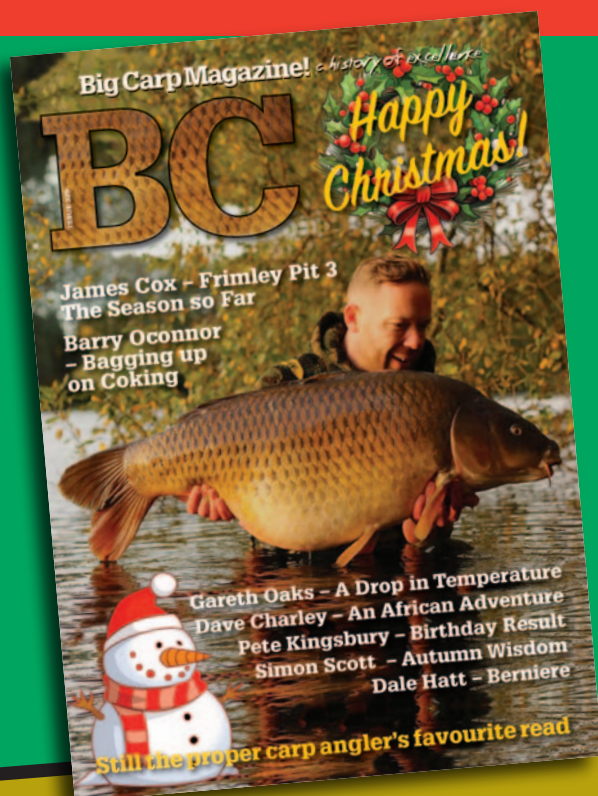


DECEMBER ISSUES OF **BIG CARP** AND **FREE LINE** MAGAZINES FREE HERE

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An African Adventure... by Dave Charley
Berniere by Dale Hatt
Frimley Pit 3 – The Season so Far by James Cox
Birthday Result by Pete Kingsbury
Autumn Wisdom by Simon Scott
Bagging up on Coking by Barry O'Connor
A Drop in Temperature by Gareth Oaks

Twynersh Chasing Dreams Part 3 by Warren James Fenn
A Red-Letter Day by Barry O'Connor
An Unexpected Path by Dan Bruton
An Unknown Fish by Lucky Scott Rowson
Treasures of the New Forest by Connor Bruton
When Pre-baiting Pays Off by Daniel Leney
Spring Approach by Jonny Hinks
An Autumn Session on Christchurch by Scott Phillips
The Turtle by Spud Sims
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BIG CARP

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5	BLUEBELL LAKES
6	CATCH 22
7	SANDHURST
8	FRYERNING
9	FARLOWS LAKE
10	COOLE ACRES

Top 10 French Holiday Destinations

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

Top 10 Bait Companies

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

Top 10 Carp Tackle Companies (Terminal)

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

Top 10 Carp Tackle Companies

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

Top 10 Carp Shops

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

Top 10 Iconic Carp Waters

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



As voted by Big Carp readers!

Big Carp Magazine! *a history of excellence*

BC

ISSUE 329



**James Cox – Frimley Pit 3
The Season so Far**

**Barry Oconnor
– Bagging up
on Coking**



Gareth Oaks – A Drop in Temperature

Dave Charley – An African Adventure

Pete Kingsbury – Birthday Result

Simon Scott – Autumn Wisdom

Dale Hatt – Berniere



Still the proper carp angler's favourite read

The Digital Tackle Hut



An Introduction to Fly Fishing



Digital Video E-Books



[Fly fishing \(7 book series\) Kindle edition \(amazon.co.uk\)](https://www.amazon.co.uk)



Can you believe it's almost Christmas?

The years just fly by when you get older. Whether you are a fan or not I always think Christmas is that time of the year when we raise a glass to absent friends. Once again, some friends lost, some before their time. I'm not going to list them all, in case I miss anyone but I must just mention my dear friends from my Yateley days Bernie and Steve both taken well before their time was due.

I have two great FREE Christmas Issues this year, Big Carp and Free Line, stuffed like a Christmas stocking with some great tales of Big Carp caught this year and before. Articles which will hopefully stir you into going fishing over the Christmas break or at least give you hope for the spring. Let's face it we have some unpleasant weather to come over the next few months.

Cover story this month comes from James Cox who has been doing a little angling on Frimley Pit 3, with extraordinary good fortune. When you think of 50+ commons you usually think of Charlies Mate, but let me introduce Black Eye which turned the scales round to 53lb 12oz! and combined with the Big Fully made an incredible 100lb+ brace!!

Next up, Big Carp regular Barry Oconnor with the first of two articles in Big Carp, this time he is Bagging Up on Coking. If you follow Barry on social media, you would have seen some of his captures on Coking Farm, here for the first time is the full exclusive story, thanks Barry, top angling once again.

Gareth Oaks describes how 'A Drop in Temperature' can make all the difference and let's face it, we've got plenty of that coming up. For Gareth it was a session he would never forget, a 48lb monster which was a new PB.

Some Autumn Wisdom from the amiable Simon Scott, an accomplished angler and all around lovely guy, pay attention to his words, excellent advice for this time of year. Pete Kingsbury's Birthday Result brings back memories of Pete and his brother Phil and their superb series on Horton way back. Great anglers and good to see out there doing it still.

Finally, but by no means least, two overseas articles with a difference. The next in our African Adventure series and the first of some articles from Dale Hatt, the first being a recent trip to Berniere in France. Once again something for everyone. Have a great Christmas guys, see you on the other side!

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

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

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

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

Rob Maylin

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BIG CARP 329
January 2024

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Front Cover
Jamie Cox with Black Eye from Frimley at 53lb 12oz

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KLS

TACKLE



KLS Tackle Alarm Moulded Hard Case

A moulded hard case purposely designed to protect your Steve Neville alarm. Made from a hard rubberized material. Supporting the KLS logo



KLS Tackle Windpan

KLS Tackle have designed the Windpan to act as a wind shield and also a pan support to eliminate your pan sliding off. It fits a wide range of pans and kettles' small and large. It's 150mm square and 100mm high to suit a wide range of cookers as you can see, two of the corners are slightly higher to accommodate the panhandle and to provide support. It's made from Aluminium and finished in black anodising; it fits together with its hook style system and packs down nice and neatly for easy storage.

Perfect to use with a Sandwich Toaster Pan, to stop it falling off a small round stove.



Monster Shellfish



Pop-ups and wafers



Chocolate Malt



Pink pop-ups



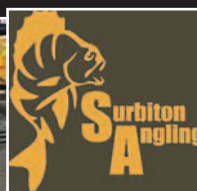
Yellow pop-ups

Monster Shellfish is a fishmeal-based boilie. This bait contains a blend of three high quality fishmeal ingredients which make it a very digestible bait using pre-digested fish-meals, alongside this are some key ingredients, salmon oil, essential oil, Shellfish Sense Appeal, GLM & Robin Red a true winning formula. Also included is a top-quality sweetener, to help finish off this highly attractive boilie.

Monster Shellfish pop-ups and wafers in white, pink and yellow. Perfect for winter.

Chocolate Malt is a birdfood based boilie. This bait contains a blend of three high quality birdfood ingredients, alongside this are some key ingredients and some of the best milk proteins. Also included is a top-quality sweetener, to help finish off this highly attractive boilie. Designed to be used in the colder months but is as equally effective in the warmer months too.

Chocolate Malt pop-ups and wafers in white, pink and yellow. Perfect for winter.



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our customers!

Visit our website to see and purchase our full range of products

www.klstackle.co.uk



ShockLeader

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

Angling Trust announce new trade partnership with The Insurance Emporium

The Angling Trust are pleased to announce that award-winning insurer The Insurance Emporium have joined the Trust as Trade Associate partners.

As part of the agreement, The Insurance Emporium will support the vital campaigning work of the Trust to protect rivers, lakes and seas for the benefit of fish and fishing, and our work to encourage more people to take up fishing for the benefit of their health and mental wellbeing.

The Insurance Emporium have a UK-based contact centre and their Fishing Tackle Insurance is trusted by anglers all over the country.

Francis Martin, CEO of The Insurance Emporium commented: "We're beyond thrilled to be joining the Angling Trust as a Trade Associate Member. We have a passion for angling, and we're looking forward to supporting the angling community thanks to our new partnership."

John Cheyne, Angling Trust's Head



of Marketing, Membership & Communications, said:

"We are delighted to welcome The Insurance Emporium as Trade Associate members. It is important for the Angling Trust to form strong links with all areas of the angling trade and services, and it is clear that The Insurance Emporium support the work we do for fish and fishing. Likewise, we appreciate the service that The Insurance Emporium provide for anglers of all disciplines, be that coarse, match, fly, lure, game

or sea."

The Insurance Emporium is based in Thorpe Underwood, York and has over 90 years' experience in the insurance industry. During that time, it has helped bring certainty and security to many UK residents by protecting the things that really matter to them.

In addition to fishing equipment, customers benefit from comprehensive cover on insurance products such as pets, caravans, horses and trailers, camera equipment, and more. ■

Tackle shops helping to encourage fishing legally



Do you support your local tackle shop? Here is Surbiton Angling, a useful hub for local knowledge and insight in the south.

Many of our tackle shops unknowingly support the work of enforcement by helping their customers know where they can legally fish, with some even selling day tickets for their local waters. When was the last time you popped in to your local? Give them a shout out in the comments.

Lifelong angler Eric Prescott appointed Angling Trust Chair

Eric Prescott, a lifelong angler with a wealth of business experience, has been appointed the new Chair of the Angling Trust.

A former President of Manchester Anglers' Association, Eric has also experienced the challenges involved in running a fishing club after taking control of his local club in Sussex when an outbreak of KHV devastated its premier water.

It led to a drop in membership and management issues, and for the past seven years Eric has led the construction of a three-lake fishery covering seven acres on a limited budget. The venture has been so successful the club's membership is now full and has an eight-year waiting list to join.

Eric's earliest recollections of fishing are from a boat in Anglesey with his uncle when he was about six years old, and later fishing the meres of Cheshire. Sixty years on, the excitement and pleasure he gains from a day on the bank are just as strong.

Eric said: "As a lifelong angler who is passionate about all forms of our sport, I am delighted to have been appointed Angling Trust Chair and look forward to contributing to the amazing work the Trust does to protect, promote and grow fishing.

"I have experience of managing both a grassroots angling club and being CEO of a major PLC, and I am excited at the opportunity to help build a sustainable future for all aspects of angling and the environments we support."

While a member of Manchester Anglers' Association, Eric enjoyed trout and salmon fishing on their Ribblesdale fishery. He was also a member of Prince Albert Angling Society where he fished for specimen chub and barbel on the Rivers Dane and Severn, a former member of Warrington Angling Association, a member of the Chub Study Group and an early member of the ACA, now Fish Legal.

Eric manages to fish a couple of times a week and enjoys the social and fun side of local club competitions, particularly if he can occasionally beat his friends. He also fishes from the coast around Shoreham and Brighton, and the commercial fly fisheries near his home.

Eric has recently retired from an extensive career in construction and manufacturing that started with a trade apprenticeship and finished as



a CEO of a major PLC.

He is a former member of the CBI's President Committee and has held numerous non-executive directorships, including with the British Waterways Board where he supported the executive in the transfer of



British Waterways to the Canal and Rivers Trust. In these former roles, Eric has worked alongside Government and other relevant agencies.

Angling Trust CEO Jamie Cook said: "Eric brings to the role extensive business experience at the highest level having successfully led large international organisations for many years. His experience of working with central and local government, coupled with his knowledge of angling clubs, fisheries and societies, made him the standout candidate to Chair the Angling Trust."

Eric replaces Interim Chair Stephen Beverley who will remain on the Board as Lead Anti-Doping Director.

Gone Fishing to return this Christmas!



Good news – the immensely popular Mortimer and Whitehouse: Gone Fishing is set to return to our screens at Christmas. Will you be watching?



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:



Take part in our Christmas Raffle and support our work for fish and fishing



The festive season approaches and that can mean only one thing... the Angling Trust Christmas Raffle is back! Our annual fundraiser is bigger than ever before with 24 prizes on offer including £2,000 worth of Daiwa tackle of your choice, £500 of Korda tackle, a £300 Angling Direct gift card, a £264 Korum tackle bundle and a £250 Orvis gift card.

Tickets are still just £2, and you can either buy them online or send back the paper raffle tickets you will find in our new Angler magazine which will be arriving with you soon.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our supporters in the angling trade, without whom this raffle wouldn't be possible. Money raised from the Christmas Raffle, and all of our other fundraising events throughout the year, is used to support the Angling Trust's vital work.

Look out for our next fundraising auction which will give six lucky bidders the opportunity to fish at the renowned Kimbridge Beat on the River Test courtesy of Orvis and their support of the Anglers Against Pollution Campaign. Launches early November. ■

ANGLERS AGAINST POLLUTION

River Ivel test is 3,000th water quality sample



Congratulations to Brian Sellers who has recently recorded the 3,000th sample for our Water Quality Monitoring Network project. Brian volunteers for Shefford & District Angling Association and has been monitoring on the River Ivel for a year.

The WOMN is a key part of our Anglers Against Pollution campaign and enables angling clubs to better understand pollution issues on their waters and to use the findings to help seek solutions. To date, over 560 volunteers from nearly 230 clubs are testing water quality on 172 rivers throughout England and Wales. ■

Fishing Show Winter Carp 2023



BIG NEWS FOR ALL CARP ANGLERS!

**THE MOMENT YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR IS FINALLY HERE!
WE ARE THRILLED TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE WINTER CARP
SHOW 2023 WEBSITE AND TICKET SALES ARE NOW LIVE!**

DECEMBER 2ND AND 3RD, 2023, AT SANDOWN PARK, ESHER.

Get your tickets NOW and take advantage of our LIMITED VIP tickets with a special gift....

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT AT THE WINTER CARP SHOW 2023?

INDUSTRY GIANTS:

Rub shoulders with the legends of the fishing world, as they share their wisdom, stories and secret techniques for reeling in the big ones.

MASSIVE LINE-UP OF EXHIBITORS:

Explore an extensive array of fishing gear, equipment and accessories from top-notch brands.

EXPERT TALKS & SHOWS:

Dive deep into the world of fishing with expert talks and captivating shows. Learn from the best in the business including the legend Ali Hamidi Angler himself.



**HURRY AND VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO GRAB YOUR TICKETS NOW:
WWW.THEWINTERCARPSHOW.CO.UK/BUY-TICKETS**

This show is an experience you won't want to miss, so spread the word, tell your fishing buddies, and let's make The Winter Carp Show 2023 an unforgettable angling adventure!

MARINE

Why the Angling Trust are involved with Catchwise

With the recognition of recreational sea angling as a stakeholder in UK fisheries management under the Fisheries Act (2020), there is now a greater interest in sea angling's interactions with fish stocks, species of recreational importance and the socio-economic contribution the sport makes to coastal communities.

Catchwise is a data collection project that aims to gather as representative a picture of sea angling activity across England and Wales as possible. It is not a decision-making project nor is the aim to implement management or restrictions on sea angling.

The Angling Trust want to ensure sea angling voices and concerns are heard throughout the Catchwise project and with the support of organisations such as the Angling Trades Association, Professional Boatmen's Association and Institute of Fisheries Management, we are confident that the interests of the sea angling community will be reflected throughout this project. ■



Pollution on the agenda at party conferences



The Angling Trust has been making sure that anglers' voices were heard loud and clear by politicians at all three of the recent party conferences. Anglers will understand the sentiments expressed by Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer when he talked about politics needing to "tread lightly on people's lives" and went on to say "government needs to give people time to do what they love – football, fishing, or just a quiet time with family".

As anglers we know that fishing depends on clean and healthy rivers and seas, so pollution was inevitably high on the agenda as both Stuart Singleton-White (Head of Campaigns) and Martin Salter (Head of Policy) travelled to the gatherings of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat faithful. These are likely to be the last party conferences before the general election. ■

GET FISHING



Get Fishing Fund now open – apply for up to £2,500

Building on the successful launch of the Get Fishing Fund in 2020, the Environment Agency and Angling Trust have announced an additional £200,000 investment to encourage more people to give fishing a go for the first time.

Funded from fishing licence sales, grants of up to £2,500 are available to benefit angling-based projects. The funding could be used to help purchase equipment, fishing tackle and resources to run fishing events and activities to give people the opportunity to get into fishing.

Clubs, fisheries and other organisations have until Friday 8th December to apply. ■

COMPETITIONS

Team England dominate new European Feeder Cup



Drennan Team England have won the first-ever European Feeder Cup with a trio of dominating performances over three days at a wet and windy Barston Lakes.

Ten international teams took part in the inaugural event hosted at the Midlands fishery – including two sides from the Drennan England Feeder squad and the England Masters Feeder squad.

They faced some of the World's best match anglers with reigning World Champs Hungary alongside Czech Republic, Belgium, Ireland, Lithuania, Austria, and Germany all on the bank too. ■

Curtis lands gold for England at World Shore Championships



England have a new U16 World Champion with Curtis Driver taking gold at the Shore World Championships in Domburg, Netherlands. At the same venue, the U21 England team took bronze. ■

MEMBER OFFER



Save £££s on DFDS ferry trips to France and Netherlands

DFDS have been voted the world's leading ferry operator for 12 years in a row – and now Angling Trust & Fish Legal members can travel to France and the Netherlands at discounted prices!

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 in comfort and style. Generously partnering with us to provide travel for our England teams, the fabulous team at DFDS have also agreed to offer exclusive discounts including:

- 10% off Dover-France ferry crossings
- 15% off Newcastle-Amsterdam ferry crossings
- 10% off Newhaven-Dieppe ferry crossings
- 33% off special mini cruise from Newcastle-Amsterdam ■



Carpy Humour

TRADE PARTNERS

Free thermal bobble hat worth £20 for Angling Trust members with any Zerofit Baselayer purchase



The Angling Trust has teamed up with Zerofit – The World's Warmest Baselayer® to offer all members the opportunity to get a FREE thermal bobble hat worth £20 when you purchase a baselayer or leggings from the award-winning Zerofit Collection. Simply apply code FISH100 at checkout!

The Japanese brand – who are Trade Associate members of the Trust and the current headline sponsor of the Silverfish Competition – entered the fishing market in the UK, Ireland and the US in 2021, and have since kept thousands of anglers warmer than ever!

The Zerofit Heatrub Ultimate baselayer (£55) has been independently tested at the Boken Institute in Osaka and proven to be five times warmer than a standard baselayer, making it an essential piece of kit this cold season.

Zerofit also offers instant warmth for legs too, with the Heatrub Ultimate Leggings (£55) that are made from the same material, and work in exactly the same way as the top. ■

VACANCIES

Environment Communications Officer

We are seeking an enthusiastic and hard-working individual to join the Angling Trust supporting our environment team. The role will help to develop and lead on the production of communications to promote the environmental and campaign work of the Angling Trust and engagement in our 'Love Fishing Love Nature' campaign ■

2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTICE

SUNDAY 3rd DECEMBER 2023



Notice is hereby given, that the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (THE "MEETING") OF THE CARP SOCIETY (THE "COMPANY"), WILL BE HELD AT HORSESHOE LAKE, BURFORD ROAD, LECHLADE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE GL7 3QQ ON SUNDAY 3rd DECEMBER 2023 @ 1:30PM TO TRANSACT THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS AS SHOWN ON THE NOTICE/AGENDA

THE CARP SOCIETY LIMITED ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTICE



Venue: The Lodge, Horseshoe Lake, Burford Road, Lechlade, Gloucestershire, GL7 3QQ

Date: Sunday 3rd December 2023 @ 1:30pm

Agenda:

1. Welcome from the chairman
2. Update on the last 12 months
3. To approve the minutes of the AGM held on the 20th November 2022
4. To adopt the annual report and financial statement for the years ending 31st May 2023 (to be added)
5. To approve the annual accounts will be produced by an independent chartered accountant to a maximum fee as determined by the directors
6. Election of directors & officers (Year 2023 – 1 director term ending)
7. AOB
8. Following the closure of the formal meeting a question and answer session will commence.

NOTES

The AGM will be conducted in accordance with the company Memorandum and articles of association which are available on the society website or via the head office located at Horseshoe Lake.

A current membership card is required for admission and the submitting of any proxy/voting forms.

Any questions relating to the accounts must be submitted in writing to the company secretary and be made 21 days prior to the AGM date. (Sat 11th Nov)

Director nominations (where vacancies are available) must be made in writing in accordance with the memorandum and articles no later than 21 days prior to the AGM date. (Sat 11th Nov)

All questions/nominations should be sent in writing to The Secretary, The Carp Society, Horseshoe Lake, Burford Road, Lechlade, Glos, GL7 3QQ or email sales@thecarpsociety.com quoting your current membership number.

As per AGM notice: 1 director's term is ending, elections will take place by vote at the above meeting.

Director term coming to an end is STEVE BOWLES

Any director nominations (as per the M&A terms) must be submitted to the Society in writing no later than 21 days before the AGM date. (Sat 11th Nov)

After this time a full list of names standing and voting forms will be available 14 days prior to the meeting along with voting forms

Director	Term Ending	Re-standing
STEVE BOWLES	2023	Yes



Anglers Against Pollution – protecting our rivers!

The Test and Itchen in Hampshire are two of the most iconic chalk streams in the world, famed for their trout fishing and where modern fly fishing developed.

Yet these prized waters are constantly under threat from over-abstraction and pollution. Now the Angling Trust's Water Quality Monitoring Network – a key part of our Anglers Against Pollution campaign and supported by Orvis UK – will be carrying out regular testing on 12 rivers across the Test, Itchen and Meon catchments, thanks to amazing support from 45 volunteers from the Test & Itchen Association and the Watercress & Winterbourns Partnership.

Over time, the data gathered will highlight the various pollution sources blighting the rivers and enable us to address them either through campaigning or practical habitat improvements.

You can read more here: – <https://anglingtrust.net/2023/11/20/testanditchen>. ■



AQUA LILIUM CLOTHING

NEW PRODUCTS

It has been an incredible year here at Aqua Liliium Clothing, and there is no better way to tell you about it, than through the country's biggest and best carp magazine.

As you may or may not know, we are a relatively small clothing brand situated in Essex and have been trading now for around 3 years.

In that time, we have grown from designing T-Shirts and hoodies to a huge range of desirable high quality fishing wear, which you can find at our online store www.aqualiliumclothing.com.

This brings me on to our brand-new range that I am very excited to tell you about. Starting off with the All-Rounder Jacket.



This jacket is unbelievable in every way, not only is the jacket water proof it is also wind proof. The All Rounder is designed with an inner fleece lining to keep you warm on those chilly days and is also a great walking jacket to boot. Although incredibly warm, the jacket is lightweight and takes up no space when rolled up. The jacket boasts a huge front pocket, also zip up side pockets. Moving on to the hood of the jacket, this is also fleece lined with 2 no. pull chords for that secure fit. The sleeves are elasticated with an adjustable Velcro strap to keep the jacket tight to the wrists if needed.

When designing the All Rounder we decided also to have the back of the jacket longer so it doesn't ride up your back when you bend over, making sure to always keep you protected from the cold. These come in green or black.

Moving on, we also have matching



*Merry Christmas
and a Happy
New Year to all
our customers!*

winter cargos. These are a game changer and, in our opinion, a future award winner. These beautiful cargos are also waterproof and windproof. Not only are the main body of the cargos fleece lined but the pockets are too, making sure to keep you warm on them cold days.

Again, these are designed to give you maximum movement whether you are sat in your bivvy or roaming a river and these are also lightweight. The Team decided to wear and showcase these at the North West Carp show





and lasted two hours before having to change into the original joggers, they were just to warmmmmmmm.

Unfortunately, the new design Graffiti koi was not ready in time for the North west Carp Show, but I am pleased to say it is now in stock. This design is beautiful in every way, with its bold colours and attention to detail, you will without doubt stand out from the crowd. I reckon the fish will think your pretty cool as well lol.

Again, anybody that knows us, realises we only use the best materials that's why we have won so many product of the month awards. The reason for this is, in reality we only design clothing that the team want to wear and are not interested in flooding the market with cheap out of shape clothing that will last 5 minutes.

We are passionate about making you the customer feel amazing on the bank.

Please don't take our word for it, why not pop over to our Facebook page/ Instagram and see for yourself.

Not only do we want you to look amazing, we also specialise in Dog coats. So, if you're lucky enough to be able to take your best friend fishing then they need to look and feel the part too. The Full Monty Bivvy jacket has everything you need to keep your dog warm, also we have designed the jacket to zip up along the back of the dog meaning there is no need for the Velcro strap you see on most coats. This ensures your dog's belly stays nice and warm through those cold months. Can i also add the jacket is made from a stretch fleece material which is designed to sit semi tight to your dog's fir. These jackets sold out at the North West Carp Show in the first day.

Please don't worry about the size of your pooch, we range from tea cup size up to Hippos so we are well covered.

What's ahead for Aqua Liliu?

we are proud to announce we will be at the Essex Carp Show and the Big One, not only that, we will be there with our exciting new exhibit stand. We will also be working with a small number of charities this year through a charity carp match.

I can't stress enough the warm feeling the

team get meeting everyone that takes the time to come and see us, it really does mean the world to us all. Can I also wish everybody a Merry Christmas and thank you for your support over the past year.

All the best, Aqua liliu Clothing



Aqua Liliu

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

Email: aqualiliuclimbing@hotmail.com

Tel: 07854629130

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

Our monthly reviews on products currently on the market

In this issue:

- Leatherman
- Nite Watches
- Nite Watches



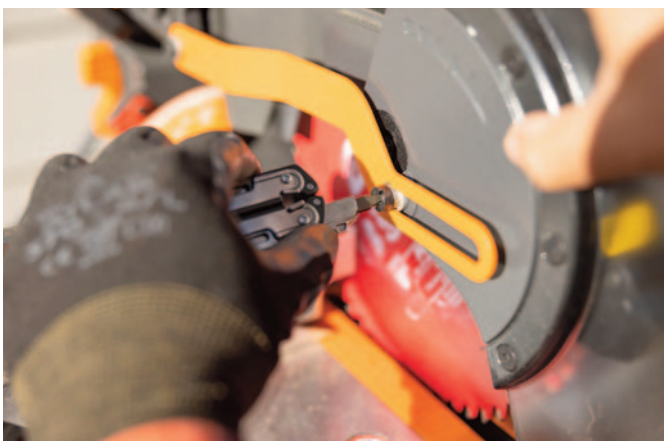
New Leatherman ARC extends the cutting edge of multi-tools

Leatherman has announced the launch of a new premium multi-tool. Sitting at the top of the brand's range, the Leatherman ARC includes 20 tools and is the first multi-tool to use a MagnaCut steel blade, with its superior edge retention and durability. Developed based on extensive consumer feedback, the new product incorporates Leatherman's renowned FREE technology that enables its features to be used with one hand. The ARC is now available in the UK.

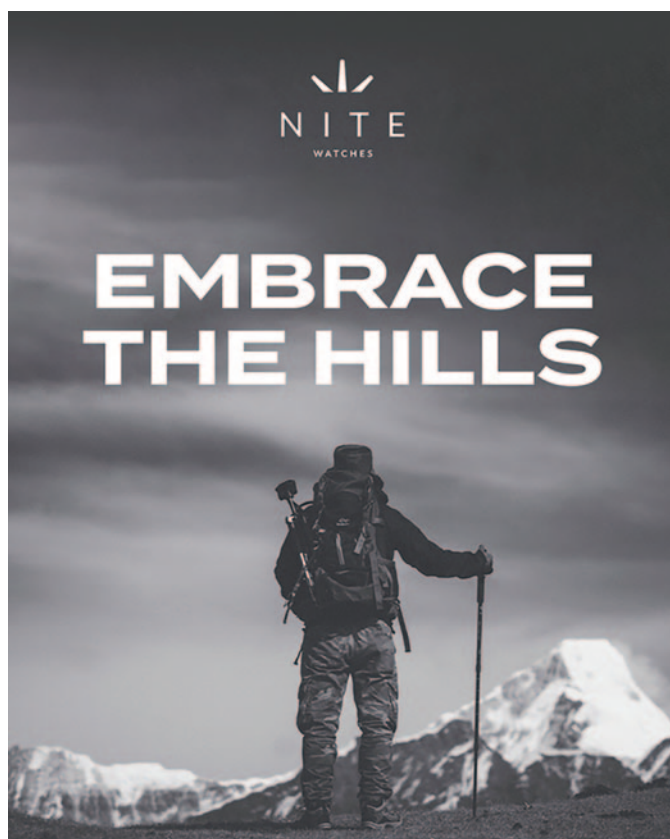
The new Leatherman ARC is the first-ever multi-tool to use premium MagnaCut steel. The knife blade is made of CPM MagnaCut which maintains a sharp edge and excels in corrosion resistance, toughness, and ease of sharpening. The result is a knife blade that's perfect for everyday tasks as well as the harshest of environments. The diamond-like carbon (DLC) coating on the blade adds another layer of corrosion resistance.

Following feedback from consumers during the five years of its development, the ARC includes a highly-requested bit driver and thanks to FREE® technology, each feature opens smoothly and is 100% one-hand operable. With 20 tools (see 'Note to editors' below), removable pocket clip, four-pocket nylon sheath, and eight double-ended bits, the Leatherman ARC aims to set a new standard for premium multi-tools. The Leatherman ARC retails at £260.95 and is available from www.whitbyandco.co.uk and selected specialist retailers. ■





Nite Watches – Exploring the Great Outdoors



Exploring the Great Outdoors

Hiking, the pursuit of adventure in the great outdoors, is a passion that resonates with many outdoor enthusiasts. At NITE Watches, we understand the thrill of exploring the world on foot and embracing the elements.

Over 120 million people globally are

regularly choosing to lace up their boots, grab their backpacks, and head for the trails.

This surge in interest can be attributed to several factors, including a growing desire for outdoor experiences, a need for physical and mental wellness, and an increased awareness of the natural world's beauty.

TIPS FOR A SAFE HIKE:

Plan Ahead: Just like crafting a fine timepiece, planning a hike requires meticulous attention to detail. Before embarking on your adventure, research your chosen trail, understand its difficulty level, and check the weather forecast.

Gear Up: A quality hiking experience demands the right equipment. Ensure you have sturdy footwear, appropriate clothing, a well-packed backpack, and essential items like a map, compass, and a reliable timepiece. At NITE Watches, we

appreciate the significance of time in the great outdoors.

Stay Hydrated and Nourished: Hiking can be physically demanding, so remember to carry an adequate supply of water and high-energy snacks. Staying hydrated and well-fed ensures you have the energy to enjoy your journey.

Leave No Trace: As passionate outdoor enthusiasts, we should be stewards of the environment. Respect nature by following the "Leave No Trace" principles, which include packing out all trash and minimizing your impact on the wilderness.

Safety in Numbers: Whenever possible, hike with a companion or in a group. There's safety and camaraderie in shared experiences.

Use Apps To Optimise Your Experience: We love the app AllTrails as it offers over 400,000 hard-curated maps, as well as functionality online and offline.

At NITE Watches, our watches are designed to endure the elements, just like hikers who venture into the wild.

So, lace up your boots, adjust your NITE Watch, and set out on your next hiking adventure with confidence, knowing you're part of a community of independently minded outdoor enthusiasts. ■



MX10
THE HIKERS CHOICE

Nice work if you can get it



While the idea of a life on the road is a dream for many, Adventure Magazine founding editor Alex and fiancé Mascha have made it their existence for the last 11 years.

Alex's latest companion on his adventures is his trusted NITE Atlas. In the latest edition of the Magazine, for the first time, Alex tells his fascinating personal story and how he came to a life on the road.

"I reached out to NITE watches before I decided to publish this story. They would be the perfect brand partner who were in the business of creating stories for life. #ProvenThroughPassion embodies the story Mascha and I are on. Sitting here at 35 I can count the things I've kept with me on one hand. My camera being one of those, and now my Atlas watch from NITE joins the journey".

Adventure Magazine is a coffee-table style journal packed with 100 pages of inspiring van life stories. Park up, slow down, chill out.

The Adventure team have generously offered a 20% discount on online purchases. Use code 'niteadventure23' at checkout. ■



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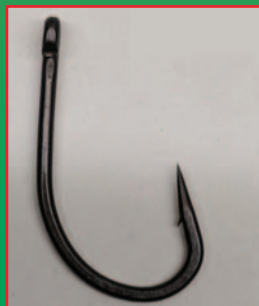
Hair Stops



Shrink Tube



Tungsten Putty



Scorpion Snag Hook



Scorpion Chod Hooks



Scorpion Crank Hook



Swivels



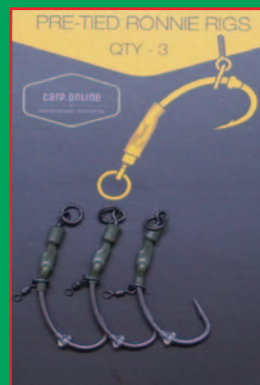
Tungsten Kickers



Hair Aligners



Composite Leadclips



Scorpion Ronnie Rig



Choddy Crank Hook



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Owner Mark Russell just Landed this banging 23lb common: "I thought my chances had gone as bite time is normally overnight, I fell back to sleep after waking at 7am. At 8:30 my middle rod screamed a tone I hadn't heard for an age! Having to fish with the rod tips up my rod came out of the butt rest, and the reel hit the alarm the take was so hard. It stripped line and took me a few minutes to slow and turn it around. After a hard fight the lead had come off making it a bit easier to clear the weed, I slipped the net under my first common from my syndicate and one that hasn't been caught for five years! I used our Scorpion Wide Gape hooks in size 4, micro ring swivel, Tungsten Kickers, Hook Bead and our new CTO Pro hooklink in 25lb B/S. Having my daughter with me on her first night made it all the more special."



Team member John Paul McCusker sent his most recent report to our catch reports page, and a right result it is: "Another nice week in the Cotswolds. Struggled a bit early on in the week. But the back end produced a few good fish. Best two were commons going 32lb and 35lb. Using Carp.online scorpion ready-made Ronnies size 4s with a small wafer in solid bags. After fishing on baited spots for four days for nothing. These three being the pick of the bunch."

Scan the code
here to give us a
follow-on
Instagram.



Team member Lee Oxley has continued to put fish on the bank regularly with his latest capture. Nice reward for braving the winds. Wouldn't say bar of gold more a slab of gold. Happy days with this 36lb falling to RS hardhooker. Nailed on Scorpion Wide Gapes was never coming off. Big thanks to Ralph Hedley walking around just in time for net duties and pictures. Well done Lee, proper chunk.

CARP TACKLE ONLINE RECRUITMENT

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR? We need you! We are looking for people who are into carp fishing, who are willing to share their knowledge and experience with others, and who are willing to help us grow our business. We are looking for people who are passionate about carp fishing and who are willing to help us grow our business. We are looking for people who are passionate about carp fishing and who are willing to help us grow our business.

How to join: Email us at sales.carponline@gmail.com with some details about yourself, your fishing CV and a few recent pictures. Instagram and Facebook a must have and be regularly used. X (was Twitter) an added bonus. Additional discounts on offer for media creators on production of videos, adverts and content usable on our pages.

Contact: sales.carponline@gmail.com

We are on the lookout for new team members, if you are handy with the camera, video and regularly bank a few carp then get in touch. In return we offer fantastic products with a very generous discount. Email us at sales.carponline@gmail.com with some details about yourself, you're fishing cv and a few recent pictures. Instagram and Facebook a must have and be regularly used X (was Twitter) an added bonus. Additional discounts on offer for media creators on production of videos, adverts and content usable on our pages.



Team member Grant Walters beauty from Bluebells recently: Happy with that. Baby Lucas at 37lb. Decided to come back over my heavily baited area last night. Consisting of @jhbbaits KLF, Nutty B and my original home-made infusion boilies. With @kentparticles mixed particles. Caught on a snow man presentation with one of my yellow infusion specials, using @carptackleonline size 4 Scorpion hooks." Well done, Grant!



Team member Alan Morton managed to bag this 27lb 6oz beauty after a couple of nights struggling on @towcesterlakes. Alan used our size 4 Scorpion Crank hooks, Tungsten Rig Putty, size 8 Barrell swivels, and Tungsten Kickers to coax it over the net cord.

Happy
Christmas
to all our
valued
customers



Jay Curry catch report

Jay Curry has been having some exceptional results testing the new Fishmeal boilies recently. The West Sussex carper has banked some lovely commons to 46lb whilst testing the new bait, one that's going down a storm with many testers. Well done, Jay.



Mathew Swan catch report

The end of my session resulted in the one I really wanted and a new PB Cuttail at 57.



Jake Mitchell catch report

Jake Mitchell has had a great start on his new water. Farriers was the venue and 9 carp turned up to join the party, topped by this superb 40lb common. The Cell covered in Cell Smart Liquid along with hemp and sweetcorn, an unstoppable combination! Well done, Jake.



Aaron Liney catch report

Aaron Liney with two Papercourt crackers weighing 44lb8oz and 41lb. These two, are a small fraction of what Aaron has actually caught in the past two weeks. He has been hauling, big style! Our GPB2 crushed cork pop ups, fished over Wraysbury Baits boilies proving literally devastating for him recently. Great angling, lovely carp Aaron.



Lee Brooks catch report

42lb 8oz – heavy baiting starting to pay off.



Dave Cornes catch report

First UK 50 – 'Bricktop' @ 50-6 from The Rise. 'Do you know the meaning of the word Nemesis?' Thanks to Mitch, big Pete and the lads, an amazing fishery. The result of Cell and Quad combination.



Callum Pawsey catch report

An absolutely spotless mid 40 common. The big common buzz was real with this one.



RK Leisure catch report

Congratulations to @aaron.r90 on tripping up one of the old-guard, Wraysbury's Long Sutton, at a weight of 50lb on the nose. (Photo credit: @lporter_95).



Adam Lingo Caminarides catch report

Few more pics from the two fish I had on my 48hrs on K1 and one of them being another PB and my first UK 50 the Football Sutton. Can't wait to return is it Friday yet.



Dan Belkon catch report

Dan Belkon, with an off the scale mirror weighing 45lb+. Caught from a large undisclosed UK venue, on one of our red S3 crushed cork pop ups. Between Dan and his very good friend Daniel.... The pair have blown us away a bit at SHB over the past couple of days. Photographs of some very special, truly hard earned monstrous carp. Inspiring stuff Dan.



COOLER BACKPACKS

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Available in 17L and 27L and three colours, there's a Cooler Backpack for all your outdoor adventure needs.



To explore the range, visit www.whitbyandco.co.uk or scan the QR code



Thomas Duncan-Dunlop catch report

Well, well, well, a little overnighter before our match this weekend between the North and the South (dividing lines) run by @jacklamb87 and a few others... what a carp at 52lb 3oz and I've heard, a new lake record, and an English PB for me! Now for the match! All tackle from @ridgemonkey, Orbit tapered mainline, fished around 100 yards, Connexion 20lb Spectre hooklink in 20lb, size 6 medium Apex curve hook (Barbless) 4oz lead on a RM Uni leadclip. Bait was a mixture of @mainlinebaitsofficial Cell crushed boillie, Cell smart liquid, Maggots and plenty of Luck!!! Thanks to @finnleynewnham12 for all the help, and everyone that helped out with the epic pics. Love you all! Have a wonderful weekend one and all. As always Mr Chris Thomas, Kev Garrett and all the others that have a better view than I – always feel close by!



Ashley Groom catch report

When you know your customers not many words are needed to know something special had happened! All I got yesterday afternoon was those three words above but it said it all and the pictures that followed confirmed it! A massive congratulations to Ashley Groom, owner of The Carp Syndicate - Crowborough and to captor Gary Hall on the complexes first ever 50lb plus fish. The Big Common weighed in at a mighty 50lb 3oz and came from the newest lake on the venue "Steve's Lake" named after ash's late father who passed just after the lake had been stocked in late 2017. This fish was stocked as a C6 of 20lbs 10oz at that time and has flown ever since! It's done a massive 5lbs since it's last capture in July! Buzzing for everyone involved.



Furzebray Catch Report

Wow! Just Wow! Well 17 years ago we started our journey here at Furzebray when we dug and stocked the Island Lake, never in my wildest dreams did I think one day we would have a fish topping 50lb but today that happened! Massive well done to Scott Pollard on smashing his PB and setting a new lake record with the mighty Dropscale at 50lb 10oz! Such an amazing fish I'm completely blown away with this one.





Lewis Holland catch report

Lewis Holland with Scottys common at 41.10 from Stoneacers on the Linch Hill complex. Lewis has had a brilliant run of fish this year on a lake that's not easy with all the angling pressure and such low stock. As usual baiting heavy with the red spicy fish boilie and pellet combination. www.urbanbait.co.uk



Paul Heseltine catch report

50lb 12oz proper crusty one this was Rinkles all over its head looked prehistoric was made up with this one, it's mouth though I could have put and tennis ball in it. He was nailed though! Slip-D Multi Rig I'm becoming to like that presentation, I went through a full pack of the Armorok Curve's. I'm not one for sharpening them, straight out of the packet for me. I put quite a lot of bait in on this trip but all bits and pieces the biggest food item was the Maze in the mix. Maxi Nut 10mm Pink topper so it sits with the hook flat and the topper wafting, fished that over crushed boilie hemp and Maze. Simplicity at its finest the key was to not use big baits keep everything small. I find this approach works well on pressured venues. Key Baitsolutions Midland Mixes LTD Avid Carp.



Nick Dunn catch report

Nick Dunn had a proper result last month, with this 48lb mirror being the larger part of a 93lb brace! Furtively baiting a quiet area of the lake, a couple of times a week after dark in the lead up to the brace proved to be key. Using a throwing stick, he was able to bait at close range without the disturbance of the spomb these fish are so used to and coupled with good quality boilie from Oxford Carp Baits t all came together nicely! Nick was using a new ESP hook pattern (launching spring '24 as part of a bottom bait presentation combined with a new hookbait he is developing for his Stoglemans Hookbaits range.



Nick Maher catch report

I have wanted to catch this for two years. A fish known as the long common at 46lb 4oz which is a UK PB for me as well.



Lewis Holland catch report

Urban bait consultant Lewis Holland holds the elusive Baby Choco from the difficult Stoneacres on the Linch Hill complex. Lewis carried on his run of big carp by landing one of the most sort after fish in the country whilst baiting heavily with a combination of Red spicy fish boilie and pellet. The beauty weighed 43lb 6oz and was landed along with another special mirror weighing over 40lb!



Josh Sanders catch report

Back to weekends only and to say I am absolutely blown away (bet you couldn't tell by the smile) is an understatement! One of the best Welly Whackers, C Scale, popped by to say hello this morning at a lovely weight of 47lb, 12oz. Huge thank you to the absolute gent that is Charlie Hayes for reeling in and doing the snaps.



Ryan Gibson catch report

Great to get amongst a few this week down at the syndicate. Mirrors of 42lb 4oz, 27lb 15oz and 21lb 7oz all coming from the same area on an 18mm Purebaitconcepts AminoMarine Hard Hookbait, fished over around half a kilo of the Marine each time it went out.



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Korda catch report

Wraysbury North's Long Sutton at 50lb! @rk_leisure Wraysbury North Lake member, @aaron.r90 has had an Autumn to remember after banking some of the syndicates finest in recent weeks! "It's been a crazy past couple of weeks over at Wraysbury for myself especially since I changed over to the new Spinner hooks in conjunction with the XT Snag Leader. I use this for my Spinner rig boom as I love the suppleness this gives the rig and since the introduction of the New size 5 Spinner hooks I've landed a recent new PB the Long Sutton at 50lb and this Two Tone mirror of 43lb 2oz on my recent trip and a load of other 30lb and 20lb fish to back these up. The hook holds have been incredible on every fish and my confidence is sky high in this new pattern". Get on the SPINNERS!



Myles Gibson catch report

Over-slung gob, rounded tail, big golden apple slices and a smattering of star-burst scales. carp perfection. Myles Gibson with yet another mega one from his northern paradise.



Sean Smith catch report

Keeping it strictly over 50. Sean Smith and the Pristine Common. This one making the 230-mile round trip more than worth it! 57lbs 14oz of jaw-dropping common carp – a true UK tank. A Camstiff Blow-Back rig for the win.



Robert Crowson catch report

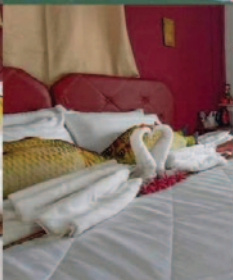
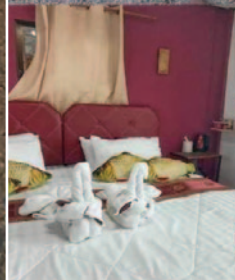
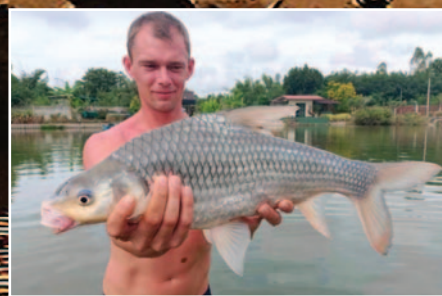
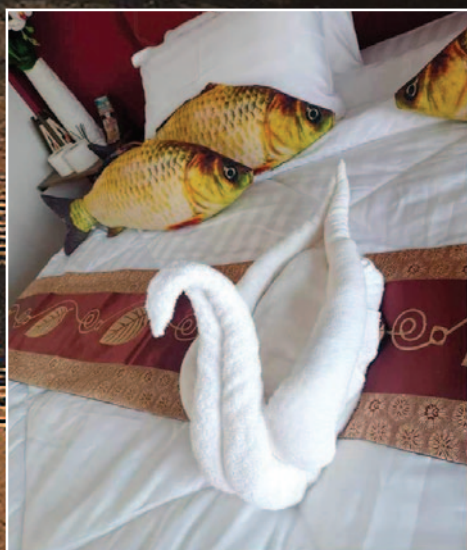
Great to get back down on my Cambs syndicate this week after nearly a five-month break. A lovely 36lb mirror got the session rolling before a move down to the deep end of the lake resulted in a brace of 40s going 45lb 14oz and 49lb 8oz! Big thanks to Rich Barnes for your camera skills and Michael Parsons for your assistance.



Curly Kieran catch report

An untamed 50 from an untapped water. Curly Kieran lifting the mood on a Monday morning.

Loei Jungle Fishing Lake Thailand with over 80 different Species of fish! The lake that families choose to fish, and where fathers and sons from all over the world make memories that last a lifetime





For more details check out our website – <https://loeijunglefishinglake.com>

An African Adventure...

A story of a fishery, where no fishery has been before.

Part Two (part one can be found in July 23 issue of Big Carp)

I had the sensation of being like an over excited kid on Christmas eve . . . the baby carp had finally arrived, the fishery was being built and life was rather rosy! I would nip down the road to feed the fish over my lunch hour, and after seeing them finally coming up and munching after 4 days, it was like discovering another cherry on a birthday cake. It was on the fifth day however that I observed something not entirely 'ideal' upon my daily, midday visit.

As I approached the pond, there was a sudden disturbance amongst the reeds, immediately followed by a loud commotion at the water's surface. What the blooming Norah Batty was that I thought?! I quickly scanned the water to see what was occurring, and half way across the pool surfaced a rather large Nile Monitor Lizard! A flick of its massive tail and it disappeared again in a flash. Thankfully I saw it resurface at the opposite bank and scurry out of the vicinity. What an incredible creature. Unfortunately, just not really what you want in a pond full of baby carp.



Nile Monitor Lizard.



Anti-Avian lines and Feeding Box.



Fencing installed.



First dam at 12 acres.

These reptiles are one of the largest lizards in the world and grow to over 5ft in length. It's another species with a seemingly insatiable appetite, eating almost anything in its way, including

fish and even small crocodiles!

That evening we discussed all things predation-proof, as Piet had also clocked eyes on some small kingfishers and a Black-headed Heron, the

latter of which was 'kindly asked to leave' by Piet shouting some choice words in its direction. The next day we purchased some fencing materials, and line to stretch across the



Carp dam with islands and some deep trenches.

pond, and got busy trying to protect our aquatic livestock. I also put together a floating feed structure, so the pellets wouldn't drift all over the pool.

Welcome to the mundane world of fish farming!

Whilst we encountered some early challenges with the grow-out pond, things were running rather smoothly in the creation of the two fishing dams. The excavators were busy building up the walls, and daily progress was there to see. Over one weekend I watched a YouTube video by Fox International at Old Mill Lakes, and was inspired by the venue and particularly its islands.

Southern Africa is full of dams, most of which are generally quite plain in design. They are literally dammed up at one end and the low lying land behind it is flooded. Not many sites are chosen with undulating topography, hence why isn't often you find bodies of water with islands in around this part of the world. I shared the

video with Piet and the guys at the farm, and they were enthused by the idea & agreed that some islands must be built into the venue.

These features would not only create safe havens for a diverse variety of birds and wildlife, they would also increase the amount of marginal area in the dam, the area where land meets water, where terrestrial and aquatic communities meet. These zonal edges, also known as ecotones, are often the most important part of the environment due to the greater diversity and abundance of species present. This richness is greater if a thriving population of plants is present, that provides habitat for not only fish, but an array of invertebrates (snails, shrimp, water fleas etc.), all of which carp love to feed on.

The dams were completed over the next couple of months, and they were joined together with one wall between them. The first dam was just over 12 acres and the second one, which was destined to be the carp

venue, finished up with 8.5 acres of surface area. The 12 acre dam had a land spit extending out into the middle of the water with an expanded round area at its end . . . slightly phallic I know! The carp dam had five islands dotted around, and both bodies of water had deep channels in places where the excavators had moved earth to elevate the banks. Although pretty barren in its infancy, the dream was becoming a reality.

As the water started to fill both dams, it was now the time to start the process of trying to develop thriving aquatic ecosystems. I had already done this with the grow-out pond, but now this was on a much larger scale! The plan was to leave the carp dam without fish in for at least a year, allowing the ecosystem to flourish, so when we did stock our carp into the dam, they would have a habitat to thrive in.

I would collect as many freshwater mussels and snails from any of the production ponds at work when they were drained down. Then in my lunch hour I would drive with a bucket full of goodies to the dams, and start populating one corner at a time. I would visit a couple of local rivers searching for molluscs and shrimp. I found a shrimp fisherman who was catching a larger species than the tiny *Caridina nilotica* shrimps I had previously caught, so luckily I ended up buying 500 after a couple of visits.

Over a period of around four to five months I managed to populate the carp dam with two species of mussels, five varieties of snails and two types of shrimp. Literally tens of thousands of these 'carp food' items went in, along with native macrophytes, lilies and marginal plants, that would provide habitat and shelter for these little critters to conquer. I think I had become slightly obsessed enhancing the dam's ecosystem, as these trips to the rivers were a two-hour round journey, often after a day's work! However, I simply loved exploring and submerging myself (literally) into the surrounding nature, and it gave me an excellent opportunity to observe the different trees and plants growing at the various water's I would visit.

Up until this point we hadn't decided exactly what we wanted to achieve fishing-wise with the first, larger dam. As the venue had two dams, it would give us an opportunity



Freshwater mussels.



Shrimp.

Dear Santa,
PLEASE
No more
socks this
Christmas!

Wish list:

Seasonal Tactics and Techniques – Autumn/Winter

The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

The Darker Side of Carp Fishing

Old School Carping Volume 4

History of Yateley Volume 3

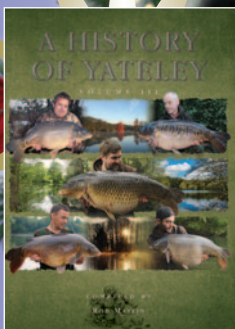
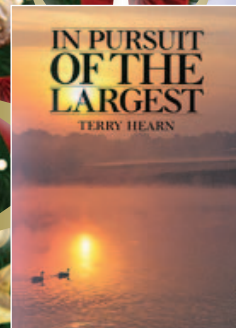
Under the Radar Volume 2

In Pursuit of the Largest

Further off Beaten Track

Advanced Terminal Rigs

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Snails.

to provide different fishing scenarios, rather than just specimen carp angling. During my regular river visits I had seen several fishermen catch a few random Tigerfish with their throw nets, although they would quickly die once dumped into the bottom of their wooden boats. As I wrote before, I had

experienced the thrill catching these incredible indigenous predators at the massive dam some 3 hours' drive away. These fish put on impressive aerial displays once hooked, and can reach over 20lbs in weight, making them one of the most coveted fresh-water game fish in the world.

It was obvious now what we wanted to do with the first dam! This dam was perfectly set up for the roving angler as all areas were accessible from the bank and the extended island protruding into the middle of the water. Clusters of reeds had popped up around the dam, so there were features all around, ideal for throwing a lure to. There are literally hundreds of thousands of Nile Tilapia on-site at the farm, so these could be stocked for the pleasure angler, as well as becoming the main feed source for Tigerfish, ideal! I also needed some predators in the carp dam to ensure it never became over run with baby carp. Now I just had to figure out a way to successfully transport them alive and kicking!

I hadn't found any literature or information online about transporting Tigerfish, nor could I find any projects that had actually stocked Tigers. This was certainly going to be a challenge, but nothing ventured, nothing gained.



Local river fishermen.



Daily scenes along the rivers.



Our first baby Tiger.

I had a network of local fishermen from three different river systems, and if anyone managed to catch one, the instructions were to leave it in a bucket of water, in the shade, and message me asap. Between us someone would go and collect these toothy predators. It's important to understand at this point that these fish were destined for the cooking pot, so we were trying to 'save' these fish, by stocking them into our dams.

On the 7th August 2021 we man-

aged to release the first live Tigerfish into the dam, a moment of great relief and satisfaction, especially since a couple of earlier efforts had failed somewhat miserably. It wasn't a monster by any means, but it was a start. One down, ideally another 299 to go!

Based in the Southern hemisphere our weather patterns are the opposite to Europe's, and as September and October rolled in, the temperatures were beginning to rise. The warmer

summer months are the growing seasons for fish and plants alike, so in early October we began planting indigenous trees around the bare banks of the dams. The planting was tough work, digging holes in clay rich soil, in the African heat, is not for the faint hearted. As I also wrote previously, there simply aren't garden nurseries around here selling native trees, so we had already been germinating seeds and rearing saplings for this phase of the project.

Our vision was to create a rich green oasis, replicating what we observed growing along the river banks and local ponds. These would provide well needed shade for anglers and create a natural habitat for the abundant species of birds already visiting the dams. This would obviously take some time, but by planting only native trees, we knew they were in their perfect environment to prosper. We also had access to chicken manure from the farm, so we were confident we had a great growing combination.

In late November I received an early Christmas present in the shape of 32 juvenile common carp. These



What dreams, or nightmares, are made of!



Marking where to plant.



Sycamore Fig trees.



Barren banks to plant up.

weren't just any old common carp, but had been bred from a female fish that had reached an almost unheard of 5kgs in 18 months. I'm not joking, as crazy as those figures sound. My original batch of carp were mostly mirrors, and I'd been keen to supplement the stock, so when these became available I jumped at the chance to take some, especially considering their genetic makeup!

2021 turned into 2022, and with every new year brings excitement and expectations. However, things were not looking great on the Tiger-fish front, and something had to change drastically. Over a six-month period of trying to successfully stock Tigers into the dams, we had reached a pitiful total of just 30 fish. At this rate it would take us 5 years to reach our target of 300 fish!

A new plan had to be put in action if this was ever going to happen, and after much discussions and pondering, we formed an elaborate scheme that, if conducted properly, could solve our problem almost overnight. Jan 15th would be our D-day.

Part three of the African Adventure to follow soon. ■



Like peas in a pod, baby common carp with enormous potential.

Carpy Humour

So I saw an old dude with a fishing rod outside my local bar fishing in a puddle. He looked so cold! I said to him: "Come in for a drink and get warm". As we sipped our double whiskeys, I thought I would humour him. I asked him: "How many have you caught today?" He replied: "You are the 8th"!



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and to seeing you all again*



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



25lbs common for Ricky Collett. Nice catch.



Paul Slade caught Jensens Common out of Pipe Lake weighing exactly 38lbs.



First session on Pipe Lake and Mark Ransom lands the big ghostie at 36lbs. Nice catch. All lakes fishing well currently.



His face says it all as they say. This is young angler Frank Chappell on the day ticket lake with this cracking carp at 20lbs 8oz. Apparently, his dad is in the swim next to him thinking what can I learn from my son. Nice one Frank.



Graeme Edgar had breakfast in Fat Boys Cafe said he'd not caught then landed this lovely 23lbs carp on the day ticket lake. Good time to catch as they feed before winter sets in.



25lbs 7oz common for Ricky Collett.



Fifth common for Ricky Collett. Must be due a mirror now.



17lbs 6oz carp from day ticket lake caught by Levi Denham. Cracking catch Levi.



Aaron Larke had these two carp out of day ticket lake weighing 15lbs 6oz and 13lbs 8oz.



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.

European Spotlight – Berniere

By Dale Hatt

Well, it's that time of year again, the sun is out and us carp anglers are day-dreaming about a week away in France and the possibilities it could bring. It started with an unexpected voice note on the ND Whatsapp group. Was I hearing this right? I had been invited to head out to Berniere in France to join the rest of the ND team to film a European spotlight episode. I thought I must really be dreaming! The carp angler OCD kicked in as I frantically tried to organise what I would need to take, and try to get myself over to France within the next 24 hours. Nobody is going to turn down an opportunity like that, and I was thrilled to have the chance. The major issue was trying to book a tunnel crossing, but luckily not many people want to be on the

5.30am shuttle on a Monday morning. So, a little over 12 hours after receiving the invitation from Mark Foster, I was on the shuttle with excitement and anticipation building knowing in 35 minutes I would be on French soil.

As I drove out of Calais to make my 240-mile drive down to Berniere I was chomping at the bit. Did I have enough bait with me? Had I forgotten anything? But surely anything I had forgotten I would be able to beg, borrow and steal from one of the other boys. I had enough diesel to drive straight down without making a stop. Finally, after 4 hours, I was approaching Berniere and was greeted by a further mile drive down a dirt track surrounded by what I can only describe as the typical beauty of the French countryside, who wouldn't be beyond excited. When I got to the end, I was not disappointed, it had been well worth the wait and as I approached the main gate, I could see the crystal-

clear waters of the glistening 27-acre gravel pit. I had made it at last! As I approached the lodge, I was greeted by Mark, Jamie, Simon and Jason. The only thing I hadn't quite factored in was the extreme heat of over 30 that would hit me as I stepped out of my delightfully air-conditioned car!

So, for those of you that might not have heard about Berniere, here is what you can expect, should you be lucky enough to visit as I have been. It is a 27-acre gravel pit which holds some very impressive carp of over 65lbs. This large natural water is packed full of features such as bays, gravel patches and snags with a variety of different weed. Formerly a gravel pit, Berniere was first dug over 35 years ago. There are 13 swims on the lake, 5 of which are doubles. Although at 27 acres it is a big water, the elongated shape means there are plenty of bays and channels which makes the lake feel more intimate





than it really is. They really have thought of everything, there is a track around the entire perimeter which enables you the opportunity to park behind all the swims, making it easier for the less mobile anglers among us.

My first task was the crucial decision of swim choice. One perk of being the last in, was getting the heads up from the others to say they had seen fish down the far end where there was no angling pressure. Mark and I walked round the lake and immediately found a group of approximately 8-9 fish sat sunbathing in the floating weed bed. That was my decision made.

First things first, we sprayed some floaters amongst the sunbathing fish to see if we could get them going on the surface, before leaving them in peace to head down to the local shop to stock up on some necessities as I was completely unprepared for the trip. On our return from the shop, the floaters had gone and there was a group of 4-5 small grass carp floating around the bay. I assume they were the culprits, because as yet I had not observed any bird life, other than the local Heron and several birds of prey.

My next job was to get the bivvy set up. I decided not to fish that day, or to have lines in the water during daytime hours at all that trip. I believe giving them some bait without lines

in the water allows them to feed more confidently before then dropping the rods into position from a boat at last light. This is something I have found very effective in previous trips abroad. My opening gambit was hinge stiff rigs with 14inch booms made from fluorocarbon with a critically balanced RG baits pop up. The rods were leant up against the bivvy, and while the sun pounded down, I made my way round to see the others in the lodge to have a social. Yet another perk of being away with the ND guys is having our own on-site chef, Jason from ChefUKcarp, who cooked up a storm the whole week. After having a beer and a good catch up, full of Jason's amazing chicken curry, I headed back to my swim eager to get the rods in position. I decided to fish the rod tips high in the air to get as much line out of the water as possible due to the immense amount of weed. The clutches were locked down tight and rod butts secured to the ground with bivvy pegs. I didn't give them too much bait as I was simply fishing for a bite for my first night, then I could adapt my approach from there on after. I made a coffee and soaked in the sun set over this glorious water, anticipating a bite at first light.

I was awoken from my slumber at 3.45am to the bobbin pulling up tight





against the blank. Slipping my life-jacket and trainers on, I bent into the fish and took straight to the boat. There was no way I was going to attempt to land this fish from the bank, the weed was just too thick. I

pulled myself out until I got above what I thought was the fish, but to my dismay, the fish was off, the rig was snagged. I began to hand line it and try to free the rig from whatever held it captive. After several minutes the

line dislodged from the snag to reveal an immaculate looking rig, still with a perfect hook point and the lead still on. After scratching my head for a bit, I came to the conclusion that it had been a trailer. I made my way back to the bank, double checked the rig using the light from my H10 head torch, tied on a fresh bait and headed back out in the boat to reposition it on the clear spot I discovered earlier in the day. Not long after that the sun was coming up, and with it faded my chances of another bite.

At 10am I resigned myself to the fact that any chance for a bite had been and gone. I wound the rods in, applied some bait, left them to it and headed round to the lodge as I had been informed that David the bailiff was coming down later that morning. There is nothing quite as useful as local knowledge, the smallest of details could be the difference between having the session of your life, or blanking. David recommended that on my open water spots, I should give them plenty of bait in order to hold the fish if they did drift over my spots. I gave them around 10kg; a combination of 10mm crab bottom baits, hemp, and jumbo tigers that I



had scrounged from Mark. I went in with old school tactics; a long supple braided hook link, a size 4 hand sharpened hook, long hairs and 3 tiger nuts hard on the bottom with a big inline drop off lead. I got the rods out a bit earlier, around 6pm, sat back and enjoyed the remaining hours of sun, feeling optimistic about the night ahead. Despite waking up with a face that resembled a punch bag, thanks to the local mosquito population taking a liking to me, I landed a fish at first light. A lovely dark dumpy common of around 25lbs. I messaged Jamie the videographer and he and Mark headed round to take some quick snaps. Once bite time had been and gone, I wound in, applied some more bait and rested the swim.

Following breakfast, Mark was nowhere to be seen. I eventually found him sat back from the water's edge in one of the bays, watching several fish tearing up the bottom, a rod length off the bank, in front of a fallen dead tree. What followed was nothing short of a stalking master class. I witnessed Mark land an epic

44lb scaly mirror on a 6ft stalking rod; he then proceeded to catch 6 more in the same manor that week from various nooks and crannies around the pond. This was followed by 6 additional fish from his main swim, just proving its water craft that catches you carp, not the most fashionable rig or bait. As the day got hotter and hotter, I was more convinced than ever that resting the swim during the day was the right decision. We found groups of fish sat in the centre of the lake, held up enjoying the oxygen in the floating weed beds.

As evening drew in, I had a quick shower to wash off the day, only to find I was now the local delicacy on the mosquito menu as I was covered in more than 40 bites, everywhere from my face to places no mosquito needs to go. Fish had been seen all over the lake that evening, and we all went into the night feeling that there was something different in the air and luck could be on our side. We weren't disappointed. At first light 4-5 fish came out between us and the icing on the cake was a 50lb 3oz common

falling to Simon. Words cannot describe the feeling that spread among the group; the buzz of a big carp is infectious and sharing a PB with a friend is something truly memorable. With morale at an all-time high, the trip was gaining momentum.

Our days were occupied by filming content; we couldn't help but notice when Jamie sent the drone up to film, we managed to see so much more than with the naked eye. This was a first for me and I have to say it really gave us a massive edge. I have never been an advocate of using that much technology in my fishing, but since being with ND, my eyes have been opened to the huge possibilities and advantages that tech can offer the modern angler. However, it wasn't all work and no play, there were plenty of outtakes and laughs that will stay with me forever. Special mention goes to Simon and his shower scene, and the complete professionalism in maintaining eye contact by Jamie the videographer.

Going into the final night your mind



is always full of the practicalities of packing up a weeks' worth of kit and the drive home.

At our last dinner together, we were all talking about the events of the week and what a great time was had by all. Conversation turned to some of the absolute beasts that occupy Berniere and that there was still time for one more. Keeping everything crossed, Simon and I headed down the bank in the direction of our swims, dreaming of landing one of the 'A-Team'. Simon's parting words before heading to bed were "Rambo will do me!" Laughing to myself, I said "Yeh, you wish!"

A few hours later, just before first light, I was awoken by a dozen or more voice notes from an emotional Simon letting us know he had a mid 50 in the net, or so he thought! The voice notes were flying around the group chat, we were all buzzing with excitement on his behalf, we wound in and headed round to Simons' swim. Jamie set up the camera equipment, Mark and I hoisted her up onto the scales and the wheel of fortune span to eventually settle on a massive 61lb 3oz monster. On further inspection, he had only gone and talked Rambo into the net!

Fishing is a funny old game, the

lowest of lows and the highest of highs, an emotional rollercoaster every step of the way. To be able to share moments like these with close friends is what keeps me coming back for more. On that note, to further share in our experience, head over to the ND YouTube channel to watch the full feature film, you won't be disappointed.

If you would like to visit Bernier and experience it for yourself, head over to the Angling Lines website www.anglinglines.com. Keep an eye on the ND Facebook and Instagram pages for all things ND.

Tight lines. Dale Hatt, ND Tackle. ■





FISHING RESORT



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Frimley Pit 3 – The Season So Far

By James Cox

Back in January I decided to spend the year on Linch Hill (Stone acres) stepping out the on Stoneacres for the first time, I felt something special, the lake, the surroundings the other anglers and the history, it had a special feel to it, I set about things the way I felt would give me half a chance to get amongst these elusive carp, before I knew it, the winter had been and gone and I was facing a spring where we had a 50 acre lake that was absolutely full of anglers week in week out and the carp that reside were known to be extremely elusive at times, with this in mind, I got to work and again set about the place in a way which I felt

gave me a chance of a bite, as the weeks went by the same way the winter went with very little to report, I had lost a couple of fish in the weed and felt like my chances were running out.

I found myself at the beginning of summer now and decided to head over to Belgium, spent 6 weeks over there, fished 24 venues, landed over 40 carp biggest being 41lb and knew it was time for me to go back to the big pond and put myself in the mix again to try and get amongst the special ones that had so far eluded me.

Turning back up in the summer on Stoneacres was completely different to the spring, the anglers had all pulled off apart from a select few, the viz had completely gone and from

what I know now, this was a major factor in the lads pulling off and taking their angling elsewhere, I decided to go hard, every week for 6-8 weeks, 4 nights minimum and I was going to get one!

I had told myself I have to catch one, it bearing in mind it was my first year on there and I had never fished anywhere previously where you needed to use a boat, this was all new so my expectations at the beginning of the season were to just get on there and have a go, get my first bite and then take it from there, this first bite just wasn't coming, I had tried everything I could try, I gave them everything I had in me, multiple personal sacrifices, and then one morning in the café bay, it happened, I had



37lb Common - Frimley.



41lb Common - Frimley.



Frimley 30lb.



Frimley Big Fully.



Frimleys Black 53lb 12oz.



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Exclusive Frimley Pit 3 – The Season So Far

landed a Stoneacres carp, probably one of the best looking fish you are likely to ever see, a special carp, an extremely rare Stoneacres scaley that very rarely got himself caught, to my knowledge since I had been on the complex, only Gaz Fareham had landed him previously, I could be wrong but from the digging I done, this is the only capture I could find.

The relief I had in me, I don't think I will ever feel it again, the blood sweat and tears I had endured this year had all been forgotten, just like the endless blank nights I had experienced, 34.4 of Stoneacres immaculate carp had made my season.

I was now at the end of the summer and a good friend of mine had managed to get himself a Frimley ticket and for many years we done our fishing together, over the past 5 seasons, we found our schedules just didn't match anymore so done a lot of fishing apart, with this in mind, I decided to get a Frimley winter ticket so that I could enjoy some social fishing, if I was going to go hard in the winter I knew it would be tough but if I had a mate with me, we could struggle the



Belgium 41lb (The Big Grey).



Stone Acres – scaly 34lb 4oz.



winter months together, having a few laughs along the way to blank out the pain that winter carp fishing usually brings.

I started my Frimley campaign on 6th October, a little earlier than I had expected but it felt right, I had visited the complex a few times prior to starting and it just felt like I would have a good chance of getting into the gems that reside.

I turned up on my first session and came to a swim known as “the stick” where I had seen a few carp showing just on dark, I set about it with the motherload of bait and 3 rods ready to nick a bite. I sat there in the pitch black darkness grinding 5 kilo of Sticky Manilla and spombed the lot out at short range, it was less than 30 yards and the fish just seemed to be visiting the area frequently that evening, after 20 minutes I was in to my first Frimley carp, a low 20 common and from there the bites kept coming, I had another 4 that night the biggest being a mega 41lb common,

the second and last night of the trip as they have a 2 night rule on Frimley, was very different, someone had turned up and gone opposite me and the swim to my left had been filled, there was a lot more line pressure in the area which resulted in me only managing on more bite, a low 30 common.

My second trip, I turned up late morning and spent hours lapping the lake, it was busy, there must have been 5 or 6 other lads on and there wasn't much water that was pressure free so I decided to go in to a small bay and fish to the marginal lily pads, same as the first trip, 5 kilo of manilla crumb with added sweetcorn for a bit of visual was deployed, 2 hours later I was in to another Frimley common, a low 20 that looked as though it had never seen a hook before.

That night the bites once again kept coming, I had another 3 fish that night which again were all commons, the biggest going just shy of 34lb. with how the previous trip panned out, I thought a move was in order, I had similar circumstances as the previous week where the area had become busy with other anglers so thought I would get away from the zone and move to a different part of the lake that again was less pressured, the move didn't pay off, it was a mistake, and my second night was a

blank, nothing had materialised.

So with 11 carp under my belt in two trips, I was now on my third trip, my 5th night and it was a couple weeks after my previous trip so the weather had really cooled down, the evenings were wet, cold and the leaves really started to fall from the trees, it made me think about my approach, do I go in with the bait or fish lighter, maybe try a single hook bait approach, those that know me, know that I love to fish over bait, a lot of it so a single hook bait just wasn't going to work for me mentally!

I went in heavy with the crumb and corn, heavier than before maybe 7kg crumb and 12 tins of the green giant and fished off the edge of the baited spot, we was away within the hour, a mega 26lb common again immaculate and one for the future, this run of form (good luck) wasn't going away, that night I landed another 6 carp (all commons) the biggest being one of the lakes largest residents, a fish names black eye turning the scales round to 53lb 12oz, this carp was one of the best commons I had ever seen, the shape of it, the colours, everything you want from a big carp was there! It was a fish of a lifetime.

Having put 7 fish in the net on my first night, I called a friend of mine (pump) and had told him that I was thinking of going home, I was wet, I

was tired, I had just caught, for me, one of the best commons around and I was ready to retire to my bed and come back in a few weeks, he convinced to me to stay, his exact words were, that big fully in there is incredible mate, you never know, it might turn up.

At this point I had landed 18 carp from the lake and they were all commons, I hadn't even seen a mirror let alone caught one.

The second night of the trip had begun and I decided to repeat the process, another 5kg of manilla crumb with the green giant to add some visual and away we went, I had another 6 fish by 6am, the biggest being a 34lb common, I had 24 commons on the bounce, and for the stock this probably wasn't normal as there are quite a few mirrors in the lake, I just wasn't getting in to them, then all of a sudden, 7am the left hander has pulled up tight and the alarm is in full melt down, this fish was flat rodding me for a good 20 seconds and I knew it was a good fish, after 10 minutes she was ready for the net, I scooped her up, looked down and there she was "the big fully" at just under 48lb, my 100lb brace was completed.

I fished 6 nights, across 3 trips and managed to land 25 carp, the season has just begun! Let's see what the winter brings. ■



SECRETS OF THE THAMES

Price
£29.95

Secrets of The Thames

By Rob Maylin and friends

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).

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Birthday Result

By Pete Kingsbury

I had planned my birthday trip to coincide with the full moon, I arrived early on Sunday 3rd September and planned to fish to the 5th, which is actually my birthday, the plan was to try and catch a birthday fish.

I walked around the complex hoping to find some fish, I found loads stacked up in Dog Bay on the Church Lake, but having my mind set on trying to concentrate on fishing Kingsmead I carried on walking.

I got into the top car park and saw that someone had moved into a swim that I fancied, upon asking him he said he was due to go later so I placed my bucket in to secure and walked back to the car to make a tea and tie

up some rigs. It got to 13.00 and I saw the guy packing away, so with that I loaded and pushed my barrow into the swim.

I had never fished this swim before and the Carp were clearly evident as the wind was pushing in and it was lovely and warm, a close mate advised of a couple of areas to try and with this info I had a little lead around, the left rod was lined up with the tip of a tree and at 11 wraps went down with an almighty crack, the right hand rod was a little further next to a weed bed at 13.5 wraps just off a little gravel seem and also went down with a crack.

So, spots marked I was ready to bait, I rigged both rods with the awesome Essential Cell Wafers and got

them both out, once out I spombed 5 kilos of mixed sizes of Essential Cell and Cell, with a bottle of Cell Smart liquid, this liquid is an absolute game changer, over both rods.

As day went into night, I started to see a few showed around the area, and at 3am I had a take which opened my account and a 25lb common was in the net, whilst returning this fish my other rod was away which resulted in a nice 39lb 10oz linear, pics done I repositioned both rods and got back in bed.

5.30 I was up making a tea when my right-hand rod was away again, this resulted in a 25lb linear, once returned and rod back out my left rod was away which resulted in a 20lb fully scaled mirror.



I repositioned the rods and made up another batch of bait as before and put half out and left the other half to top up later. It got to 13.00 and I needed some supply's so a quick stop to the shop and shower at the lodge and I was ready to go again.

Back in the swim I got the rods out and Spombed the remainder of the 5K over the two rods, I didn't have to wait for long when the right-hand rods away again and this felt a lot bigger as it managed to kite on a long line into weed, but after waiting and keeping the pressure on I managed to steer this huge framed fish into my waiting net.

I was thinking that this could be a potential pb and at 44lb 12 was just

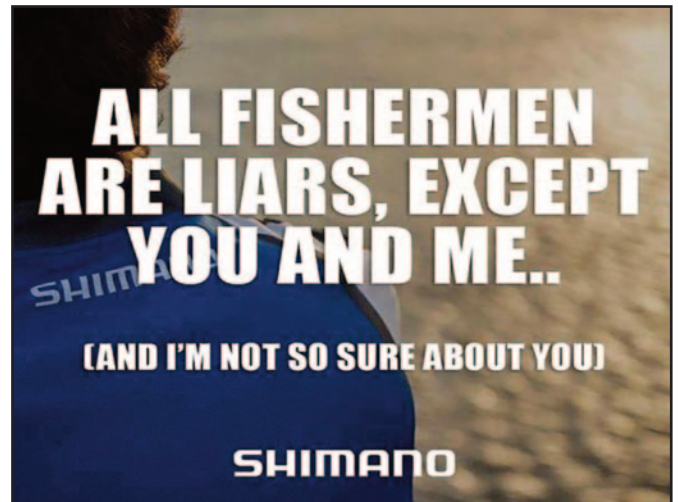
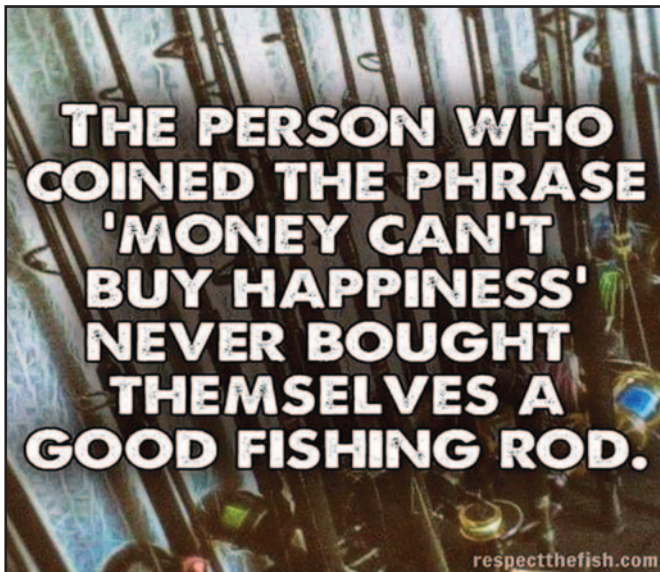
short by a few ounces, but oh my what an absolute banger this fish was and to catch it on the day before my birthday was a great early present, pics done and returned I was in the throes of sorting the rod to recast when the left rod was away which resulted in a lovely 25lb linear.

Once pics done and returned, I made a quick tea to have a calm down as it had been a hectic 24 hrs with 6 fish.

I repositioned both rods and made up my last 2 kilos and deposited that over the areas. I had a nice curry and washed it down with a couple of beers and turned in early to catch up on some sleep as I was due to be off home at 9am the next day.

The night passed uneventful and at 6am I started to see the odd show and received some liners, then the right hand rod was away, whilst playing this the left handed rod is also away, so I quickly tried to get this fish in whilst the left rod was ripping line off the spool, unfortunately I think with rushing I was not concentrating enough and the fish lunged and I didn't give any line quick enough and the hook pulled, gutted to lose that fish I picked up the left rod and the fish had weeded itself, but again with steady pressure and time I managed to get it moving and at 28lb was a greater way to wrap up my session, this called for a McDonalds on the way home, tight lines Peter. ■

Carpy Humour



Exclusive

Autumn Wisdom

Featuring Simon Scott

Autumn is one of my favourite times to be out angling, there is an atmosphere surrounding the water that personally, I don't feel you get with other seasons. Snuggled under a layer of hoodies, clutching a warm brew watching the daylight fade with rods pumped out to a baited zone in the open water is to me, what epitomises autumn fishing.

The first tip I give when discussing autumn approach, is the carp's transition towards night time activity. I cannot stress enough the importance of getting up through the night and listening for shows. Going for a wander in the middle of the night and moving is a big part of my autumn approach. You'll often hear them in those neglected zones through the autumn, and one sighting can change a season. Put the effort in and you will be rewarded.

Because of the night time feeding





spell, I like to really organize my kit through the autumn, making sure all my bits are stored accordingly and I have rigs and bait ready so I'm not scrambling around in the darkness. Charged torches, plenty of tea bags and bundles of dry clothes are definite autumn essentials!

In terms of watercraft, the carp tend to frequent into the open water,

often the deep silty zones where you'll see them sheeting up as they harvest the natural food. Fishing to these areas, and baiting with a concoction of bits and pieces, boosting your bait with liquids and powders will really turn them on.

I've found those first big winds of the autumn, increases in temperature and drops in pressure can all encour-

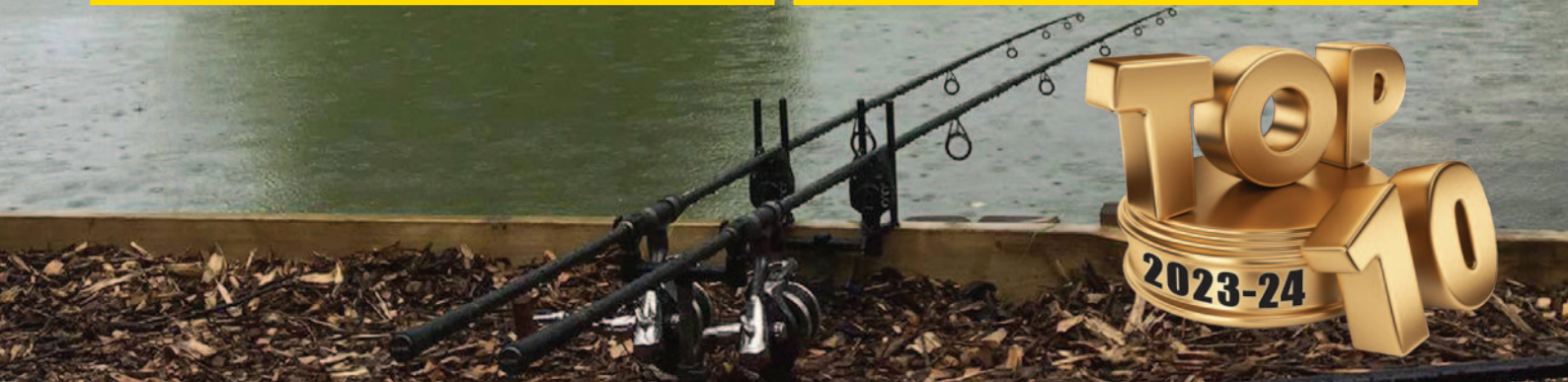
age a big feed up, so if you can, time your sessions around the big weather fronts.

Being vigilant and keeping eyes on is essential at all times of the year, but in the autumn, carp will often roll over their feeding grounds, so really maximise the effort as we progress into the October and into November, some of the prime big carp months! ■



BIG CARP TOP TEN

Carp Fisheries



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Exclusive

Bagging up on Coking

By Barry Oconnor



Two of my rods out on the spots.

It's always exciting when you start fishing a venue you've never fished before. How do I fish it, what bait do I use, when is the best time etc. These are some of the many things that run through your head. Of course, phoning friends who have fished there will help so will reading and gathering as much information you can about the venue. You can never have too much info. After learning as much as I can about the venue it was time to prepare everything for a visit. Now for me preparation is very important. Ben and I do a lot of preparation not only for our fishing but for the carp matches we've entered too. It will always pay dividends if you do. If you fail to prepare then prepare to fail. This visit was no exception.

I was soon on my way to Coking Farm Fishery in Dorset. I'd fished Coking once before during winter and blanked. This visit was in September and I was there for a week. I'd booked peg 25 on Oak Lake. It's a swim I've



A SM Inline Flat Pear lead with the bag stem insert

never fished in before but as I said at the beginning of this article always prepare ahead of your session. Knowledge gained can be priceless.

The journey to Coking took nearly two hours. I usually travel early in the morning to avoid the traffic. Anyway, I pulled into the yard at Coking but



Been using this for some time now.



My peg.



21lb 3oz.



26lb 2oz.

now had about an hour to wait before I could go to my swim. When you book a swim here you have to give a time from when you want to start and finish fishing. In my case it was a ten o'clock start. The booking system here is brilliant. A swim can be booked and paid for in advance. Great if like me you're travelling a long distance because your safe in the knowledge that your swim is secure when you get there. No rushing around trying to beat everyone else putting a bucket in a swim. A much more relaxed atmosphere here. The bailiffs at Coking Farm are very friendly and helpful.

There are eight lakes on the fishery and all have big carp in them. As I said I was booked on Oak Lake. Now Oak Lake has some serious carp in it all swimming around in a lake of about 4 acres. At the time of writing the lake record Common is 42.12 and the lake record Mirror is 48.00. There are two islands with reeds adorning the banks and overhanging trees and bushes. The depths range from a couple of feet to about six feet. Three rods max can be used. Bait boats are allowed. Fishery rules require barbless hooks to be used. At Coking you can drive and park your vehicle behind most swims on the complex. Great for us carp anglers who carry everything. Also on site is a brilliant café that not only does breakfast and dinner but also delivers to your swim. There is also a well-stocked tackle shop on site which sells everything.

I set up camp in the knowledge that there was going to be some gale force winds during my time here so I pegged my bivvy out with extra-long bivvy pegs. As an extra precaution I also tied my bivvy down with ropes. On my previous visit my bivvy took off in high winds and ended up in the field next door. I didn't want it happening again. Once I was set up, I put in some work using a marker rod. I was trying to find some hard spots or gravel anything that would induce me to put a bait on. I found some spots for my three rods in depths ranging from three and a half feet to just over four feet. It surprises me how many anglers turn up for the first time at a fishery and don't use a marker. I cast each rod to its chosen spot and before I clip up I take a few steps backwards letting out some line as I go and I mark the spot where I



Distance wraps are a must.



Bags ready to go.



My swim was a bit tight.

Exclusive Bagging up on Coking



Some of the baits that I used.



The bags and cable ties that I use.



These are the liquids that I squirted into the bags.

stop with a bivvy peg. Only then do I clip up the rod. The peg is my marker for where I stand to cast or put the rod out in a bait boat. I do this so I've got some spare line to wind back on my reel after I clip up. I then walk forward winding the spare line on the reel and put my rods on the rod rest and set them up. Now if I get a run I've got some spare line on my reel that can be pulled off by the fish causing the alarm to sound before it hits the clip giving me plenty of time to get to the rod. Each rod is checked how many wraps it is to each spot from where my bivvy peg is with my wrap sticks. This is duly written down for further reference. Two rods were ten wraps and the other was eleven. The targets I used in the distance for casting references were prominent trees on the skyline. Obviously if I use the bait boat they won't be needed.

My method of fishing was going to be with solid pva bags. The lead was an inline flat pear from SM Leads. I was going to fish with a bag stem insert. The original insert in the lead is removed and replaced with a bag stem insert. These stems are made especially for solid pva bag fishing. You can get them in most tackle shops. They have a loop at one end for tying the mainline to and the other end has either a swivel ring or quick-change swivel for attaching the hook-link. I use a short 15lb Katran Gurza coated hooklink with the coating taken off. I like the braid that's beneath it. The hooklink is about four inches long tied to a size 4 Deception DX Curve Barbless Hook. Although you can tie your mainline to the stem I prefer to put a small snap link or Gizmo (remember them?) on the end of the line. This enables me to change the filled pva bag quickly. The set up I use also enables the stem and snap link/Gizmo to pass through the lead if there was a breakage.

The hook with the bait on is placed in the Castaway PVA bag first and partly filled with pellets covering the bait. The lead is then placed on top of the pellets and more pellets are put in to just cover the lead. Now is the time to pour in any liquids you might want to use. I don't do this at this stage but continue to finish the bag. Any air is squeezed out of the bag and the open end of the bag is twisted around the bag stem. Wetting your fingers before you twist will help to hold it in place



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around the stem. I then take a Cast-away pva cable tie and loop it around the stem and pull it tight. These pva ties make bag making so easy. I wouldn't be without them now. With this method of constructing pva bags I can make up several bags in advance. When I reel in, I just open the snap link/Gizmo, remove the lead set up and replace it with a new pva bag. I put my liquids in the bags as I am about to replace the pva bag. I have bottles with different flavored liquids in that have pointed spouts. The bag is easily pierced by these spouts and any pva friendly liquid can be squirted into the bag without any mess. If you have trouble piercing the bag then pierce the bag with your scissors. You can squirt the liquid in the bag long before you need to use it. This way the pellets have time to soak up the liquids. Unfortunately, I've found that the bags can go a bit saggy if the liquids are put in for long periods of time. The bag goes out of shape a bit and loses its aerodynamic



You can park behind your swim.

shape. Ok in a bait boat but not if you want to cast a long way. My rods are bagged up and ready to go out in the bait boat. I've already clipped the rods up for the spots they're going on.

My first run came on the second morning which I lost close to the

bank through a hook pull. It looked a good fish. Later that morning I had another run and this time it stayed on. Because the lake is shallow the carp tend to stay near the surface when you're playing them. This one was rolling and pulling until eventually he



28lb 6oz.



28lb 8oz.



32lb 8oz.



32lb 11oz.



33lb 8oz.



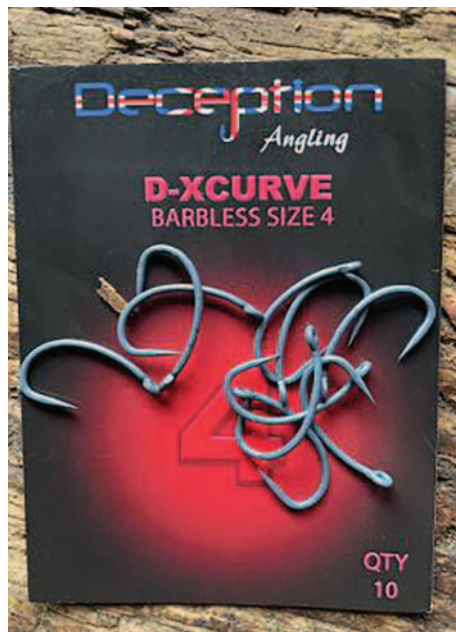
Wafers soaking in liquids.

gave up and came to the net. It was a Common caught on Krill and Bloodworm and was well hooked with my size 4 barbless hook. It went 33.10 on the scales. I was well pleased with it as it was my first carp out of Oak Lake and it was a thirty. Not long after redoing the rod another of my rods was away. This was interesting because unbeknown to me the battery had died in the alarm. It was just sheer luck that I happen to be watching the rods when it went off. Nevertheless, another scrap ensued and this time it was a Mirror of 26.02 on the end of my line.

The rain and thunderstorm promised by the weatherman arrived with a bang. It absolutely poured down and there were gale force winds with it. I was really glad I'd tied my bivvy down and used long bivvy pegs. Day three and there was still



33lb 10oz.



Perfect hooks.

some rain about but the winds had gone. One of my alarms called out for my attention. I picked up the rod and pulled into something that pulled back. It darted all over the place and didn't want to come to the net. When using barbless hooks, I worry that the hook might pull. The longer it goes on the more I worry. In this case I needn't have worried. I engulfed the carp in the net and could see it was another good one. The scales recorded this Mirror at 33.08. This carp was soon followed by a 21.03 Mirror.

I had now caught four good carp. Another day passed without any carp. I could see some but they weren't near my baited area. I decided to put new bags on all three rods. As I said earlier it is an easy task with the quick-change clip. Each hook was baited with one of three hookbaits. I used Steamies Wafers in Krill and Bloodworm, TNT and Hydro Squid. These hookbaits had been soaked in their respective liquid soaks for some time. On the fifth day as I was having something to eat, you guessed it, I had a run. I was quickly onto the rod and doing battle with another carp. The rain was lashing down and unfortunately in the excitement I'd run out of the bivvy without putting on my waterproof coat. I stood in the rain getting soaked and played the carp hoping it wouldn't take long to get it in. The carp had other ideas though because it



Some action came just as the sun was setting.

decided to go round the lines on my other two rods. All I could do was open the bale arms on the reels and hope for the best. This worked and I managed to net the culprit. I unhooked it in the net because all the lines were tangled up. It looked a good Mirror and the scales confirmed it at 28.06. I managed to get some pics and after returning the carp I set about untangling the mess.

The sixth day and the rain had finally stopped. The rods had new bags put on them and out they went to the spots. I'd been squirting hemp

oil, Hydro Squid and TNT liquids into the bags before casting or boating them out. Night time was now upon us and I wanted some well-earned sleep. I slept as best I could but was rudely awoken at the crack of dawn by an alarm. I fell out of bed and grabbed the rod. As I was playing the fish I could see a healthy bend in the rod. Whatever was on the end was giving a good account of itself. As it got nearer to the bank I could see it was a Ghostie. It kissed the spreader block and was mine. I put it on the scales and the needle went to 32.11.



This was my swim with the island on the right.



38lb 3oz.

Another thirty to add to my tally.

After having the Ghostie I went the whole day without a bite. My next bite came at night. The fish was trying to get into some reeds to free itself. I managed to keep it away from them and guided it to the net. It was a Common that went 28.08. Not long after I was at it again. I pulled, it pulled but eventually I won and what a prize. This was a Mirror of 32.08. Early morning and the sound we all want to hear when carp fishing was an alarm ringing in my ears. Another of my rods had burst into action. As I picked up the rod it was nearly wrenched out of my hand. Something very angry was on the end and wasn't about to come my way. At first I thought it was one of the cats that live in Oak Lake. I managed to gain some line only to have it pulled from the reel. Whatever it was it wasn't about to give up anytime soon. It seemed like I had it on for about an hour but in reality was about fifteen minutes before I got it to the net and

it was a lump. As I unfolded the net a massive Common appeared. I put it on the scales and the pointer stopped at 38.03. What a carp. It was huge.

Well, that was it I didn't have anymore. The final tally was nine carp, five thirties and four twenties. What a session this had been. I can't wait to get back. I filmed the session and it will be out on YouTube. If you look up

The Oconnor Angle you'll find it and other sessions that I have filmed. I'd appreciate it if you would subscribe to my channel.

If you would like to fish at Coking Farm ring them on 07759090881 or 07789003044 to get yourself booked in on Oak Lake or any of the other lakes at the fishery. Until next time be lucky. ■

Carpy Humour

**LIFE ISN'T ABOUT
FINDING YOURSELF.
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FINDING FISH.**

A Drop in Temperature

By Gareth Oaks

With the drop in temperatures this week Gareth Oaks knew it would be a good time to get on the Bank and when he arrived on the Tuesday the fish were active and with multiple shows around an area, he had fished the week before, he knew where he was going to go. Gareth told us: "I baited the area with 15mm Cell and matching response pellets covered on hemp oil. But decided to change my presentation to a pop up and put one of the new maple clones range on.

That evening I managed to catch a 38lb 8oz common and I knew this was a sign of things to come as a bite this

quick is a rare thing. I had another fish just after first light which is the normal bite time and then at lunchtime.

After bite time had passed, I decided to bring all my rods in and put a fresh bed of bait out and renewed all my hook Baits.

As bite time was passing I started to see shows just off my spot and I was hopeful for another bite, and then it came. This fish didn't want to stop off the initial run and I was trying to do everything to try and lift it off the bottom of the lake away from the weed, but it wasn't having any is it lock me up solid. After a few minutes of trying to apply pressure, I knew I wasn't going to come out so went to get the boat.

Once I was above it, I could start to

see the flashes of gold down in the weed and I knew it was a big fish. After a short while the bar of gold just got bigger and bigger as it was starting to surface. It was a struggle to get it in the net with all the weed but a managed and then started to clear the weed and prepare the fish for the short row back to my swim.

Tam was in the water ready to grab the folded net whilst I sorted the boat out and then we both looked at the fish and straight away I knew what one it was due to the length of the barbs and the y split on one of them.

Once we got everything ready, we weighed it and I was shocked when the scales spun round to 48lb, a new UK PB and I fish I will not forget for a long time." ■







The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

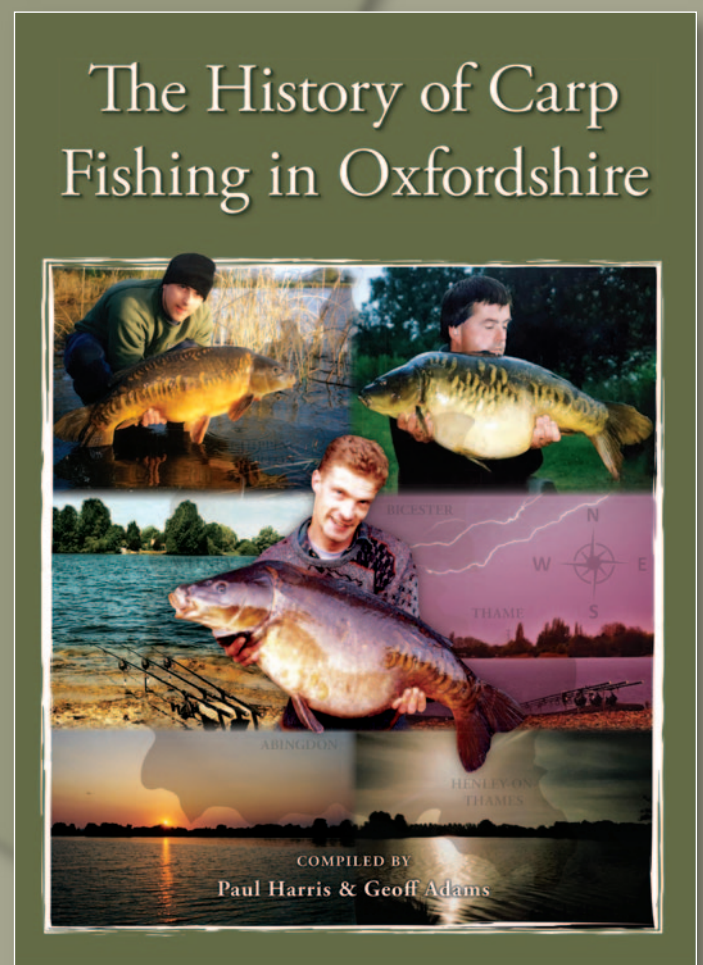
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing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

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

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

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

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



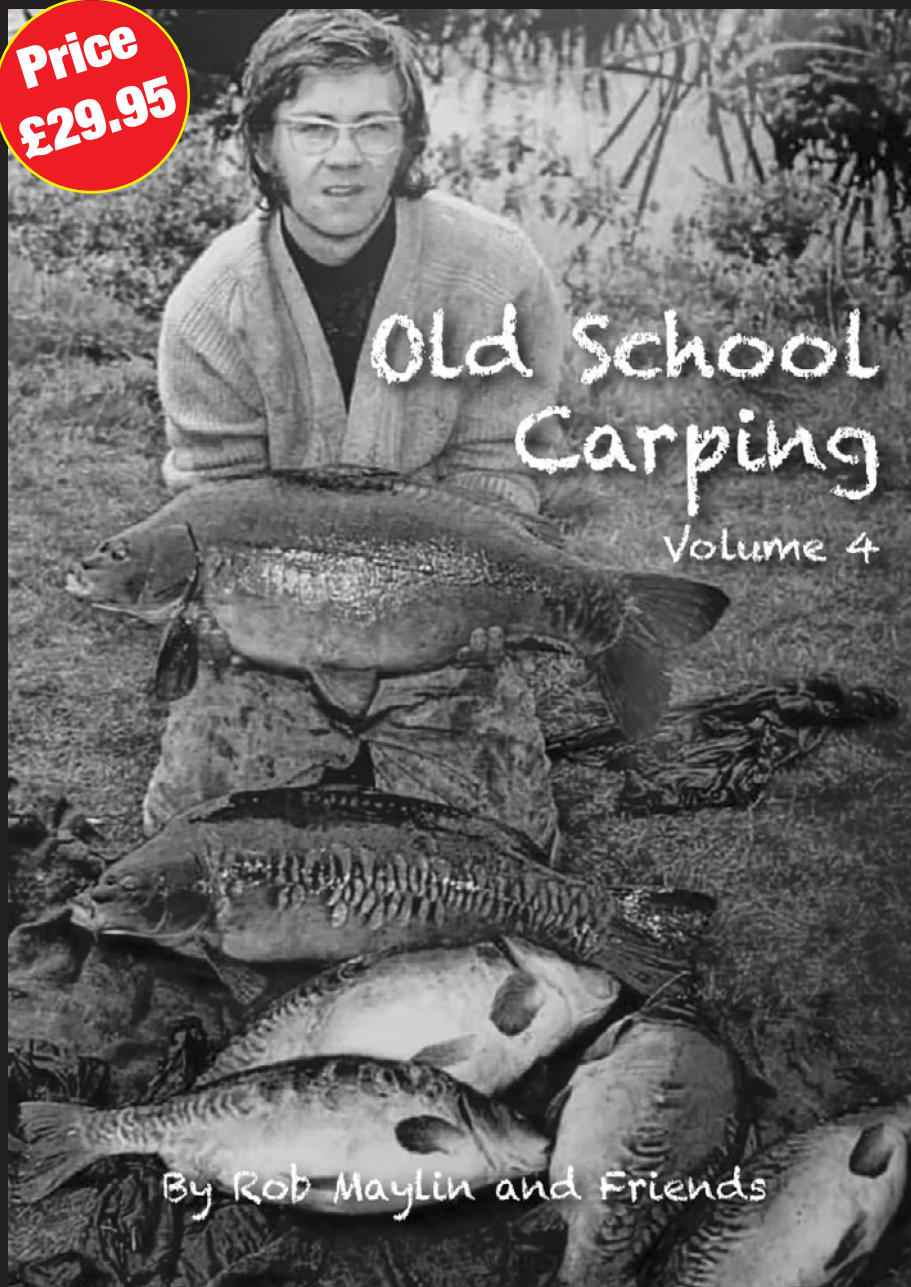
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The 'Old School' series has become one of our most popular sets of books we have ever published. It appears that, in this fast-moving society we find ourselves, more and more anglers are keen to look back at how things used to be, where it all started, 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, Snapchatting, 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.

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VIEWS FROM THE BIVVY

Rob's Ramblings



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Also available this month,

Big Carp Issue 329

Miss it and miss out!

This month's Views from the Bivvy feature some of the great work being carried out by the Angling Trust

Why not visit their stand at the shows, including the Winter Carp Show at Sandown Park

Come and see us at The Winter Carp Show at Sandown on 2nd or 3rd December. The show will be back with a bang with a huge range stands so you can get a feel for new products and grab yourself a bargain. Advance tickets are available now. Free parking The Winter Carp Show 2023 Adult Standard: £13 Concession (Ages 12-15 and 65+): £10 Kids under 12: FREE VIP: £35 (Limited availability, includes an exclusive gift). All tickets are valid on either December 2nd or 3rd at Sandown Park Racecourse Esher. BUY TICKETS The Winter Carp Show <https://www.thewintercarpshow.co.uk/buy-tickets>



Anglers Against Litter in action!

Hampton Angling Association were joined by volunteers from Hampton Parish Council for a litter pick around four local lakes in Peterborough using kit supplied free to clubs through our partnership with Shimano. As well as collecting bags of rubbish, the angling club helped maintain the Memorial



Garden ahead of the recent Remembrance Sunday service. Nathan Minter from Hampton Angling Association said: "With our venues being on a housing estate, our work parties go a long way to keep everyone happy and the lakes clean and enjoyable for all. It is very rare to find any fishing-related litter." Fantastic work!

#AnglersAgainstLitter #ShimanoFishing Pledge your support for Anglers Against Litter: <https://anglingtrust.net/get-involved/anglers-against-litter/>

Real Education

The Reel Education team is pleased to be partnering with Empower Active in Worcestershire. Neil and Richard from Reel Education trained their coaches before visiting Tudor Grange Academy. All had a brilliant time, and we look forward to offering more angling sessions and Reel Education sessions in the area. Reel Education is jointly funded with Shakespeare, our Exclusive Fishing Tackle Partner. The project engages pupils about the importance and value of our lakes, rivers, seas and environment, and uses resources written by teachers for teachers to provide angling-related lessons and hopefully inspire the next generation to give angling a go! The project is totally free to the school. If you would like the Angling Trust to visit your school or would like more information on how to get involved with the project, please contact:

chris.holden@anglingtrust.net – North
neil.wylie@anglingtrust.net – South #ReelEducation
#ShakespeareTackle Read more about Empower Active: <https://www.facebook.com/EmpowerActiveCIC>



Get Fishing

The Get Fishing Fund is now open to applications until Friday 8th December 2023 Building on the successful launch of the Get Fishing Fund in December 2020, the Environment Agency and Angling Trust are pleased to announce an additional £200,000 investment to encourage more people to give fishing a go for the first time in 2023. Funded from fishing licence sales, grants of up to £2,500 are available to benefit angling-based projects. The funding could be used to help purchase equipment, fishing tackle and resources to run fishing events and activities to allow people to get into fishing. Guidance Notes and Application Form <https://anglingtrust.net/funding/get-fishing-fund/> #GetFishing #AnglingTrust #fishing #angling #fishinglife



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CARP CHAT

Carpy News

The Environment Agency and Angling Trust Get Fishing Fund is back!

Monday 2nd October launch date for applications

£200k of funding will get even more people fishing, more often

Grants of up to £2,500 available to deliver events and activities to help people go fishing

Since 2019 the Environment Agency has invested over £400,000 of fishing licence income in 300 Get Fishing Funded projects nationwide, and enabled thousands more newcomers to get into fishing. This popular fund relaunches on Monday 2nd October,

with grants of up to £2,500 per organisation available via the Angling Trust who administer the Get Fishing Fund.

The Get Fishing Fund is all about supporting organisations to run events and activities that help get people into fishing. Funding can be

used to purchase fishing tackle, equipment, event shelters and resources to help run events, making it as easy as possible for newcomers to get fishing!

The fund has proved incredibly popular with angling clubs, fisheries and angling coaches as well as schools, local authorities and charities. Interested organisations are recommended to review the fund guidance notes available at www.anglingtrust.net/getfishingfund, to fully understand the objectives of the fund, and are welcome to contact the Angling Trust to discuss their application and give it the best chance of being successful.

Heidi Stone, Fisheries Partnership Manager at the Environment Agency commented: 'We are delighted to continue this initiative with the Angling Trust. All the funding comes from licence sales so today's anglers are helping to support first timers or novices to try the sport they love. It is especially rewarding to see the joy a first catch or the shared learning experience of families or groups of friends at these professionally run events.'

Clive Copeland, Head of Participation at the Angling Trust added: "Over the past three years, we've seen the incredible impact the Get Fishing Fund has had to help more people get



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Environment Agency

into fishing. The continued support of the Environment Agency to introduce newcomers means that even more people can discover the social, health and wellbeing benefits of fishing."

The deadline for applications is Friday 8th December 2023. Applicants can expect to receive an update on the status of their application by 31st January 2024.

Notes for Applicants: The contact for Get Fishing Fund applicants is: admin@anglingtrust.net The fund opens on Monday 2nd October 2023 and closes on Friday 8th December 2023. Funding applications can be made on the Angling Trust website at grants.anglingtrust.net/online-application-forms or search "Get Fishing Fund" For more information on coaching and courses visit anglingtrust.net/get-involved/coaching. In some circumstances, we may be able to use additional licence income from

the Environment Agency to provide bursaries for training new coaches. Notes for Editors: The contact for this Press Release is: james.roche@anglingtrust.net Get Fishing is the Angling Trust's campaign to grow participation in angling. Annually, the Get Fishing campaign introduces over 30,000 people to angling at hundreds of fun, safe and friendly events funded by the Environment Agency from fishing licence income. You can download this email as a Word Doc here: <https://anglingtrust.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/GFF-Press-Release-2023-Final.docx> Quotes from previously funded projects: Sue Galloway BEM, Northampton Nene Angling Club: "For me, this is what it's all about, creating these opportunities for children, young people, and their parents to try fishing and hopefully incorporating this into their lives to help them maintain a healthy wellbe-

ing." Ashley Bunning, SW Lakes Trust: "We have kicked off the Get Fishing events on our reservoirs. We had a fantastic time and all that attended thoroughly enjoyed it. It was great to get to see the participants who were a bit unsure at the start with what to expect from fishing, to then seeing them get full enjoyment when they caught their first fish." Mark Smedley, MS Angling and Education: "Children and staff attended our Get Fishing events together and have thoroughly enjoyed being out in the fresh air, socialising with each other and sharing knowledge and experiences. The Get Fishing Fund has allowed us to deliver these events where participants have learnt new skills, caught personal bests, built confidence, and have learnt to experiment with different baits and techniques."

ORGANISED BY Angling Trust

Carpin' With Smudger Face book group by Paul Smith

Well, it all started 7 years ago from a village in Suffolk. Just at the time I wanted my own carp fishing group on Facebook. I was the only admin at the time, for a few months then added my nephew Karloff Knappett and my good friend Kevin Balaam who I met down Hinderclay lakes in Norfolk. I

only had a few members at the time, all local carp anglers, but with word and mouth and a lot of sharing the group soon developed too 500 in no time.

After a couple of years, we had our first decent social down Hinderclay lakes which I invited a lot of anglers





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A moulded hard case purposely designed to protect your Steve Neville alarm. Made from a hard rubberized material. Supporting the KLS logo



KLS Tackle Windpan

KLS Tackle have designed the Windpan to act as a wind shield and also a pan support to eliminate your pan sliding off. It fits a wide range of pans and kettles' small and large. It's 150mm square and 100mm high to suit a wide range of cookers as you can see, two of the corners are slightly higher to accommodate the panhandle and to provide support. It's made from Aluminium and finished in black anodising; it fits together with its hook style system and packs down nice and neatly for easy storage.

Perfect to use with a Sandwich Toaster Pan, to stop it falling off a small round stove.



Monster Shellfish



Pop-ups and wafers



Chocolate Malt



Pink pop-ups



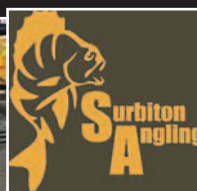
Yellow pop-ups

Monster Shellfish is a fishmeal-based boilie. This bait contains a blend of three high quality fishmeal ingredients which make it a very digestible bait using pre-digested fish-meals, alongside this are some key ingredients, salmon oil, essential oil, Shellfish Sense Appeal, GLM & Robin Red a true winning formula. Also included is a top-quality sweetener, to help finish off this highly attractive boilie.

Monster Shellfish pop-ups and wafers in white, pink and yellow. Perfect for winter.

Chocolate Malt is a birdfood based boilie. This bait contains a blend of three high quality birdfood ingredients, alongside this are some key ingredients and some of the best milk proteins. Also included is a top-quality sweetener, to help finish off this highly attractive boilie. Designed to be used in the colder months but is as equally effective in the warmer months too.

Chocolate Malt pop-ups and wafers in white, pink and yellow. Perfect for winter.



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our customers!

Visit our website to see and purchase our full range of products

www.klstackle.co.uk











to come down, I even had a good friend Gary Maddison who at the time was videoing different carp events and he said that he wanted to film 'Carpin with Smudger' which I thought it was a good idea.

Gary was invited to become admin for my team which he loved for many years then I got to know his mate Paul Munro so now I had another really good admin to keep the group running.

Now the group is in the 1k area and rising from all over the world and now I chat with them and share their captures on the group page.

In the last few years, we've been having more socials spring, summer,

and autumn which always the last one is the best with trophies and good friends who advertise their fishing business supplies prizes which I do appreciate them sending stuff over.

These social events are at Hinderclay lakes where I get permission off my good friend the boss of the complex Stuart Platt, excellent bloke, knows everything about the lakes, where the fish are coming out, the best swims and the best thing, he donated two of the trophy's for our event biggest carp caught in 24 hours and the most carp caught in 24 hours and also every year donate a prize.

I try every year to fill both lake's

and make social events good now we have BBQs teas which my good friend Kevin Balaam slaves over the BBQ and what an awesome BBQ it is.

With the group now over 2.1k from all over the world I've appointed another good friend Harry Tucker one of the best carp anglers I've seen for a lot of year's he has taught me a lot and even got me on the Ronnie rig which I been using ever since.

I would like to thank everyone who is involved with carpin with smudger and also Rob Maylin for letting me share my group in BC much appreciated.

Smudger, tight lines and wet nets.



Carpy Humour





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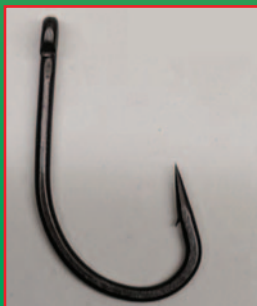
Hair Stops



Shrink Tube



Tungsten Putty



Scorpion Snag Hook



Scorpion Chod Hooks



Scorpion Crank Hook



Swivels



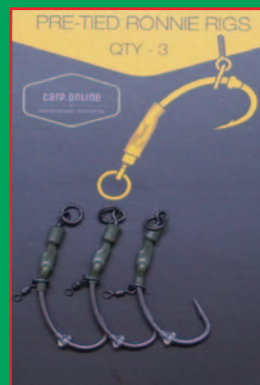
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Composite Leadclips



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Owner Mark Russell just Landed this banging 23lb common: "I thought my chances had gone as bite time is normally overnight, I fell back to sleep after waking at 7am. At 8:30 my middle rod screamed a tone I hadn't heard for an age! Having to fish with the rod tips up my rod came out of the butt rest, and the reel hit the alarm the take was so hard. It stripped line and took me a few minutes to slow and turn it around. After a hard fight the lead had come off making it a bit easier to clear the weed, I slipped the net under my first common from my syndicate and one that hasn't been caught for five years! I used our Scorpion Wide Gape hooks in size 4, micro ring swivel, Tungsten Kickers, Hook Bead and our new CTO Pro hooklink in 25lb B/S. Having my daughter with me on her first night made it all the more special."



Team member John Paul McCusker sent his most recent report to our catch reports page, and a right result it is: "Another nice week in the Cotswolds. Struggled a bit early on in the week. But the back end produced a few good fish. Best two were commons going 32lb and 35lb. Using Carp.online scorpion ready-made Ronnies size 4s with a small wafer in solid bags. After fishing on baited spots for four days for nothing. These three being the pick of the bunch."

Scan the code here to give us a follow-on Instagram.



Team member Lee Oxley has continued to put fish on the bank regularly with his latest capture. Nice reward for braving the winds. Wouldn't say bar of gold more a slab of gold. Happy days with this 36lb falling to RS hardhooker. Nailed on Scorpion Wide Gapes was never coming off. Big thanks to Ralph Hedley walking around just in time for net duties and pictures. Well done Lee, proper chunk.

CARP TACKLE ONLINE RECRUITMENT

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR? We need you! We are looking for people who are passionate about fishing, who are willing to share their knowledge and experience with others, and who are willing to help us grow our business. We are looking for people who are passionate about fishing, who are willing to share their knowledge and experience with others, and who are willing to help us grow our business.

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We are on the lookout for new team members, if you are handy with the camera, video and regularly bank a few carp then get in touch. In return we offer fantastic products with a very generous discount. Email us at sales.carponline@gmail.com with some details about yourself, you're fishing cv and a few recent pictures. Instagram and Facebook a must have and be regularly used X (was Twitter) an added bonus. Additional discounts on offer for media creators on production of videos, adverts and content usable on our pages.



Team member Grant Walters beauty from Bluebells recently: Happy with that. Baby Lucas at 37lb. Decided to come back over my heavily baited area last night. Consisting of @jhbbaits KLF, Nutty B and my original home-made infusion boilies. With @kentparticles mixed particles. Caught on a snow man presentation with one of my yellow infusion specials, using @carptackleonline size 4 Scorpion hooks." Well done, Grant!



Team member Alan Morton managed to bag this 27lb 6oz beauty after a couple of nights struggling on @towcesterlakes. Alan used our size 4 Scorpion Crank hooks, Tungsten Rig Putty, size 8 Barrell swivels, and Tungsten Kickers to coax it over the net cord.

Happy Christmas to all our valued customers

Wide-Fit Ladies Wellington Boots

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

About Jileon:

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

Website: www.jileon.com ■



**GEOFF
ANDERSON**

Press release



URUS DOZER ROUGH BLACK

UNCOMPROMISING

Geoff Anderson – Urus Dozer Rough Black



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This white dial Hawk offer is supplied in the tried and tested **lightweight polycarbonate case**. Either keep it light with a Polymer strap, with a total weight of 70g or go for the Stainless steel bracelet option at 162g. Either way, the Hawk is our **rugged all-terrain watch** fit for any adventure.



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EDZ Press Release

06/10/2023

Fingerless Gloves

an essential accessory for the connected age?



Outdoors

Much of the time fingerless gloves are all that are needed on a cold day with the advantage of greater dexterity and the ability to work touch screen devices.

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With many of us working from home, struggling to afford heating, fingerless gloves help stop hands getting cold when sitting at a keyboard all day.

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AQUA LILIUM CLOTHING

NEW PRODUCTS

It has been an incredible year here at Aqua Lilium Clothing, and there is no better way to tell you about it, than through the country's biggest and best carp magazine.

As you may or may not know, we are a relatively small clothing brand situated in Essex and have been trading now for around 3 years.

In that time, we have grown from designing T-Shirts and hoodies to a huge range of desirable high quality fishing wear, which you can find at our online store www.aqualiliumclothing.com.

This brings me on to our brand-new range that I am very excited to tell you about. Starting off with the All-Rounder Jacket.



This jacket is unbelievable in every way, not only is the jacket water proof it is also wind proof. The All Rounder is designed with an inner fleece lining to keep you warm on those chilly days and is also a great walking jacket to boot. Although incredibly warm, the jacket is lightweight and takes up no space when rolled up. The jacket boasts a huge front pocket, also zip up side pockets. Moving on to the hood of the jacket, this is also fleece lined with 2 no. pull chords for that secure fit. The sleeves are elasticated with an adjustable Velcro strap to keep the jacket tight to the wrists if needed.

When designing the All Rounder we decided also to have the back of the jacket longer so it doesn't ride up your back when you bend over, making sure to always keep you protected from the cold. These come in green or black.

Moving on, we also have matching



*Merry Christmas
and a Happy
New Year to all
our customers!*

winter cargos. These are a game changer and, in our opinion, a future award winner. These beautiful cargos are also waterproof and windproof. Not only are the main body of the cargos fleece lined but the pockets are too, making sure to keep you warm on them cold days.

Again, these are designed to give you maximum movement whether you are sat in your bivvy or roaming a river and these are also lightweight. The Team decided to wear and showcase these at the North West Carp show





and lasted two hours before having to change into the original joggers, they were just to warmmmmmmm.

Unfortunately, the new design Graffiti koi was not ready in time for the North west Carp Show, but I am pleased to say it is now in stock. This design is beautiful in every way, with its bold colours and attention to detail, you will without doubt stand out from the crowd. I reckon the fish will think your pretty cool as well lol.

Again, anybody that knows us, realises we only use the best materials that's why we have won so many product of the month awards. The reason for this is, in reality we only design clothing that the team want to wear and are not interested in flooding the market with cheap out of shape clothing that will last 5 minutes.

We are passionate about making you the customer feel amazing on the bank.

Please don't take our word for it, why not pop over to our Facebook page/ Instagram and see for yourself.

Not only do we want you to look amazing, we also specialise in Dog coats. So, if you're lucky enough to be able to take your best friend fishing then they need to look and feel the part too. The Full Monty Bivvy jacket has everything you need to keep your dog warm, also we have designed the jacket to zip up along the back of the dog meaning there is no need for the Velcro strap you see on most coats. This ensures your dog's belly stays nice and warm through those cold months. Can i also add the jacket is made from a stretch fleece material which is designed to sit semi tight to your dog's fir. These jackets sold out at the North West Carp Show in the first day.

Please don't worry about the size of your pooch, we range from tea cup size up to Hippos so we are well covered.

What's ahead for Aqua Liliu?

we are proud to announce we will be at the Essex Carp Show and the Big One, not only that, we will be there with our exciting new exhibit stand. We will also be working with a small number of charities this year through a charity carp match.

I can't stress enough the warm feeling the

team get meeting everyone that takes the time to come and see us, it really does mean the world to us all. Can I also wish everybody a Merry Christmas and thank you for your support over the past year.

All the best, Aqua liliu Clothing



Aqua Liliu

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

Email: aqualiliuclimbing@hotmail.com

Tel: 07854629130

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

Chasing Dreams – Twynersh Pit 3

Part 3 (The Mysterious Linear) by Warren Fenn



The Channel swim.

It was the week after it finally happened – Nina the Queen of Twynersh's Pit 3 had been caught. Managing to avoid capture for 12 months, her elusive disappearance was finally over, and for me it was the moment I had dreamt about. It's an unbelievable feeling to chase such a sought after carp, as many will try, and many will fail, but to be that angler to succeed is a memory you cherish forever. The feeling of a spotlight on you as your moment on cloud nine has arrived is wonderful, and it's for that very reason I do it without a moment of regret.

With my target Nina finally caught from Pit 3, all I could now think about was a carp I had seen a couple of weeks back, a unique looking linear, which was as rare to the eyes in looks as it was getting caught. It was a carp that seemed to be unknown to most, as another linear in Pit 3 took the limelight as a more popular bank visitor, known as the Big Lin, or a name better suited to him, the Big Wood-carving. Knowing that Nina was unlikely to make another appearance for a while, and with five months still left on my ticket, I decided to make

use of it and go back for the mysterious linear I had seen. The elusiveness of this unknown linear lodged firmly in my thoughts, and to catch him would be the icing on the cake for me on Pit 3. But even though this mysterious linear was priority, there were still a couple more that I would have liked to add to my album including Hoover, a fish I lost back in September, and the Swirly Common, a carp that has potential to take over from Nina as a future queen of this quarry, but in all honesty any carp from the stock I hadn't already caught would have been an added bonus at this stage.

It was mid-October on a mild Sunday afternoon, a week after catching the queen of the quarry when I managed to get back down for a four-night stint. Originally taking a week off work to chase Nina, I thought this would be a perfect time to start my challenge chasing the mysterious lin. As I arrived at the lake I was surprised to see only one angler on, and he was in the Boaty swim. The lake was in its full autumn cycle with the trees flourished in golds and browns. As I walked round to the Treeline swim, I saw it had been roped off as the head

bailiff Paul was in the process of cleaning the snaggy treeline, which was long overdue.

As I carried on around I got to a swim called the Channel swim, a swim that faced a channel between two islands. The swim looked active with patches of bubbles dotted around near the islands, and then like it was planned, a lovely dark mirror gave itself away off the corner of the island, which confirmed my decision on which swim to choose. Moments later I was all set up in the swim, and after a few casts around with a bare lead I found two spots: a lovely gravelly spot off the left hand island, which was just before it dropped off into deep silty water, and a spot in the opening of the channel where a lovely silt gully ran along to the right of the channel – perfect. With both spots marked up, it was time to prime them. After doing so well using Urban Bait's Tuna and Garlic, I'd be mad to change my approach, especially after seeing Nina passing it all over my mat. The reaction of the carp to this bait had been phenomenal, but the Tuna and Garlic bait I'd been using had a slight twist to it.

For a long time now I've been a big



Common.



Scaly.

believer in adding edges to your baits so they stand out from the rest that the carp see on a day-to-day basis. The biggest benefit I've found when using freezer bait is allowing your bait to mature while soaking it in natural oils. I've been doing it for a while now, and I believe it's played a big part in my success over the seasons. I usually remove my bait from the freezer two weeks prior to a trip, and I soak it numerous amounts of times in hemp and salmon oil, allowing the bait to draw in the natural oils to form a soft gooey texture to the bait. The smell ain't angler friendly, but more importantly it works a treat! So after Spombing out 2kg of this glugged-up bait to each spot, I flicked out two short running chods over the spots and sat back waiting for that first bite.

The day and evening went pretty quickly going into the first night, and I was woken at 5am to a savage liner on the left rod the next morning. Watching the water while sipping a coffee, I noticed the left hand area was fizzing up with bubbles – something was on the feed. It got to

around 9am, and the bubbling had stopped. Thinking the opportunity had long gone, I decided to make breakfast, and with that the left bobbin pulled up tight and I was in. With my rod in full battle curve, a slow, heavy weight started making its way towards a set of snags in the double swim to my left, but with a firm bit of sidestrain on the rod, I managed to turn the fish, and with each pump of the rod, slowly pulled him towards me. As he rolled close in on the surface, straight away I knew which one it was, and after a few more rolls, he was in the net. It was the Match Lake Leather, a carp I had caught back in spring, but one that was more than welcome, especially now it had its autumn colours fully on show. On the scales he was slightly bigger at 30lb 6oz, and a few snaps later he was back in his watery home. The rod was back out first time with four Spombs of glugged Tuna and Garlic... Let's see what's next.

As the rest of the day went, I noticed both spots were active with patches of bubbles hitting the sur-

face, but nothing was occurring on the rods. I saw there were a few bream in the area, which could be responsible for most of the activity. I decided to rechuck going into the night, which led on to a quiet night. It was 9am the next morning, and I received a jerky take on the left hand rod as the bobbin bounced up and down. Striking into the rod, the fish really didn't put up much of a fight. He wallowed on the surface as I inched him closer towards me. He went in the net first time, and I saw it was another recapture, this time the Original Woodcarving. The carp seemed pretty stressed as he lay in the net, and due to his lack of fight in the battle, I decided to give him the once over in the net while in the water, unhooked him and let him go.

With the rod back on the spot, I sat back and waited for it to unfold again, hoping the next one wouldn't be a recapture, but nothing occurred through the rest of the day or evening again. I started to think to myself that a pattern was emerging – both takes came at roughly the same time each

Fishing Show Winter Carp 2023



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morning. It occurred to me the carp might be using the channel each morning to move from the Treeline snags to the Boaty snags where the carp seemed to spend most of their time. With that in mind, I assumed my next take would be in the morning again.

9:30am the next morning arrived, and with that the left bobbin cracked into the blank as I hit into an aggressive take. The fish quickly moved to the left towards the double snag, knowing exactly where he needed to go. With the rod fully locked over, I managed to turn the fish, but instead it headed further to my left into a quiet bay. Holding the rod low to the water, I slowly pulled the energised carp out from the bay and in front of the swim. As he surfaced, a rather large head appeared – it was a decent fish. Getting it over the net first time, a sigh of relief was let out – what a fight! Looking into the net I couldn't recognise the carp but could tell from its appearance it was an original. Lifting the carp onto the mat, I saw it wasn't as big as I first thought. As I laid the crusty old mirror on the mat you could clearly see he had the head

of a 30lb carp and the body of a 20 – a really bizarre looking character indeed. On the scales he went 23lb 4oz, and after a few self takes I slipped him back. Nothing else occurred for the rest of the session, and I had to head home first thing the next morning as a callout duty came up at work.

As life rarely goes to plan, I was unable to get back down through the rest of October or November and most of December. I felt like my chances of catching this mysterious lin were totally blown. Hearing from seasoned anglers that the lake completely switches off through the winter months, I really had little hope. Adding to my problems was the realisation that being a plumber, winter was the busiest time of year, so finding a spare day would be an extreme struggle. But being kept so busy, winter started to fly by, and before I knew it Christmas was upon us, and I managed to squeeze a night in after Boxing Day on Pit 3, in the hope of a late Christmas present. With the weather being so mild for this time of year, it wouldn't hurt my chances.

As I arrived at the lake, Paul the

head bailiff was surprised to see me, as he said, "What are you doing here?" I cheekily replied, "I'm here for the lin – it is Christmas after all, so you never know." After having a catch-up with Paul, he updated me on what had been happening since my last session, which was pretty little, but he did tell me there had been one angler who had spent most of December fishing the Treeline swim and managed to catch a couple in his efforts. As soon as Paul told me this, my confidence grew, as I knew if fish were still getting caught, I had a good opportunity for some action or at least a bite.

On walking the lake, I saw the Treeline was taken, but as I got round to the Boaty swim, it was free. In fact the rest of the lake was empty. The Boaty swim had a set of savage snags in, and straight away I knew this would be a perfect place for fish to hold up through the colder months, so I was eager to look. Looking into the heart of the snag, it looked lifeless, and I was questioning myself whether the carp would even want to hold up in here. I must have stood there for a good 20 minutes hoping to see some-



Floppy Tail.



Elusive Linear.



Match Lake Leather third time.



Swirly Common.

thing with nothing occurring. But deeper down at the bottom of the snags I suddenly saw something move, and with my eyes firmly fixed on the area I could roughly make out the pattern of three rather large carp sat together in the dull winter light, blending into the lifeless snag extremely well. "Perfect!" I said to myself as I hurried back to my van to collect my gear.

Within 20 minutes I was all set up in the swim. I decided to fish the two same spots to the snag where I'd had so much success in the spring, but fished slightly deeper into the snags in an attempt to tempt them out. I threw in two handfuls of crushed Tuna and Garlic over each spot, hoping it would spring them back into life, and I fished my own homemade winter special pop-ups over the top. After having had so much success with them over the years, I would be mad not to give them a try.

Going into the night for some reason I felt confident I would receive a take after seeing those three carp, like it was set in stone. As the days were at their shortest and the winter cold

was drawing in, I was in my sleeping bag by 6:30pm with nothing to do but pray for a late Christmas carp. I drifted off to sleep early that evening. Bleeeeeep! Before I knew what was happening, my left hand rod was in my hands and it was in full battle curve, and I was holding on for dear life as a heavy weight tried its best to make it deep within the snag. I could feel the carp kicking within the branches, praying it would come out. I didn't give an inch as the carp tried its hardest to bury itself deeper and deeper within the snag. As she kicked aggressively, all I could feel down the rod was bang, bang, bang, and then to my surprise, out of nowhere the line came free, and the carp was out. I felt relieved as I inched the carp towards me with each pump of the rod, but it wasn't over yet!

All of a sudden the rod locked up tight. As I kept a firm pressure and pulled, a slow, dead weight hit the surface and came towards me. The carp must have hit a weedbed. I kept pumping the rod as it came closer and closer, and as it was in netting range, I flicked on my head torch to

reveal a big ball of weed. I couldn't see a fish, and I had the horrible feeling that it had long gone – gutted. Thinking I'd blown it, I got my chest waders on and walked into the margins to clear this ball of weed from my ejected rig. As I grabbed the line and started to break the weed up, I saw a big flash of gold – the fish was still on! I quickly grabbed the net, eager to get the carp in it, and I netted the whole section of the weedbed where I saw the carp. With that I felt the kick of the carp against the net, and she was mine.

Eager to see which carp I had, I carefully pulled the weed out of the net bit by bit, and the carp was revealed. A big row of golden apple slice scales reflected back at me from the light of my head torch, and I couldn't believe it. I stood there in the margin with the net a bit puzzled, pinching myself to make sure I wasn't dreaming. Did I really have the mysterious linear in my net? I quickly sorted myself out and controlled my emotions, as this was really happening. Before I knew it I had the linear on my mat, her winter colour was revealed,

and I was left speechless as I gazed at her beauty. Unhooking her I saw her mouth was spotless. She was in unbelievable good nick for such an old carp. On the scales she went 34lbs, but the weight really didn't matter to me in the slightest. In awe of her beauty I lifted her up for a few self-takes thinking to myself this Christmas was truly going to be a memorable one. As I slipped her back, I held her in the water, gazing at her beauty for one last time, and off she went. It was 3:30am, and I remember sitting on my bedchair shaking in complete disbelief looking through my camera shots – what a Christmas present! The next morning I packed away pretty much at first light. As I drove up to the main gate I saw Paul the bailiff, and he said, "Leaving already?" I replied, "Yeah, I've had the linear, mate." The look on his face told the story – he couldn't believe it, but neither could I. What an end to the year!

After catching the linear, the buzz was never the same for me on Pit 3. With a few more months left on my ticket and with a couple still absent from my album, I decided to carry on fishing there to the end in the hope of catching a couple more. The Swirly Common and a handful of others ended my lovely time on Pit 3, all taking pride in my album. After 64 nights and 27 different carp, my time on Pit 3 had come to an end, but maybe one day I'll return for the one that got away... who knows?

But until next time, Tight lines. ■



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A Red-Letter Day

By Barry Oconnor

The swim
boundaries are
clearly marked.

Lake Pepper

At some time or other many carp anglers have experienced red-letter days when fishing. Ben and I have had many red-letter days in our years of carp fishing, but one that stands out was at Cottington Lakes in Deal. We've fished Lake Pepper on the Cottington site for many years now and have caught loads of carp from this most prestigious water. The carp in Lake Pepper don't give themselves up very easily though. A lot of carp anglers arrive at Cottington believing that they only have to cast a bait into the lake and they will catch. Nothing could be further from the truth. Many go home disappointed simply because they've not done their homework. One of the most common mistakes anglers make on Pepper is the belief that it's easy. With this in mind if the angler hasn't caught within an hour or so, they start to doubt what they are doing. The bait gets changed, the rig gets changed, out comes the spod rod and in goes tons of bait. There's more casting going on than



there is in a casting tournament. This in our opinion is not the way to fish Lake Pepper. It's all about a waiting game with these wily carp – not a lot of casting and minimal bait.

Adjacent swims

This is exactly how Ben and I fished Pepper when we had our red-letter day. We arrived to find the lake nearly deserted except for two anglers. We plotted up in adjacent swims in the middle of the lake, which enabled us to control a big area of water. The good thing about Lake Pepper is the swim boundaries are clearly marked, and as such no one should be casting into your swim. Generally most

(Above) No long distance casting, so no need for big reels.

(Below) The first carp, a 28lb 10oz Koi.

anglers stick to their own swims, but of course you do get the odd idiot who doesn't. A quiet word to the bailiffs and this will be dealt with very quickly. The swims we chose had been recently refurbished with boards and wood chippings, which would keep us dry underfoot if it rained. The owners have got an ongoing programme that will eventually see all the swims built to this standard. Cottington Lakes is undergoing changes, which not only include the swims but also how you book on to





the lake. Maintenance is also a never-ending task.

Furrows

We got everything ready for our session. The fishing on Pepper is normally pretty straightforward; in fact once the two baited rods are in position, there's a lot of waiting around. It never ceases to amaze us the amount of anglers who fish Pepper and don't use a marker. Ben and I still use a marker when we need to find a spe-



cific spot, although we do use a bait boat with an echo sounder as well. Without either you're fishing blind. Even though we know the swims very well on Pepper, we wouldn't fish without first checking depths and underwater terrain. Lake Pepper has a new section and an old section, which are joined by a channel. The bottom on the old section is pretty uniform with silt and hard spots and depths of between a couple of feet to around eight feet. The channel is much the same. The new section however has much more contours on the bottom and has three islands in it. When it was dug out, the mechanical digger left furrows along the bottom

(Left) Just a couple of handfuls is all that's needed.

(Above) Baitboat.

(Below) A 33lb 6oz slate grey mirror.

in places. These furrows or gullies are used by the carp to get around the lake. A bait placed in one of these gullies is an ideal starting point when visiting Lake Pepper. Hence the importance of using a marker.

The bare minimum

Once our camps were up, we set about finding the spots to put our traps in. Over the years, Ben and I have fished in many swims on Pepper and have worked hard to find possible





spots to fish on. So for us it's not difficult to find the spots again. There's a two-rod rule on Lake Pepper, so Ben opted to go up against an island with one rod and put the other in a gully he found with the marker, whereas I had both of mine close to an island. Boilies account for most carp on Pepper, and this was the approach we adopted on

(Top) There are plenty of thirties in Pepper. This one went 30lb 2oz. (Below left) All the swims have been refurbished. (Below right) Most coloured pop-ups work on Pepper.

this session. Now when we say boilies we don't mean kilos and kilos of them. No, just a bare minimum is all that's needed. What is a bare minimum? Well for us that amounts to eight boilies around each hookbait. Some will be whole and some will be chops. On Pepper there is no long range fishing. At around seven acres and with three islands, it's easy to catapult baits out. Although the seagulls can be a pain sometimes. A kilo of boilies each will last us for a forty-eight-hour session on Pepper. We'll probably bring some home. Most

quality boilies will work at Cottington.

First carp to Ben

The first carp of the session came shortly after we began fishing. Ben latched into one of Pepper's hard-fighting carp. It gave him a right tussle as it kited right, and in doing so it took out one of my rods. I opened the bail arm on my reel to let the line run freely so that Ben could get the carp in. Eventually it came to the net with my line in tow. Ben removed the hook from the carp's mouth, and we duly weighed it. We could sort the mess of line out later. The carp was one of the





rarely caught Cottingham Pepper Koi. The dial on the scales went round to 28lb 10oz. What a good start. Now to sort the line out. Cutting it was the better option than unravelling it. Anyway, both rods were soon out on the spots again. As I said, sometimes we use a bait boat, which has an echo sounder on it. It's amazing what you can see on the receiver. It shows contours on the lakebed, weed and of

course fish. On some sessions we've sent a hookbait out in the boat and dropped it on fish that are showing on the echo receiver. Sometimes you get an instant bite, but other times you don't. Equally we've dropped a hookbait where there are no fish showing and got a bite within minutes. There's no uniformity to it. The echo also shows what depth the fish are at, which can be helpful, especially if



(Left) Our range of baits that we've been using for a while now.
(Above) Rig tubing has to be used on the specimen lakes.
(Below) 39lb 8oz – what a stunner.

they're up in the water and you want to set up a zig.

Rig details and bait

Rig-wise you don't need anything special at Cottingham. Basic rigs will suffice. Our rigs for this session consisted of size 6 Ashima Heavy Carp



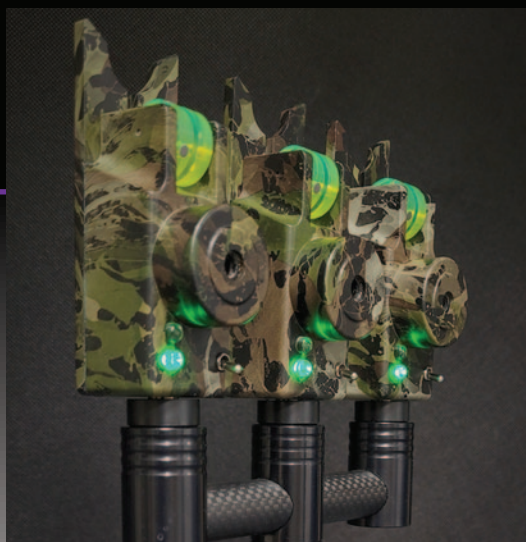
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hooks tied to a 15lb short hooklink. The reel line was Ashima Gangster line, which is thinner than most lines on the market. This was passed through 24 inches of tubing. You must now use tubing on Pepper and Christine. The line was then passed through a tail rubber and safety clip and tied to a size eight swivel. The swivel is then pulled back into the clip until it clicks. A quick release snap link is then attached to the swivel. The tubing is pushed into the tail rubber. To keep it in place a small

dab of rig glue is added to the end before pushing it in the tail rubber. The hooklink has a loop on the end and is placed in the snap link. Sounds difficult, but in reality is so easy to set up.

For hookbaits we use 15mm boilies and 15mm or 10mm pop ups. Sometimes we use 10mm wafers. We've done well using Cell and Tutti Frutti boilies on Pepper. Equally we have done well using bright coloured pop-ups. Sometimes the combination of both have worked well too. Of late though we've been using our own boilies and pop-ups and have been having very good results with them. This is a boilie that has a pop-up, wafter and a dip to go with it that Ben and I have developed in conjunction with Dave Poxon at Eclipse Baits. The

flavour is orange, but it has other secret additives in it as well. The results we've been having are excellent and suggest it's going to be a winner. We've named it "Secret Orange." There will be more flavours in the range coming out at a later date, so keep an eye out for them. Particles have also figured in our baiting strategy. Not loads of it, but just enough to keep them interested, either Spombed out or put in the bait boat but used in moderation. A couple of handfuls is sufficient for us. Whatever we do we always attach a small web type PVA bag of chops or ground boilies to the hook before casting or even when using the bait boat. This virtually guarantees a tangle-free presentation.

The biggest is over 52 pounds

The next carp came to my left rod on the island not long after Ben's capture. It came in quite tamely at first. That is until it saw the net and went absolutely berserk. Ben lifted my right hand rod to let the carp pass under the line. It was rolling and turning as it tried to shed the hook, but luckily everything held up. Ben did the honours with the net, and a slate grey mirror kissed the spreader block. It looked a good one, and the scales confirmed it at 33lb 6oz. Photos were done, and the carp was returned to the water none the worse for its ordeal. The carp in Pepper are really stunning. Some have big plate scales, and others have apple slice scales. Some have a mixture of both. Others

(Top left) Strong hooks are required for these hard-fighting Cottington carp.

(Top right) Simple rig.

(Below) We never put out a hookbait without a small bag attached.





have no scales at all. Ben and I have caught some absolute stunners from Pepper over the years. The biggest mirror in Pepper goes over fifty-two pounds. There are also commons in Pepper that go over forty pounds, and in particular some silver commons, one of which is just over forty pounds and another over forty-four pounds! They do get caught, but not very often.

Another peach of a carp

The lake had now started to fill up. Most of the swims in our part of the lake had been taken. We like it when it's busy because this tends to move the carp around a bit. Nothing more came our way until the next morning, and I was in again. This time it was my right hand rod with a pop-up on doing the business. After a bit of a battle the carp succumbed to the net. Once again it was a stunning mirror, this time weighing 39lb 8oz. Ben

unhooked the carp for me, and while he was dealing with it, I recast the rig with the original pop-up on it. It went straight on the spot and as I put the rod in the rest it went off. I was now playing another carp while Ben was putting the other one in a recovery sling. The carp in Pepper give a good account of themselves when doing battle, and this one was no exception. It was twisting and diving in its attempt for freedom. A low twenty eventually went in to the net.

Sixteen carp

The weather was being very kind to us. The conditions seemed to scream carp, and we weren't being disappointed. Some breakfast was in order. A bacon sarnie on the bank always go down well. Ben and I were deep in conversation between bites of the bacon sarnies when his remote sounded off. He looked at his rod, which was bent double, and the bite indicator bobbin was buried in the buzzer. Ben was quickly on it. The bend in his rod told the story of what was happening. The carp was making powerful lunges, but Ben was always in control. As it came nearer it rolled a

few times, and we could see it was a good fish. A few minutes later it was in the net. Ben was relieved to see it in the net after a having a ten-minute tussle with it. It was another upper thirty mirror to add to our tally at 39lb 2oz. Ben had another mirror not long after at 30lb 2oz. By the last morning Ben had eight carp, and I was on seven. We'd planned to pack up at midday because the bailiffs wanted to do some work on the islands. As we were packing away our gear one of my rods was away. Don't you just love it when that happens? As I was play-

(Top) 39lbs 2oz – a near forty Cottington carp.
(Right) Very thin line for its breaking strain.



ing it, I heard someone say they were into another one. Apparently there had only been a couple of carp out around the lake, and it was pretty rammed. If I got this one in it would be a total of sixteen fish between us in this forty-eight-hour session. Well get it in I did, and as it was lying in the net we could see it was another twenty. The dial on the scales settled at 23lb 4oz. We packed up not long after and headed home.

Red-letter days don't come along on every session, but when they do you never forget them. We certainly won't forget this one. Most of the carp we caught were twenties with a sprinkling of thirties. Lake Pepper on the Cottington Lakes complex has been kind to us over the years, and long may it continue to do so.

If you would like to fish any of the lakes on the Cottington site please contact the shop on 01304 380691 or go to their website at cottingtonlakes@outlook.com where a booking system is in place for Lakes Pepper and Christine. If you are interested in



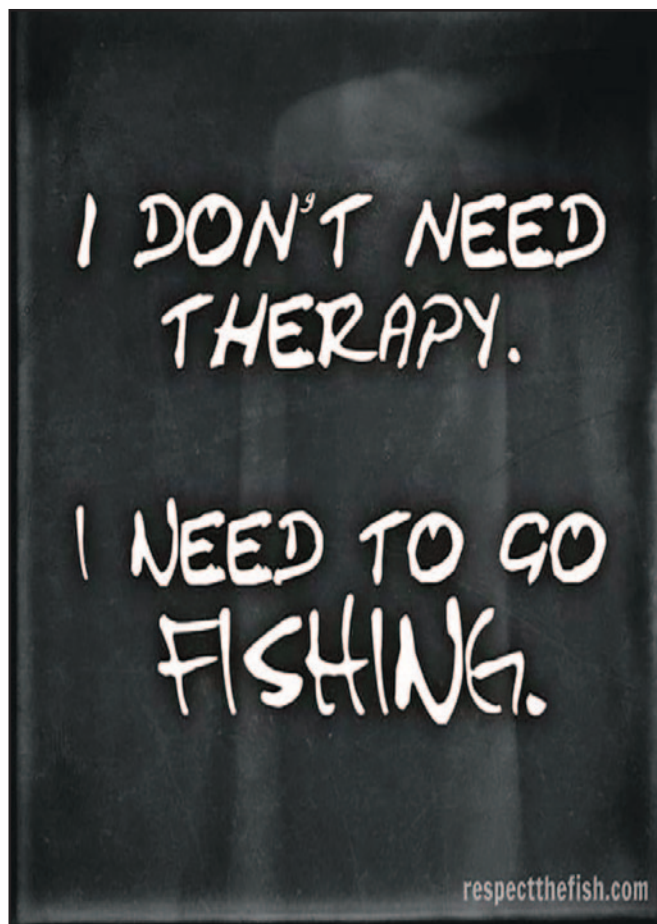
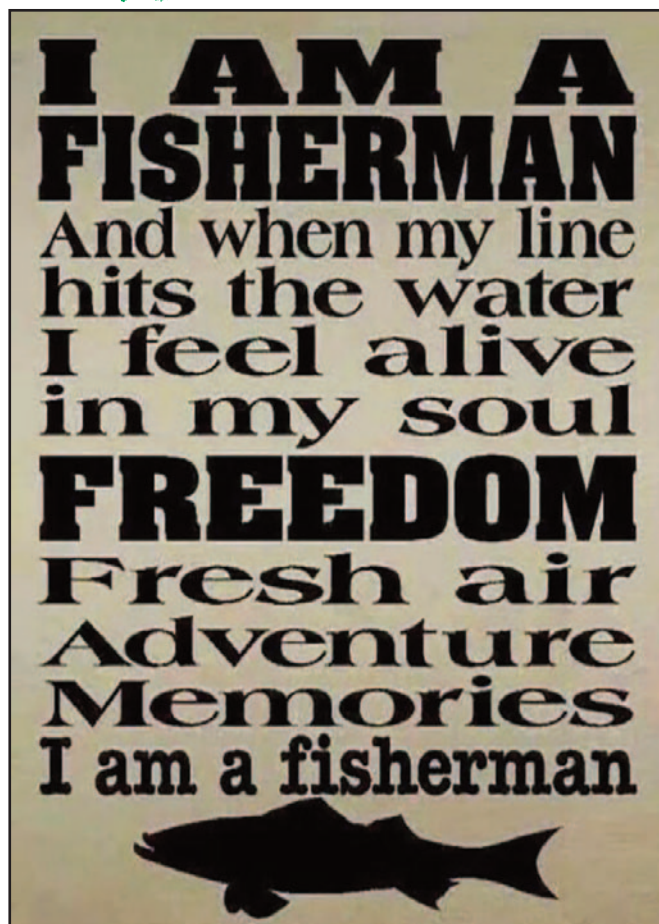
The last fish of the session at 23lb 4oz.

purchasing the Secret Orange boilies, wafers and pop-ups in the Oconnor Range that we've been using then

please contact Dave Poxon on 07872449023.

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An Unexpected Path

By Dan Bruton

One of the most valued parts of carp angling for me is meeting new people. Over the last 20-odd years I've met some awesome guys, some of whom I speak to most weeks, even though we may not have angled together for years. Everybody has a story and pictures of carp, which always leads on to hours of conversation. I like nothing better than sitting bankside talking all things carpy! On the odd occasion new waters come to light and opportunities arise, and whilst fishing Fen Drayton I learned that a friend

had his own lake in Essex. Back then, I was balls deep into Fen, so pretty much everything got pushed to one side, but a couple of years later my pal from Fen, Paul, sent me a couple of pictures of some of his fish, and my jaw hit the floor!

At the time I'd done a couple of successful winters locally, so I was looking for another winter water, and Paul's lake ticked all the boxes. Within a matter of weeks a guest trip was organised, and in late February 2013 I was sat there with rods out. The lake in question isn't huge, somewhere around four acres I'd say and in the region of 120 carp. On paper this

should be a fairly productive lake, and I was rubbing my hands. I managed a couple of small fish on that February trip, but the ticket didn't start until the 1st of June. I was fishing a big pit in Northamptonshire that year, and this was primarily going to be for the winters, so I ambled off knowing the ticket was safely secured.

I did a couple of recce trips during the summer when the weed was at its peak to learn the topography and generally get a feel for what would be involved, and although it was very, very weedy, it was more than fishable, and there were some lovely spots. I picked up a few fish on those first few





nights, which was an added bonus. After another few months in Northamptonshire, it was becoming time to start thinking about getting ready for the winter in Essex, and I'd heard that during September they'd gone a bit mad and a few guys had clumped them. It didn't really bode well, and the first few trips didn't result in as much as a bleep, so not quite the pushover that I first thought! Now we all have our little edges in carp angling, and I've picked up a few along the way. One of these was deployed, and like flicking a switch, I started to get loads of bites. In fact it became really good fun, not only catching lots of fish, but knowing that nobody else knew what I was up to, so it was a bit of a double buzz. To this day, nobody did ever find out what I was doing, so I got away with it. I ended up catching about a dozen carp including some gorgeous mirrors and an upper 20 common, which at the time was only its fifth ever capture, so that capped off a great winter, and before long I was heading back to

Northampton for another spring assault.

At this point I'm going to fast-forward to what was my best period on the Essex Lake. I used to flit in and out during the warmer months when fish were spawning on other lakes that I was fishing, so to document all of it would become very confusing. The best thing I'd found about this particular lake was that everything was so relaxed, everybody was friendly, and it was just fishing. You shut the gate behind you, and there was very little political nonsense, just a complete breath of fresh air. There were no monsters swimming in the lake, so in essence there were no real targets, but tracking back to when Paul had sent me some pictures, there were four carp that I would never be able to leave without catching. Being a close-knit little community, I found out the names of those four carp and they were the Model, the Baby Model, Paul's Pet and Baby Swirly. Obviously, unless in a stalking situation, it would be nigh on impossible to set out to

just catch those four with so many carp in the lake, and after a bit of homework there was no real hotspot for any of them. Usually that would be frustrating, but in this instance it didn't matter one bit; I knew that eventually they'd just come along the way.

For various reasons, I decided I was going to fish the autumn, and on the last day of September I arrived for my first trip. Again I'd kept an eye on what had been coming out, and so far most of the bigger residents were due out. You had to catch it just right in the autumn because generally all 25-plus of the 30lb-plus fish would come out very quickly, usually in a three or four-week period. Most of the guys were very boilie orientated, so to set myself apart I concocted a particle mix with a little bit of everything in it: hemp, pellets, maples, corn, salt and a sprinkling of 12mm Trent Baits Fresh-water Shrimp. I've always found that the Shrimp works really well in the autumn, as the carp start to deplete the lakebed of natural food. With that



Paul's Pet.

Dear Santa,
PLEASE
No more
socks this
Christmas!

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The Darker Side of Carp Fishing

Old School Carping Volume 4

History of Yateley Volume 3

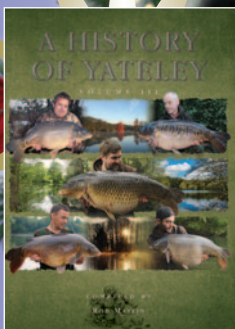
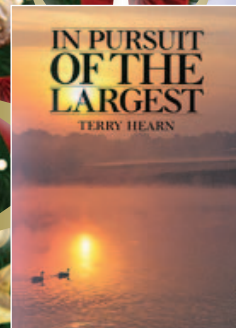
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in mind, I knew they'd be used to picking up the smaller items of food, hence the particle and small boilie approach. I'd been a member for a while at this point, and although having caught quite a lot of fish, I'd never nailed one of those larger residents.

After a minimal lead about, I found a couple of lovely drops quite close to the one island that this lake offers. You hear lots of people saying to avoid the clean, hard areas in carp fishing these days, but in my opinion at certain times of the year fish want to eat, and they don't want to particularly work for it, sifting through all the crap to get a meal in them, and this lake is no exception. I'd tried fishing in the dirtier and weedier areas before, and I never fared too well. However a hard crack down and a bit of bait had done me loads of bites. You know what it's like – you cast and get a nice thud, then you cast again and it's like hitting concrete. Those were the drops I was always looking for.

I spread a bit of bait out there, and the hookbaits were quite close to

each other, but the weed wasn't too bad, so I rolled the dice and got my head down for the night. At 7:45 the next morning the left hand Stow pulled up tight, and I was into a fish. They're renowned in this lake for fighting hard, and this was no exception, to the point that it went through my other line and a weedbed, causing me a few dramas. I'd got to a point where the fish was lying on the surface a foot away from the net but wouldn't come any further. I could see that it was a fish called the Mother, an absolute stunner that I'd already caught the previous winter, so if it did end up dropping off, it wouldn't be the end of the world.

After a lot of faffing, I finally netted the fish, and although a repeat, I was happy. The odd thing was though, it was a lot heavier than it should be, and I couldn't figure out if I'd made a mistake or not. I pinged a picture to a guy that had spent years at this lake, and a few minutes later he confirmed that it was Paul's Pet! As soon as he said it, I instantly knew he was right; I just had a massive mental block

thinking in was the Mother. The pictures came out superbly, and it was one ticked off my ultimate hit list. I've been lucky to catch a few very dark carp, and this one was right up there with the best of them.

With the nightmare of that fish going through the other line, I thought it'd be wise to find a different area for the rod that hadn't produced, and so it was popped out to a clear spot amongst some weed with a few handfuls of the particle mix, and if memory serves me, I don't think I touched that rod again. I reset the island rod just before dark, and during the night I had two more bites off that rod – a mid-double common and finally a 30lb'er! It totally beat me up during the fight, and you'll see by his length and muscle exactly why – an absolute machine of a carp. I did pics of that one at first light, and due to the nocturnal activities, I decided to get my head down. I'd drifted into a really deep sleep, and the next thing I heard was a Delkim going nuts. The previously dormant right-hander was bent double with a fish that had made the



The first 30-pounder.

ultimate mistake and clearly wasn't happy about it! After a decent tussle the fourth and final fish of this trip lying in the folds was quite possibly one of the ugliest fish in the lake. As it goes, it was another 30lb-plus fish and quite a rare one at that by all accounts, so his reputation certainly outweighed his looks!

I was really happy with how the trip had gone, especially with the bait and how I was applying it. So for the next trip I did a carbon copy. I was able to get in the same peg, and I mirrored what I had previously done. I had a few liners the first night, but the following morning, the birds moved in on me, and I was really struggling to keep hookbaits in the water. A couple of guys had also dropped in to my immediate left. I was sitting there scratching my head when I saw a fish bop a head out in the corner of my eye over to the east side of the lake. That was all I needed, so I packed the kit up and headed to a peg that I knew very well. Some heavy clouds were overhead, so I quickly put the shelter up and pinged both rods to spots I'd caught from before, and then the

heavens opened. It was actually a bit of a blessing because as I watched a monster southwesterly come across me with rain clattering the surface, fish started showing. If there was ever a time to cast at showing fish, it was now with the rain and waves causing a load of disturbance. I got absolutely drenched in the process, but for my efforts, 45 minutes later, a near 27-pounder picked up the single hook-bait.

The weather was full sunlight one minute and the next smashing down, but with the strong wind, it really seemed to turn them on, and the rod I'd originally placed down in a corner area ripped off just after I'd recast the rod I'd caught on. This time a common was the culprit at over 26lbs. Things started to settle down a bit as the afternoon melted into evening, and I did pick up a low double common off the same spot as the first mirror.

I used to do really well from this particular peg quite close in during winter. It was one of the deeper areas, and as we were now into October, I felt it would be worth putting a rod

there. In preparation, I'd already given it a few handfuls of particle earlier in the day just in case any fish were passing through under my feet, which was something that they did an awful lot. Three carp rolled very close by once the rod was placed, but then as it got dark it went very still and quiet. I woke at half three for a leak, and the moon was epic – not a cloud in the sky and very bright. Just as I was drifting back off to kip at around 4am, the short rod let out two bleeps. Weird, I thought; it must be a coot or a swan... and then a couple more bleeps. Usually I would get belting takes from that spot, but when I got up I saw the indicator was unclipped, and I could play a tune on the line – fish on! Whatever it was must have just sat there trying to eject the hook, but it was too late.

It was probably the least hard fighting fish I'd caught from the lake, and I slipped it into the folds in around a minute, maybe 90 seconds, tops. I could see it was a linear and was trying to think what it'd be. I thought it could be a fish called Harvey's Linear and guessed at upper 20s until I tried



The stormy brace and Baby Model.



No Name.



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The January brace of mid-20s.



28lb.

to lift it out! Then it became glaringly obvious that I had the very sought after Baby Model, and it was big, much bigger than it had ever been. It had never gone above 34, but I could tell straight away I was dealing with an upper, especially when I laid her on the mat – she looked enormous. At 38lb 4oz it was the second largest fish the lake had ever produced, and she was in immaculate condition. A pal popped down after his night shift, and he did a great job of the pictures. Cheers, Leon! As I was packing up, I managed another low double common, and that was the final action of a trip that will forever be etched in my mind.

It wasn't all roses though, and typical of this lake, if you get too 'Jack the Lad', it'll kick you in the nuts! The following week I had a major blank out – nothing was showing, and I felt like I was a complete novice! It had a real way of just closing the doors on you, and although I could hardly complain, I decided to change things up a bit in a bid to try and generate a few bites for my next trip down. Due to where

other anglers were fishing around the lake, I ended up going into a peg that I'd never caught from before, but with strong gale force winds due, I didn't want to be on the end of it with cooling water, and this area ticked boxes. I'd hugely reduced the amount of bait I was putting out, and it paid off massively. That trip I had six carp including another one of the bigger ones known as No Name at a shade over 31lbs. The lake had really slowed up, so it was a bumper session.

From there on, it got quite sporadic. Fish had completely stopped showing, and every week I would fish a different area trying to track them down. We were now into late November, and I'd found myself perched in a small peg on the road bank. I didn't really like it on that side so much; I always felt really exposed, but it was the next area on my mind to try out. Coming off the corner of the island was a bar, which was very shallow, but as you dropped short of it, it fell down to a lovely depth. Although I'd never fished the spot, I could imagine the fish would feel safe and protected

there. A few of the local lads used to smash fish off that area in the warmer months, but I always enjoyed fishing on the quieter field bank so had never tried it before. I leaded around and found the hardest drops and popped a little bit of bait out there, but again, not too much. It was a damp night, and to this day I've never caught a fish from this lake while it's been raining, and it rained all night. I'd already written it off, so I stayed in bed a bit longer that morning. As it approached 8am the pitter-patter slowly reduced to nothing, and like flicking a switch, the right-hander melted off.

It was a lovely strong battle, and the water was pretty clear. As the fish approached, twisting and turning, I could see it was a common, and then I saw a flash of swirly scales on her back. Suddenly it became apparent that I was attached to another of my targets. There were in fact quite a few commons with this swirl, but the shape of Baby Swirly for me made it the best common in the lake. After a couple of gulps, she slid into the net like a pro. What a buzz! After weigh-

ing her in at 32lb 10oz, I slipped her into a retainer and quickly recast the rod. I was texting my pals the good news when the same rod ripped off again, this time producing a 26lb common. The main man Paul was nearby the lake and offered to come and take some photos for me, which was greatly appreciated.

I hadn't brought much bait with me, so I had to head out and grab some more, so a few hours later, re-armed, I was flicking the rods back out again. Bear in mind the lake hadn't done any bites for weeks, and there were no shows at all, I had to make educated guesses as to where I thought they'd be and eliminate areas. Well, that night was the ultimate night of liners. I had no sleep, and there were clearly a lot of fish out there. Eventually at 5am I had a take, only for it to fall off. I was gutted. I'd waited patiently for so long. Fortunately an hour or so later the other rod burst off, and I managed to help myself to a 28lb mirror. As I was playing that fish, the rain started again,

and the ducks started diving on me, so I called it a day and got myself home.

I was buzzing to get back... I knew where they were, so it was a case of clipping up to the spots, a few Spombs of bait, and I'd be angling. However, once again, this lake decided to kick me in the shins. The birds were on me in a flash, and for the next 18 hours they completely destroyed me. I was convinced that the fish would still be lurking, but I finally gave in and packed down a night early. From there on the ducks were a real problem. I fished around the lake for a few weeks, and on one of those trips I did pick up a brace of low 20 commons. One thing I'd noticed though was that a peg called the Black Pipe hadn't been fished for possibly months. Another guy, Mark (aka Vidal!) and I were the only two fishing with any real regularity, and he hadn't been in there. I thought I'd test the ground and pop a kilo of boilie out to a spot I'd caught from before and watched for the rest of the

day. The birds held off, so I could imagine fish sat there. I was on night shifts the following week, and after work at 6am on the Wednesday I decided to make the hour-long drive and pult 5kg of boilie all around the peg. When I arrived though, I was met with a lake that was 60-70% frozen! Not ideal, but the area I wanted to bait was ice free. As I made my way round, the heavens opened and snow poured down. I was shattered, and the wind was whipping the snow into my face to the point it was stinging. I was waiting for the men in white coats to come along and haul me off to a padded cell!

All said and done, I was there because my gut told me it was what needed doing, so I did it. Friday morning after my last night shift of the week, I headed back down. The lake was understandably empty but strangely ice free. The van was reading -5. I quickly got kit round to the peg then noticed that ice was starting to form. I screwed two pop-ups onto chod rigs and flicked them out; dip-



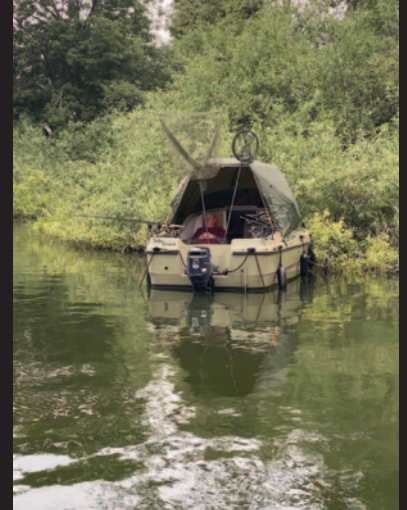
32lb.

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By Rob Maylin and friends



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.

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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).

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Elvis.

ping the rod tips before the whole lake completely froze over! I got my head down and woke up to bright sunshine and wind, which was breaking the ice up. Result! Everything had been a little rushed in the morning, so as I sat there contemplating a recast when the right hander pulled up tight, I thought, surely not? I picked the rod up and was met with the unmistakable resistance of a carp. It didn't take long, and there lay a 25lb-plus mirror known as Speckles in glorious winter colours. Another lad had turned up while I slept, and he came and took some photos for me. I'd already tied a fresh rig on and recast, so it was to my utter shock as I'd just returned Speckles that the same rod absolutely blitzed off! I actually stood there and laughed out loud – I couldn't believe it. It was the 23rd January, the air temperature was around zero, ice melt had gone into the lake, yet there I was playing an angry carp, watching a decent common fight for his life in crystal clear water. It was another mid-20 and looked incredible.

I persevered with baiting that area,

but again the ducks had other ideas, and to be honest I think I may have overcooked it. I think smaller amounts of bait in hindsight spread across two or three pegs in that area would have been better and taken the ducks longer to clean out. I was still convinced that fish were that side of the island though. February was very uneventful, and as March settled in I had a couple of bumper trips.

I'd arrived for a two-night trip and opted to fish round the back in a peg known as the Lawns. It was a bit of a sun trap round there, and throughout my time on the lake it had become my favourite peg. The fish always used it; it was furthest from the road, and it was always lovely and warm, especially if cold northerlies were blowing overhead. The fish still weren't showing, but I knew the spots well and popped rods out along the island. The first night passed quietly, which was a bit odd, but a mate had been in the area during the week and had quite a few bites, so my guess was that they'd pushed either left or right of the area.

The next morning the sun came

out, and it was the first real bit of warmth of the year. So I reset the rods, making sure I was getting the hardest of drops, even if it meant recasting continually to get the exact drop I was looking for. All of a sudden the bites started, and it went crazy! At one point I couldn't keep a rig in the water – bite after bite. The fish were all full of energy after the winter slumber, and each fish was taking a good ten minutes to land. By 7pm I'd landed seven fish including one of the rarer commons, embarrassingly named Elvis! I had another through the night and one the following morning, all of them over 20lbs to cap off a hectic and really enjoyable trip. I'd been pretty unlucky to not get involved in any of the larger residents, so I made plans to take the following Friday off work and get down for first light. The sun was due to come out, so I armed myself with a few kilos of Shrimp and got into the Lawns with rods ready and clipped up before it was even light.

As the sun rose, it didn't take long for the first bite to come. In fact it was only about 20 minutes! We all know

that feeling when we're bang in tune with what we're doing and reaping the rewards of all the learning and problem solving that has to be done to get you there. I was in my element and thoroughly enjoying myself. There was nobody else on the lake and steadily throughout the day I had three mid 20s. The England game was on that evening, and I remember huddling in the bag sipping a few beers and noticing how much the temperature had dropped. At the final whistle I got my head down, and I was lovely and warm in the bag. A few stuttery bleeps in the early hours had me peering through the top of the bag, and it needed attention.

I only had a T-shirt on whilst pulling the line slightly to see if there was any tension. I felt a knock, so I reeled down and was met with the beautiful weight of a carp on the end. By this point though, I was freezing, shaking all over and the fish was going nuts and stripping line off me as it made a few bids for freedom. I actually remember feeling annoyed that I was

taking so long to land the fish. Enough was enough, and as the runs got less powerful, I clamped down and scooped the fish up.

There had been just enough light from the waxing gibbous for me to play and net the fish. I secured everything and quickly whacked a jacket round myself. Then I turned the head-torch on and peered down into the folds. I looked, then looked again... Holy crap! It's the bloody Model!! It was the last of the four fish that I wanted, and this was the best of the lot of them. It's a beautiful linear with huge scales down her side, a thick set fish with dark mahogany colours that a Fen fish would be proud of. She weighed a healthy 33lbs-plus, and I was buzzing!

I sat up waiting for the light so that I could have a proper look at this amazing fish. My mate Tim was further down the bank, and he was snoring so loudly he'd woken the whole lake up, so I thought it was only fair that he got woken up! And besides, he's a wizard behind the camera! He

did a great job as per usual, and I was over the moon. Fishing for carp like that is what keeps me looking out for venues that hold them, and to get out week after week, month after month to try and catch them. The action didn't end there either... Two more slipped up in quick succession, commons of 28 and 32lbs to cap off another fantastic trip.

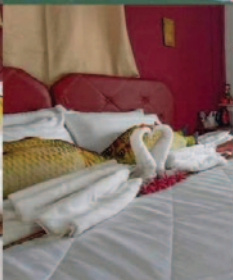
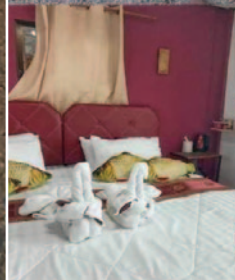
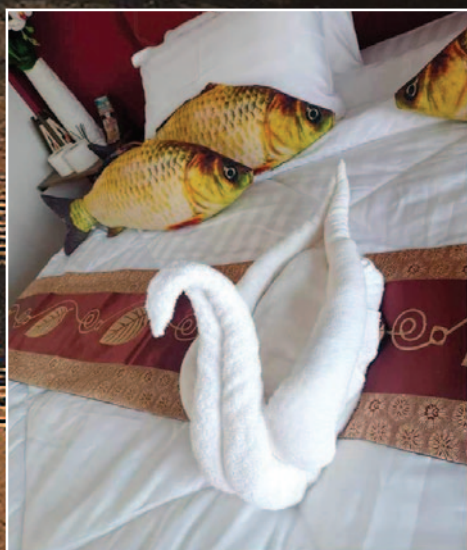
That was my last trip of the spring on there, and to be honest once those 'most wanted' ones were ticked off, I didn't have the drive I once had for the lake. I did a few summer trips and fished sporadically through the winter, and I knew the lake so well by that time that I was plucking fish out most trips. When the challenge subsides, it's always time for me to move on, and I made strides to get some other challenges lined up. It's certainly somewhere I'd love to back to in the future, and I always look back with fond memories of what is a very unique and superbly run little syndicate.

Be lucky. ■



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An Unknown Fish

By Lucky Scott Rowson

I first got into the lake I'm fishing now by accident really because it all started with a bet with a mate who was on this big windswept 70-acre pit in Northampton (which I can't name because of a publicity ban). The bet started off as a bit of banter between anglers, which ended with him telling me it was a hard water and he would take any bet that I couldn't catch one of the two known 40s out of there. Being an idiot, I found myself shaking hands with him without even thinking about how big an ask it was! I was secretly hoping that he couldn't get me a ticket, but unfortunately he did, and I had 12 months to do it with the small matter of £1000 riding on it!

April 1st came around, and I found myself staring at massive pit knowing somehow I had to find one of only two

fish in a lake I had never even seen before. The first couple of sessions I fished on there were a bit daunting to say the least and predictably resulted in blanks, but slowly I was learning the swims, and confidence was starting rise. I think I was into my fourth or fifth session when in the middle of the night I had my first take on there, which resulted in the capture of a 28lb common. To be honest I was gutted because I had been told about these stunning English fish, but this one was badly deformed with a bent back and one eye and a pec missing! I guess it was a couple of weeks before I got back down there, but at least I had found a lovely patch of gravel about 90 yards out, which I knew fish were feeding on, albeit probably the ugliest fish I had ever seen! I quickly found the spot again, and before long two rods were out

there with just a handful of boilies with them. The third rod I decided to put right in the middle of a weedbed in the margin just to hedge my bets, plus I didn't want too many lines running out into the swim.

It rained solid for 48 hours that session, and to be honest I had just about had enough and thought to myself that as soon as the rain eased off I would quickly pack up. Finally it stopped raining about 11am, so by 11.30am the bivvy was down and in the van. I was just about to fold the bedchair up when I had a couple of sharp bleeps, and as I turned around to have a look at what was happening, it turned into a one-toner, and I was in! As soon as I picked the rod up, I knew it was a decent fish, but then I realised I had already packed my chesties away, which you needed in the swim because it was quite



shallow, so I knew straight away I was going paddling! Before long, I was waist deep in the water with a lovely common in the net, which turned out to be just over 32lb. I knew there was somebody in the swim next to me, so I weighed the fish and then decided to put it in a sling for a minute while I went to fetch someone to take some photos for me as it was my first proper fish from there.

I was soon holding a stunning fish up for the camera, and just as I put it into the sling to carry it back to the water one of the other rods absolutely tore off, but before I could get the fish out of the sling it suddenly stopped. Straight away I thought it had done me, so I just took my time returning the common. After a couple of minutes it swam away, so I turned my attention to the rod that had been ripping, just thinking I would reel it in and pack away, but as I lifted the rod I felt a bump as I tightened the line.

Then all of a sudden it went berserk, taking about 100 yards of line off me! After about half an hour I finally started to get it back, and before long I could see it was a catfish, which shocked me because I didn't know there were any in there.

I've since found out there are two in there, and the one I had was the smallest at about 50lb! I've caught a lot of cats on the Ebro, so I really didn't want to net it and photograph it, so I just chinned it and unhooked it in the water then let it go! I was now soaked through and freezing cold, but a very happy angler was putting the rods away when, would you believe it, the third rod started to bleep slowly but purposefully, and I was in again! I knew straight away this was a good fish; it just slowly plodded up and down the margin, and then finally it surfaced about 15 yards from me.

Immediately my heart was in my mouth, as this was a very big fish, but



I had a problem: When it surfaced, it shot back down head first into a weedbed, and it was locked up solid! I waded out as far as I could up to my chest, but I was still about 4ft short of reaching the fish.

Then I heard a couple of anglers that were watching me from the bank shouting to be careful, as there was a drop-off there. But I had already made my mind up – I was going for it! I walked out up to my neck, and then quickly dropped the rod and lunged for it.

I couldn't believe it went straight into the net, and I found myself walking back to the bank with the net, dragging the rod behind it, but I couldn't have cared less about the rod – I had got the fish! When I opened the net I knew it was one of the fish I was after, and after weighing it, it went 43lb 8oz, a stunning mirror.

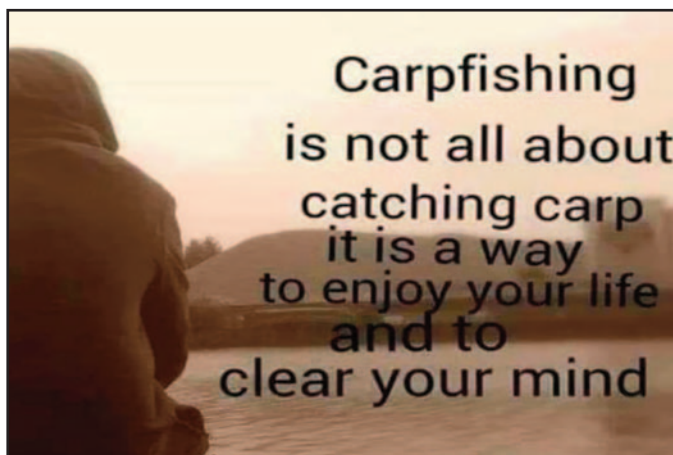
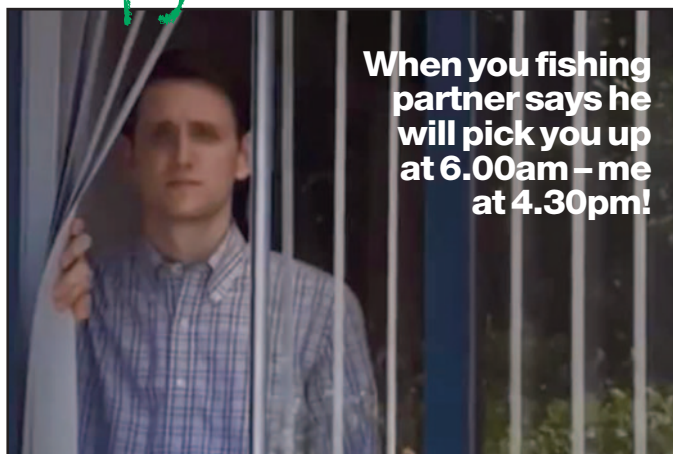
Now what a lot of people didn't know was that my work partner who I had worked all over the country with for the past ten years was very ill at home battling a brain tumour, and the

first call I had to make about my capture was to him because he knew how much this fish meant to me. Sadly, when I phoned him, his wife answered the phone and informed me he had passed away only half an hour previously, so as you can imagine, I was devastated. I think it was about a

week later that a few of the lads off the lake phoned me and informed me they had been through all the photos, and my fish was an unknown fish, so I had the honour of naming it, so I had to name it after my pal, Chrissie, and to this day it has never been caught again. ■

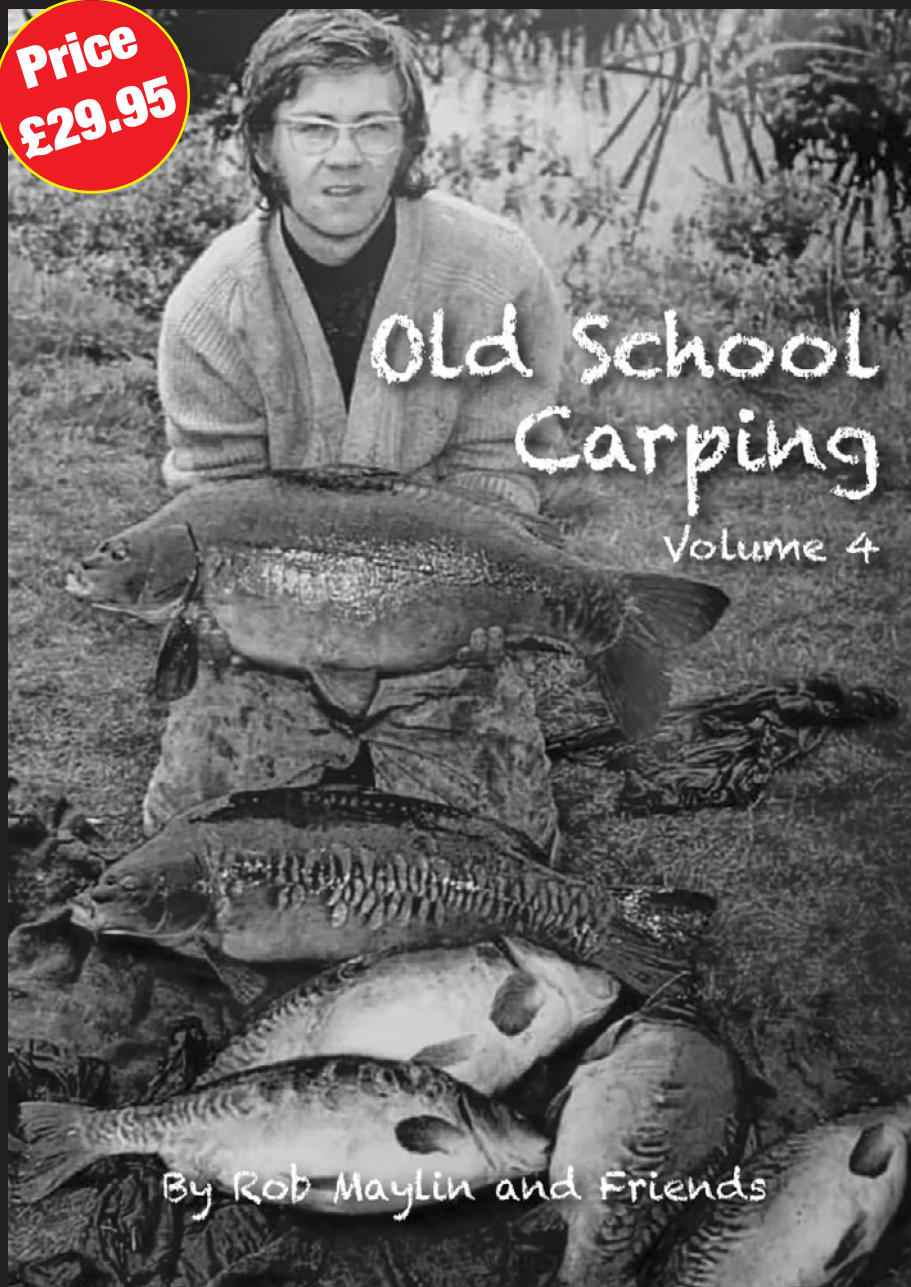


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The 'Old School' series has become one of our most popular sets of books we have ever published. It appears that, in this fast-moving society we find ourselves, more and more anglers are keen to look back at how things used to be, where it all started, 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, Snapchatting, 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.

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Treasures of The New Forest

By Connor Bruton



Since moving to the New Forest in 2013, it has taken me a few years to make my mark on this untapped ground. My carp angling has been what I would refer to as under the radar, away from the busy banks of the well-known carp locations. I spent many months away from the rods just exploring this idyllic part of the country, trying to gather momentum for my campaign, which turned out to be one of my most rewarding years of angling. My focus at this point was not just about setting out to target one resident within one lake but to get underneath the history of the New Forest to unlock its hidden gems.

Following months of research and early morning walks around the New Forest, my first stop was a well-known public park consisting of about 12 acres, not a hard-fished location but other carp anglers were present from time to time. What attracted me the most about this location was not only the stocking and strain of carp but the beautiful scenery. If I were to be sat behind my

rods for long periods then this location would surely make the job a lot more pleasurable for sure. During the warmer months, I would find myself bankside at the crack of dawn watching the morning mist rise from the water and then being greeted by an abundance of wildlife that the New Forest offers. On many occasions, I would be greeted with wild horses and cattle that were making their way down to the lake to graze on the wild gorse and late spring fruit trees.

Wildlife aside, it was time to think about my quarry, and whilst this lake had suffered from the loss of some of its biggest residents a few years back there were still a few original carp to be had – not the biggest of carp, but they certainly had that heritage appeal that I was after. Over the course of a season I managed to work my way through many carp from this lake, many of them being around the mid-twenty mark but all having what I would refer to as that notorious New Forest look – long, lean and chestnut in colour, almost wild, which made for great sport through the summer months. As the album filled up along with knowledge from local anglers, I

soon realised that I had probably accomplished all that I could have from this location even after the capture of a unique mirror carp that not many of the anglers had seen before. Shortly after making the decision to leave the public lake behind, winter had arrived, which provided me with enough time to think about my next location.

Throughout the unsettled months of winter, I found myself back in front of my PC at home pondering over my options for the following season that would provide me with as much energy as my previous campaign. It was at this point that the penny dropped – what I was looking for was right under my nose, another rarely fished pond situated behind the big lake. After completing yet more research on this unique little place, it occurred to me that a small number of much larger original carp were still present. The campaign for catching those New Forest gems was back on, so much excitement ran through me, walking around the lake trying to gather as much knowledge as possible before the open season started.

Finally, June 16th arrived, and it



The unique mirror carp.



A large, angry looking mirror carp.

was time to get back behind the rods and restart my New Forest campaign. Now at this point I would love to have mentioned the endless mornings and evenings prebaiting spots, but there was one major problem to this lake that would soon become a catalyst to an ever-bigger problem and this was lake depth. The lake on average was only about 4-5ft but was also occupied by a pair of very hungry swans that were proving to be a very stressful problem since the vast amount of Canadian and silkweed was forcing me to fish white pop-ups that were very visible to my newly found pests in the crystal clear water. Some days my rods would spend more time out of the water in an attempt to direct the swan's attention away from my spots. At times, I would have given my right arm for the residents of the New Forest to come and feed these swans to distract them when the weather looked spot-on for a bite. Being a very small and attractive pond, the wildlife wasn't the only problem over the summer months – holidaymakers, dog walkers, and kayakers all made

the job much harder than I had initially anticipated.

That said, I still to this day cannot explain the excitement that I experienced when my first bite arrived. I remember it as if it were yesterday... a damp summer evening that brought in a low-pressure system, whilst pushing my time on the lake to a maximum as fishing was restricted to days only. The swans had finally pushed away from my margin spot, as the carp were obviously present, and I sat in anticipation on my unhooking mat watching the big low clouds that swamped the skyline. Moments later it was game on! The bobbin rose from the deck in a split second, releasing the line from the clip, and my alarm went into meltdown, bouncing the rod blank aggressively between the snag ears. As I ran down to the rod I could see the line entering the water at least 20 yards from my spot where I had got the bite from, so this carp was obviously steaming away trying to shed the hook. After a hard fight, I finally managed to free the carp from a large weedbed close in and guide

what seemed like a large, angry looking mirror carp over the net cord. Whilst trying to battle with shaking knees and hands, I slowly managed to empty what felt like kilos of weed from my net. The head of this old original slowly appeared, and looking at the paddle, it was clear to see how this carp had managed to put up such an aggressive battle. With nightfall upon me, it was time for a few quick photos and home to appreciate this capture on the PC.

A few weeks passed, as I was unable to revisit the lake due to family commitments, but my passion for getting back to it only increased. As the season went by, it became apparent through inside knowledge and personal observation that there were only two or three original carp left in this pond, but these sat amongst a total lake population of about eight to ten carp, so location was playing a huge part within my angling, even on such a small lake. Reading through my journal, I began studying the weather conditions through past captures out in the New Forest, from

The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

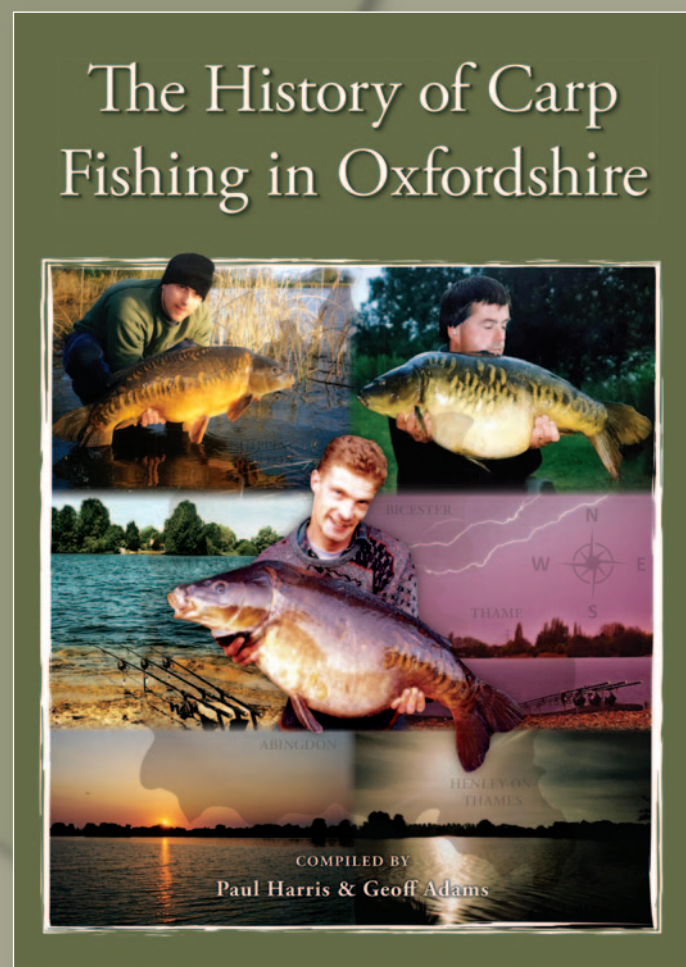
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing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

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

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

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

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



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which I slowly started to build a picture, and timing would be everything, as the season wouldn't last forever. I probably managed a further four or five more sessions but was again suffering from those hungry swans and tourists enjoying the surroundings of the pond. It was eventually approaching the end of September when I realised that time wasn't on my side, and with another low-pressure system due, I began preparing my attack on the pond.

It was the 10th of September when I found myself driving across the forest towards the little pond. I arrived to a dark lake, watching the cloud cover build for what turned out to be one of the wettest days of the year so far. After factoring in where I had seen carp throughout the summer, I decided on another margin spot just short of a weedbed, only about 4ft deep, but I was convinced that the carp were using this clearing in the weed to feed on. I managed to flick the rods out in the low light levels before the swans realised where my hookbaits were placed. Not being able to apply any freebies to this shallow spot was destroying my confidence, but to keep the swans away, this was my only choice.

The morning passed with no action, and with the rain well and truly in for the day, I slowly began to doubt my location and approach. A friend visited me during the afternoon, and we discussed these old original carp and why they don't see the bank that often. We talked about one of the originals that many anglers

**(Top) Autumn on the big public park.
Below) Battling the weed at the estate.**



knew was present but again could not explain why it did not get caught for many years. This carp was a common carp stocked in the mid-70s. I had seen a few very old pictures of this carp when it was around 18lb or so, and was told by an elderly and well-educated angler that he had photographed this carp for a young angler a few years back at 28lb. I know that in many carp fishing stories you wonder whether the truth has been embellished, but what happened next I am still to this day unable to explain.

The bobbin on my left hand rod slowly rose to the blank, but the line did not release itself from the clip. A liner, I thought, but a few seconds passed and the bobbin dropped to the floor. I sat forward and within an instant the bobbin rose again, only this time the line pulled clear of the clip. As I looked over the spot, an

eruption occurred underneath the surface of the water, and with the reel now going into meltdown, I quickly pulled into what seemed like another angry carp. Luckily the carp had buried its head into a weedbed, which slowed it down, and after a few seconds this creature was plodding around under my rod tip. I suddenly clocked a glance of my capture, and I recognised the fish immediately; it was indeed my second original of the year, but not only that, it was the elusive common carp that many talked about.

My knees were like jelly as I slowly tried to put the net under this fish, but it was by no means ready yet. With one last surge, it powered away from me, ending up in the same weedbed where it had been hooked. I was reluctant to put heavy pressure on the fish, as I noticed my little multi-rig barely hanging from the bottom cor-





ner of its lip when the fish was plodding around under the tip. Amazingly I managed to get its head up for some big gulps of air, which allowed me to slide the net underneath it. No matter how I describe the moment, only an angler can appreciate this feeling of achievement. As I lifted the bottom of the net up, all my efforts were rewarded. It was indeed another original that I was after, and not only that, it was the one that many had told me so many stories about. To have caught a carp that has spent more days on this planet than me just blew me away, and my New Forest campaign was living up to all expectations.

I immediately called a good friend who had spent many mornings with me on the pond talking about the history of these fish to come and share this special moment. As I pulled the weigh sling away from this creature, it showed all the signs of an old and

wily carp – big bulbous eyes and whittled fins. I could only appreciate this carp's life; the shape of it just amazed me, and it had all the traits of a New Forest warrior. Beyond the excitement of this capture, I was still aware that there was one last original for me to catch, a carp known as the Ugly One due its misshaped body. Although it isn't the prettiest of carp, its age and presence still attracted me, but unfortunately it had come to that time of year when it was time to

pull away from the pond and focus on my next location that had already proved to be fruitful throughout the year.

Tucked away on the south coast of the New Forest lies an historic estate lake steeped in history dating all the way back through two world wars for which I was lucky enough to obtain a ticket for earlier in the season. Although my efforts had focused mainly on catching carp from low stocked and intimate waters, the



(Top) To have caught a carp that has spent more days on this planet than me just blew me away.

(Right) Winter sky on the big public park.

estate lake was a little bit of a different scene with more anglers present and more of a vibe, but I was still committed to catching some seriously old carp that again had spent more time on this planet than me. In fact many of the carp were twice my age.

During the start of season towards the end of the winter, I spent many hours of darkness listening and waiting for signs of carp that were awakening from their long winter slumber. With the lake again being quite shallow, my hunch was that any warm weather system would quickly spur them into feeding, but again it would be down to timing and rod hours.

After a couple of quick overnight sessions, I soon located most the carp held up in a secluded part of the lake that was filled with overhanging trees and dead roots. On warmer days, I could see from a high vantage point numbers of carp cruising in and out of this area, which provided me with enough evidence to target this location. After a long tactical think, I con-



cluded that I would only have a couple of chances at catching these carp before the secret of their location was out, so I opted to fish with a very delicate snowman presentation consisting of a 2oz lead, as I knew that this would settle over the soft Angel Delight like silt patches that were present just inches from the snags where cover had hindered any weed growth.

It wasn't long before the bites came. During a quick overnight session in early March, I woke to motionless rods but was certain that the carp would enter these snags during the

spring sunlight. It was around 7.30am that morning when my left-hand rod, fished tight to an overhanging tree, was away, the bobbin tight to the rod blank and the spool slowly releasing line. I sprang into action watching the rod tip slowly buckle over. After a short fight, I slid my first estate lake carp over the net, not the biggest of residents and by no means my target from this pond but a lovely old chestnut coloured mirror carp bearing many battle scars obtained throughout its life.

As spring continued the album slowly filled with several very old

**(Top) Darkness hours on the estate.
(Below) A lovely old chestnut
coloured mirror carp bearing many
battle scars obtained throughout its
life.**





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I noticed a few carp moving slowly out into the pond as the water temperatures increased.

estate lake carp, but I knew that this spot would soon dry up, as I noticed a few carp moving slowly out into the pond as the water temperatures increased. As my environment around me changed, it was time for a tactical change as I soon realised that my delicate bottom bait presentation wasn't the one anymore in the fast-growing weedbeds present throughout the lake. I remember my next bite as if it was yesterday due to the timing.

Two weeks before I was about to get married, I found myself back on the pond trying to catch a certain carp known as Orange Spot, a lovely old carp that I had observed in a friend's album following a brief discussion in regards to the lake stocking. At this point in the season the clocks had gone forward, and I was making the most of every daylight hour to watch my quarry and predict where it would be. After deciding to

fish a swim that positioned me in the centre of the lake, I was happy that the carp were now using the spots that I had located in the weed to feed on when they were not hanging out in the snags. I attempted to improve my hookbait presentation by deploying multi-rigs fished approximately 1.5ins off the deck whilst still using very light leads. With wedding plans filling my head, it was hard to keep focused on the job in hand. Another action-free night passed, but I knew that the carp were using these areas throughout the day. Again right on cue at about 8am my right hand rod was away, only this time getting me into a bit of trouble as the butt of the rod had been pulled aggressively from the butt rest. The rod was now slowly slipping forward, only being stopped from entering the lake by the reel locking up in front of the alarm head.

After releasing my tangled bobbins chain from the moving line, I quickly pulled into the fish, which was now luckily fighting on top of the weed due to lead dropping off as planned. Whilst playing the fish, it never really occurred to me as to which resident it would be, as at this point, I was more



(Left) Early spring at the estate.



I had managed to build momentum in a few spots, which was producing some great carp.



(Above) The notorious Orange Spot. (Below) The notorious dorado.

focused on putting the net under it. As a passionate carp angler, it's always difficult to explain to people why we do it and what motivates us to target individual fish, but I never have trouble trying to justify this to myself, as the feeling of catching that carp that you have seen others enjoy



the moment of catching just takes over. I really did at this point feel like giving myself a huge pat on the back, as in my net lie the notorious Orange Spot.

At this point in the year, I was now feeling that true sensation of satisfaction within my angling. All that I had worked for over the last two years had paid off, and I was enjoying every moment. After the capture of Orange Spot, it was now time for me to experience one of the proudest moments of my life outside of carp fishing, which was to marry my wonderful wife. On May 20th 2016 my wonderful partner Stephanie, who has supported me throughout my passion for angling, became Mrs Bruton. After a lovely honeymoon spent in St Lucia catching some awesome sea creatures such as the notorious dorado it was time to return home to family and friends, and of course the New Forest campaign, which was by no means over.

Throughout the remaining summer and autumn months of 2016, I enjoyed great rewards from the estate. By this point I had managed to build momentum in a few spots, which was producing some great carp. With Orange Spot securely in my album, at this

point I started to think about my future at the estate. The campaign was going so well, but I knew in the back of my head that this location was not going to be the conclusion. One of the great things about carp fishing is the diversity of carp to be had and the range of angling that the sport provides to a different style of angler.

Whilst I enjoy catching carp from many different types of waters and situations, my passion for catching such creatures with vast amounts of character and history takes over any other style of angling for me. It is never easy accessing waters that hold such carp, but my campaign will continue. My desire to get out and capture as many hard-skinned and elusive New Forest carp will only increase overtime. I would be truly disappointed if I had finished this piece without a next location planned, but what lies in front of me could be one of my biggest challenges to date – a newly identified lake, or should I say ocean, that is 120-plus acres, holding only a handful of carp, which I have learned have the potential to do some very attractive weights.

To be continued... ■



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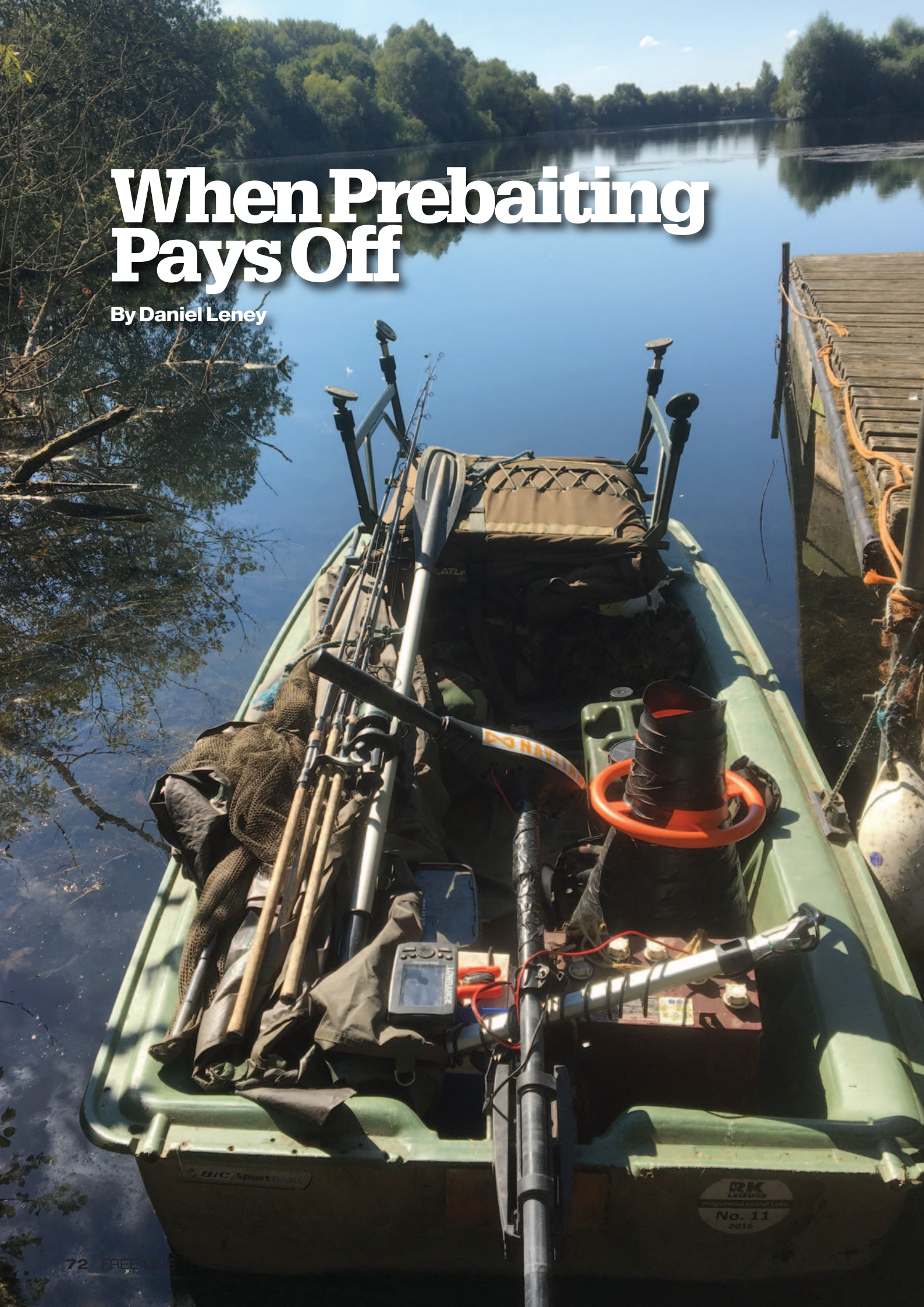
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When Prebaiting Pays Off

By Daniel Leney



Like me, you are probably looking at the weather on a constant basis and relish those days when that big low sweeps in and you can feel right down to the core that you should be on the bank. With itchy feet, tinkering in the shed, rolling hookbaits and checking you have everything you need for your session at your chosen venue, when you know full well that you will forget something because getting to the lake is of utmost importance, especially when, hopefully like me, you have prebaited spots dotted around your venue just waiting to be checked because you know that when that weather turns you're on it. Well that's how I am most of the time, buzzing like a little kid, ready for a big low pressure. The carp in my venue this season really have it on a low and a big moon, but high pressure and light winds is a no-no, so you're camping, and I don't enjoy that, or I would take the missus and some cider.

RK Leisure's Kingsmead Island Lake is where I am this season, and only there, as I am concentrating all my efforts on pit fishing. I find if I'm not in touch, in the zone, with a water, I can't locate or track my chosen fish. Anyone will tell you about the normality of big pit fishing, get on the



end of a new wind when a low comes in or get in the snags when the sun comes out, but here is different. I learnt a long time ago on the Wraysbury waters to do the opposite of the norm, because the fish were real characters and each one different. Whether on Fox Pool, Wraysbury 1, Cargills and some waters where I shouldn't have been, that location and prebaiting always pays off in the end, and all those early mornings braving the M25 before school just to see where they are is all part of the season's plan that I stick to. When it comes off and the carp gods are all aligned then that passion reignites a different spark, which leads you to a different journey and the anticipation of something miraculous.

As this high pressure which we have had (well, it seems like all year) was peaking, and all over the news this jetstream was fluctuating all over us, the news came in that I had been waiting for. The pressure was dropping to 996mb on the Wednesday night and staying till Friday. It was Monday night, and I knew that only two fish had been out in the last two weeks, mainly with the fish holding up in one of the housing estate sized beds of weed and totally not interested, but I had been working the long-term plan, and every other day I had been baiting an area of the lake that never got fished. It was festooned with gravel bars where the weed had been stripped away by the voracious carp that resided in the 'Mead.

I was baiting, mainly from the bank, firing 5kg of CC Moore XXX boilies over two spots close to a margin snag but clear enough to get a rod to an open water swim as well in the hope that they could use this as a larder when I got them hooked on it. To cut a long story short, they were. Every time I put more bait out, I would go on the boat for the second baiting session to lay a good bed of hemp and crushed boilie all over the bars and the heavy weed next to them. I was baiting the weed only with hemp to mimic the abundant snail life in the lake and see the spots developing. This had been going on for five months, so the fish knew about it all, but not one line had gone in, so this was the moment I had waited for.

Being the Sunday, there was only one other angler on the water, so with carp boat loaded and everything right, I chugged down to the quiet corner, as I always do, but what had I forgotten? Yep, I'd left an alarm on the sideboard at home – doh! Nothing new there, I chuckled to myself and turned the motor off. Cigarette in mouth, polarised goggles on and oar in hand, I stood up as I ghosted over the area, hoping to see a sign that the big common was about. Since the lake is crystal and there was no wind, I was surprised to see chopped weed and clouded water everywhere in the area. There was only one answer, so I got out of there sharpish and drove the boat into the little swim that I had rekindled from days gone by – a little gap, reed-lined and with no weed in



the margin, perfect to flick the rods out.

Since I had forgotten an alarm again, I decided to fish two rods, one on each spot, and distribute only 1kg of XXX over the area, as they were about and having it. Hinge stiff rigs were taken out of the rig board and clipped on and big leads were attached. They not as big as I wanted, but I was casting and not dropping them from the boat. I put Rigmarole lead clips on, as these are the quickest way of dropping a lead on the market – fact – and with those humongous weedbeds I take no chances. The rods were now on the rests with cork ball XXXs on, and I sat and waited for a sign to show I hadn't spooked them away.

Big pit fishing is always precarious, as if you spook a feeding fish then they are gone for another month from that area. I always put my tea down on the floor because I know I will knock it over, as I am proper clumsy at times. The signs were all there again, and when I moved to hear a noise down the left margin, I proceeded to kick my tea over! Upon picking my



spilled tea up, boom! Fifteen yards in front of me the big common came breaching out up to the tail and nearly spraying my boat on the way back down. When you see them in the

water the big girls always look big, but when out the water that close in, it's unbelievable to compare. I knew that there were three big commons in the lake and one had been out at 48lb,



but I was sure the other two were bigger.

With the adrenaline coursing through my veins, I resisted the urge to flick a rod out, but fired single boilies out all over the area for the next two hours, watching them roll and fizz up when they were flanking on the gravel, a trick they did to test for lines. Often you had a massive liner, and then watched the carp politely disappearing out of the area, boshing as they left. This trick to build the confidence over the last few months could last a while longer, as it was enough just being there, knowing that it was all coming together and the moment would be mine.

That evening the rods went out donk, donk, first time. The lines were slackened off, and all was quiet with just the foam popping the surface film from a rig that had been confidently presented, and the waiting began. 25 minutes passed when the right hand rod over the marginal tree fizzed round, locked up and then bent double. I scrambled to get the rod in one hand and grab the boat in the other, as if she kited right then it was game over even with 50lb braided mainline. With steady force and applied pressure, the gods were with me as she



kited out away from the tree and started to plough through weedbed after weedbed giving me the Nantucket sleigh ride of my life. I was willing her to stop, but this was mental. 15 minutes passed when finally she rolled in the edge and I managed

to slip the net cord under her. It wasn't the big common I wanted, but I am buzzing about any fish, and she was a bit special. After weighing her and doing a few self-takes I slipped her back with a little thought in my head that it wasn't over yet. After call to the missus and an early night, I left the rod out of the water to try and snare this girl that has been teasing me all year.

The alarm was ringing away at 4.30, and I was up and out. It was only a false alarm from my phone, which was now screaming bite time at me on the screen, when the real alarm went off this time. It was the same scenario, with the fish ripping through the weedbeds, and thankfully I was using braided Whiplash mainline, which was cutting through the weed with no threat of a break-off. This time I took to the boat, and once under control, I wound out to the fish, which was nestled in the corner of a weed mass. Once over it, I wound down again, and she kicked free straight into the waiting net.

Bites have always been few and far between here, but I was now buzzing with confidence knowing there was more to come, especially with that low pressure now over me. After some trophy self-takes because I wanted this area kept quiet, I slipped her back, and she thanked me with a huge soaking all over. The lovely 30-





plus mirror put my tally to 27 fish this season, but the common was still eluding me. With no rods out, I decided to sit and wait, and I fired up the stove. The issue with this corner was that I had seen them in here often, but they would go just as quickly.

Just as I was thinking this, I glanced up and saw the big girl retreating all the way down the left margin and into the depths – gutted.

Not being a greedy angler and going for more, I decided that she was the main target this year and any others that came along were a bonus, but the search had to continue.

I packed up in the wind and rain that had been howling in my face and set sail, managing to deposit another load of XXX and hemp over the spots, safe in the knowledge that she would be back. Soaking wet, I pulled the boat into the compound, and as I

walked to get the car off Springgate's, who did I see half mile from where I saw her last, just 30 minutes before? When you know it's time to go then just do it – don't hang about camping, as the journey will always be there tomorrow.

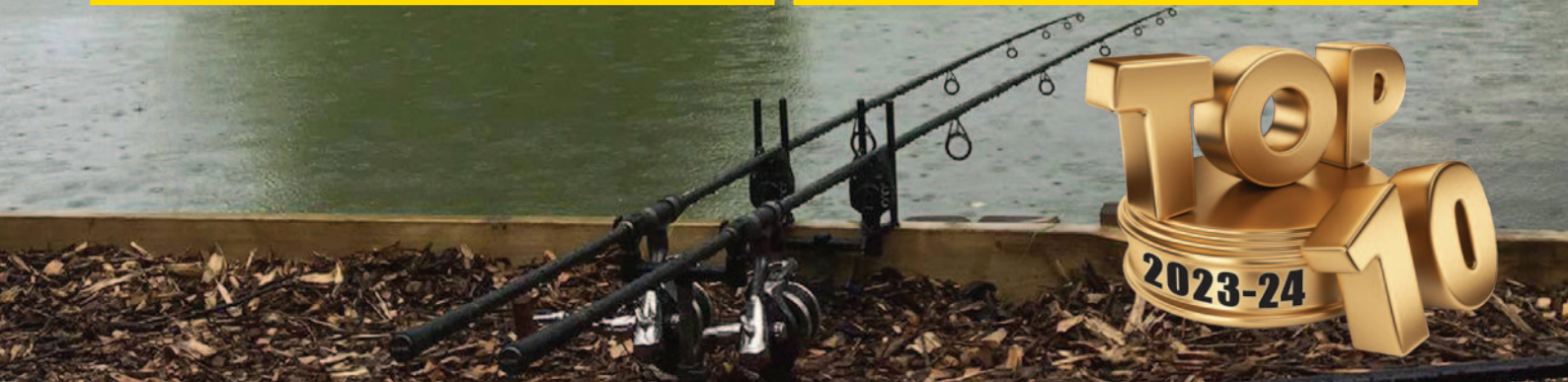
Until the next time when I have more stories to tell, I hope you all catch and maybe hook up at one of the shows this year.

Slack lines. ■



BIG CARP TOP TEN

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Spring Approach

By Jonny Hinks



My spring approach was like most of my approaches to fishing really – do your homework. So I did. Early 2015 I walked and helped out down at my local water with boat work, otter fences, stock ponds and general maintenance around the lakes. I loved every minute of it, working alongside the lake I was soon to be fishing (it shuts up shop in the winter). I watched the water day in day out, learning where the fish sat in the colder months. Finding clear spots with my marker rod with an hour spare at the end of the day really helped me get an understanding for the lake. The weed wasn't as prolific as the summer, so it gave me a rough idea on depths, clear areas and silty areas. I knew in the spring the weed would start to grow again, so most of the spots would have grown over, but nonetheless it helped get a picture in my head about the bottom of the lake, I sat there after two months of hard work with the guys that own the place, building stock ponds, netting, clearing trees and all manner of things really on a fishery.

March came around, and I decided to do my first night up the arm of the lake with depths over 13ft in places. I thought it was a great way to start off my season trying zigs – one short, one mid-water and one two feet below the surface. That session went as it



started really with me losing a fish in the blazing sun in the morning on a zig up in the layers. I felt upset that I'd lost one but felt I'd learnt a little more about zig fishing.

That week I'd returned and found a spot on the far margin... well, just off the marginal slope at 11ft deep. I thought if I baited the spot with plenty of small items, like maggots, chopped worm and ground bait. I knew that if the carp weren't feeding on the bottom, as they still weren't very active, the roach, tench and specimen sized rudd would enjoy the buffet I'd left them, so it wasn't going to stay there for weeks and go mouldy and mess the spot up.

The next day I returned and cast my lead down on the spot, and crack! The spot had got ever so hard. I did my rounds with the bailiff and shot off to my other job (tackle shop). I went in and spoke to my good and close friend Neil about it, and he said that the rudd and other species would clear the spot every time with small items of bait, and that I should try something more substantial like mixed particles or hemp, so I got my boss, Nick, to order a 20kg sack of mixed particles. I cooked the 6kg of





particles he had left at the time, and I then put it into 1kg bags, heat sealed them and took them home and put them in my fridge in my garage.

I was going down to the lake every other day for about a week and a half, putting in about half a kilo of parti-

cles, two pints of dead maggots, one pint of live maggots and a kilo of bread crumb. After I'd baited for five nights, spread out over ten, I decided it was time to fish that area.

So I woke up at the crack of dawn, got my gear ready, got a lift to the lake

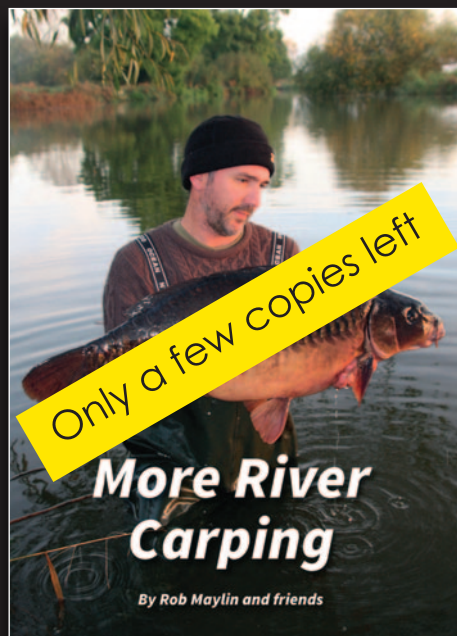
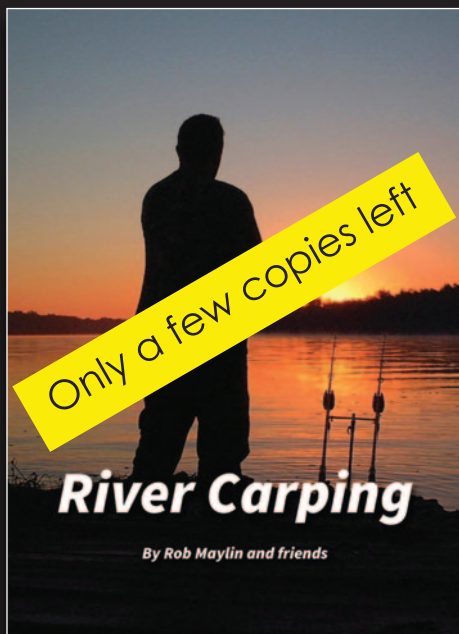
and set off in search of some carp. I decided that I should just sit on the baited spot for one night to see if it did have any resident carp feeding on the spot, so I set up in the swim. I set my brolly right back to keep the disturbance as low as possible, got my rods out to the spots, sat there and chilled out that night feeling quite confident of a bite.

The night passed without a crash, show, liner or even a bleep! I was left feeling confused more than anything that I hadn't had a bleep or show all night, when at 7.34am my rod on the spot absolutely melted off, with the fish kiting up and down the far margin. After a very nerve-wracking fight I ended up with a common of 24lbs sulking in the bottom of my net. Result, I thought to myself. The spot had done a bite on my first night, and I'd ended up with a carp to show for all my efforts of baiting and hard graft over the winter. That night I decided to move down the other end of the lake, as that was where the main bulk



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of fish were, and I didn't want to go all guns blazing on the spot. That night produced a tench and good little social with Harry.

I went to work at the tackle shop, told Neil and showed him the fish. Neil had told me to up the ante with the baiting, so I did. I was putting five kilos of particles every week for two weeks, and then before I knew it with college work building up and work taking over, it was mid April, and I'd only done one night on the baited spot, so I decided to fish the lake and bait the spot like normal. I fished on the end of the southwesterly wind, but not the spot I had been baiting, as the wind was changing that night. I had two nights to play with and thought I'd try to snare one from that end to take the pressure off.

As soon as I set up and cast two rods out, the first one was away, and after a nightmare of a fight with the fish kiting through my other line and tangling me up a treat, I soon managed to get her in the net. I unhooked her, put her in the sling, lifted up the scales, and yeah, once again they spun round to 24lbs! Neil was close



by the lakes and came to down to do the photos for me (top man).

That night I sat there watching fish after fish crash out down the arm at the top end in the same piece of water as I'd had been baiting. I sat there feeling happy to have caught but annoyed with myself for not going up that end for some reason. Anyhow, the night passed with nothing to

show. I packed up my kit and went to go up the top end, but as soon as I got there someone had beaten me to it and was already in the swim, which was fair enough. These things happen, and it's not the end of world. I'd still got six acres to fish anyway.

So I ended up back at the swim where I'd started, placing rigs back on the spots where I'd previously been





fishing. With nothing resulting in any takes that night, I decided to still bait the spot up the arm but also look to try and fish the main body a tad more.

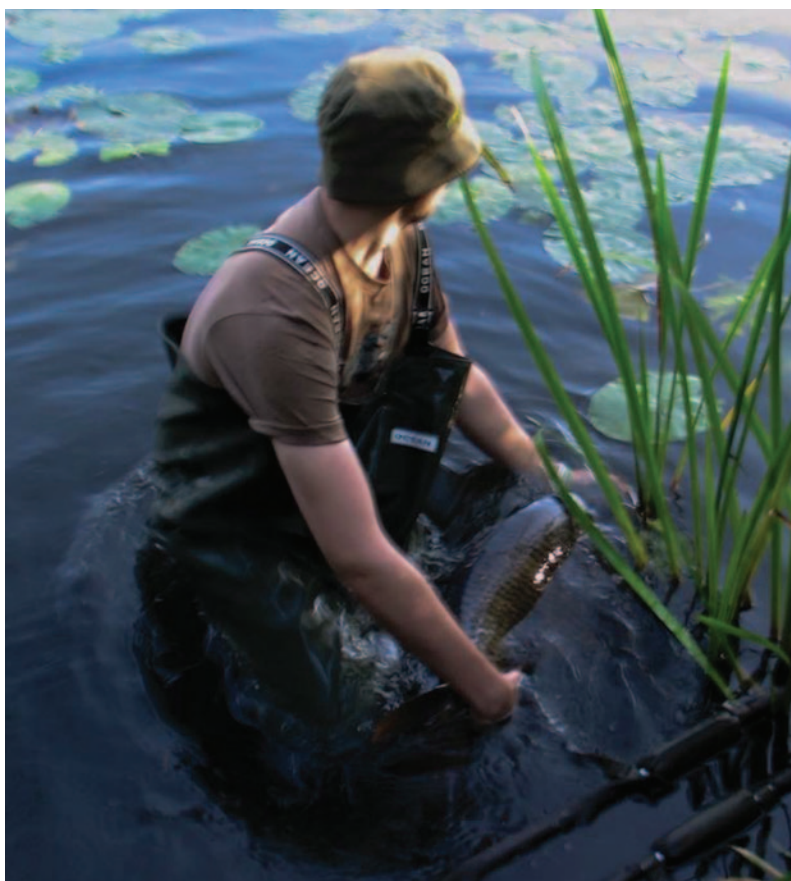
A few more weeks of baiting the area without fishing passed, and I felt the bug to get back down there and start to fish the spot, so after college I rocked up at the lake. I set up in the swim, placed the rigs out onto the spots, sat back and chilled out with Osborn that night, watching fish after fish crash on the far margin. I went to sleep that night feeling so confident of a bite. I soon nodded off and was woken up from a dream to the sound of my alarm in meltdown mode. Scrambling out of bed at 4.15, I got into the waders and bent the rod double into an angry mirror. I forgot my head torch on the way to the rod, so the fight was so edgy with me being half blind, not seeing a thing. I soon managed to draw the fish over my net though.

I unhooked the fish and weighed it at 24lbs again I thought to myself, another 24lb'er? I sacked the fish up

for first light, as it was only an hour or so away. Thanks again to Osborn for some great shots – much respect! I packed up that morning feeling happy with myself, knowing that it was all starting to pay off.

After baiting up every couple of days, the next week I planned a trip back down, but was only allowed if I passed my car theory test, so off I went, feeling happy about it. I'd actually failed by one mark, so I was very upset, but my stepdad, being a big softie he is, let me go fishing anyway.

So after what had been a bad day already, I turned up at the lake in the pouring rain. I set up on the end of the wind to try and get out of the storm that was being thrown down at me! I got three rods out to the areas down in the main body of the lake, but after seeing nothing, I decided to reel in and go for a proper wander round the lake. I found fish at the end of the lake and decided to go stalking for a few hours, resulting in nothing, so feeling even more beaten up, I got to the swim and cast my rods back out till

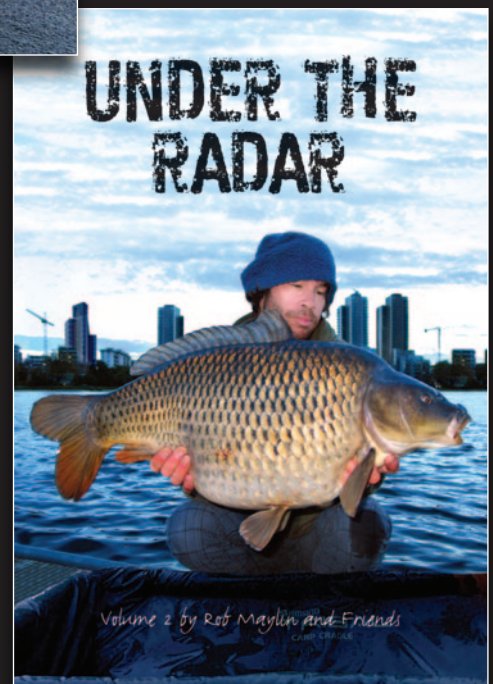
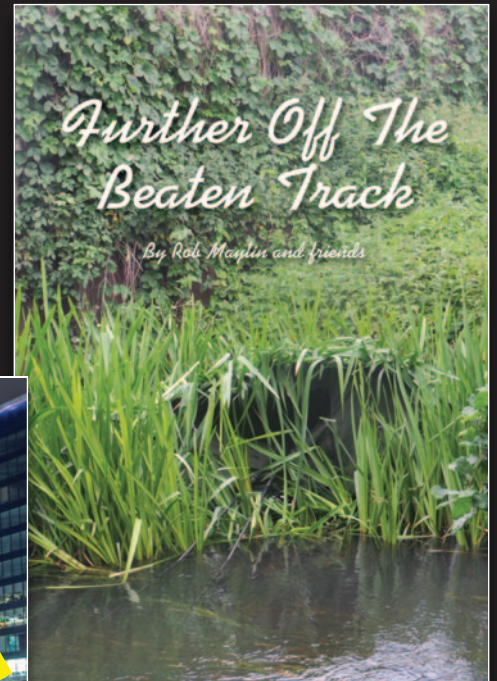
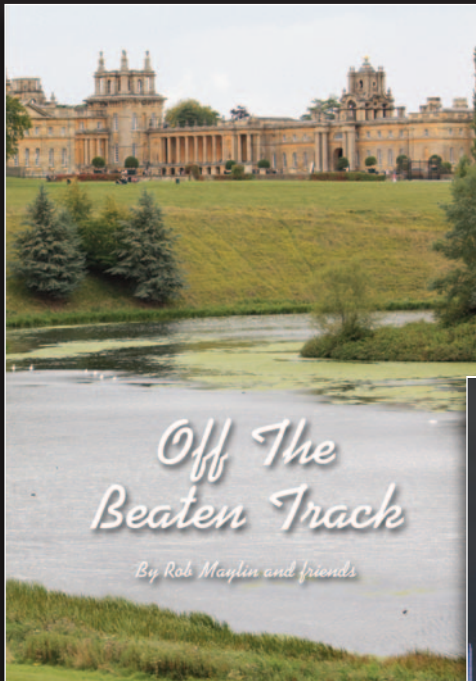


about 7am, and then decided that I was going to move onto the spot I'd been baiting...

I set up in the swim, put my rods out with 14 Spombs of bait, and within ten minutes the right hand rod screamed off. After a battle that seemed to take an age, I managed to net an average looking common (or so I thought). After giving Braggy a call to say I'd gone and got one, he came round. I got her out of the water and placed her on the mat. Wow! She looked enormous! I zeroed the scales and hoisted her up. My eyes went like a kid's at Christmas as Braggy read out 37lb and few ounces. I placed her into the retainer and gave my good pal Neil a call and asked him to come and photograph her for me, as this was a very special fish to me. He did an awesome job with the camera. (Thank you very much, mate, and also Braggy for helping me weigh her). My spring was complete with the second biggest fish in the lake in my net. All my hard work and effort had truly paid off, and I was the happiest angler in the Nene Valley for sure with a grin like a Cheshire cat. ■

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An Autumn Session on Christchurch

By Scott Phillips

Well, the time had finally arrived for my autumn week session on Linch Hill's

Christchurch Lake. I had fished it at the same time of year the year before and had a decent result, landing some nice mirrors up to 39lb 5oz. The weather forecast for my week was sunny with temperatures up to 19 degrees in the day and dropping down to around 6 degrees at night, and with the air pressure at around 1035mb most of the time, I knew it was going to be a testing week.

A group of lads had booked the lake exclusively for Friday to Sunday and were due off at some point in the Sunday morning. Knowing this, I arrived at the main gates at around 6.30am even though the gates weren't due to open till around 7.30-8am. I was hoping to be first in line so that I had a good chance of getting where I wanted to be. It was due to blow a NE and a N wind consistently all the time I was there, but I was unsure whether I wanted to be on the back of it or on



the receiving end of it.

After having a chat with the guy who was in a swim that receives the northerly winds, it was clear where I needed to be, as the lake had done three bites for the social, and they were all to the same guy, the one I

was talking to. After asking him if I could drop in behind him, I then spent the next few hours walking around the lake a few times having a catch up with some mates. I finally got in my swim at around 4pm, and after having a quick lead around, I got my



Heartleys a stunning 39lb 5oz mirror that I had the same time the year before.



40lb 8oz.



The O Fish at 36lb.

three rods out quite quickly because I knew the spots I wanted to fish from a previous session. The dark was soon upon me, and it wasn't long before I got in my bag and had an early night. The night passed without anything happening.

The morning soon arrived, and I wound my rods in around 9am to go and have a breakfast in the Linch Hill café. The rods were back out about 11am, and I spent the next few hours enjoying the autumn sunshine. Then at 4.10pm my left hand rod burst in to action. Straight away I waded out in to the water to play the fish. After a brief fight and it getting weeded up a couple of times, I had it safely in the landing net. Nick the bailiff was in my swim, as I had phoned him when the fish was weeded up and said that I may need the boat. He asked me if it was a decent one, and I replied that it was probably a mid 20 or maybe a 30. After it had been unhooked and treated with propolis, we then give her a weigh. When the needle went round to 40lb 8oz I was a bit surprised to say the least. It was a new UK PB common. We did a few photos and then let her go back in to her watery hole – buzzing!

The next couple of days and nights passed by with nothing happening, but I did see them munching on a hatch right in front of me for a couple of hours, and that was an experience

in itself just watching them. Thursday 4.40pm, and the same rod was away again. I went straight into the water again to play the fish, but this time it kited left at rapid speed and then went solid in the weed.

This time there was no way it would come out, so it was waders off and life jacket on. I was soon out in the boat to see if the fish was still there, and after a bit of a struggle with the wind, which resulted in me spinning around in the boat a couple of times, I managed to get the fish out, but then it went straight into another weed bed. I managed to get directly above the weed, and I slowly started to hand-line the big ball of weed up. I could clearly see my leader and most of my hooklink, and my heart sank, as I was sure that the fish had gone. I gently prodded my finger in to the weed, and much to my delight I felt a fish, so into the net went a ball of weed, and somewhere in between it all a fish.

Back on the bank with all the weed removed and the fish unhooked and treated, we were greeted with a jet black mirror that we recognised as a fish called the O Fish. This one was certainly in its autumn colours. We lifted her on to the scales, and the needle settled at bang on 36lb – absolutely buzzing. A few quick photos, and she was soon back off into the depths. The rest of Thursday passed

by as did Friday day as well, then at 5am Saturday morning the same rod burst in to life waking me up. As I came out of my bivvy it was extremely foggy and pitch black, making it hard to see anything at all. This time instead of going in the water I walked back up the bank with the rod, hoping that it would stop the fish from weeding me up, but it didn't, so back on went the waders. This time though, I managed to get the fish out fairly easily, and another decent fish was in the net. Unhooked, treated and weighed, it turned out to be 34b 14oz of Christchurch beauty.

As the fog was so bad, I had no chance of getting a picture, so I waded the fish out in the retainer and stayed up to keep an eye on it until the fog had cleared. After the fog had cleared around 7.30am, we did a few quick pics, and she was returned. The rest of the session went by quickly, and I didn't receive any more action. I was soon barrowing my gear back down to the car park. With the lake fishing hard that week with only six fish out, I felt very lucky to catch what I did.

In my eyes Christchurch is the best day ticket water in the UK, and the stock speaks for itself. There is a massive number of large fish in there, and each one in there whether it be a double or a 40 is a stunner. Roll on the next session! ■



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The Turtle

By Spud Sims



September-October is always the time I step up my fishing and try and be at the lake as much as possible. The last couple of sessions had gone well with me having four carp over two two-nighters, the biggest two being 39lb 10oz and 41b 8oz, so when I arrived on the Sunday afternoon at Welly, confidence was high. However I was met with the news there had been 17 anglers fishing Saturday night. This is not the news I wanted to hear, as even though Welly is 35 acres, 17 on is rammed. Generally when arriving for a session, I'll head for the areas that have seen the least pressure, if I can't find 'em that is. Being shallow, and bearing in mind how big they are, you'd think finding them would be easy, but this is certainly not the case. With no weed and water clarity low, you can walk forever and not see a thing.

After a couple of laps, I was scratching my head. I'd seen nothing

to encourage me, and eventually I settled in a swim called the Wides, which had the wind pushing in nicely, and they had been seen in the area of late. That night was quiet, and I woke to the feeling of wanting to move. A few texts revealed nothing had been out! At 7.15am I was sitting on my bedchair wondering what my next move was when Charlie rang. He'd done the night in the Finger Arm, and even though he'd not caught, he said he'd heard them crashing right at the bottom end of the arm during the night. Even better news was he'd just left for work and the swim was free. By now it was raining, but that didn't bother me. Everything was thrown on the barrow, and by 8am I was on the other side of the lake and the swim was mine, and with two nights ahead of me confidence was high again.

The arm is probably a few hundred yards long and 50 yards wide in places with snaggy tree lines either side. Even though I was in the last fishable swim, there was still another

70-plus yards to my right where they were perfectly safe from anglers. I was in no rush now; I was in the swim, and it doesn't tend to do many daytime bites, so I flicked singles out for the morning and set up the Supa broolly. Late morning, Darren and Rob walked past.

They'd been the café and processed to tell me I was indeed in the right place. They'd seen quite a few carp at the bottom of the arm, and big ones too! A little later Geoff Bowers arrived in the swim with some new bait for me to give a try, so I wound the rods in, put fresh hookbaits on and spread a little bit of bait over the spots.

The afternoon dragged a little, as I was eager to get to night time when hopefully they would creep out and maybe I'd get a chance. At 5.45pm I was sitting on my bedchair doing nothing in particular when I received three or four bleeps on the left hand rod that was fished over the far side. I jumped out to see the line picking up





and immediately lifted into a fast moving carp. Now these carp know their environment well, and this one knew exactly where it wanted to go. 25 yards to my right there's a snaggy tree in the near side margin, which could cause me a problem if I let the carp get the upper hand. I had to gain line and quickly, as it was kiting right and heading straight for the tree. As the line cut right, I dipped the rod under the water and gave it the butt. The carp rolled heavily on the edge of the tree and the branches shook. I kept the rod buried in the water and slowly drew the fish away from danger. Three or four pumps and it was clear.

I could relax a little, and once in front of me it showed immense power, with me just hanging on at times, all the time thinking, don't let it get to far out otherwise it would kite right again. At one point I had it ready for the net, but as its nose hit the spreader block I lifted but it wouldn't go in. It turned slowly and powered 20 yards across the surface. By now the nagging doubts were starting to creep in... please stay on! Another couple of runs, and I bundled it into the net. I quickly called Jaime the bailiff who was on the other side of

the lake, and he made his way round. At this point I had no idea what was in the net. I knew it was a lump but wanted to let it and me rest while I sorted the weighing tripod and scales.

The swim itself is quite steep, so I

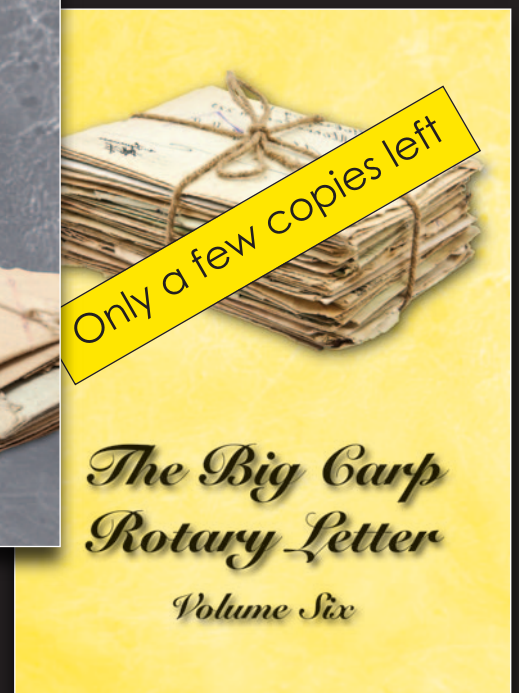
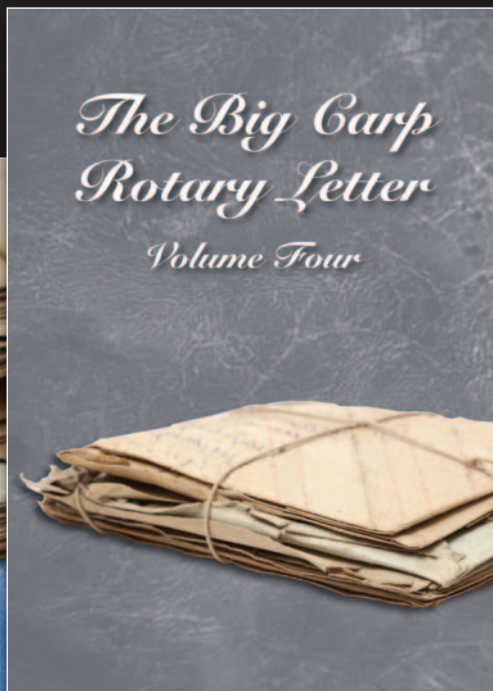
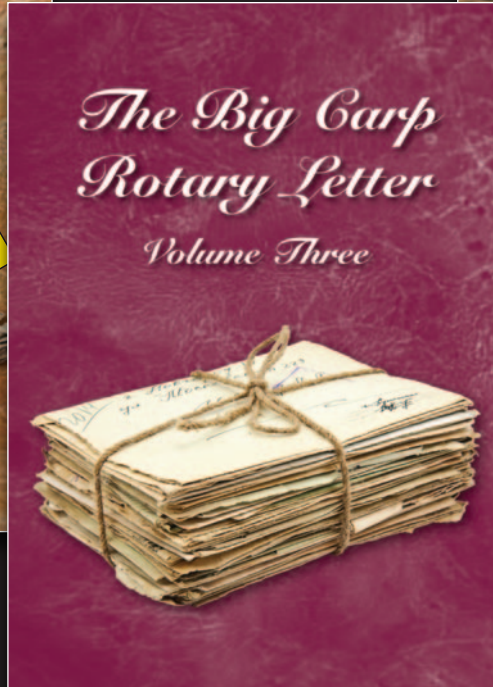
jumped in while Jaime passed me the mat so I could easily transfer the fish into the mat before lifting it out the water. As I collapsed the net, I commented to Jaime that it was a bit bigger than I thought. As I rolled it onto my forearms Jaime uttered the words I thought I'd never hear: "That's the Turtle!" Once on the bank it was confirmed, and I went into meltdown and shouted, "TURTLE!" at the top of my voice. It gives me goose pimples now just writing this... Anyway Darren and Rob came down and helped with the pictures. He weighed 56lb 12oz and was 47 inches of pure muscle. Soon enough he was back in the lake and powered off leaving me to reflect on what had just happened.

All the talk had been that he was due out, and my good friend Kris Ollington and I had been having plenty of banter about it a few days before. I'd told Kris not to bother coming to fish Wednesday, as I'd have had him by Tuesday... not that I actually thought it would happen. That evening my phone was in meltdown, and I'd like to thank everyone for their congratulations. Also I'd like to thank Geoff Bowers and the lads at Active Bait Solutions for the opportunity and faith in me. Back in May I lost one of my best friends to cancer, so I'd like to dedicate this capture to him... RIP Steven Mason. "I've had him, boooooooyyyyy!" ■



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The Cheshire Pond

By Steve Smith

After enduring five months of blanking on the days-only Cheshire pond, giving up just wasn't an option. I had decided to target a certain fish known as the Epic. The fish was last caught from the pond at an impressive weight of 39lb-plus. But if I was to stand any chance of catching this carp, I would have to also put in the time on the pond, as I was aware that

any of the other anglers that fished the pond could also have a chance of catching the Epic. The window of opportunity to catch any carp from the pond can be very short, so when the carp do decide to feed on our bait, this may only be for a short period of time. I had been introducing a prototype bait, B2S from SAE Bait Developments since March. It's the restrictions on the pond that makes the fishing so difficult. It's a days-only venue of approximately 32 acres with fishing

from only one bank. The opposite bank is approximately 295 yards across, and it's the opposite bank where most of the carp tend to spend all their time, so in most cases, it's just a matter of waiting until the carp decide to venture over to where the bait is.

I caught my first carp for 2016 from the pond in mid-July, a lovely and very welcome 25lb mirror, then endured a few more weeks blanking. Then, in mid-August, that window of



opportunity had arrived. The carp were now coming out on a regular basis, so I had to put in as much time on the pond as possible if I was to stand any chance of catching my target fish. My next carp from the pond

came in mid-August, a lovely little mirror of 17lb, and then a few days later I was into another beautiful carp, a stunning 34lb mirror, so I was well pleased. The Epic had still not been caught, so I still had a chance.

It was the 1st of September and a new moon when my good friend Steve Clare, said to me, "Smithy, it's nearly bite time – 9pm," and within two minutes, my left hand rod melted into action. Not even thinking of which carp might be on the end of my line, I played the fish for about ten minutes before Steve finally netted my prize. Looking down into the net, he said, "Wow, that's a very big fish, Smithy." After a few minutes, we noticed that it was in fact the Epic, my target fish. I was totally blown away; I had finally caught my target fish from the pond at a very impressive weight of 41lb of solid Cheshire carp.

My time on the pond over the years has been very enjoyable, meeting some great friends on the way, and I also enjoyed some very memorable captures, but now it's time to venture onto other waters. A massive thanks to Scott Eyre, the boss of SAE Bait Development, for supplying such quality bait. ■



Carpy Humour



Cottington Lakes

By Tommy Onslow

I had to meet Ben and Barry O'Connor for 7am Sunday morning at Cottington Lakes. What a lovely place, which probably has the best looking fish in the country. We had a chat and walk down to the lake to choose swims. I was happy no one was in there, and the chosen swim looking good for a bite. There was a new northerly wind blowing in my left hand corner, and it was a warm wind for a northern. Seeing a few fish too, I was buzzing to wet a line.

It took Ben an hour to have two fish on the bank. I was getting liners for about five hours with fish rolling. I was pulling my hair out, but about 5.30 I had my first take from Cottington Lakes, and I was happy with a small common of about 15lbs. It was a very slow night, and at first light I was up and saw a few fish about 15 yards out. I thought I'd try something different from what I did the day



before, so I spoddied three spods full of pellet and crushed tuna and garlic from Urban Baits. The other rod was a PVA bag of crushed tuna and garlic.

At about 11.30 the left hand rod was away with a take like a bream. I picked the rod up and the rod, which was bending, so no bream! After a 20-minute battle and with her head just going in the net, the other rod was away. Not knowing what the size of the fish on the net was, I was in again with another nice fish. After about ten minutes the other fish went in the net too. The boys were weighing the other fish, and she was a new PB of 43lb 2oz, and the other was a 37. I was other the moon, but that was it – no other takes.

I would just like to say a big thanks to Barry and Ben O'Connor for a few good

days, great laughs as always and Tel from Urban Baits for the bait and Ashima for the end tackle. Also a well

done for my brother Nicky Onslow for having a 41 common on the same day. ■



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