in the remaining parts of the North Kent Marshes and covering 5,449 hectares (13,460 acres).

By far and away the largest carp water in UK. Now sit back and enjoy just a few of its many secrets.

Order your copy now, only 500 copies produced, so be quick!

Available Here - <http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk/buy-books.html>



up!" Then my phone rang, and I told him what had happened. He was buzzing, as only a few hours ago we were talking about me chasing a new PB next year, and it happened.

That evening the phone did not stop going, with lots of well-done messages and calls saying how much I had deserved and earned that fish for the effort I had put in at Farlows. It felt like all the time I had spent fishing the venue and walking around had just paid me back in form of a jackpot brace.

I was informed by a few guys who have fished Farlows for many years that this was the first time they had heard of a brace like that on the venue. The common was one that had graced my net before in 2013 and my favourite carp of all time to date. I know it may sound a little weird, but if there was one negative from the day, it's that I wasn't able to share this moment with my brother on the bank.

(Top) Paul's 34lbs 12oz mirror. Thirties all around that week – 2015. (Right) Stunning 16lbs mirror from the hit.

We all fish for many different reasons, and the things that make us buzz are all different. Not one of them is wrong, but for me sharing great moments and angling with close friends and family on the bank is one of the best. I also have a little more

faith that maybe our passed love ones do go to a better place and watch over and help us, as my first time out on Lake 1 after my mum's passing resulted in a venue record brace and a new PB, so if you had anything to do with it, thanks, Mum. ■



BIG CARP TOP TEN

Carp Fisheries



Web: cottingtonlakes.co.uk
Email: cottingtonlakes@outlook.com
Tel: 01304 380691

Mystery Lake

By Alan Gale

I went to have a look at my new mystery lake that a friend of mine told me about. When I got there I thought, what a nice looking venue, so I had walk around. In some parts, the lake looked shallow, about 2ft deep. I walked back to my van, got my marker rod out and had a cast about in the shallow bit. It was weedy in places. I had a look in a bay, which was shallow. I cast the marker to a nice set of bullrushes in the margin and found a nice 6ft hole. I carried on with the marker and found 3-4ft, shallow again with thick silkweed, so I had a look at the Point swim and found 12-13ft with a hard bottom. I got some idea of the lakebed and depths, and I thought to myself, I'll pop down on Friday for a weekend.

When I got home, I gave Andre a call at Custom Bait Solutions and told him about the lake and asked if he

could also roll me some Walnut Cream. This was November – what a time to start fishing a new venue! I got to the lake on Friday, had a look round but saw nothing, so I decided to fish the point so I could see most of the lake. I kept an eye out for moving fish, got set up and got the marker out. I found a spot at 8ft, which was good for me. I got the rods out, and I decided on a snowman setup with 12m hookbaits, which I always use with my hemp and Vitalin. I cast out to the marker, and then it was the best bit... I do love to spod; it's practice for me for casting accurately, so I started to spod out my 5kg of particles, which took me about an hour. Then I set up camp for the weekend and got my dinner on – pork chops with a tin of sweetcorn, but for not the fish. I had a cuppa and settled down for the night. I had no run through the night and slept well.

Saturday morning came round, and I had a bream of about 5lb at eight o'clock. I unhooked it and put my rod back out to the spot, but I had no more fish on Saturday. Sunday morning I had a tench of about 6lb. I went back the following weekend, had a look around, but still saw no carp, so I fished the same spot with the same bait and spodded over the Walnut Cream snowman. Still no carp that weekend, so I thought to myself, what's going on? I called my mate and he said there's only about 10 to 15 carp in there with a nice common of forty-plus! I said to him, well it is November, so I carried on fishing it through the winter on my own. There weren't many other anglers on the lake, only pike anglers.

Anyway, months went by still putting bait in but only catching bream. April came and springtime, and I started to see carp not too far



away from my baited spot, but all I caught were bream and tench. I was not going to give up, as a few other anglers had caught a carp or two, so I booked a week off work to fish in June. It soon came around, so off I went to the lake. I got to there on Friday at about 7pm and saw fish in the bay, so I set up camp, got the rods out, baited with snowman setups with 12m baits on the rig. I like to use size 4 Mugga hooks. The traps were set, so I put my feet up and had a lie down. I fell asleep, and next thing I knew it was Saturday morning. I got up and had a walk around to see if the carp were still there, and then I walked back to my swim.

I decided to stay another night, and in the afternoon I had another look and saw four carp basking in the warm sun. It was only in 4ft of water. Still no fish throughout the night, so I moved on Sunday morning. It was Father's Day, and my son came down with Jonathon, and they helped me to the left side of the Point. I found 4ft with a bit of silkweed, but not too bad. I cast my rod out, still on a snowman and 20 minutes later I had a tench. On Monday, I moved again to fish in the swim for two days until Wednesday, but all I had were six tench and two bream. This was in 6ft of water, so I moved to the Point and fished the



same spots as before in 8ft of water. I spodded to the spot and had three more tench. I saw a big carp roll twice on Wednesday only a few yards away.

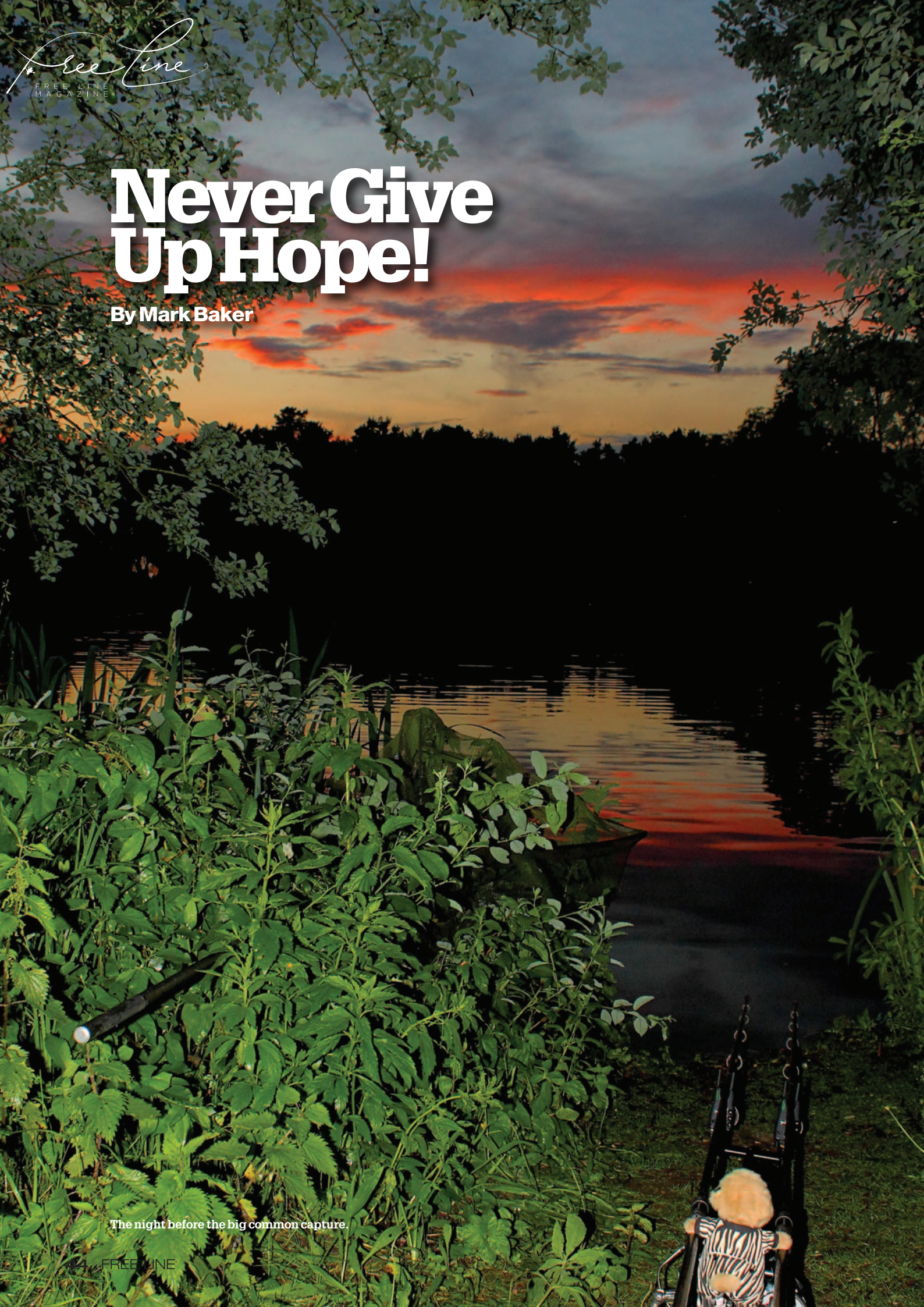
On Thursday a mate came to fish the swim by me, and fish showed again on the same spot. I thought she's got to get on my bait, but no. On Friday she showed again, and my mate saw her too. No fish on Friday, so on Saturday morning I moved to the other side of the lake. I got set up, put the rods onto the spot and baited up for two bream, so on and on...

On Sunday morning I was buzzing! All the hard work paid off! Ten nights and 9kg of Custom Bait Solutions Walnut Cream, 10kg of hemp and moved three times. At 5.15am the bobbin went to the top, held for about

two seconds and then moved off in to a slow run. I picked the rod up and bent into the fish. It got about five yards away and all hell broke loose – what a fight!

My arm was aching, and at 5.45 she in the net! "Yahoo! Yippee!" I shouted when I saw the size of her. I knew it was the big common. I gave a mate a call who was on the point: "I've got the big common. Could you pop round and help weigh and photograph her please?" We had a cuppa so I could recover from the half-hour battle and then did the photos. A big thank you to Tom Carpo for the photos and Andre Clare at Custom Bait Solutions for supplying me the bait. Happy days – a new PB for me of 44lb 2oz! ■





Never Give Up Hope!

By Mark Baker

The night before the big common capture.

This story starts in May 2015 when I unexpectedly lost my syndicate ticket due to a perfectly innocent post on a social networking site that was taken the wrong way. Doesn't that seem to be more and more prevalent in modern times? Well after what would soon become a silver lining, I found myself in a bit of a pickle looking for somewhere to angle.

Not wanting to go back to day ticket waters, I hurriedly called everyone I know to put the feelers out for somewhere I could wet a line for a season or two. Ten minutes later, I received a call back from a good friend Phil who had managed to put me in touch with the bailiff of a water I'd not heard of previously due to a publicity ban, a ban that has now been lifted, allowing me to share my stories from such an amazing piece of water.

The water in question was a country park in the heart of Suffolk by the name of West Stow. This is a proper history water that has seen the likes of Dave Lane, Pete Castle and Jim Shelley to name a few, and after seeing a few pics of some of the proper old English carp that inhabit the crystal clear water, I was inevitably champing at the bit to get a ticket. A guest session was arranged with the bailiff, which was more of a chat

rather than a formal interview. Hoping I'd made the right impression, I nervously waited, and much to my relief I had a ticket through the door about a week later. Happy days!

Due to some planned photography work in Marbella and other commitments, the first time I made it to the lake to wet a line as a fully-fledged syndicate member wasn't until mid-July. That first session I didn't turn up until after dark on the Friday night,

and not knowing the lake and definitely not wanting to make a nuisance of myself by trying to navigate my way round the lake under head torch light, I decided to drop into the closest swim to the car park, flick the rods out and get up at first light for a proper look around.

With the area in front of me looking devoid of fish in the morning, the rods were wound in and I was off for a wander. It was a bright, hot, sunny day, typical of mid-July and as I approached the large, shallow out of bounds bay it was clear that the carp were there in numbers. This really is a lovely reed fringed bay of about an acre in size and a maximum of two and a half feet deep with a sandy bottom and a few snags making it very easy to see if carp are in attendance there or not. There are two swims that command the water at the entrance to the bay, however they seemed like a bit of an obvious place to position a rig so with that I carried on my wander.

As I was approaching the next swim along, I just spotted a couple of small commons cruising along the margin from the direction of the bay, out towards the first island on the lake, of which there are three. I was



(Top) My first fish of the campaign, the Broken Lin at 24lb 10oz.
(Left) The Big Ghostie at 26lb 12oz.

creeping alongside the commons, keeping as low as I could and making a distinct effort to not crack any twigs and spook them off. They made it to about 12 yards from the next swim when they both disappeared from sight as they dropped lower in the water before reappearing a short while later, clearly working their mouths. Well that was enough for me, and before I spontaneously combusted from excitement I crept away from the edge. Then the angler's quick tiptoe took over before I was in a full-on sprint to get back to the car park area where my gear was still set up.

In record time I was packed down and legging it around to the vacant swim that covered the margin of interest. Once in the swim, I rechecked there were no fish along the margin, and with the coast clear, one rod was flicked about three rod lengths down towards where the commons had disappeared from view.

Within an hour there was a single bleep followed by the rod tip bending round, simultaneously giving me a mild heart attack!

A short but spirited battle ensued, and before long I had my first West Stow carp in the net. And wow, what a pretty one it was too! It wasn't until after the session that I found out it was a particularly rare visitor to the bank that went by the name of the Broken Lin. With the photos done and rod flicked back to the spot, I decided that maybe a small amount of bait wouldn't go amiss. No bait went on to the spot where my rig was positioned; instead I chose to just drop a few whole and broken boilies up and down the margin leading from the spot all the way to the entrance of the bay where the carp were still in residence.

A couple of hours later and I had my second take off the session, resulting in a cricket bat common of low twenties. I was absolutely ecstatic

and could have quite easily packed up there and then, but with one more night at my disposal it would have been rude not to stay. Little did I know at the time how significant that decision would be. With more bait trickled up the margin I sat back perfectly content with the world and stuck the kettle on.

The next action came the following morning when another of the small scraper twenty commons graced my net. After the morning's commotion I decided to put a bit more bait out and rest the swim for a while whilst I went for a wander to familiarise myself with the rest of the lake.

Returning to the swim by midday after not seeing anything else to go on, I flicked the single rod back to the productive area, and with my trusty double 18mm bottom bait rig sitting pretty, I sat back quietly confident.

At half past four that afternoon the rod was almost pulled from the buzzer as something that was clearly



The Big Linear at 31lb 3oz.

LIMITED EDITION • SIGNED AND NUMBERED

Legendary Carp Paintings



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



www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk

in a different league to the three twenties I'd previously caught made its bid for freedom! The unseen powerful force that kept flat-rodging me and stripping yards of line at a time fought on relentlessly, until, after what seemed like an eternity, a huge leathery flank popped up to the surface coughing water. With one swoop of the net, my prize was secured. Looking in the net I was greeted by a carp so wide you could have put a saddle across its back, and looking back up at me lay the biggest carp in the lake! Well I guess you can't choose which fish picks up your bait.

This is when things started to go wrong, as by this point I was the only person on the lake, and what with not retaining fish being a very strict rule, I had no choice but to weigh it and shoot a couple of quick self-takes. With the fish in the Nash cradle and lifting the scales, the needle spun round to 43lb, and yet I had not taken the full amount of weight up when

(Top) Stow sunset.

(Below) The Biggest and oldest common in the lake, Andy's, spawned-out at 31lb 12oz.



BANG! The needle on my Reuben's spun. At the time I was absolutely gutted that lying there before me was a fish that would be pretty close to, if not exceed, my personal best and I didn't know how much it weighed! However, as time passed I was more at ease with this, as I realised just how privileged I was to have caught such an awesome carp, and at the

end of the day it's only pounds and ounces.

It was three days later that I returned, once again on the Friday evening and just before dark this time. With a rather busy lake, I decided to set up in a small swim behind the first island away from all the commotion of marker floats, Spombs and leads that are typical of



the beginning of a weekend wherever you angle. That night I managed to trip up a perfectly stunning low twenty mirror.

The next twenty-four hours were spent tucked away behind the island, but before long I started to go stir crazy. From this swim you cannot see any of the lake, and with no more takes forthcoming I wound in for a wander. When I made my way to the far end of the lake I spotted a couple of fish cruising the margins of the third island. Half an hour later and somewhat of a sweaty mess, I was plotted up in my second swim of the session, looking for suitable areas to position my two rods.

Directly in front of the swim was a very large canopy that overhung the island by some 15-plus feet and extended about 30ft the length of the island. With a double bottom bait rig cast to the far right hand end of the

canopy as tight as I dared and the left hander flicked tight to the margin about halfway along the island, I sat back to see if my run of incredible luck would continue.

As midday rolled around, it was the left hand rod that gave some sort of indication first as a rather large tench snaffled the two 18mm boilies attached to my size 4 longshank. With the rod repositioned, it wasn't long before it was away again resulting in a new PB 27lb common. An hour later and the left hander was away yet again. This time I netted the biggest ghostie in the lake at 26lb 12oz and a proper old and battle-scarred warrior it was.

No sooner had I returned the big ghostie than my right hand rod finally let out a couple of bleeps before the rod tip hooped round and a rather hairy battle ensued. This was real hit and hold as I desperately tried to stop

the fish making it into the channel that ran between the end of the island and the bank. It didn't take too long for the fish to succumb to the pressure and turn into the comparative safety of the open water in front of the swim.

Once in the net I realised I had just netted the lake's big linear at just over 31lb, a bit down in weight after spawning, but having banked the lake's biggest mirror, ghostie and lin within my first week, I really was on cloud nine! A few more sessions followed, banking a few more stunning carp including bracing an almost fully scaled thirty and another new PB common of an ounce under thirty.

With winter fast approaching, my run of luck seemed to draw to a close, and by the beginning of December I was off to start my winter campaign on the Quarry in Chelmsford. Well, a rather tough winter followed with no



The biggest resident, Two Scale at 43lb-plus.



The last fish of the season at 23lb meant more than most.

carp gracing my net despite fishing 15 nights in December alone! As February rolled round, marking the end of my winter syndicate ticket, it was off back to West Stow in search of more old and scaly Suffolk carp.

I struggled upon my return. With 11 sessions and 27 nights under belt since being back, with nothing but catching a cold to show for my efforts, it came down to the last weekend of the season before the lake closed for a couple of months. This last session all came good though, as I landed a truly stunning, dark golden mirror of low twenties. Now I was buzzing! The joy of getting that fish in the net was unreal, and it meant more to me than any day ticket thirty I'd been lucky enough to catch in the past. It's amazing how all the blank nights soon get forgotten when you finally nail one.

After a couple of months fishing day ticket waters, May 2016 soon rolled around, and I found myself joined by the rest of the syndicate members in the car park for the opening season draw for swims. With it being the opening week, plus being my birthday, I'd decided to take a week off work and spent the entire

time at the lake.

Now for some reason I always manage to fluke a good draw, and this instance was no different, as I drew fifth and got my first choice of swim. What little good it did me though, as I blanked for nine whole days. How-

ever, as it was my birthday that week there were definitely some good nights had while the alarms remained quiet.

This season started in a completely different manner to last year, and whereas last year I could not seem to put a foot wrong, this year I could not seem to put a foot right. No matter how hard I tried I just could never seem to get on the fish, and on the odd occasion I did, I could not get a take. What was I doing wrong? I was really starting to bang my head against a wall. I started to question everything I was doing; I started messing around with my presentation that had done me so well last year, and as any of you reading this will know, this is the worst thing you can do. It wasn't until one of the members, Trev, with

whom I'd become good friends over the last year gave me a slap about and told me to keep doing what I was doing last year and eventually everything would come good.

Well last weekend it did, twenty-five nights into the new season with only a small thirteen-pound common to show for my efforts whilst everyone

Basic rig details:

Nash Combi Link hooklink, 8ins in length with a 2.5in loop at the lead end to aid kicking the rig out, followed by 3ins of the coating stripped to allow it to sit neatly over any bottom debris and give the rig its required freedom of movement, and a further 2.5ins left coated below the hook to help aid anti-eject properties. There's a medium rig ring on the shank of my Angling Iron size 4 longshank blowback style, and it's all finished off with a couple of coils of lead wire to help pin it all down. This is baited with two 16mm or 18mm hardened Black Seal bottom baits from Proper Carp Baits, soaked in L-Zero-30 and Cap Oil.





**Fine quality fishing tackle
since 1857**

www.reubenheaton.com

For more on Reuben Heaton, Sportscale & RH brands
call 01455 293000 or email info@reubenheaton.com

Join Reuben Heaton on Facebook for all our latest news

REUBENHEATON



EAGLE CLAW
TROKAR



**Exclusive distributors for eagle claw
brands in the UK and Ireland**

around me seemed to be hauling. I turned up for my usual 48-hour week-end session, and whilst moving to my third swim of the first 24 hours, I dropped a small amount of corn, hemp and boilies into a secluded little bay that seems to get overlooked by everyone, me included.

Well after a fruitless few hours in the third swim, I decided to go and check on my little margin spot in the bay. Well, knock me down with a feather – there was only one of the largest mirrors in the lake sat troughing on my bait!

Well, with that I was off with the speed of a cracked off 4oz lead back to collect my gear to move into the bay for the night. With darkness fast approaching, I just managed to see enough to get the rods positioned on their respective little clear spots, and I sat back rubbing my hands together feeling like I was actually angling against the fish rather than everyone else for a change. Much to my amazement and disappointment, nothing happened, and the big mirror never

returned. I must have blown my chance somehow.

As I was fishing literally four feet from the bank, and in the morning I hadn't wanted to move a muscle for fear of spooking any carp that may have been in the area. Once it had got to almost midday, I felt that maybe my chance had been and gone, and it was almost time to go home. Whether it was that sixth sense, a gut feeling, or just pure luck, as I crept down to the water's edge to check all was clear before lifting my lead off the clear patch 4ft out, I was stood there for all of 30 seconds before the largest common in the lake came cruising into view from the right. I knew instantly that if I was lucky enough for this carp to pay any interest in the bait, and if I was even luckier enough to land it, then I would be holding up a new PB common for the cameras!

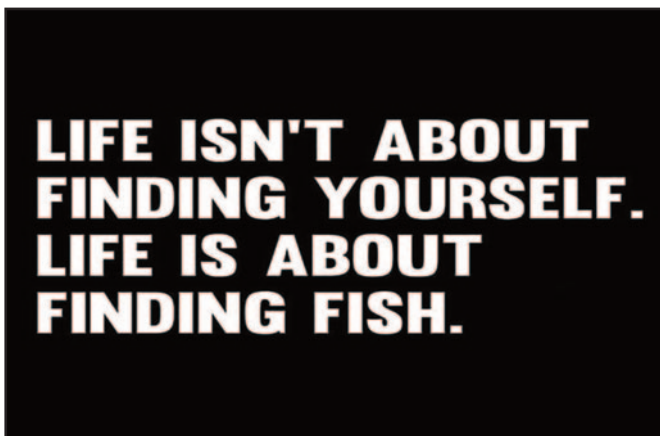
As it levelled with my hookbait the pecs came out as the anchors went down so to speak. It pivoted and decided that amongst the handful of freebies and hemp, my hookbait was

the one it wanted to eat. I froze, my breathing noticeably stopped and I'm damn sure my heart momentarily stopped too as I saw the little pink pop-up of my snowman rig hanging out of the side of its mouth. She shook her head and then bolted.

After all of thirty seconds I had bundled my number one target fish into the net before I think she even realised she was hooked, and with it being my first ever thirty-plus common, and at over 35 years old too, it sure was one hell of a stunning looking carp!

West Stow has been very good to me in my short time there, and with only one more fish I would dearly like to catch, a big forty-plus mirror by the name of Nobby's, I feel that if my amazing run of luck continues then my time there is surely drawing to a close. I have made some great friends on this amazing and picturesque piece of paradise, and I will be sad to move on. However those big wild St. Ives carp are calling. Hopefully that'll be a story for another time. ■

Carpy Humour



Gareth Southgate's New England Men's Team.



around me seemed to be hauling. I turned up for my usual 48-hour week-end session, and whilst moving to my third swim of the first 24 hours, I dropped a small amount of corn, hemp and boilies into a secluded little bay that seems to get overlooked by everyone, me included.

Well after a fruitless few hours in the third swim, I decided to go and check on my little margin spot in the bay. Well, knock me down with a feather – there was only one of the largest mirrors in the lake sat troughing on my bait!

Well, with that I was off with the speed of a cracked off 4oz lead back to collect my gear to move into the bay for the night. With darkness fast approaching, I just managed to see enough to get the rods positioned on their respective little clear spots, and I sat back rubbing my hands together feeling like I was actually angling against the fish rather than everyone else for a change. Much to my amazement and disappointment, nothing happened, and the big mirror never

returned. I must have blown my chance somehow.

As I was fishing literally four feet from the bank, and in the morning I hadn't wanted to move a muscle for fear of spooking any carp that may have been in the area. Once it had got to almost midday, I felt that maybe my chance had been and gone, and it was almost time to go home. Whether it was that sixth sense, a gut feeling, or just pure luck, as I crept down to the water's edge to check all was clear before lifting my lead off the clear patch 4ft out, I was stood there for all of 30 seconds before the largest common in the lake came cruising into view from the right. I knew instantly that if I was lucky enough for this carp to pay any interest in the bait, and if I was even luckier enough to land it, then I would be holding up a new PB common for the cameras!

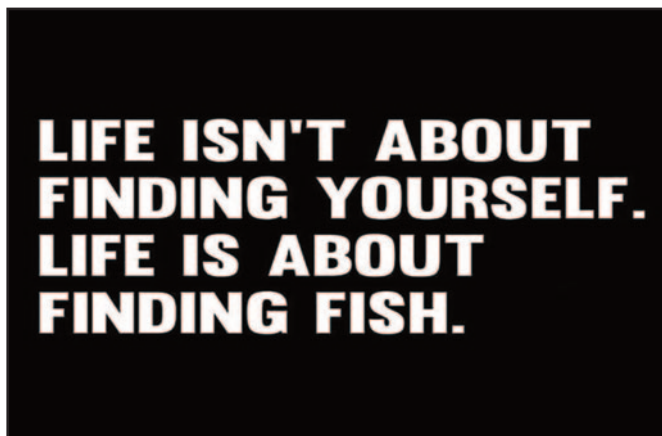
As it levelled with my hookbait the pecs came out as the anchors went down so to speak. It pivoted and decided that amongst the handful of freebies and hemp, my hookbait was

the one it wanted to eat. I froze, my breathing noticeably stopped and I'm damn sure my heart momentarily stopped too as I saw the little pink pop-up of my snowman rig hanging out of the side of its mouth. She shook her head and then bolted.

After all of thirty seconds I had bundled my number one target fish into the net before I think she even realised she was hooked, and with it being my first ever thirty-plus common, and at over 35 years old too, it sure was one hell of a stunning looking carp!

West Stow has been very good to me in my short time there, and with only one more fish I would dearly like to catch, a big forty-plus mirror by the name of Nobby's, I feel that if my amazing run of luck continues then my time there is surely drawing to a close. I have made some great friends on this amazing and picturesque piece of paradise, and I will be sad to move on. However those big wild St. Ives carp are calling. Hopefully that'll be a story for another time. ■

Carpy Humour



Gareth Southgate's New England Men's Team.



A Previously Trodden Blackwater Path

Part 1 by George Loughlin

The carp gods are shining on me!

I might as well start piece this with some background information before we embark on this previously trodden Blackwater path. Since the start of my carp fishing journey in 1988 when I caught my first scaly carp, which was around 18lb, I have fished almost exclusively within the confines of the hallowed venues that make up the Colne Valley, and over the years I have occasionally dropped back to some previously fished places for the odd social or guest session. Once I started to spread my angling wings and venture outside of the comforts of the lakes within a sensible distance from my humble abode in Watford, I discovered some other fantastic waters that really began to intrigue me and heighten my interest in fishing them.

The lake in question is situated in the Blackwater Valley and was renowned for having some lovely dark, scaly mirrors and some mightily impressive commons. The lake itself has a unique makeup and can be



(Top right) My first carp of 18lb, which started me on the journey in 1988.

(Below) 34lb 8oz, first fish from the venue.

described as essentially three lakes with narrow channels effectively joining them into one. I first had the opportunity to fish this place back in the spring of 2008 when I was fortu-

nate enough to secure a spring ticket for three or four months. At the time I was a consultant for a major company and had access to some fantastic bait in the form of the famous Scopex





Squid Red and Tangee Peach. They were very helpful with the bait and assisted greatly in kicking off my campaign, so I was able to introduce large quantities of bait for my short window of opportunity. This was definitely an edge in my fishing here, and my results in that short window were

pretty impressive.

Unfortunately, because the ticket was a separate spring ticket, it did not afford me any sway with the waiting list or with the option to get on the syndicate for the forthcoming season. It seemed that no sooner than it had started, my time on there drew to a

premature close, and I was left thinking that I had unfinished business with the lake's residents, vowing to return one day if I could and see what transpired.

As is so often the case, my fishing took a different direction, and with commitments to various sponsors and a plethora of articles to write for various publications, my angling time seemed to be taken up with an almost work-like regime, and the whole sponsored/consultancy thing was beginning to lose its shine. I had a CEMEX Gold Card, which was an expensive ticket, and I seemed to be dividing my angling time fishing some of the top venues on their portfolio but not really getting to grips with any of them really successfully, except perhaps for Kingsmead One.

Towards the end of 2008, I was told that my career in the beloved print industry, where I had spent over 20 years, was about to be cut short with the dreaded threat of redundancy, and my vocation as skilled newspaper

**(Top left) Island sunset.
(Below) A no-publicity Colne Valley
linear from ten years ago.**





FISHING RESORT



[https://naxiresa.inaxel.com/etape1-criteres.php?
compte=iktus&lang=2](https://naxiresa.inaxel.com/etape1-criteres.php?compte=iktus&lang=2)



printer was finally drawing to close. This was a pivotal moment for me because I became very disillusioned with carp angling and what it was

(Top left) Ginger Ben's turned into a quagmire.

(Top right) Don't leave home without them!

(Below) Dean's fish at 35lb-plus from K1.

becoming with the increasing popularity of forums and the imminent creation of the keyboard warriors and trolls that it produced. Suddenly, there was an underlying discordance where once there had been harmony. People suddenly had too much negativity to say in relation to the merits of other's captures, and disrespect seemed to be the main order of business rather than feeling pleased that a



fellow angling brother had caught a guileful adversary. I had my final session of the year on the popular Sandhurst day ticket lake where I managed to bank the lake's big common at the time, and my fishing partner on the session, all-round nice guy and carp catching phenomenon, Martin Pick, commented on my not overly enthusiastic demeanour. My response was: "I think I have had





enough of carp fishing now; I'm done!" Within four weeks everything was sold. I felt I had become disillusioned with what carp fishing had become, and once I make my mind up, my decisions are not going to be swayed.

Six years went by, and I enjoyed the

explosion of social media and seeing my old mate's captures being posted, but I never felt the need to embark on carp angling again. My new passion was the guitar, another hugely expensive hobby (much to my wife's annoyance), which was all consuming, and carp fishing was merely a previous

chapter in my life. Something happened in February 2014 that made me rethink my angling days, and whilst just being on the cusp of getting another motorbike, the wife said it's the carp gear or the bike, but not both, and at least you can't kill yourself with the carp stuff! The decision was made to get back in the game, and my good friend, Mick Krassos was instrumental in persuading me, having told me about a book that was just published by Bountyhunter Publications that had at least nine chapters in it penned by me. This was the catalyst that I needed to reignite my lost passion for carp angling.

My angling journey had resumed, and with a great Maple and Banana Nutmix bait in my arsenal, sorted by my mate Sam Healy at Obsession Carp Baits, my first season back was pretty successful having purchased an RK Leisure Gold Card for the Horton Complex. I met some great people and had plenty of laughs, but no matter how hard I tried, the never-ending

**(Top left) The Willow swim.
(Below) 34lb spring ticket mirror from 2008.**





(Above) Thorpe Park Common 37lb from K1, still my surface caught PB. (Top right) Korda Krank choddy. (Bottom right) The Willow swim at sunrise.

drone of the jet engine was always present, and it was driving me mad. They say you get used to it, but I have worked in noisy environments for over two decades on massive newspaper printing presses, and this was the last thing I needed, so I endeavoured to seek out relative peace and quiet if possible for my angling these days.

The decision was made to move on to quieter pastures new, and my thoughts reverted back to some unfinished business in Hampshire, so enquiries were made with the help of some friends to see about a getting a full syndicate ticket on a jewel in the Blackwater Valley. Confirmation received of the offer, the money was paid, and the postman was eagerly awaited every day for the arrival of the ticket for my 2015 campaign water. Then it arrived, and I knew the dream had become a reality... Time for some unfinished business to be resumed.

The first thing I did was ensure that I was there for the start of the ticket, so the appropriate leave was booked

for a four-night stint commencing on the 1st April. I had a good supply of the successful OCB Nutmix in 15mm and 18mm with me as well as the matching corkballs and some ultra-buoyant 11mm White Banana pop-ups from Proper Jobs, which were perfect for some snowman presentations on IQ D-rigs. My other "edge" bait-wise was some special corkball pops from my mate Mark Dean (aka Kodak), and his Candyfloss Koda Pops proved to be very successful as single hookbaits or over a scattering of boilies.

The 1st April arrived; I could hardly sleep, and with an early start on the cards, I opted for the sofa that night



because the wife would not have appreciated the 3am wake-up call. Having navigated the ghostly quiet of the M25 and M3, I pulled into the venue car park to be greeted by only a few cars, and the anticipation was electric for me as I grabbed a bucket and started to tread the paths of yesteryear as I was looking for some signs of the guileful leviathans that reside in this little gem. The quiet, inky blackness at the tail end of the night was slowly giving way to fresh spring morning, which although chilly, was not unpleasant.

Upon crossing the threshold from the car park, my path took me in a clockwise direction, and each step was taken as if an intruder were navigating somewhere he shouldn't have been. One foot was lightly placed in front of the other as carefully as possi-





Coole Acres Fishery

Premier Cheshire Day Ticket Complex

Coole Lane • Nantwich • Cheshire

CW5 8AY



We have three well stocked lakes catering for anglers of all abilities and preference. Lodge pool, Spanner lake and our specimen lake, Fox, offer something for everyone.

- Carp up to 32lb and Catfish to 49lb 12oz.
- Café serving hot and cold food.
- Showers available for overnights.
- Designated car park for anglers located directly between lakes.
- Toilet block with male/female/disabled toilets at the car park.
- Disabled pegs at two coarse lakes and 12 bark chipped pegs available for overnighting at the specimen lake.



Visit us on Facebook

www.cooleacresfishery.co.uk

07899 735052

cooleacresfishery1@gmail.com





(Above) A nice OCB Nutmix bait package.

(Bottom) 17lb 12oz common that gave a right scrap.

ble so as not to disturb the slumbering anglers currently ensconced in the folds of their sleeping bags. Alas, the inevitable crack of a twig was at seemingly earth shattering volume in the vacuous quiet of the early morning, but I carried on looking and listening for signs.

One lap of the lake was carried out with stealthy aplomb, but the carp quarry were proving a tad elusive and not giving away their presence. Back at the start of the circuit, near the car park, and I could make out a shadowy figure in the distance, and within a few moments our paths would cross and some sussing out would be done. The guy I met was also a new member on his inaugural lap, and we exchanged introductions whilst discreetly getting the measure of each other, and James and I were to become pals over the coming months. We trod the paths together until the impending dawn increased the need for a decision on swims, and we both agreed to fish in the same area of the lake but on opposite banks, as we had only seen activity from carp in the area they call the Match Lake.

The buckets were dropped, and it was back to the motors to load up the porters and head off to our swims to pitch camp. I opted for a swim known as Ginger Ben's, which commands a sizeable chunk of water due to the swim immediately on the right being unfishable, and due to the undergrowth, it has been left in that way for

some time. I remembered this swim from many moons ago, but the lake has changed dramatically in the seven years since I last fished it. Gone is the mushroom farm and the horrid smell that emanated from it, replaced by luxury detached houses, and the car park of old has been replaced by a new one around the corner. No longer can you drive behind any swims; it's all about huffing and puffing as you lug your gear around the wood chipped paths.

The lake is circumnavigated via a manicured path, which has been put in place by the local council, and they have designated it a walking space for the public and their dogs. The swims are divided from the path with wooden fencing, and the idea is that the public stick to the path and the anglers are left to get on with their business. A major concern for any angler these days is security, and I

would be lying if I said it was not a major worry given the amount of tackle we take and its worth. However, given the area it is in, those concerns were unfounded, and the same people were prevalent in their daily, weekly activities around the lake and some would become regular people to chat with over the coming season.

So camp was set up, and the rods were waiting idly propped against the Pioneer as I had a bit of a lead around. One thing that quickly became clear was that there was either a hell of a lot of weed left over and not rotted down from last season or the weed had started to take hold quite early in this area of the lake already.

With three good spots found, I opted to fish three on low rider chod rigs over a scattering of the 18mm Nutmix and some chopped baits catapulted out in small PVA mesh parcels in a tight proximity. One of the chod rigs had a matching Nutmix cork ball, and the other two were on pink and white Candyfloss specials in an attempt to give them some visually appeal, as well as emanating some rather special fruit oils.

The swim was very soft underfoot, and I could see this turning into a quagmire if we had some persistent rain over the coming days. Being a bit paranoid about filth in the bivvy, I was not looking forward to the relentless cleaning regime, which would no doubt ensue. With my newfound love of angling and a lack of pressure from sponsors, I can honestly say that I am 50% angler and 50% camper now





with an unbridled love of al fresco cooking, reading and listening to music to take up my time.

I am, dare I say it, a bit lazy when it comes to being in pursuit of the largest, and now that I am in my mid 40s, the fishing off a barrow ready to move in a flash, moving at 3am to the sound of crashing fish or upping sticks in the middle of a thunderstorm



are not really on my angling agenda these days... Come to think of it, they never really were in the first place! My time now is limited to sessions starting on Friday afternoons to Sunday morning, so with the pressures of work, I want to relax and not be dragging kit around to four swims in two nights.

Don't get me wrong; if the carp are

blatantly gone from my area and are actively feeding and showing elsewhere then I do pack up and move,

(Above left) Double sirloin steaks and trimmings just before catching the Penny Common.

(Above right) Image 12 – 17lb 14oz of lean torpedo common.

(Below) 35lb 4oz spring ticket mirror from 2008.



but usually under inner mental protest.

So, having got the rods on the spots and confident they were all actually fishing effectively, it was time to fire up the stoves and get some hearty food on the go to stave off the spring chill. Having been up so early, I must have nodded off after my substantial feast, and I woke around 10am to see James fighting his first fish from the lake. That's a great start, especially when he texted me to say that it was a 30lb common. I was well pleased for him getting a bite so soon and a cracker of a fish as well. For me, the rest of that first day passed without event, the sun continued on its low trajectory into the west, the light levels faded to reveal a cloudless sky, and it wasn't long before the celestial jewels shimmered against a charcoal canvas. The lake began to take on a different aura as the swirls of mist floated over the surface, and the odd

fish could be heard rolling in the darkness with only the ripples as evidence of their presence.

I slept well that night, as the alarms only made the odd bleep commensurate with a passing fish or shifting weed clump. The clock indicated it was early, and the sun rose behind me where the dappled rays were filtered through the emerging greenery on the trees. The odd car could be heard on the road some 150 yards away, and the dawn chorus was as noticeable as the lack of aircraft noise. The temperature had dropped significantly overnight, and there was a noticeable chill in my swim, which was not yet benefitting from the weak warmth of the sun's rays. The Primus was fired up, and a quick wave over the lake to James started off the day. My first night was completed, and I was now in the midst of bite time, so confidence was still high as I sipped on the first cuppa of the day. The sun's attempt at lighting up the day was quickly extinguished by the thick blanket of cloud that was now omnipresent, and as the morning drew on the odd fish began to show



(Top right) Fillet steak, medium rare!
(Below) 29lb 2oz surface-caught common from the same venue spring ticket in 2008.



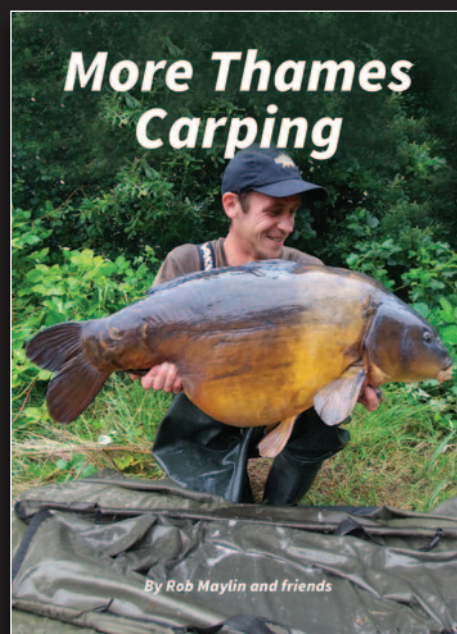
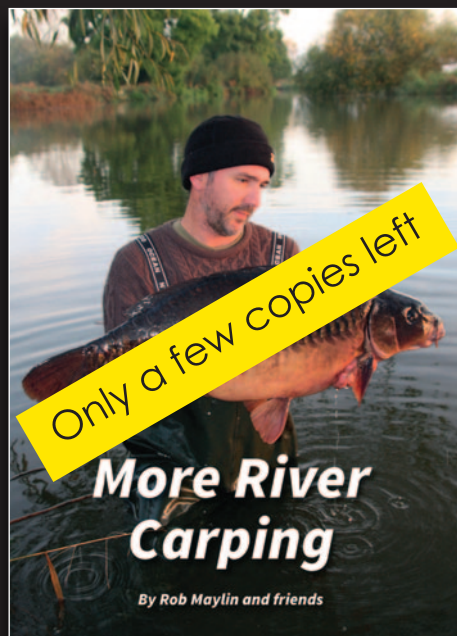
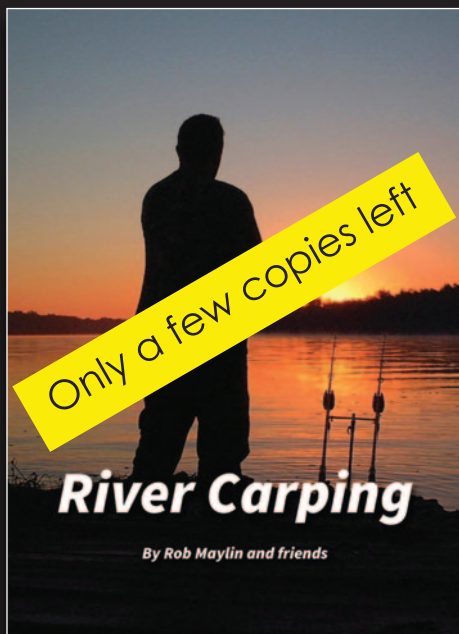
in this area of the lake.

The resident swans on the lake were involved with a long running battle with the Canada geese, and they were constantly charging around creating masses of disturbance as they crashed and flapped their wings in an attempt to drive the geese away, albeit only temporarily. I thought any chance of a bite might be diminishing by the second with this chaos unfolding on the surface in what is a relatively shallow area of the lake with a maximum depth around 7ft but averaging around 5ft generally. However, at around 10:15 the left hand rod was away as the fish had picked up the lethal, Jag sharp Krank choddy. This rod was being yanked round to full battle curve as I lifted into the weighty adversary, and it took on a phenomenal battle curve as we became locked in a battle of wills. The spot I was fishing was in between two substantial weedbeds, and by the time I was able to raise the tip, it had already pulled enough line off the reel to ensure that it had got a head start on its bid for freedom. I could see the line was going through the further of the weedbeds, and the sheets of bubbles coming up were indicative of my guileful opponent trying to bury itself further in the knotted mass.

About five minutes into the fight, the fish had seemed to have lost momentum or could not penetrate the weedy jungle it entered. It had all gone solid, and my thoughts had now turned to the "rod on the rests" waiting game. So with trepidation, I gently

THE RIVER CARPING SERIES

Tales and Technical, a must-read series for the river angler



07768 731425

www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk



**(Above) 31lb 10oz spring ticket mirror from the same venue in 2008.
(Bottom right) Haulin' oil, every pellet deserves some!**

backed off the clutch, put the rod on the buzzer and sat back for a few moments until the fish had regained enough energy to make good another escape attempt. A bleep then some clicks and more bleeps and more clicks told me the carp was on the move, so the clutch was tightened, the battle curve was taken up once more, and I started to lean my robust physique into the rod and flex some carbon.

I think it was at this point the lake's resident swim pirate, affectionately known as Captain Sparrow, arrived in my swim and offered some assistance having seen my plight. The state of the ground around the swim resembled a marshy bog, and getting into a position for netting was proving tricky, but the spritely Sparrow deftly made his way through the quagmire to get ready with the net. The line began to sing like a high E-string on a guitar, but this wasn't exactly a sublime "Parisienne Walkways" moment; it was more akin to a frantic, Van

Halen "Eruption" as the weedbed shifted, the fish and a substantial amount of the green stuff came loose, and we were now in fight mode proper. After probably 20 minutes of an epic fight, Sparrow scooped up the weed and fish, and I was now about to claim my first Blackwater valley carp.

Well, on the mat, the majesty of the clean, golden chestnut mirror became evident, and it was looking resplendent in its cold weather colours. Up on the scales she pulled the needle around to 34lb 8oz, and Sparrow did the honours with the camera. This fish was a welcome ray of sunshine on what you can see was a dull day, and this was not the last time Dan was set to be my cameraman and netting assistant over the coming months, but for now, I was off the mark and happy as a pig in the proverbial...

The rest of the day passed without any further action, and after a night spent only with thoughts of the following daybreak, it wasn't long before the dulcet tones of some Classic FM had me in a deep slumber on top of the bedchair, exposed to the glistening frost that was developing

whilst I recharged my batteries. A rude awakening at some ungodly hour as the early onset of hypothermia jolted my brain into action left me with an immediate need to drain my bladder, and as I struggled to free the stack of buttons where my manhood once was, it was a blessed relief (literally) as the steam rose in a bitterly





cold sky. As I gazed around, the whole area looked like it had a dusting of icing sugar scattered liberally all over the vegetation, and the lake's surface looked like a polished black marble worktop, as there wasn't the slightest ripple. There was literally a deathly silence, which was only broken with the hoot of an owl within the canopy of a tree close by.

I was troubled with an age-old dilemma, which has no doubt been experienced by every carp angler ever to tread the banks on a cold night. The toss-up was a simple one, but an important one nevertheless. Do I have a warming cup of tea washed down with a couple of Rich Tea biscuits, knowing that this will inevitably mean another wee in a few hours, or do I go back to bed feeling cold and hope my stack of buttons returns to its normal size in the warmth of the sleeping bag? Time to fire up the stove and bust out the biscuits!!

Unusually for me, I slept well, and the morning was fully underway when the right hand alarm burst into life. I was out of the bag and slipping



in the mud in my Crocs before pulling up the carbon carp stick and feeling the torpedo on the end. Immediately I knew it wasn't a big fish due to the frenzied fight, but my god was it leading me a merry dance. After eventually netting the common, I was surprised that it was only an upper double, but this old fish was a lean fish with an impressive paddle, which was obviously the reason it was covering so much water with ease.

The next couple of days saw a change in the weather, and a deluge of biblical proportions battered the lake overnight, which turned my swim in to an almighty quagmire. The degree of mud that was left was akin to a tropical mudslide, and I had to use my food chopping board as a makeshift scoop to pile up the stinking filth, as it was literally ankle deep outside the door of my luxury lakeside abode! That morning's hearty gastronomic feast was served up as the sun was climbing above the trees behind me, and the steam of the damp flora and mud was rising into the atmosphere. It can certainly be said that this green and pleasant land can give up four seasons in one day, and thus far, the last few days had given grey cloud, clear sky, sharp frosts, epic wind and rain and now warm blue skies. You have got to love dear old Blighty.

That morning, thankfully after the gargantuan breakfast was consumed, I managed to net two more commons

(Top left) Obsession Carp Baits Nutmix.

(Above) Knocking up some fajitas.

(Bottom left) On the bank.

which were just under 18lb and 21lb respectively, so with four fish under my belt so far and one night to go, I was quite happy with my inaugural session. The last afternoon saw quite lot of activity on the far margin, and as the swim opposite had become free, I was contemplating loading up that area of the lake with some bait in final attempt to bag a chunk. The decision was made, so I began walking round to the area via the bridge armed with my marker rod and bait, and then with the finesse of a ballet dancer, I deftly stepped over the boards with the Polaroids on, and I was greeted with a steady procession of wide, grey, ghostly shadows motoring under the bridge into my area of the lake. This was an encouraging sign, and it raised my confidence to new heights because I was hoping they would remain in here for the night and get their heads down on the OCB Maple and Banana Nutmix I was spreading in the zone.

I carried on walking round to the area I intended to fish and dropped down the bank to the subtle enclave in the trees where the swans like to plot up during the evening. A few casts were made to establish the bottom makeup, which revealed it was a nice gentle gravel shelf ranging from



2ft at the top to around 5-6ft near the base, at which point it transitioned from gravel in to detritus-rich silt and the start of the weed, which unbeknown to me at that time, was going to create a stranglehold on the lake in a monumental way. I made a mental note of where I needed to cast and hoped it would be out of the swan's reach, but on the clean stuff, because that's where I had seen the carp crashing. I baited up with around a

kilo of 18mm boilies and chops and another kilo of crumbed Nutmix in a fairly tight area, so there were plenty of treats for any hungry carp that came across it.

I am not normally the sort of angler that goes to the finite degree of ensuring it is on the absolute bullseye of a spot, but I was determined to get this cast right on the money because the carpy shows seemed quite localised, and there must have been something

unseen that was making them so visible there. It was around 80-85 yards across to the area I wanted to be in, and I opted to fish a size 6 Korda Krank choddy hook on a 2.5in 25lb Mouthtrap hook link with quite an aggressive curve. This was set around 18ins up the leadcore, which was attached to the Helisafe bead and coupled with a 3.5oz swivel pear lead. I had been mixing the hookbaits from the matching Nutmix cork balls to some Koda Pops Candyfloss cork balls over the freebies, and this had been working well so far. These Candyfloss Koda Pops are a bit special and seem to have an amazing pulling power with their multiple fruit attractors and the mouthwatering secret glug that he revs them up in for me. I put on a white one over the top of the Nutmix, and the other two rods had a pink candyfloss and standard Nutmix corkballs on ready for action as well, again over the Nutmix freebies.

As the spots were all primed and everything set, I watched the weak, blurred outline of the spring sun setting over the opposite horizon, and lit-

(Top) The Barks swim where the Korda fish and the Pig were captured. (Below) 35lb 8oz mirror – last of five caught on the first session.





tle by little the residual solar heat it once gave began to dissipate. The air began to feel cold, and within a few hours, the moisture that had formed on everything began to shimmer as the miniscule fractals of ice formed a silver layer over everything, and the only thing moving was the regular cloud of exhaled warm air from my lungs. The lake remained dead calm, and the hooting call of the feathered night hunter could be heard again as

it was on the lookout for its unsuspecting prey in the fields behind. I never did catch sight of it, but you can feel a kind of empathy with its targets because they will literally be plucked from their nightly scurrying by a feathered, stealthy, silent assassin.

As the evening drew on, and after several cups of Douwe Egberts' finest caramel coffee, it was time play the waiting game from within the confines of the sleeping bag. After a bit of reading of another Steinbeck classic from the Kindle, my eyelids felt like they weighed a kilo each, and it wasn't long before I was deep in slumber and no doubt snoring thunderously (according to the wife, but I can't believe that!). I subconsciously recalled the faint warble of an alarm, but it didn't register instantly, as if some part of the brain were dreaming of a take, but after what seemed like an eternity, the brain kicked my arse out of the bag, and the far margin rod was away. I pulled into it, and the fish kited strongly to the right. I could see that it was a long way down the lake as the moon picked up the glint of the line's angle. It felt like a powerful fish that had some weight to it, and I knew that I could not let it have free reign because there were several

weedbeds between the fish and me. The other thing that was quickly becoming apparent was the cold that seemed to be jabbing at my body from all angles, and the realisation that whilst sleeping with just a T-shirt on in the bag is a great idea for actually letting the bag work, it really is a poor decision when standing outside in the dark at some hellish hour and the mud is frozen all around you indicating that it is indeed very cold!

After what seemed like an eternity, the carbon began to tame my unseen adversary, and it inched ever closer. The net was welded to the ground with an icy covering and maintained its form until being immersed in the lake ready to accept my hard won prize. In those final moments of the fight when the carp gods make or break the moment, I was thankful the business end held fast, as a creamy leviathan crossed the cord and was safely ensconced within the deep folds of the mesh.

Normally I would rush over, excited at the first glimpse of what I had snared, but at this stage, being per-

((Top left) Back Bay cut, rods primed for action. Below) Bubbletail from Sandhurst at 33lb 8oz, my final carp caught before giving up in 2008.



ilously cold, the first order of business was getting some suitable attire on and getting prepared for the post capture protocols. Now suitably dressed but hypothermic and armed with the head torch, I peered into the net and saw a very wide chunk of mirror. My first thoughts were that it was indeed a very good fish. The time was around 5am, and I knew it was going to be a short while before the light was up and I could go and seek out the skills of my resident photographer, Captain Sparrow, Pirate of the Blackwater Valley. I fired up the stove and set about getting all the relevant paraphernalia ready and got the rod back out into the zone with a fresh Koda Pop on the business end. The hook had a light dusting with a file to bring it up to "that's so unfair" level, and with a bit of luck, it would find another worthy addition to the album.

The light levels came up, Captain Sparrow was woken up and the photos were done, and I can honestly say that my hands have never been so

cold from handling a fish. The water was actually freezing on the mat, and this creamy coloured chunk went 35lb 8oz! That all gets forgotten though when trawling back through the pictures on the camera screen. As that was my final day, the drudgery of the packing up was imminent, and I was soon ready to hit the road back

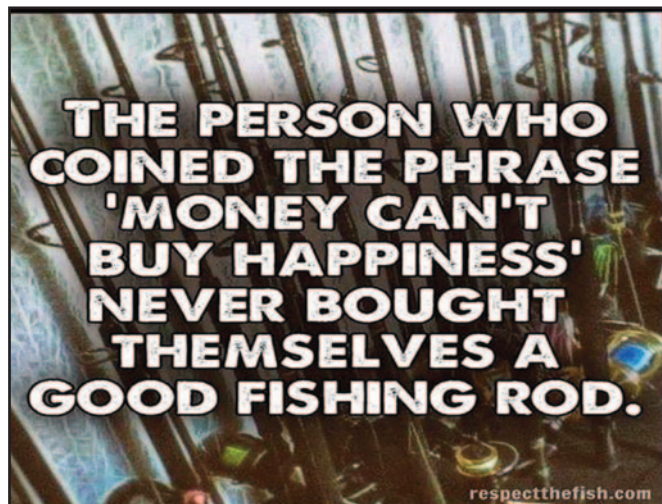
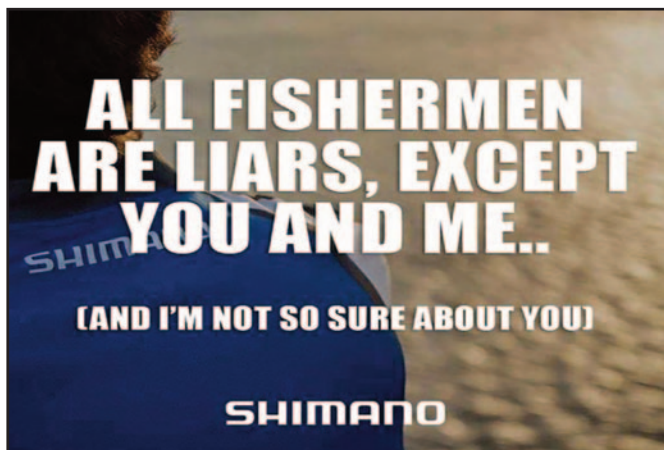
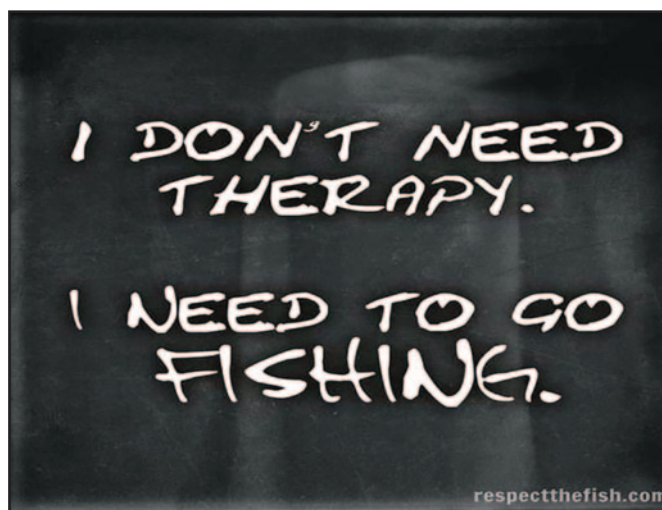
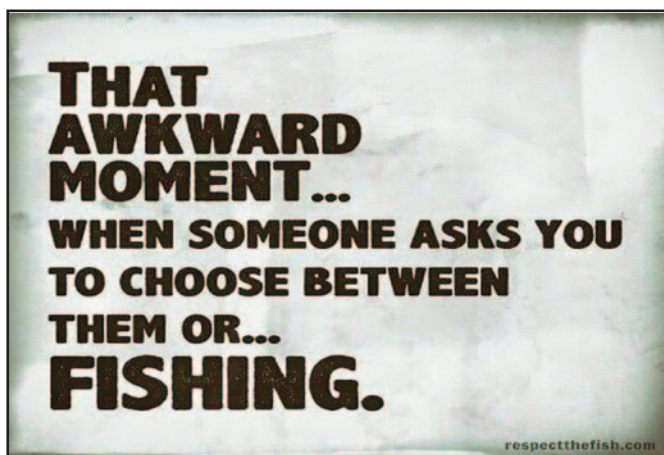
home. I was absolutely buzzing to be back, but alas my wife didn't share my excitement for the five fish I had on my first session, but my thoughts were now firmly on the next one.

That's all we have this month, but join us next issue when George continues his campaign in the Blackwater Valley. ■



On the bank.

Carpy Humour



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.

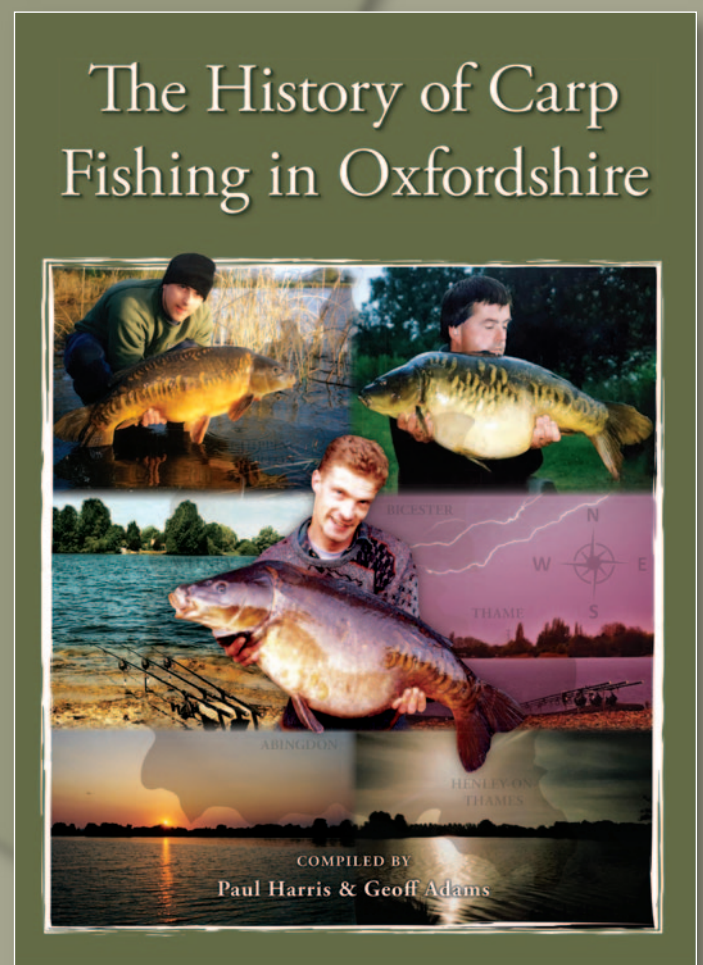
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing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



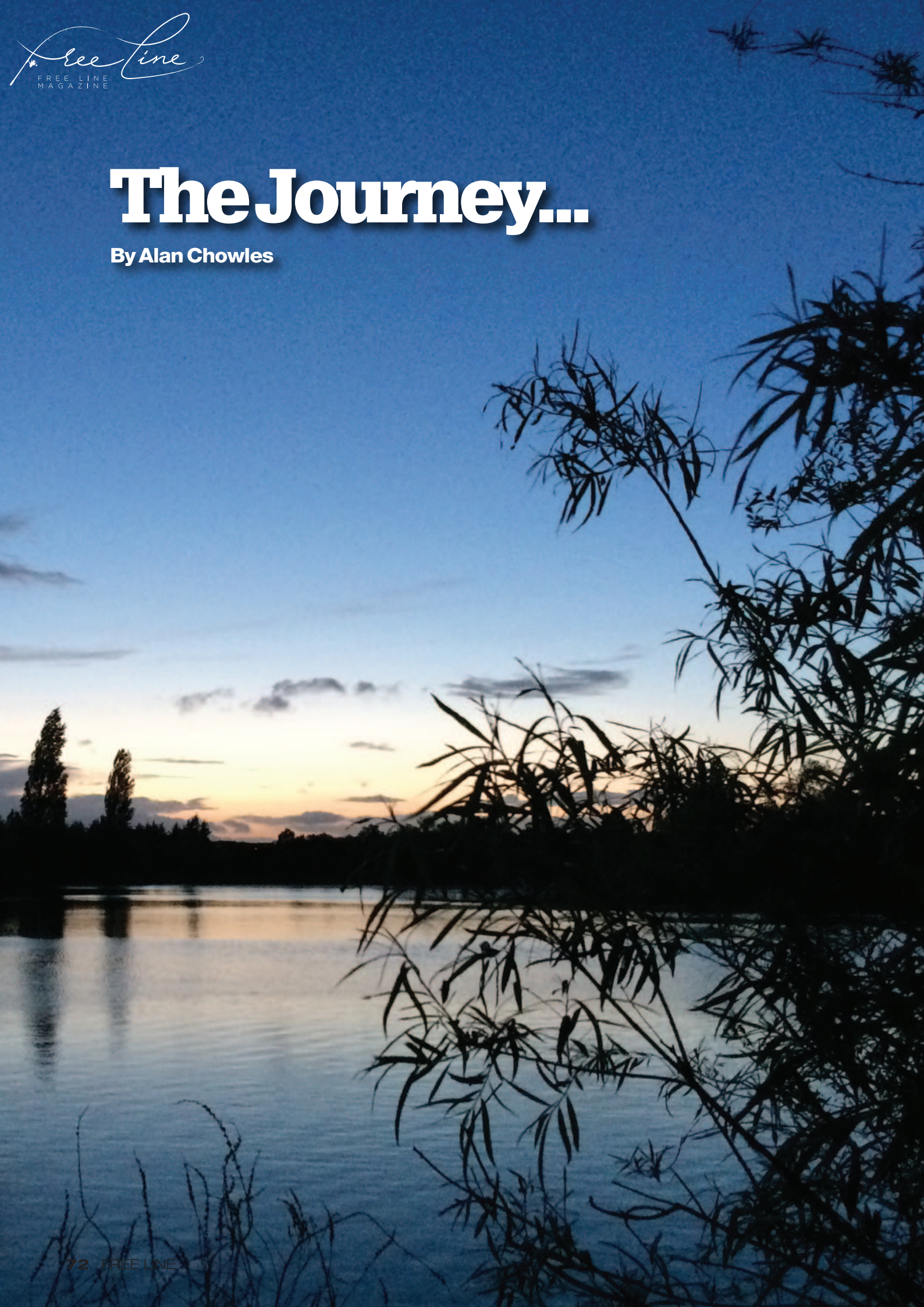
CARD: 07768 731425

PAYPAL: www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk

AVAILABLE THIS AUTUMN

The Journey...

By Alan Chowles



We all have a true passion in life, and I am sure if you are reading this now then

carp fishing is more than likely yours. As much as I love carp now, this wasn't what got me into fishing. My dad and grandad were very keen anglers, but it was my dad who introduced me to fishing, and I have very fond memories from the age of five fishing with him. There is a place called The Creek in lower Sunbury where he used to take me, a run off from the Thames with long overgrown paths, horse and cow fields and fences to climb. It was always an adventure before we'd even cast out a float! This place was to become my angling school where eventually my dad left me to my own devices once he was confident I could manage all the aspects of fishing for small river species.

The angling bug was set in me from a young age, for which I thank my dad, as I believe this kept me on the right side of the track through my junior years. Instead of getting up to mischief on the council estate where we lived, I would be seen shuffling my big tackle box and rod bag onto a bus heading for Teddington Lock after school. The river taught me so much; you quickly learn that if the bites stop then adjustments have to be made to keep the bites coming, whether that be depth, rig, bait or hook size, it just became natural to ring the changes.

It wasn't until I was 13 that I had my first encounter with a carp. I was



feeder fishing a stretch just off Richmond Lock, and opposite me was an area that would get very busy with all types of anglers. There was an old polish guy (I never knew his name) who I would always say hello to. He was very friendly and would always take the time to ask how I got on. On this particular day I could see him waving frantically from the other side. He was clearly very excited about something, so I reeled my rods in and headed over the bridge to go see what all the commotion was about. All the anglers were now gathered in the area, and the old guy was now down the concrete steps at the

water's edge with something HUGE. On peering down, I was shocked to see a Thames catfish.

After all the pictures and weighing was over, I was able to congratulate him, and being only 13 years old, the usual questions were asked: "What rig? What bait? Where did you catch it from?" Being the friendly guy that he was, he duly answered all my questions, and somehow it was arranged to meet at the same swim the following Saturday where he would help me cast to this spot under a particular boat, and he would bring down his special bait for me.

That Saturday could not come quickly enough. We met up, got the rods out, and the hours ticked by. Even from a young age, I just loved the atmosphere of being next to the river – the dog walkers, the boats pushing through, the tourists and of course the fishing itself... it just always made me feel alive.

It was nearing packing up time when my rod suddenly buckled over. On picking the rod up, I had never felt power like this before, and in my own head I believed I was hooked into the catfish from the previous weekend! After a short battle, a huge fish rose to the top, and the old man ran down the steps and netted it for me. I put the rod down and legged it down the



(Top) Thames at Richmond Lock.
(Left) Siddy's.

The Journey



(Above) Cluster.
(Left) Whale!

steps to see my prize. I was all over the place, but I do remember his words: "That's a carp there boy, well done!"

After unhooking him we hoisted him upon my new friend's scales and he went 13lb 8oz. I never did get a picture unfortunately, and it still remains my only Thames carp some 23 years later. I never did see my Polish friend again, as I actually stopped fishing, mixed with the wrong crowd on my estate and fishing took a back step for years. I only went on the odd occasion if my mates were going. We would sometimes go to a place called Crane Park, which was abundant



with fish back then, and it's where I mastered using a whip. It was perfect, as it was a quite narrow stream, and I would often fill up my little keepnet. Come night time you would cast a little Arlesey bomb to the back reeds baited with a few grains of corn and catch the crucians when it was dark – great times.

It wasn't until I left school and passed my driving test that I started fishing again with my good old pals Jay and Lee and my brother Rick. We would head down to a certain day ticket water in Farnborough and just spend the odd Saturday fishing for small carp. I used to see most anglers sitting behind their alarms looking bored as hell, but I would catch loads on simple feeder rod tactics and catch a lot more than the regular 'campers', as I used to call them. There was one occasion that Jay and Lee had gone to the venue to fish a 48-hour. I couldn't make the Friday but was to join them on the Saturday. I arrived before the gates opened and was first in line to buy my ticket. My mates had set up on Gold Lake, but three banks were totally packed including theirs, so I had no choice but to head to the furthest bank away from the main car park, which was completely empty. On setting up, I remember thinking no wonder it's empty. Even though it was due to be a hot day there was a big wind heading right into me, which was actually quite cold. To cut a long story short I had over 20 takes in a three-hour period and was shattered by lunchtime. This was the first time I

noticed about wind direction and how it must have pushed the fish to this bank and how the carp were reacting to the angling pressure.

Fast forward five years, I was now 23 and had moved in with a girlfriend who I'd had a child with. Fishing became nonexistent, as time was very limited with my new family, and I probably only managed a few sessions per year. Unfortunately our relationship broke down some seven years later, and I found myself single with lots of spare time on my hands, so a new fishing adventure was about to start.

On fishing the Thames for many years there was one species that I'd always wanted to catch... a barbel. I now had a new fishing partner in Adam Armstrong, still a close mate to this day. We fished the Lower Sunbury section a lot together along with my brother Rick and were both present to see each other finally get over the 'double' mark of this wonderful species, which took us a good couple of years to achieve. During this time I would often get a guest ticket on his local club water where he shared his knowledge on everything to do with carp, as I was so out of tune with it all. That final year fishing for barbel was very kind to me, as I had caught several over the magical 10lb mark, and I now had a new PB of 12lb 8oz, so I needed a new challenge.

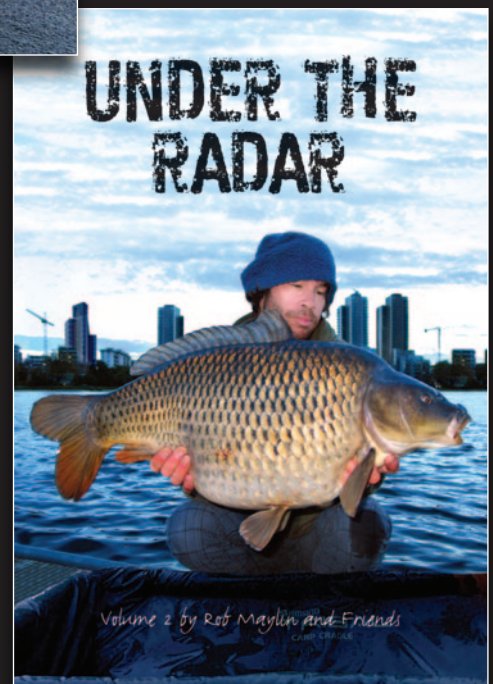
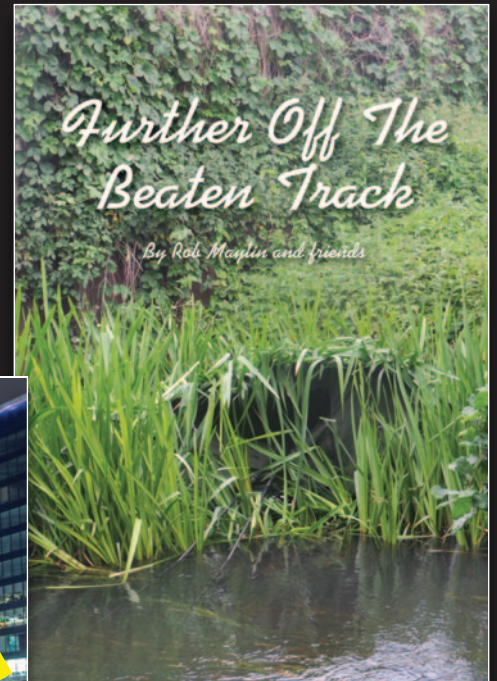
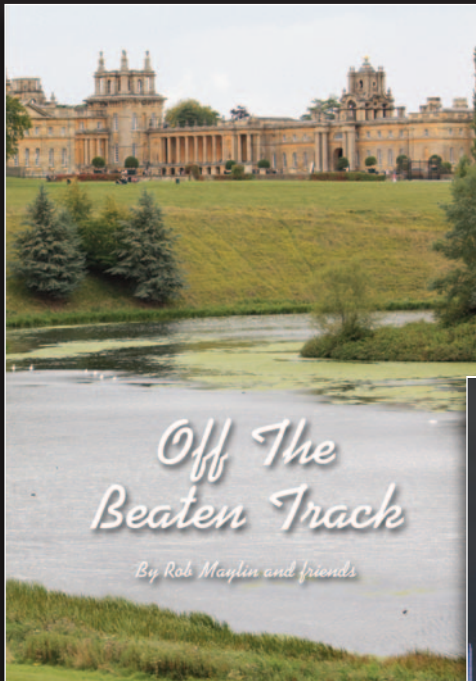
After really enjoying my carping sessions with Ads on his club water, it was then decided that I would invest in a proper carp setup and find myself a local lake to join, as Adam's lake wasn't taking on any new members. A new addiction was about to begin...

Siddy's Lake, Shepperton

After purchasing a relatively cheap setup, I was eager to put it to use and quickly found a local lake called Siddy's that had recently been taken over and was taking on new syndicate members. On meeting the bailiffs, I was shown the lake's stock via old photos with one particular fish catching my eye, and on having a good look around this intimate water with Adam, he and I had no hesitation in joining. It's a cracking little lake, roughly nine acres, very shallow and weedy with crystal clear water and scattered with five islands with nice silty bays and channels and abso-

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK SERIES

For lovers of the unknown, unnamed and uncaught



07768 731425

www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk



Three Quarter Linear, 41lb.



The Pretty One.



lutely packed with features. It was perfect to cut my teeth on.

Opening day of the season could not come quickly enough. I was absolutely buzzing for it, and it felt like the old closed season buildup on the Thames. I fished it quite hard from the start of April and struggled if I'm honest, blanking my first 20 nights on there. The problem was I was employing my old barbel tactics with simple blowback bottom rigs that had served me so well on the rivers but were simply not good enough on this weedy water. It was time to get educated.

Luckily most of the members who were experienced were kind enough to educate me. I was probably a pest at the time, asking question after question. I was like a sponge absorbing every last word they were willing to share with me, but we all have to start somewhere, and I took it all on board. New rigs, tactics and more importantly watercraft were implemented. You can never know enough, and it's what keeps me ticking. With my newfound knowledge, I soon started to get amongst the old, dark residents and soon broke a long standing PB from my day ticket days with a lovely common of 26lb 4oz.

As the months flew by fishing as many work overnights as I possibly could, I gained extreme confidence. I quickly learned that if I put serious effort into walking/watching and baiting this lake that the rewards were there to be had. I'd now caught 30-plus fish of the lake's stock within a four-month period but my mind kept going back to that photo I had seen when I bought my ticket, a lovely carp called Cluster, by no means the biggest fish in the lake, but by far the prettiest, which hadn't been out since I had joined.

It was now late August, with temperatures soaring, and having plenty of sunny days, I had noticed that Wayne (The Machine) Barratt was having serious success off the top, often popping down for short one or two-hour sessions but always managing to catch whilst the rest of us sat behind stagnant, lifeless rods. Luckily for me he owed me a little favour, so after a bit of persuasion it was set up

**(Top) Dead Man's swim.
(Left) Dark Mirror from Dead Man's.
(Below left) Black as your hat common.**

for him to spill his knowledge of surface fishing (cheers, mate!) and some sessions were quickly set up. Watching him fish was unreal; his watercraft is just on another level, and it certainly opened my eyes. After a few lessons, I was soon getting amongst them on the surface, and I would often nick one or two off the top then retreat to my bivvy to get set up for the night, feeling very happy with myself.

It was now mid September, a Friday, and I remember hurtling down the M25 on my way home. For once there was no life-wasting traffic, so when I arrived in the Heathrow area I had a spare hour or so before picking up my daughter from her mum's, as she stays at mine every weekend. As the floater gear was already in the van, there was only one thing on my mind – conditions were perfect. I got to the lake, and my favoured swim was free, which was a result to say the least. They could be very cagey carp in there, so to give myself the



best chance on this short session, I used an 8lb hooklink instead of my usual 11lb setup, and I used a counterweighted dog biscuit, which are excellent if you have the patience to balance them correctly.

With the birds fed off and the rod ready to go, all I had to do was get them going. After sitting on my hands

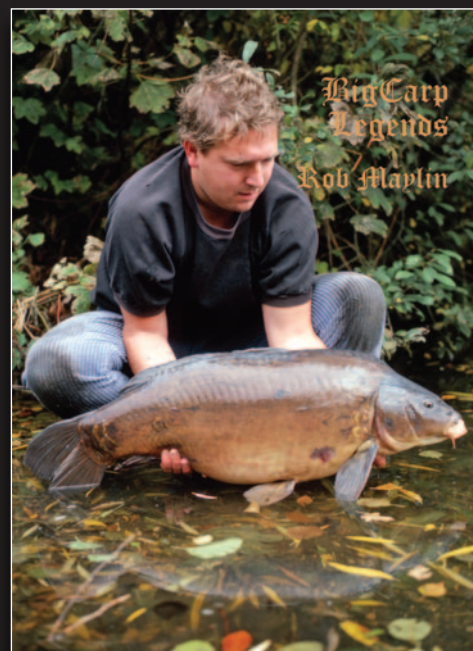
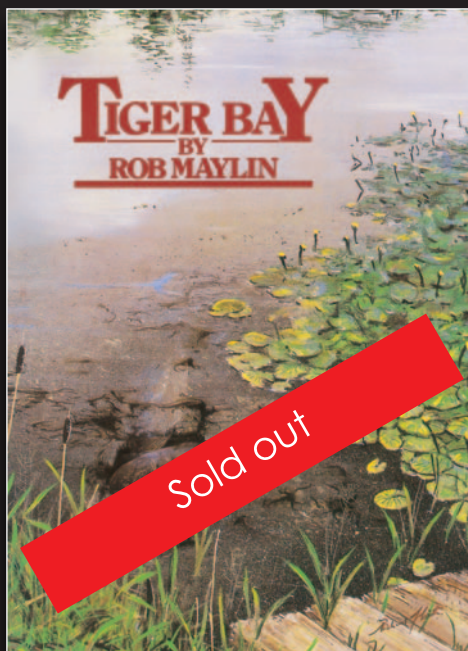
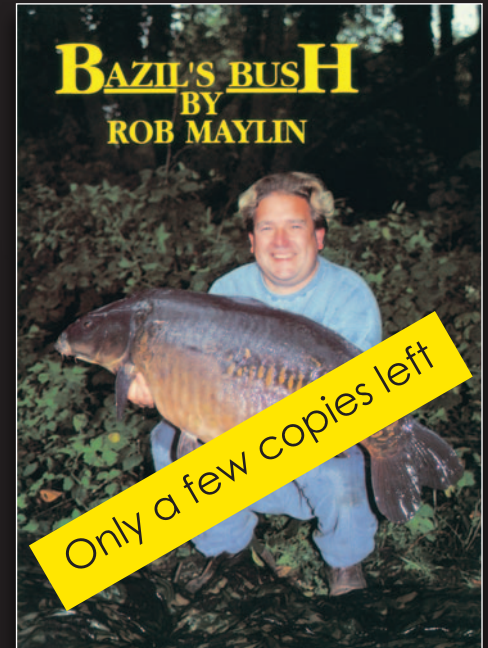
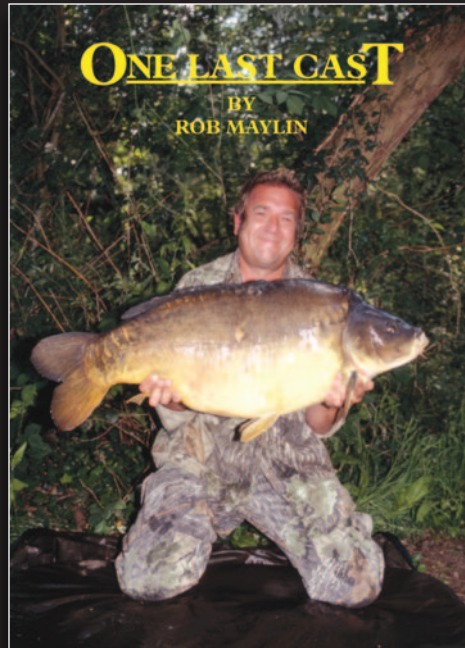
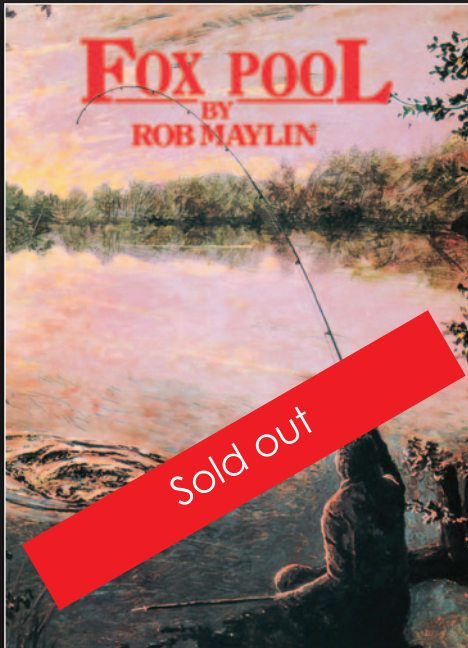
for 45 minutes feeding only three interested carp 20yds out, it was time to try and nick one. The cast went out perfectly first time in this tricky tight swim, way past the feeding trio, and my line was straightened out immediately. With the controller slowly heading my way, all I had to do was keep it in check. It must have been out only

(Top) Back Bay, Bedfont.
(Below) The Italian.



THE ROB MAYLIN SERIES

50 years on the bank with Rob and Friends



07768 731425

www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk

30 seconds before there was a huge eruption, the line tightened up bow-string tight, and I knew the controller had done its job! Fish on!

After what was easily a 15-minute battle (that felt like years!), I finally had my reward within the folds of my net. Now I knew this was a good fish, and yes, I was on lighter gear, which can make the fight seem more extreme, but when I stopped shaking and I saw the one from that picture some months ago sitting in my net, somehow still did not register that I had her.

Alex and Ben came running over and confirmed what I thought – Cluster was mine! I must mention Lewis here, as I had no camera or waders. I made the call for photos and the gent that he is literally stopped eating his served-up dinner and legged it down to help me out. I will never forget that! He was pouring sweat too – LEGEND. With the shots fired off and the weighing process complete, I was now buzzing even more, as she'd swung the dial past my old PB – lovely job.

I did manage six more fish after this date, but I knew my time was up there, and I wanted something new after meeting Cluster, so I decided to join Wayne on Rodney Meadow for the winter. Even though I had a few months left on my ticket, I am a great believer that things happen for a reason, and it turned out to be the correct decision...

Winter at Rodney Meadow

After leaving Siddy's I headed off to France for a week's fishing, but couldn't get Rodney Meadow out of my thoughts, and the anticipation was building of starting this new adventure. It was now October, and I had walked Rodney a few times midweek since my return. It's a stunning lake with a rich history and has a cracking stock to boot, which includes up to twelve 30s and plenty of backup 20s with the big girl going 47lbs at her top weight.

My first session was planned for the Saturday coming, and with no anglers present on my visits, I decided to get some bait in from a swim called the Car Park. This swim has plenty of water in front and has a very good view of the lake. I knew this swim had been somewhat neglected



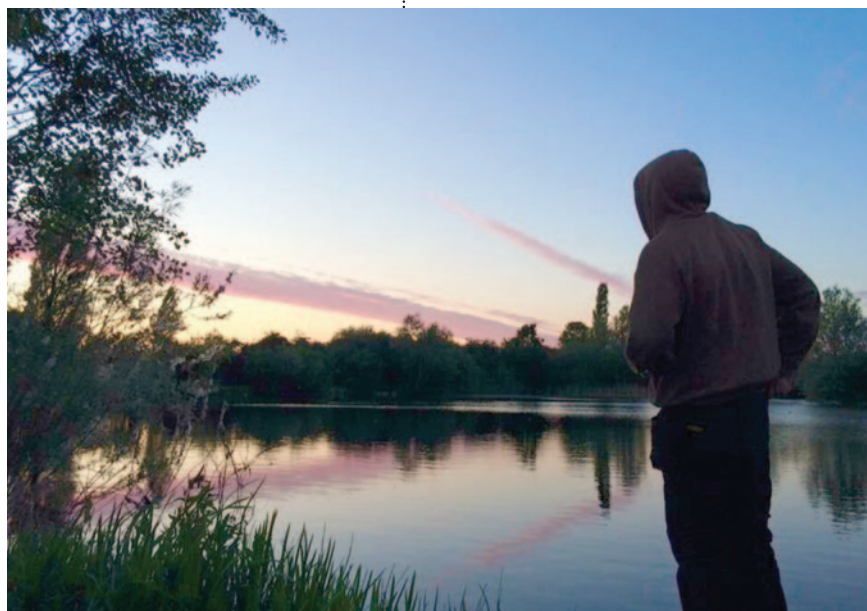
(Above) Back Bay frustration.
(Bottom) Left of Reeds swim.

during the summer months. I arrived late on Saturday evening and was surprised to still see the absence of anglers, but I certainly wasn't complaining, as I had a choice of all swims. After a quick walk round with light fading fast, it was an easy decision to jump on the semi-baited spots after seeing nothing at all. From here I could get the rods out quickly and get to watch this big expanse of water, especially as it was my first session on there. I had a good first night having a few takes and landing three stockies. It's always nice to get off the mark quickly, that's for sure, so I was more than happy with the night's work.

After the eventful night, I was feeling quite tired, and even though I planned to stay the Sunday evening, I thought it was best to go home and recharge for the busy week ahead. I gave the swim a 6kg hit before leaving, which is quite a lot for me, but I

knew that they liked their bait, plus it was unlikely that the swim would be occupied on my return due to the lack of anglers. With work out of the way on the Monday, I just had to go fishing. I couldn't resist, so with my foot to the floor and the drum and bass pumping I booted it down the M25, heading to Rodney.

With supplies picked up, I arrived at the gate just before dark, headed down the long gravelled bumpy track past the horse fields and pulled into the first car park, as there are two on this complex. To my shock it was rammed, and I feared the worst. I quickly grabbed my bucket from the boot and walked into the Car Park swim, which was free. There was a mild southeasterly, which heads straight into this swim. With the car park rammed, I placed my bucket





Cracking common, from Left of Reeds.



Snubnose common.



**(Above) Right of Reeds swim.
(Bottom) The Tench.**

down and thought I'd just have a quick walk round even though the light was disappearing. Without seeing a living soul on the bank I then worked out that the neighbouring lake adjacent to Rodney actually shared this car park. This was right up my street – 11-12 acres of beautiful lake all to myself! I could get used to

this!

I set up in the Car Park swim, as I'd had a good start in there, and the rods were placed on the recent productive spots from only 48 hours before. A couple of hours passed, and it was now pitch black, so I retreated to my bedchair and made a couple of calls to Lewis and Jake, with both conversations leading to the big Three-Quarter Linear. Lewis had offered his cameraman services at anytime if I was lucky to land a lump, and with Jake

mentioning that she was due out, I easily fell asleep with her firmly in my mind after our long chats were over.

I was awoken by the beautiful sound of my screaming MXR+. It was still dark, and in my blur I just ran out, still shoeless, and hit into a heavy, plodding carp. With wet feet waking me up by the second, I knew this was a good'un. After an open water battle of sudden powerful bursts, with two heavy lunges down both margins, I was praying she would give up and tire. Only a few minutes later I was peering into my net looking at an absolute whale; I'd never seen a carp so big! On lifting her out, I knew this had shattered my old PB by miles. It then dawned on me it could only be one carp once I saw the dial swing past the magical 40lb mark – the big girl, the Three-Quarter Linear!

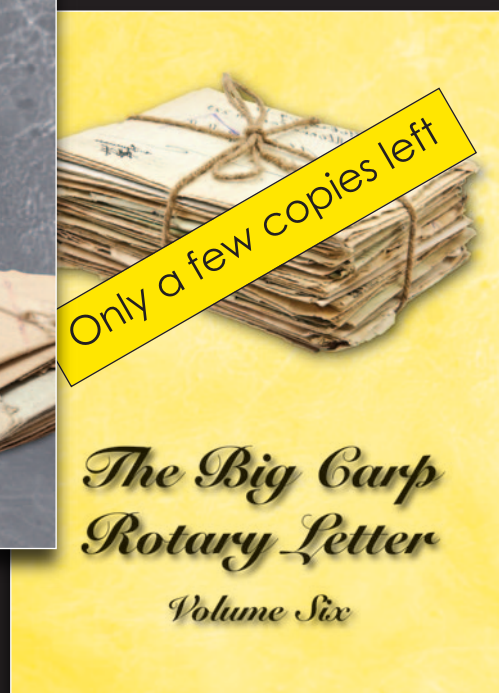
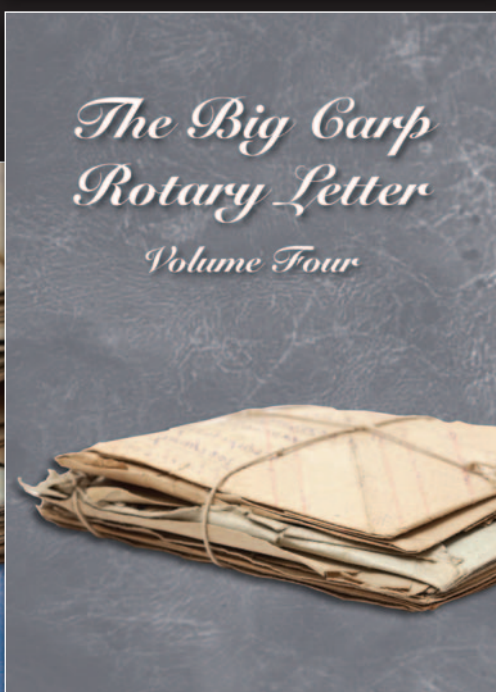
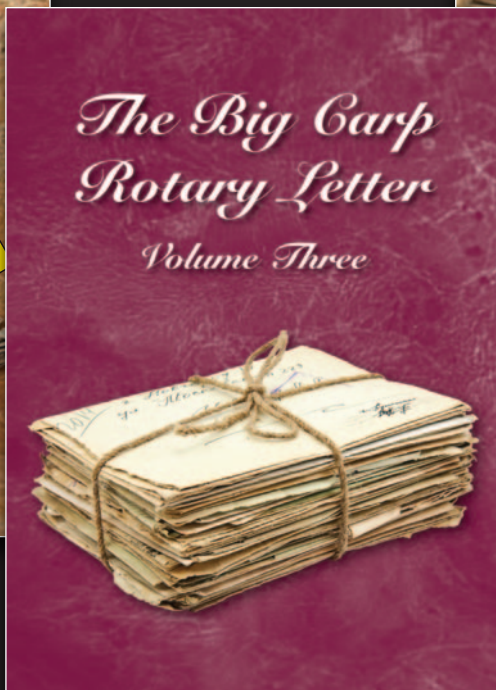
With several calls made at this ridiculous hour, I was lucky that my brother had crashed out on my sofa that night, as he was living out the area at the time. An hour later he had joined me to help out with this majestic carp, firing off a few photos on my phone before confirming her weight at just over 41lb. To say I was lucky is probably an understatement, but I put a bit of work in, and she picked up my hookbait on only my second night – lovely job!

After this, I did all my overnights from this swim through October and learnt that the bigger fish seemed to like this area. It was like an egg box out there with gravel humps all over with varying depths and plenty of silt in-between, which I actually targeted. I managed to meet a lovely carp called the Pretty One at just over 33lb and broke my common PB with a big, gutty one at just under 30lb with a couple of smaller ones chucked in also. The bites seemed to dry up for me from December to February, which added up to a 30-night blank, but that's winter fishing for you. I decided against renewing for the summer; it was a difficult decision to leave, but I'd had my money's worth, and to be honest it was a lonely few months on there with Wayne mostly fishing the weekends when I couldn't be there. I had just changed jobs so needed a water slightly closer to home for the start of summer, as I needed to be suited and booted, and a shower each morning was a must for working in an office environment.



THE BIG CARP ROTARY LETTER SERIES

The greatest collection of thinking anglers ever amassed



07768 731425

www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk

During that winter I had visited Ads on Bedfont Lake, which was only two miles away from home, and as it had at least seven commons over the 30lb mark, it just ticked all the boxes. With new owners running it for a year already and the place looking better every time I saw it, it was perfect for my next water, and I quickly secured my ticket for the new season ahead.

B Pit

I grew up not too far from B Pit, so I would always hear the stories of what used to go on over there – certainly not for the faint hearted. It had it all – thefts, assaults, a burnt body found behind a swim, and the lake had been searched for a car relating to a quite recent murder investigation too. I'm sure the police investigation divers had a nightmare, as the lake used to be filled with over 20 cars and a few motorbikes, not to mention concrete slabs and pipes and the usual shopping trolleys! It was pretty much a dumping ground before I angled there. These carp had certainly seen it all, that's for sure, let alone our rigs over the years!

Bedfont is only a small lake, roughly four acres, but it always felt you were fishing three lakes with the car park end, the Cleanaways end and the back bay. On walking the lake you just had to be impressed; it was pretty much untouched with only a few manmade swims. It just had that natural feel to it, and with the flocks of parakeets ever present it was a lovely place to fish.

The stock was amazing; there were



(Above) Cleanaways End, Bedfont.
(Below) Prehistoric, Heart Tail.

some lovely old carp with different strains, a 40lb common that hardly saw the bank, plus a 40lb mirror as the top two and quite a few 30s with a lot of the old stocking now pushing 30lb too, so there was plenty to go at. The big common, which was known as Heart Tail, was top of my list for sure. It was a proper old one, apparently stocked into the lake in 1985 at 20lb and was thought to be over 40 years old.

Once my ticket was confirmed, I spent every hour that I could pre-season walking and observing, plumbing up areas and raking early, as the weed was apparently prolific in the later months. There was one swim called Dead Man's (yes the body was found there) that I spent a lot of time in. You

had to be mega quiet, as the fish would vacate this area as soon as you gave yourself away. It didn't take me long to work out their patrol routes, as this swim was kind of cut off from the main body of water, like a mini bay if you like. So with the opening day not too far away, I decided to take a week off work and get my teeth stuck into this new water with lots of preparation and baiting beforehand, which would give me options if needed.

I lost one on my first morning off a plateau out of Dead Man's but actually felt good that I'd had a take, as it's not the easiest of waters, so I saw it as a good start. I managed two out that week after switching to a margin spot, losing one more, but the two I had caught were crackers – a nice dark mirror and a black as your hat common. I was off the mark. Over the next couple months, I worked my way around the lake, fishing as many swims as I could, always gaining knowledge, which is important to me on any water, let alone this tricky one, and I had a few nice ones out along the way.

It was now July, and I had noticed that the carp were using the back bay quite frequently. Looking at my notes, there was one swim that was stacked with weed and was generally not fished. It was very tight, but the carp loved it here, often moving out of the weedbeds and using the small, narrow channels to navigate around. I





started prepping this swim, as once again through observation I had worked out their patrol routes with the main one being literally only a rod length out. It was under the rod tip stuff, up close and personal, which I love!

First session in this swim, I sneaked out a cracking fish called the Italian and lost a decent one too, but as you can see from the photo it's an awesome carp, so I certainly wasn't complaining. I did a bit more time in the back bay, catching a couple more, but it could be so frustrating. You would often see fish over your spot, as it was shallow. It would erupt as they were feeding, yet a take seemed impossible at times no matter how hard I tried, and trust me... I tried hard!

It was now August, and my good mate Kentish Stu was absolutely hauling from the car park bank. There is a huge set of reeds that was their main holding area, and he was putting a lot of time into fishing the left side of these reeds, often picking them off once they ventured out of

**(Top) Heart Tail at 37lb 14oz.
(Left) Huge frame.**

their safe haven to feed at night. I started concentrating on the swim to his left, hoping that if they passed him then I would be in a prime spot for a take. Yet again this swim was neglected, which I love, as I can work it without the fear of others jumping on my work. It started off slowly, but once the spots became firmer with harder donks, I did manage a few out in the 22-24lb bracket. Some would say I was slightly unlucky, as two of these had come out to Kentish at 30lb-plus pre-spawning.

I also met a cracking dark mirror called The Parrot and a lovely carp they call the Snub Nose Common at just over 28lbs. Whilst fishing this swim, I was always baiting an area that was to the right of the reeds. On my plumbing up work at the start, I had found a silt gully with a cracking hard spot bang in the middle so often trickled bait in to keep it clean and get the carp confident in this area. I did the odd overnighter in this swim when the lake was empty of anglers, as I didn't want to give anything away, catching a rare one called the Tench and a lovely scattered mirror,

and I lost a chunk to a hook pull, which was devastating, as I actually thought it could have been the one I really wanted.

It was now late August, and a social was set up for a Sunday evening. It was Adam's birthday, and we were also celebrating my mate's new PB, as Chris was lucky enough to bank the big mirror some weeks previously. With the swim prepped midweek, I headed down there just praying it was free. On walking into the swim, I was gutted to see it taken, but with no bivvy up and only one rod out there, I got talking to Steve, and luckily he was packing up very soon – result! In our conversation he had told me he'd seen a big common show that afternoon, which left me wondering if it had been over my spot!

Once he was gone, I set up camp for the night with the other lads soon to join me for our social. I had a nightmare start, having to pop home after snapping one of my rods on my first cast out! We all have those days where nothing goes right, so I just hoped that was my bad luck out of the way. It was a great evening, and

with the social coming to an end, I retired to my bed feeling quite refreshed from the evening's drinking. With work the next day, I must have crashed out as soon as my head hit the pillow.

I was awoken to a belting run at first light. With the rod nearly locked up, my first view was my reel smashing into the alarm then looking out seeing a huge fish at the surface on a bow tight line heading for the reeds. I had no time to think, literally diving for my cork handle before he found sanctuary. This fish had immense power, and after some careful persuasion leading him through a channel that separated a set of pads and reeds, I now had him in open water. I guided him in towards me, but once he was near netting distance, this carp was certainly not gonna give up this early and bolted to my left, then down the dreaded right margin where I'd lost the good one only a week or so before.

With my heart in my mouth, I just prayed everything would hold out. Luckily he steamed out to open water again where I backed off the pressure



The Big Mirror at 38lb 15oz.

just praying to the carp gods that he would tire. As the lunges became less violent, I knew I wasn't far away from seeing him. Gaining more and more line, a few minutes later I had him on the surface, and I slid the net underneath his huge frame. I will never forget that feeling – pure elation, I can tell you. On peeling away the mesh and exposing this creature, it was his split dorsal that I saw first, which confirmed straight away which fish I had – the big common and the king of the lake, my target, Heart Tail!

I put him straight into the retainer to rest up, as we were both knackered, whilst I got everything ready. By this time Chris had just woken from his slumber, and on looking my way I raised my arms in victory, and I think he knew what I had. On the scales he went 37lb 14oz. He did come out once before at 40-plus but he's a rare one that so many anglers before me have targeted with many failing. He smashed my old common personal best, and I truly feel privileged to have met him. Unfortunately the pictures didn't turn out great, as the heavens opened up, and we were all rushing to



(Above) Rodney Meadow Car Park

head off to work, but I really didn't care. It's the memories that count and will never be forgotten.

I took a well deserved break after that capture, as to be honest, I was shattered from all the hard work that had led up to that memorable morning. But I returned at the start of September and jumped into the swim

to the left of Kentish Stu again for an overnighter. I couldn't believe my luck, as come packing up time before heading off to work I met the big mirror, a 40-plus year old carp, the queen of the lake, who swung the dial round to 38lb 15oz! When your luck's in and all that... lovely times for sure

Be lucky Alchow. ■

Carpy Humour



**JAMES HAS 2 FISHING RODS
HE BUYS 2 MORE,
WHAT DOES JAMES HAVE?**



**HAPPINESS. JAMES HAS
HAPPINESS.**

Fishing Muck Ups

Good Looking Carp

By Jon Quinn

It was the morning of the 17th of November 2015, and I had arranged to meet my chum James the Farmer at the syndicate lake for a bit of swim maintenance before I was to fish the night to follow. On arriving I could see that James had completed most of the heavy work with a machine that was on site due to repairs to the lakeside track. I was gutted to say the least, as I had mentally built myself up to hours of digging and earth moving by hand. Result. All that remained was to pick up some wood chip to finish the job. Nice one, James.

The conditions were moody, overcast with a moderate westerly blowing, but it was remarkably warm for the time of year. The lake in question is one of the Wasing Estate lakes and is very close to Cranwells and this is where we had to go to grab the chippings.

Upon our return we heard news of the impending hurricane nicknamed Barney. Reports were saying it would start to hit late afternoon, early evening round that neck of the woods. We spoke of it and just laughed, as the

weathermen seldom seem to get it right in my experience. How wrong could we have been? The next hour was spent making the swim good, and at last I was able to get some sticks in to it. Happy days.

There is a fair story that leads up to this session inasmuch as the lake itself can be, shall we say, awkward at the best of times, although I had done fairly well and been pretty consistent up until then. I had decided some six weeks prior to give it the large one on the baiting front. The fish had shown a definite liking for the ever-faithful Cell, so I decided to let 'em have it.

I had chosen my area carefully and the decision was made on several grounds. Firstly the water in front was fairly deep, most probably in the region of 18ft at that time of year. It was very silty, and there were very few if any notable features in front of me. My choice was based on the following factors... Most other anglers didn't like the depth. They were mainly also looking for gravel, and there wasn't any to speak of, and owing to these two reasons it was very often the last swim to

be taken. That'll do for me.

In a near military fashion, I baited a line of about 30 yards in length every other night or just on nightfall every other night for a six-week period. It was critical to bait as it was getting dark, as I figured that the area would have bait in it throughout the night, at least until the birds got back on it during the morning, as they invariably did.

I planned to fish all three rods along the line at regular intervals, as each spot would have got an equal amount of bait during the baiting period. I planned also not to fill it in when fishing, and I did know by the time this session came that the fish knew exactly what time feeding time was, as I'd had action bang on that time the week previously. Rigs were simple, comprising of a metre of leadcore, simple lead clip arrangements with a sinking coated hooklink material from my mate Ian at CV Tackle and bait. Two rods were cast with snowman rigs on Longshank Nailers and the third on a bright pop-up on the same size 8 hook.

I managed to get the rods out by early afternoon, and only a small sprin-





kle of bait followed along the line again as opposed to directly on top of the rods – the same baiting pattern as my every other evening tactic. Radio on and reports of the weather closing in, and a serious picking up of the wind had me thinking, hang on, there really might be some rough weather coming. I was good though, as I took shelter under the bivvy and looked out, awaiting some action. I didn't have to wait long, as after only an hour, I had a good take on my right-hander. After a spirited fight, I netted a low-20 common. This was slipped back straight away with no fuss.

The time now was, I'd say, about 4.30pm, and the wind was really starting to get up. I kept finding myself laughing, but laughing in a nervous kind of way. You could just tell it was going to get worse. Twigs and branches were now starting to become airborne, and man, were the trees bending behind me. The maddest thing was that it was still virtually warm enough to be stood out in it in a T-shirt. The temperature was most likely 18.5 and possibly even higher – mad conditions or what? The lake had an incredible chop on it, and it was blowing directly at me. I'd still not seen any fish though. The next hour was spent continually putting pegs back in and holding on to the front of the bivvy.

This kept me busy for a few hours to follow.

By midnight the storm was in its prime, and all hell had broken loose. I was starting to get a bit nervous at this stage and thought to myself, "You must be mad!" This just made it all the more fun when my left hand rod belted off. I had to make a quick decision: it's the bivvy or the fish. Of course the fish won, and I was soon bent in to what felt a good'un. I have never played a fish in such high winds before, and the hat I had on was now 20 yards behind me and was making for the field beyond. Ha ha! I laughed again to myself. The fish put up a great account of itself, and thankfully all held firm as I slipped the net under the mirror. Happy days, as I had wanted this one since Mr. RB had caught it in the summer just gone. Pukka, I thought, and in these conditions as well and with the lake to myself. What more could I ask for?

The wind was such that it would have been very difficult to reposition the rod, so I figured that with two still on the line I'd leave it and let them do their job.

At this point I was getting continual bleeps from the alarms so decided to turn the sensitivity down to zero in order to try and get a bit of peace. This wasn't to be, as less than an hour later

that familiar sound of a one-toner filled my bivvy. Fish on! A very good scrap followed having picked up the middle rod, and again it was absolute madness holding the rod and trying to control the fish in what was nothing less than a gale force 70-80mph wind.

Once again the tackle held firm, and the second pearler of the night lay quietly in the mesh. What a session, and what a night! I'm not sure what it was – most probably a combination of factors – the wind, the crazy situation and two of the lake's gems in one sitting. Buzzing or what? The key for me has to be the dedicated baiting approach, as the way the fish turned on to the bait over a period of time was nothing short of mindblowing. The swim hasn't done a bite this year. I wonder why...

James the Farmer came and did an excellent job with the pictures, and I have to thank him for that. If ever I hear of a similar weather pattern coming, I know where I will be heading. I am not fishing the lake currently, as a new adventure has begun, but I will be back. Have no doubt about it.

Incidentally I called the mirror the Guvnor, as he had a defiant look about him when we were doing the pictures, and he is after all one of my all-time favourite carp and carp captures.

Get yourself out in the wind... I know I will. ■



Big Carp pillows...



Common Carp

GIANT - 100cm - £24.99
MEDIUM - 60cm - £16.99
MINI - 36cm - £9.99

Mirror Carp

GIANT - 90cm - £24.99
MEDIUM - 61cm - £16.99
MINI - 35cm - £9.99





**...loved by
adults and kids alike**

SEE THE WHOLE CARP RANGE IN THE BIG CARP SHOP

Pay by card 07768 731425

Pay by PayPal - www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk



Vagrant Antics

By Chris Eaglestone

It's been a bit of a mad year for me again. I haven't got anywhere near as many nights as planned but the same happened last year, and to be honest I kind of expected it. What I didn't expect however was how much flitting about it was going to do. I've acted like a bit of a vagrant this year and moved between waters loads. And you know what? I've loved every minute of it.

I love fishing new waters. I get that buzz I did when I was a kid. That first lap around a lake is pretty special, and if you see some carp on the way round in an area it's hard to get the thought of having a crack for them out of your head. For me it's a really addictive feeling, and this year I seem to have collected more tickets than a bus conductor. Really I should have got my head deep into my main syndicate, but I enjoyed floating around in the winter so much, it seems to have carried right through the season. But I wouldn't change a thing –

it's been epic. Now I must admit I've had seasons where I've caught bigger fish more consistently, but I've caught some proper stunners, and as the misus keeps telling me, size doesn't matter. Don't get me wrong; I love big fish hunting, but I think I've had just enough big'uns to keep me ticking over while I hunted some proper old scaly characters. So I suppose we'll get started on what I've been up to.

I started the early part of the year just fishing socials with friends on day tickets and had some really good results. I think the first of these was on the Gold Lake at Burgfield. Now this is one of the lesser-known lakes in the area and overshadowed by the Blue Pool and obviously the mighty Burgfield syndicate itself, but it's a very good venue for day ticket sessions. I was lucky enough to come out first in the draw (a very rare occurrence for me, as normally I'll be last out the hat wherever I go), which was happy days, and a little heads-up from the bailiff (who I collared first

thing in the morning) saw me in good stead to get on some carp. After a very quick decision on a swim, I was setting up in a small corner of the lake. Looking back I'm not sure what made me do it, but I found a few holes in the weed and absolutely filled it in with Nash TG chops, loads of hemp and most importantly bundles of maggots.

The first bite came that evening. Considering the amount of bait I had put out, I was surprised to get a bite so quickly, so I decided to top the swim up straight away. I think my next bite came the next morning, and to be fair I was so happy with that result I could have quite happily ended with those two. The action was far from over... Regular baiting and keeping the maggots on the right fresh was working a treat, and by the end of the session I'd racked up seven bites and landed each one. Most of the fish were mid to upper 20s with one 30. I was well happy with that for some cold water carping!



20lb 2oz.

After this I had two more trips again to lakes I've never fished. First was to Farlows and then Cuttle Mill, two waters I've wanted to fish for years, but the chance just never arose. I'll be honest, I think I trod in something brown and smelly around that time, as on both sessions, I just couldn't seem to do any wrong! I'm not sure if it was my heavy baiting that was causing my run of luck, but I was managing some serious hits of fish in the cold weather, and anyone who knows me well knows I'm really not that good! Although I had no real chunks from these venues, I was loving the action. The cold nights and short days can really mess with your head if there's no action, and I was thankful that I was being kept busy. It also helps that I spent time with some great lads that I don't get to see that often. It's safe to say I was enjoying myself.

I employed the same tactics at Farlows. Loads of chopped Nashbait, hemp and maggots saw me in good stead. I know it's been said thousands of times, but maggots are such an edge in the colder months, and they're not just a small fish method. I've caught some whackers using maggot alone. I have huge confidence in them, and that's half the battle. Cuttle Mill was a little different... The daylight hours were starting to get longer, and due to the makeup of the bottom I felt a boilie-only approach would suit best. I decided this because the bottom was very choddy with deep silt, so I used the best rig for the situation and the one it was designed for, the infamous chod rig. Now I've had a bit of an issue with the chod over the years, mainly people thinking it's acceptable to just chuck them wherever they fancy. For me this is the exact use they were developed for, not for just chucking into huge areas of weed and snags. Yes it works, but for me it's a bit on the lazy side. Anyways, rant over. It wasn't long before the rods were rocking, and I managed three bites from the historic venue, all being 20lb commons up to 28lb. They were beautiful fish from beautiful surroundings, and I got some lovely photos of the one I had in the day. More epic winter times!

Right, now down to business... It was time to get back down to the Manor and see if I could treat myself

22lb.



Low 20s.



Upper 20.





26lb 2oz.

to some springtime units. I kept in contact with a few lads, and it had fished reasonably well right through the winter, so it was looking good for some springtime action. I did one session with Steve Falco as a bit of a social, and I openly admit that this time around I made totally the wrong swim choice (I was back to true form at least). It was really warm for the

time of year, and I was hoping that the fish were going to push into the shallow end swim called End Pads. Oh, I was wrong, and the next day Steve had a scale-perfect upper 30 common (he got it right, as he often seems to do), but it was good to see they were still active and obviously catchable.

I think it was a few weeks before I

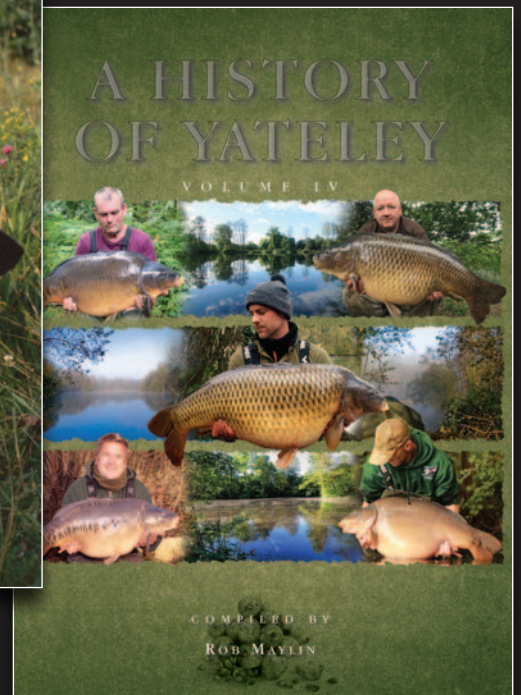
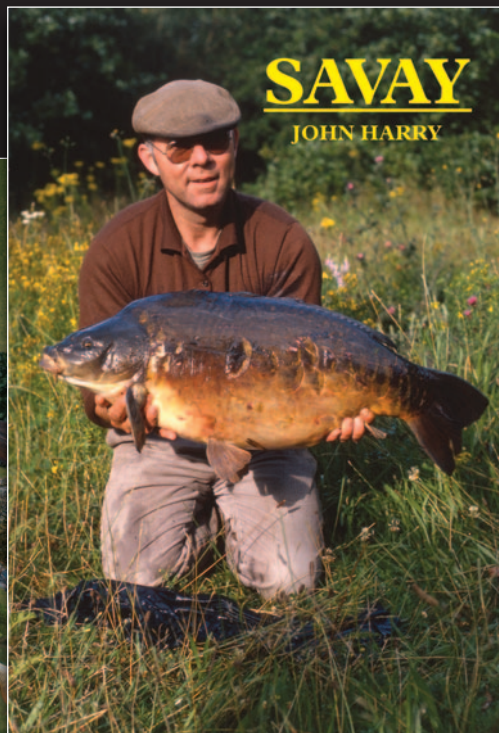
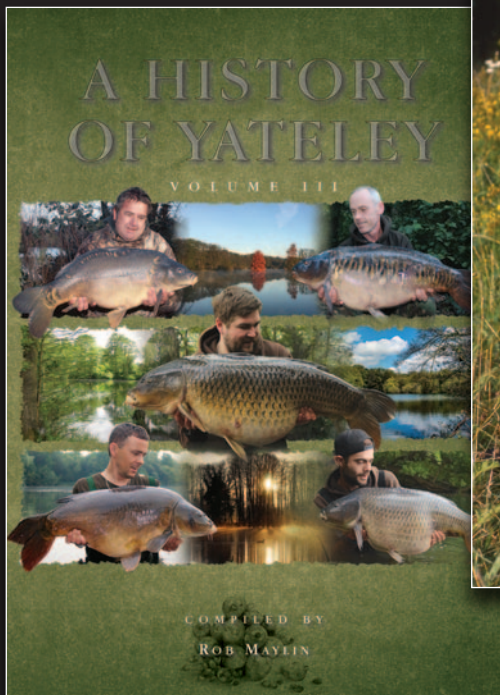
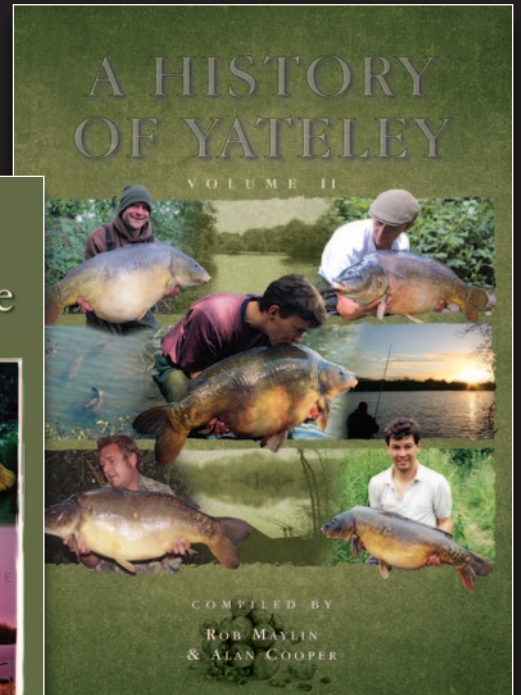
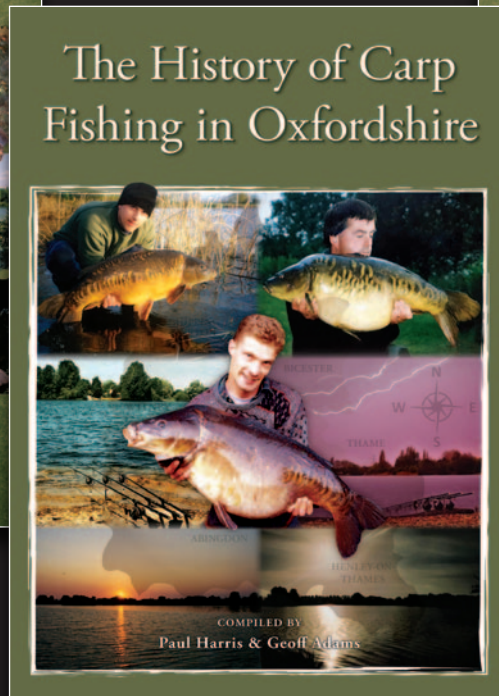
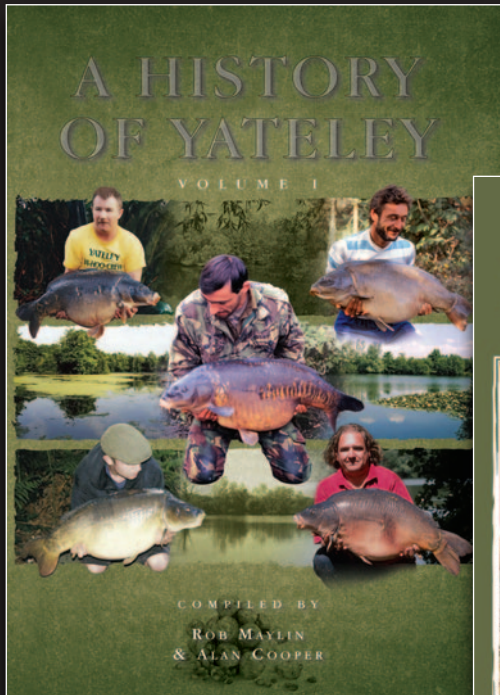
went back down again when Steve was there, and guess what? Steve was smashing it up where I had blanked the time before. I told you I wasn't that good. But I was rewarded with a big-framed mirror at 38lb, a proper chunk in anyone's book, and I was over the moon to get off the mark pretty early, seeing as I think I did 20-odd nights for my first bite on there on my opening season. I think there was another blank session in between.

Back down on my next session, I managed to get on a few fish, but they were over the deep water (up to 30ft). I was convinced they weren't on the bottom, so I pub chucked three zigs into the areas they were showing in and fished them 2ft under the surface and just waited. About 1am I had a take on my right hand rod. I've been fishing zigs for years and caught a fair few fish on them, and it still baffles me how the tiniest bit of black foam can be found in the pitch black in over 30ft of water! I mean, really! It does work, but unfortunately it wasn't meant to be, as the hook pulled after a short fight. I was a bit wounded to be



30lb 6oz.

THE HISTORY SERIES



07768 731425
www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk

fair, but that's fishing for you, and it seems quite common with zigs at times.

In the morning I noticed a few fish right close to the opposite bank. I needed to get on these fish, but that water was being controlled by another angler at the time. I knew he was off at midday, so with nothing going on in my water, I wound in and got in place for when he left. As the day went on, it became more and more like Billingsgate. Anywhere else I'd be rubbing my hands together, but it seemed it might be the classic all show, no go. But one of my targets was due, and it loved this area, so I thought this was a good chance to maybe tick another off the list. I managed to get in and find a couple of spots without disturbing the fish that were present too much – lovely times!

It wasn't long before I had fish all over the rigs and I was charging up and down the back of the swim and up and down the tree, as I couldn't keep still. I thought a bite was imminent, but in typical Manor form, it did happen? It was only when all had gone quiet and I popped next door for a cuppa with a good friend that I had the take. Just my luck! But after a very hairy battle I had a chunk in the net. I



wasn't one of the well-known Manor fish, but in my eyes a very nice proportioned fish, and at 43lb-plus, one I was buzzing to have a cuddle with! I felt really good for another and felt that my target, a fish named Popeye, was definitely in reach. I'd spoken to a few lads and really thought I was in with a chance.

That night the guy fishing in the swim next door woke me up and explained how he had an old-looking chunk in the net. I knew straight

away it was the one I was after, and a quick peer into the net confirmed it. "That's Popeye, mate!" I said to him. "Oh, that's the one you were after, isn't it?" he said. "Yeah, that's the one." It seems I was only 30 yards away. I'm not going to lie – I was wounded, but in all fairness, John, the guy who caught it, is one of the nicest guys you will ever meet on the bank, and he angled well to catch it, so fair play to him.

My next trip saw another move to

29lb 4oz.



get on a group of fish, and the first evening in the new swim saw me land a lovely looking fish known as the Darrell Peck Fish. It seems this is a relatively new name, but it can be seen in his book and it has been used quite a bit on social media, so I think that's where it's come from. Anyway, around midnight my left hand rod let out a few bleeps. I'd thought it was a liner, but when I looked down at the rod, the bobbin was sat right up to the buzzer. I'm having that, I thought. The fight was manic! Some of these Manor carp are real powerhouses, and this thing was no exception. Luckily it was a straightforward fight, and it didn't cause me any grief near the reeds.

It wasn't long before it was in the bag, and that was my third one in only around ten or so nights, which isn't too bad at all. Two chunks and a stunner – things were going well, and maybe I should have stayed on, but I haven't been back since I had a plan to catch a very special old fish from a local lake that summer, so that was my next port of call.

With the Manor fish spawning late due to the depths, it was the perfect opportunity to catch a fish from a small local syndicate I had joined. I saw a pic of this fish known as the Half Lin on social media. One of the lads I fished with as a kid had caught it, and I thought I recognised the lake. A quick bit of investigation, and it was confirmed. It's a stunning little water, choked with weed and gin clear. It's stream fed at one end and really is a special lake. The fish aren't massive, but what they lack in size they make up for in classic carpy



20lb 2oz.

good looks – old, dark and scaly. What more could you want? It was a very intense time on there. I had good results in the winter, but summer was a different story. I was struggling a bit and felt it wasn't the type of water I should have been having trouble with.

There are a lot of fish in there, and only one that I was interested in catching. I was thinking it was going to take me a few campaigns to get in contact with the fish, as I only planned to put a couple of months into it. In the end I think in total it took me two weeks.

I found the fish feeding on the surface sucking scum of the top, and a strategic placement of some bread crust saw it in the bottom of the net. I don't think any carp I've ever caught has given me such a buzz, and I've

had carp 15lb bigger – it was crazy. I spoke about the fish so much it was like I talked it out. Maybe that's a tactic I should employ on my other campaigns. As I said, I did have a little dabble on there in the winter, but I wasn't targeting this fish; I was just trying for some late winter bites and had a couple of bangers then as well. From the time I made a conscious effort to try and catch it, I think all in all I did four nights and two short days. I'll be honest, I was buzzing to have got it done so quickly, but it left a big hole in my summer plan, so I decided to look for another water to try and get on.

The Stour had been on my radar for a while, but I found a lake out in deepest Kent that had to, let's say, let a couple of members go, so there was a chance to get in there. They have a good stock of decent sized fish, but more importantly there are some absolute belters in there. No, I thought it was going to be very challenging, as I'd heard it was reasonably hard, and I'd fished it years ago in the BCAC when only one fish was caught. That's fine – I like a challenge. I started dropping bait in an area totally unlike anywhere I've fished for a long time; it's so quiet, and chances are you can actually get back on the bait.

I turned up to see fish showing all over what I'd put out the day before. I had to wait till first light for the bite, but I was away on my very first night on the water. Where it's so shallow the bites are savage. A 24lb, scaly,



bad-arse looking fish was my prize. I was smitten with this place from the off and kinda felt I might have fluked that one out, but I've managed to be really consistent on there. It's a place that really suits how I like to fish. Finding areas in the weed is a style of fishing I love. If you have a lake full of weed and there clear areas in and around it there's a reason for it. And if I'm in these areas with fish present, I feel very confident of a bite. My confidence is because of the fish's confidence.

I wholeheartedly believe fish feed with so much more gusto when surrounded by these green food-packed walls! The next few trips saw me land a total of seven fish up to 31lb. Now there are stacks of 30s in there, but it just seems the time of year with the relentless spell of hot weather just kept the bigger fish off the feed. Again I had some cracking fish from the water, and don't get me wrong, I love catching big fish, but it's not everything. I think as long as you're out there doing it and enjoying it, it really



doesn't matter what you're fishing for. And that goes for everyone – don't let anyone tell you what you should be doing. As long as you enjoy your fishing, how can anyone tell you you're wrong?

Well, I'm back to the Manor for the

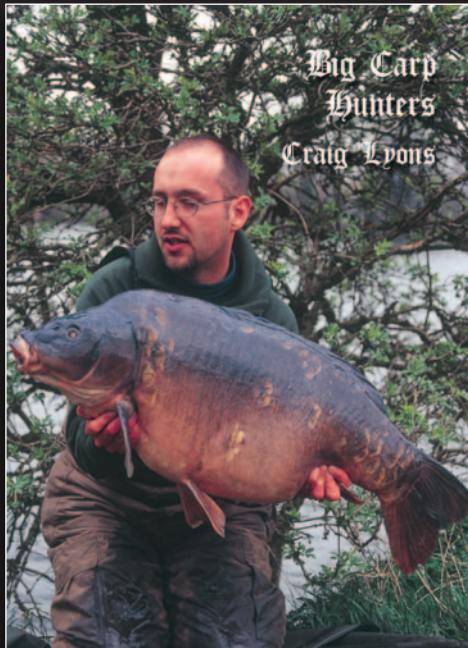
autumn, and hopefully a couple more chunks will Grace my net, but if not, that's cool.

I've had a great year and made some good friends and shared some great memories. Be lucky, lads, in whatever your ventures are! ■

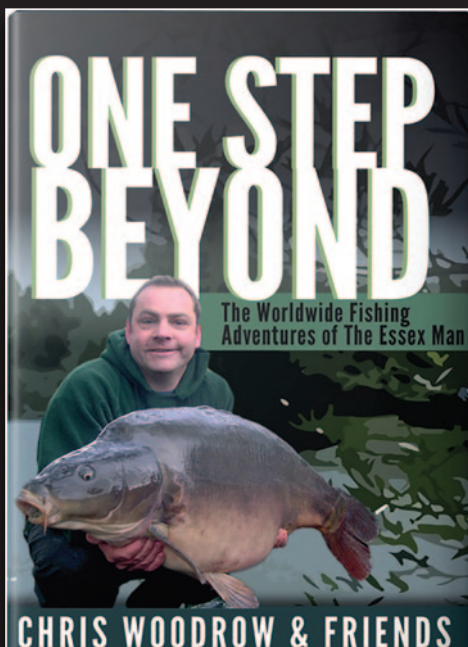
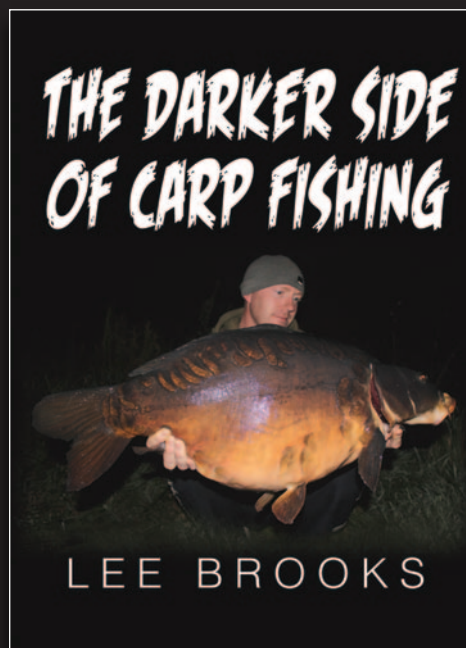
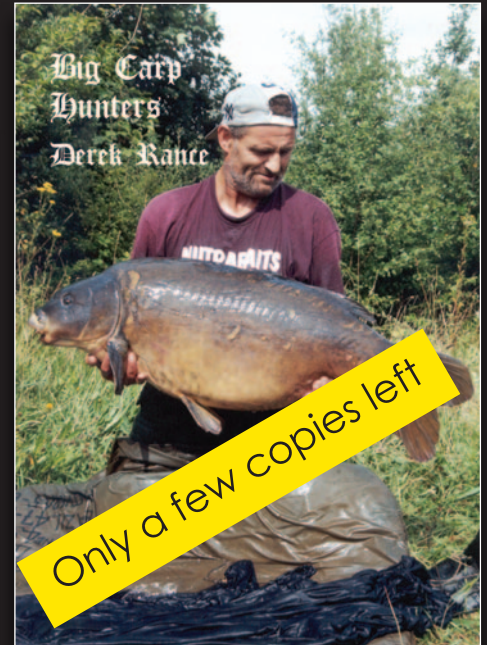
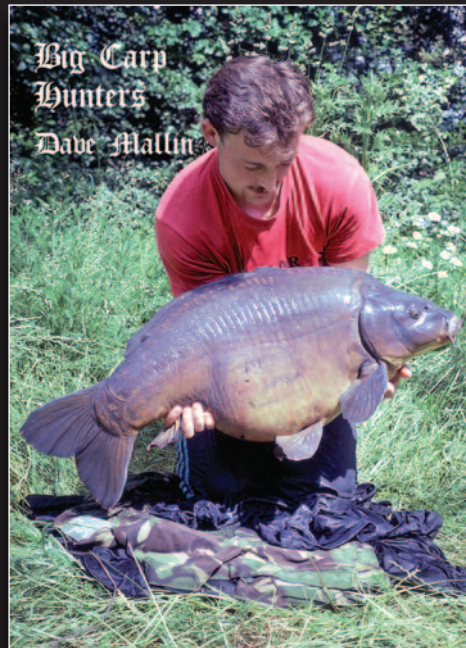
Carpy Humour



THE BIG CARP HUNTER SERIES



The Unsung hero's prolific catches with a unique tale to tell



07768 731425
www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk

Big Carp Magazine!

a history of excellence



AVAILABLE AS A DIGITAL DOWNLOAD

Yes, you can
purchase Big Carp
magazine as an App
downloadable to your iPad,
iPhone, iPod Touch, PC and
Mac and read the only carp
magazine worth reading
anywhere you go...



Available on the
App Store



Available on
Android

