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One-Wrap 60 Pounder featuring Saul Gardiner
Danish Carp Record Broken by Peder Litchtenberg
An African Adventure Part 3 by Dave Charley
Monks Pit Record Falls to Bug-Munching Black Spot! featuring Phil Candlish
Boilie Crumb by Luke Vallory
A Remarkable Catch Report by John Allmark
Autumn Came Good, In the End by Charlie Ferris
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Post Spawning Assault by Barry Delderfield
Quite Possibly the Best Common I'll Ever Catch! by Bradley Wegner
I Never Thought I Had It In Me To Catch by Oscar Thornton
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Maggot Rigs by Tom Stokes
Confidence is Everything by Elliott Gray
The Spot Was Absolutely Rocking featuring Scott Sweetman
Attention to Detail by Charlie Ferris
Lac D'Orient by Darell Peck

It's a Fine Margin by Wayne Iszatt
The Park Lake by Lewis Richards
A Year in Carp Matches by Barry and Ben Oconnor
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10	COOLE ACRES

Top 10 French Holiday Destinations

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8	DREAM LAKES
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Top 10 Bait Companies

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2	NUTRABAITS
3	STICKY
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5	CC MOORE
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10	OUTLAW

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4	JAG
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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
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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 330

**HAPPY
NEW
YEAR!**



Featuring: Darrell Peck, Elliott Gray, Tom Stokes, Luke Vallory, Dave Charley, John Allmark, Phil Candlish, Charlie Ferris, Simon Hartop, Saul Gardinier, Luke Stevenson, Oscar Thornton, Bradley Wegner, Scott Sweetman, Barry Denderfield, Pedder Lichtenberg,

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Happy New Year readers

I hope you all had a nice break, met up with friends and family and hopefully, if you were very lucky, caught a Christmas carp? I also hope you are ready to put your feet up one more time and relax with the first editions in 2024 of Big Carp and Free Line Magazines, your monthly dose of FREE carpy tales.

Just right to get you in the mood for some cold weather carp fishing or even keep the fires burning ready for the spring onslaught – only a little over eight weeks away.

So, this month I thought I would kick us off with a bit of everything, some autumn bigguns, where things worked out well in the end. Some cold weather tips and tactics to put an extra winter carp or two on the bank. A new record overseas. The next instalment of the African Adventure and of course plenty of our favourite type of carp, big, black and scaly.

So, let's have look in a bit more detail of the lineup for Big Carp's New Year Special.

Saul Gardiner, is this month's cover story, it's a Grenville sixty, the first of many to come I think!

Dave Charley returns with part four of his African Adventure, as time goes on we are almost up to the current day.

Barry Delderfield makes a post spawning assault on his chosen venue with spectacular results. Peder Litchtenberg smashes the Danish carp record on a bait which is smashing PB's in the UK!

Bradley Wegner catches a monster common and wonders if he will ever catch a better one. Charlie Ferris has been consistently catching again this season, this month we have two features, one on his autumn results and the second explains the importance of attention to detail. Darrell Peck features once again in our catch reports with his early results on Greville while he also looks back to a memory Milestone at The Orient.

Elliott Gray explains why, to him, confidence is everything. John Allmark catches a remarkable common. The ever consistent Luke Stevenson explains the importance of plumbing. While Luke Vallory, another super consistent catcher, looks at boillie crumb and chops, possibly one of the most important factors in his baiting.

Have you ever thought that catching a target is beyond your capabilities? Oscar Thornton had to dig deep to believe it was going to happen! Phil Candlish, Monks Pit record. Scott Sweetman's spot was absolutely rocking, the result was inevitable. Simon Hartop catches an immaculate piece of carp fishing history and Tom Stokes reveals his chosen maggot rig, just what you are going to need over the next few weeks.

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 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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Exclusive

38 **One-Wrap 60 Pounder**

Featuring Saul Gardiner

40 **Danish Carp Record Broken**

By Peder Litchtenberg

46 **An African Adventure Part 3**

By Dave Charley

50 **Monks Pit Record Falls to Bug-Munching Black Spot!**

Featuring Phil Candlish

52 **Boillie Crumb**

By Luke Vallory

56 **A Remarkable Catch Report**

By John Allmark

58 **AAutumn Came Good, In the End**

By Charlie Ferris

61 **A Fantastic Bit of Kit**

Featuring Simon Hartop

62 **Post Spawning Assault**

By Barry Delderfield

68 **Quite Possibly the Best Common I'll Ever Catch!**

By Bradley Wegner

72 **Why I Plumb**

By Luke Stevenson

75 **Maggot Rigs**

By Tom Stokes

76 **Confidence is Everything**

By Elliott Gray

79 **The Spot Was Absolutely Rocking**

Featuring Scott Sweetman

82 **Attention to Detail**

By Charlie Ferris

84 **Lac D'Orient**

By Darrell Peck

87 **I Never Thought I Had It In Me To Catch**

By Oscar Thornton

Big Carp Promotions

37 **Oak Lake Fishery**

2024's



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Front Cover
Saul Gardiner with a 61 pound monster.

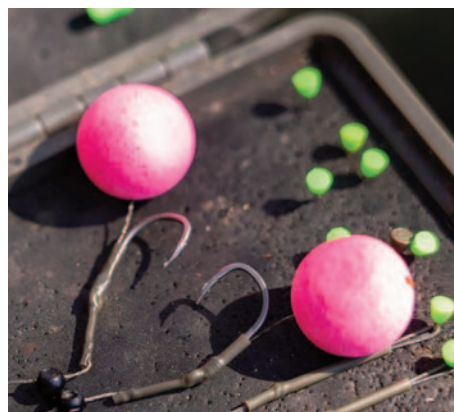


News & Reviews

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

20 **Tac-Tec**
Latest product reviews

- Nite Watches
- Nite Watches
- Nite Watches
- Princeton Tec
- Geoff Anderson



Advertising Index

Reuben Heaton 2 Bountyhunter 5 Coole Acre Lakles 11 Bountyhunter 18 and 19 Bountyhunter 25 IKTUS 33 Oak Lake Fisheries 37 DT Baits 43 Cottingham Lakes 67 Bountyhunter 71 Bountyhunter 90

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

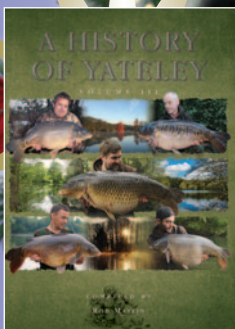
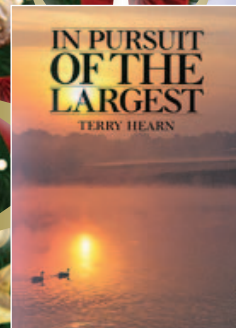
Under the Radar Volume 2

In Pursuit of the Largest

Further off Beaten Track

Advanced Terminal Rigs

Secrets of the Thames



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ShockLeader

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

Latest news from the British Record (rod-caught) Fish Committee

The BRFC met at Fishmongers' Hall, London Bridge, on the 9th of November 2023

Present were: Stephen Mardlin MBE (Chairman), Oliver Crimmen (Scientific Advisor, Natural History Museum), Andy Nellist (Vice-Chairman), Paul Coulson (Freshwater Specialist), James MacLaine (Scientific Advisor, Natural Natural History Museum), Paul Edwards, (Wales and Game Angling Representative) and Nick Simmonds (Secretary). Remotely attending were: David Craig (Ireland representative), Dr Phill Williams (Marine Specialist), Nigel Hewlett (Freshwater Scientific Advisor) and Mat Mander (Marine Specialist). Also joining the meeting by internet link as the BRFC's guests were: Hannah Rudd, Dr Bryce Stewart and Dr Simon Thomas, representing Shark Hub UK. The BRFC members and the Shark Hub UK representatives held an interesting and constructive discussion focussed on fish handling and welfare issues and how the procedures for claiming British record captures of large shark species may be adapted to take account of best practice in catch and release of these fish.

The BRFC will soon be introducing length based records for all of the sea species on the main list (not for minispecies). For the larger shark species Blue, Mako, Porbeagle, Thresher and Six-Gilled there will from now on be only length based records, with a requirement that the fish is measured whilst still in the water. The BRFC is currently engaged in defining the



methodology for obtaining suitably accurate measurements and is investigating (in collaboration with Shark Hub UK) technology which may be available to develop digital measurement techniques for measuring fish still in the water. The BRFC has undertaken a comprehensive review of its policy concerning non-native Coarse and Game species.

The committee agreed that henceforth the British Record List for Coarse Fish will only include:

- (i) species indigenous to British waters;
- (ii) species originating in Europe and already on the list with established self-sustaining populations in Britain;
- (iii) Carp and Crucian Carp, which have both been present in Britain for over 1,000 years.

The committee agreed that henceforth the British Record List for Game Fish will

include only fish indigenous to British Waters with two records for Brown Trout (migratory and non-migratory).

The BRFC Record Lists for Coarse Fish and Game Fish will be updated to reflect this policy, with all records that are to be removed from the Record Lists to be moved to the Notable Fish List.

An important outcome of this review is that the BRFC will re-open the Wels catfish listing for new claims. The committee believes that the self-sustaining population of Wels catfish now growing to specimen size in British waters means that the threat of illegal imports of large catfish has diminished and is therefore willing to receive new claims for the species. In order to avoid an excessive volume of record claims, the BRFC will advise the threshold weight for new claims early in 2024. The committee is reviewing species that are difficult to separate from each other using photographic evidence, particularly given the requirement to return some species as soon as possible at the point of capture.

The committee has already decided in that respect to make changes to the record listings for



Smoothhound and Skate species as follows:

- (i) to amalgamate the two currently separate record listings for Smoothhound (*Mustelus mustelus*) and Starry Smoothhound (*Mustelus asterias*) into a single listing for Smoothhound.
- (ii) to maintain only one record for both the Skate species Blue Skate (*Dipturus Flossada*) and Flapper Skate (*Dipturus Intermedia*).

Similar changes may follow in respect to other species. The committee considered and accepted the following record claim as being duly ratified:

Steven's goby (*Gobius gasteveni*), caught by Steve Clements from the shore at

Stonehouse, Plymouth, on 5th September 2023. This is the first appearance on the British

record list for this species and

Steve's catch was ratified for the record list at 9 grams.

The next meeting of the BRFC was scheduled for June 2024.

The Committee would like to remind readers that in the event of the capture of a potential record fish, the captor should first contact the British Record (rod-caught) Fish Committee without delay. Captors of potential record fish should contact the Secretary, Nick Simmonds, at the Angling Trust, on 01568 620447 or by email at brfc@anglingtrust.net. Nick will record the details of the capture and advise the claimant on progressing the claim.

More information about what to do if you catch a record fish can be found on the BRFC web pages here.

Aims and Objectives of the BRFC:

The Committee exists to recognise and publish record weights of both fresh and salt water fish caught on rod and line by fair angling methods

in the waters of England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, The Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, and aims:

To provide an adjudicating body to which marine and freshwater anglers may submit claims for record fish taken by fair rod and line angling.

To investigate all such record claims to the fullest possible extent and maintain a permanent record of such investigations.

To establish and maintain accurately a list of British fish, marine and freshwater, of record size and to publish this list frequently and make it readily available to all interested persons.

The activities of the Committee are voluntary, and claims are considered and adjudicated upon, only on the basis that the Committee shall be under no obligation whatsoever to claimants, that its decisions shall be final, and it shall not be obliged to give reasons for its decisions. ■

2024 JUNIOR CARP CAMP

SAT 27th - TUE 30th JULY

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12 - 16
YEAR OLDS

LIMITED TO
30 ANGLERS

The Carp Society Junior Carp Camp is a four day event held at our iconic Horseshoe Lake in Lechlade.

The camp is available to juniors aged 12 - 16 years old and for anglers who want to learn or improve their fishing experience and techniques. ALL angling abilities welcome! Our tutors provide a mix of on the bank tutoring and class style lessons throughout the four days.

Limited to 30 junior anglers, we have limited spaces available for this year.

To register your interest please email us with a brief overview of yourself, age and angling experience.



Email sales@thecarpsociety.com for more information



**2023
ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING NOTICE
SUNDAY 3rd DECEMBER 2023**



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The Annual General meeting of the Carp Society will take place at Horseshoe Lake, Burford Road, Lechlade GL7 3QQ on Sunday 3rd December 2023 at 1.30pm.

FESTIVAL OF CARP 2024

Following the success of our first event, we are back in 2024 with more top brands and anglers! Come along and check out bankside demos, casting tuitions, the rig & bait clinic, trade area and much more ... Plus, some special guests lined up, to be announced!



JUNIOR CARP CAMP 2024

Limited to just 30 anglers, our four day Junior Carp event will take place on Horseshoe Lake from Saturday 27th to Tuesday 30th July 2024 and is available for juniors aged 12 - 16 years old. The event welcomes anglers of all abilities, whether they want to improve their fishing techniques, learn new skills or gain experience on Horseshoe Lake our 2-1 tuition offers a flexible approach to individual needs. At only £85, the price includes tuition, fishing, main meals and goody bags provided by our sponsors. ■

FESTIVAL OF CARP

**@ HORSESHOE LAKE,
GL7 3QQ**

Save the date!

2024

Sat 29th June

Carpy Humour by Dr Kibble

It's always the way isn't it Rob, just as you get really comfortable under your umbrella. Leaning back in your favourite fishing armchair, looking across the lake for signs of carp. The bite alarm goes off. It always happens, doesn't it!

A fishing club bailiff came up to me last year and said, "You are not allowed to fish seated in an armchair at this lake matey!" I said to him "Show me in the rule book where it says armchairs are not permitted on this club lake." He couldn't find anything in the rules saying such a thing. So, he left with his tail between his legs. There is not even a mention in the rule book, about three seater settees. Which can be a bit of a hazard when fishing in tight swims, as I had found in the past. No mention of armchairs, settees, or even jacuzzis being banned from the club water in question. So, they need to re-think the club rules in that handbook.

Though I always say, you can't beat a good Vondom Daybed, especially the Igloo shaped ones, but they can take some time setting up in your chosen swim.

Went to my local off license the other day. The Eastern European geezer serving at the till said, "Have you ever had cock burns Kibs?" Clearly, he was getting lost in translation. I told him I have had heartburn before, and if he was having cock burns, he should see a doctor about it. The only time I have ever suffered cock burns, is when dipping my tinky



winky in the sand, crabbing in Lee Jackson's backyard, years ago over Kent way. I remember the first time I fished Darenth Big Lake in 1990, the local anglers thought I was a bit wet behind the ears. Well, I had been swimming in the lake ten minutes earlier, putting a thirty pound carp back. So, they may have been right.

I saw my old fishing mate Sid-E-O the other day. I said to him, "How is the wife?" He said he hadn't seen her tackle box in years. Apparently, she'd run off with a barbel angler, and it all went all down river since then.

They go on about Essex girls. I went to Preston in the nineties. Visited the posh part, 'Ashton-On-Ribble'. Though I visited a lovely pub known as 'Belle Vue Hotel' in New Hall Lane. There was a lady behind the bar wearing the square root of sod all. A local lass came up to me dressed in a rubber nurse's outfit, with a zip from the centre of the neck line, going right down to the hem at the bottom of the dress. When she breathed out the zip started to slowly move downwards, partly showing her well-formed breasts. I said to her, "Do you work for Preston innovations by any chance?" She said, "It's funny you should say that, I'm going for an interview with them on Monday". She said, "Buy me a drink, and I'll tell you my life story darling". Though women from Preston are quite down to earth

though. I said to her, "I bet your shit doesn't stink?" She said, "All it does love. I had a dump the other day, it was so overwhelming, and strong smelling. It started to take the paint off of the bog door". After buying her half a dozen Babychams she invites me back to her flat. I thought to myself I'm going to get more than a wet finger here tonight. I'm now in her flat, and she says to me while she's leaning back stark bollock naked on her Chaise Lounge. In a lowly lit room. "Come and give it to





me big boy!" I look over my shoulder, thinking to myself is there someone else in the room. Are we being burgled? Well, we can't all be well hung like 'Steve Allcott'. I said to her, "I'm just popping back down to the van, to get my Cobra throwing stick love". When I got back' she said to me "I like it rough. Can you spank my bottom with that stick, while asking me questions". It was difficult to think what to ask. I gave her a spank with the Cobra, and said, "Who's your daddy?". She replied with, "It might be you Kibs, you used to know my Mum really well in the eighties, when she lived in Manchester".

Talking of drunk women. A drunk girl calls over the barman, and says, "Beertender! Gimme a martooni!" The bartender patiently gives her a Martini, which she disposes of quickly down her throat. She then yells at him again. "Beertender! Gimme another martooni!" He rolls

his eyes and serves her another. But not ten minutes later, she's hollering across the bar at him again. "Beertender! Gimme another martooni! And give me some antacid; I have terrible heartburn." The barman replied, "Listen, lady. One: It's Bartender, not Beertender. Two: It's a Martini, not a martooni. And three: You do not have heartburn; your left boob is hanging inside one of my ashtrays."

Two drunk girls stopped to pee in a cemetery after a long night out drinking and partying. The first girl squats down and starts to pee. She then realises she doesn't have anything to wipe with, so she takes her panties off and wipes herself off with them, and throws them away. The second girl squats down near a gravestone and starts to pee. She also realises she has nothing to wipe with. She saw her friend use her knickers but she thinks to herself, I'm not using mine they are far too expensive! They are made by,

'Amour Precieux', Italian briefs. I'm not throwing them away." So, she grabs a ribbon off the nearby grave and wipes herself down. The next morning one of the husbands of the two women calls the other husband on the phone. The first girl's husband says, "Man my wife came home with no knickers on and can't remember anything. I'm divorcing her." The second husband says, "That's nothing man, my wife came home with a ribbon stuck to her harris saying 'We will never forget you!' signed by Barry, Ian, Paul, Dave, Jeremy, and all the lads from the army barracks."

Sheep are not just for Christmas. It's not only Lockeeree that thinks that. A fellow angler came up to me last week. He said I've been reading your articles in Big Carp. Are you into lambs? I said to him, we are carp anglers not perverts, mate.

Someone said to me the other day, Kibs your English is not quite 'William Shakespeare'. Clearly a very observant chap. We never did Shakespeare at my school. At my school I didn't even know who he was. I thought he made fishing tackle.

You don't realise how lucky you are sometimes. There are always people far worse off. A manager at our local jobcentre caught Herpes, for shaking hands with the unemployed last week. I used to know of a lady who had a terrible complaint. I don't know the real medical term for it, but she was suffering from dandruff fanny. Though she could always guarantee her boyfriends one thing, it would snow at Christmas.

I should have been a male model Rob, with my good catfish looks. Though I seem to catch more Catfish





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than Carp these days. Especially on lakes like Badshot Lea. Last visit to Farnham Angling Society's 16 acre lake in October. Had me catching Wels of 25lb, 35lb, 45lb, and 62lbs in 2 days. All caught on Sticky baits krill boilies, with liquid liver, and a few other secrets soaked into frozen boilies. I have only fished there six times in the last 3 years. Three times in September, and three times in October. Usually doing 2 or 3 nighters with my good mate JW, who fishes for small fish on the float, or carp or cats legering. I just go for the carp myself, but know the Wels will always take my boilies if they are swimming nearby. So far I've had 33 runs off the Wels in the six visits. Managing to land 22 of them all on 18lb ESP line. I have only been spat once. Though the line has been cut off ten times. I'm only using size 4 Korda Wide Gape Barbless hooks. They are the best hook I've ever used when fishing on bottom baits. They get the fish inside the corner of the mouth every time practically without fail. Though there is one Wels in the lake I think I've hooked it now five or six times. It's a really long fish, sometimes I manage to turn it back towards me, after it takes me about 50 yards down the lake, but just as I think I've got it beaten every time, and getting the

fish back out in front of me. It seems to get a second wind every time, and it just steams straight off again. I did twice try using 30lb line on my last visit, and using a catfish rod. Just to see if I could get this fish in, but both times it cut me off instantly. So, I gave up on that idea, and went back onto the carp rods. I think the lake record is over eighty pounds, but this fish looks like it could be about six feet long. It has a very large tail. In the nineties I did fish for the Wels a few times in Spain, and once in Kazakhstan. I did manage to catch them over 150lbs on the Segre. Though I have now had 6 over the 40lb mark from Badshot, but I'm sure there is one over 100 pounds in the lake now. The Nessie of the lake. I think the lake record at the moment is over 80lb. Though the cat anglers that fish there have told me I've done well just getting in the ones I've caught using lighter tactics. All caught at ranges of 20 to 40 yards out. I don't use a bait boat. I prefer to spread bait about with a catapult. Occasionally using a fox impact spod. Though the splashing they make I think attracts catfish into the swim, like a dinner bell. Most of the time I only fish with one rod at Badshot, because we usually share a swim. We go there really just for a social. It's really difficult to get two

rods in the lake, when the carp, cats, and bream find the bait there. They can get right on it sometimes.

An angler said to me some weeks back, after reading Big Carp. You had a lucky escape there Kibs, not meeting Jimmy Savile, and Gary Glitter. What a lot of people don't realise. Before 'Jim'll Fix It' was first created, and broadcasted in 1975. The producer Roger Ordish, and the BBC team who put the show together back in the day. For some reason, wanted a person to host the show from 'Yorkshire' way. I've even heard rumours in the past that Tim Paisley was considered as the host. I'm not sure if that is true, but imagine that.

Well, I can. Tim'll Fix It, "I have a lovely letter here from a young Julian Peter Cundiff, which reads, Dear Tim, can you fix it for me, to be your bivy butler for the day, rolling your baits, making your rigs, and even giving the ground sheet a once over with the bivy Hoover.

I think it was 'Tim Paisley' that once said. I was the greatest carp angler that ever lived. Actually, thinking about that now. That might have been something else with a capital C.

An angler shouted out to me the other week at a lake. "I used to love it up the Harris, Kibsee!" I thought to myself I bet you did. Another fella,

and his wife both pike anglers, said they both used to love it up the Harris back in the day as well. Apparently his wife used to get well excited. He said it used to put colour in her cheeks. I think they were all talking about the tackle shop?

My old fishing mate Johnny rang me up the other day. He said have you seen internet porn these days, it's pure filth. Bare in mind he was a porn director himself back in the day, in the seventies. Through to the early nineties. I say porn director, they were more like homemade movies. He is the only bloke I know who can use a polaroid camera, while having sex. "Blow on that love, it will develop quicker!"

Obviously, I had to research what Johnny told me, for article purposes. He was correct. Pure filth. Back in the day we had the pearl necklace. These younger blokes are not happy unless they are firing tiger nut juice everywhere. They will have to start selling safety goggles in 'Ann Summers' next.

The things you can buy in sex shops these days. I love that strawberry lube though. I've been putting that on my ice cream for years. There are some carp anglers over Kent way, that soak it into their boilies. They've had to ban it on some large overstocked lakes, because some carp are swimming around sucking on one another's ring pieces.

When I was a kid in the seventies apart from remembering the Anglers Wail, and the Angling Rhymes. There used to be a bloke that would come around our street in his old Ford Cortina, which he eventually upgraded to a Capri. He used to rent out pirate video copies of films out of his car boot. Ones that had just come out at the time at the cinema. Though as a sideline he sold porn movies to Dads as well. We used to call him 'Blue Ray'. We never realised that in 2003 they would one day name a cd after him. Though the first carp fishing video I ever saw was by Clive Dietrich and Malcolm Winkworth.

Now I know what you are all thinking. What ever happened to the 'Phantom Boilie Rubber', of old London town? A man who was seen on many occasions, wearing a mask, cape, and tights in the dark of the night. Running up behind angler's bivvies back in the day, and rubbing his man boilies up against tents made of nylon like materials. Though many believe he was not from London now,

because he was spotted in mainly counties like Essex, Kent, Surrey, Hertfordshire, and Bedfordshire way. Though in the nineties anglers were still sending in reports about the 'Phantom Boilie Rubber' in places like Gloucestershire. Many famous carp anglers in the past were named as suspects, but it's difficult to prove. When a man is hiding behind a mask, and cape. Kevin Nash did prevent the risk of this when he brought out the canvas bivvy in the late eighties. I don't know if that was the actual reason why Mr Nash made canvas bivvies, because some say he liked the feel of static on his testicles. That's the Phantom, not Kev.

Though what ever happened to the 'The Bayeswater Werewolf' Allegedly in 1591 a young lad named Gary. Had

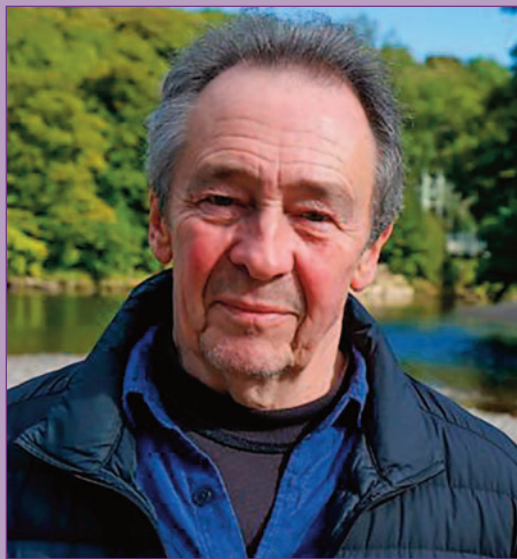
a Gypsy curse put on him, and on the start of every full moon he now turns into a Werewolf. Though in folklore some say he is half Werewolf, half Vampire.

All I know is you wouldn't want a love bite off of him. Apparently at the start of every full moon. You can hear The Bayeswater Werewolf howl from Boreham to Rayleigh. Sometimes his howls are that loud some have said in the past, they have heard him as far as Tilbury docks. Though some vets say the only medicine that can stop him changing into a full Werewolf, is to give him a Grafters Over the Moon beer, the night before a full moon. He doesn't look bad though for 427 years old.

Happy New Year, Steve 'Doctor' Kibble ■

Paul Whitehouse is an Angling Trust Ambassador

Paul Whitehouse is an Angling Trust Ambassador because he believes in our work to protect fish and our fishing environment, grow our sport and with Fish Legal make polluters pay. Support us too by joining today and receive fantastic member benefits including discounts on day tickets, tackle, bait and more! Membership starts from just £30 a year (£26 for seniors) [#https://anglingtrust.net/individual-membership/#anglingtrust](https://anglingtrust.net/individual-membership/#anglingtrust) #angler-sagainstpollution #lovefishinglovenature ■



Carpy Humour





Welcome to your Members Newsletter

Welcome to the latest issue of the Angling Trust & Fish Legal Members Newsletter. Today we report on the launch of our annual Christmas Raffle which raises vital funds to support our work to protect fish, fishing and the environment; how sea angling can benefit from an £18m fund; our latest trade associate partner Zerofit who have a special offer for members; the fantastic film we have produced of this year's RiverFest final on the Trent; and loads more! Tight lines! John Cheyne, Marketing, Communications & Membership Manager:



Three Voluntary Directors elected at AGM

The Angling Trust provides members the opportunity to vote on a number of voluntary director roles with individuals serving a three-year term as part of the Angling Trust board.

There were three vacancies this year, the first a specialist role focused on welfare and safety. This is a critical role of the National Governing Body (NGB) in every sport which requires specialist knowledge and experience. The membership voted Brendan Tonks on to the board to fulfil this role.

There were two further vacancies with an excellent shortlist of candidates. The membership voted for Bev Clifford and Neville Fickling to join the board. Neville will be serving his second term having been voted on to the board initially in 2020. Bev is a new addition to the Angling Trust board.

In addition, the Annual General Meeting welcomed the newly



appointed Angling Trust Chair Eric Prescott who ran the meeting and took questions from the floor.

Finally, the Angling Trust board wished to thank Tim Macpherson as he stepped down from his third term as a volunteer on the Angling Trust

board. Tim provided specialist insight into the sea angling community and chaired the Marine Advisory Group of anglers from across the country. Tim will be made an Honorary Vice President in recognition of his commitment and support. ■



Bid now to win a spectacular day on the Test



Be one of six lucky bidders to join our Mayfly On The Test event at the legendary Orvis Kimbridge Beat – generously donated by Orvis as part of their ongoing support of our Anglers Against Pollution campaign.

The event on Monday, 20th May 2024 promises to be spectacular. Angling Trust Ambassador and fly-fishing leg-

end Charles Jardine will be joining you on the day to help guide and advise, and has generously donated a box of his renowned mayflies for each of our six lucky winners. Lunch and refreshments will be provided at the Kimbridge Beat Hut and each winning bidder will receive a goody bag to commemorate the event. ■

BUILDING BRIDGES

Building Bridges team supporting angling in Wales

Building Bridges Officer Bogdan Pascaru was invited to Swiss Valley Reservoir by the South Wales Kayak Anglers and Swiss Valley Angling Association to have a look at their new club venue and provide multi-language signage and other help.

The association was formed two years ago and is going from strength to strength, negotiating angling opportunities and successful fish stocking. During the visit, the team and bailiffs found illegal crayfish traps which were destroyed.

Last week, the venue hosted the first European Kayak Fishing Championship Final. Bogdan clearly gets on well with the venue as he won the event! We look forward to this part-



nership flourishing and to be able to support this work in Wales. All of our enforcement work is funded by fish-

ing licence income delivered in partnership with the Environment Agency. ■



ANGLERS AGAINST POLLUTION

Chalk stream volunteers join fight against pollution

Volunteers from the Test & Itchen Association and the Watercress & Winterbournes Partnership have joined the Angling Trust's Water Quality Monitoring Network to carry out regular testing on Hampshire's iconic chalk streams, famed for their trout and salmon.

England is home to 85% of the world's chalk streams, yet these prized waters are under threat from over-abstraction and pollution from sewage and agricultural practices.

The WQMN launched in 2022 as part of our Anglers Against Pollution campaign, which is supported by Orvis, and this latest initiative will see 45 volunteers testing and recording phosphate, nitrate and ammonia levels on 12 rivers across the Test, Itchen and Meon catchments. ■



ANGLING TRUST

Team England international selection policy amended following detailed consultation process

The Angling Trust have approved a revised selection policy relating to transgender and non-binary participants following a detailed review process. The amendment means that anglers who have transitioned from male to female will no longer be permitted to compete for England in the ladies' category but will continue to be eligible for the existing universal (open) category in both domestic and international events. ■



COMPETITIONS

Overview of 2023 National Coarse Competitions



The highs and lows of the National Coarse Championships in 2023 plus an insight into the finances of the 10 biggest events staged are revealed in the end of season's review by Angling Trust Head of Competitions Steve Fitzpatrick.

The Angling Trust event's calendar remains the largest, nationally organised series of matches in the UK with thousands of anglers from grass roots to elite level given the opportunity to compete.

Over half of our ten Nationals saw a rise in attendances in 2023 with the biggest growth in events for young anglers. We're especially proud of this as it has formed a large part of the Competition team's focus since last year.

700lb of roach! Stunning start to Zerofit SilverFish competition 2024. ■

700lb of roach! Stunning start to Zerofit SilverFish competition 2024

The first Angling Trust Zerofit SilverFish qualifiers of the season kicked off in style with some huge bags of skimmers, roach, and ide in the opening weeks of the competition. One common factor has been that a few carp are still on the feed due to the mild weather, but as the mercury levels drop we're sure to see some more consistent silver action. One venue where the carp barely got a look in was Boddington Reservoir, hosting its first-ever qualifier.

The vast water produced an incredible 700lb of roach across the 30 anglers, with England international Adam Wakelin leading the way with a 47lb 7oz net! Another venue on top form was Makins Fishery which hosted the third Zerofit SilverFish qualifier. There was an abundance of skimmers caught across all the lakes and top rod on the day, qualifying for the final at Barston, was Dave Wilmott with an incredible 62lb 2oz of skimmers from lake Five.

Our stand-out performance of the rounds so far though was made by Lauren Stevens, who not only became the first female to qualify for the SilverFish final but is also the youngest ever at just 14 years of age! Fishing as part of the Angling Trust's new Young Angler Exemption scheme for under 16s, Lauren showed us all how it was done at Barston Lakes, qualifying with an awesome 32lb 9oz of skimmers on the pole.

She joins a growing list of star anglers who'll be on the bank at Barston Lakes for the big final on Saturday March 9, 2024

Thanks to our sponsor - Zerofit

Thousands of anglers have already benefited from Zerofit products this Autumn, and while the Ultimate baselayer is still the go-to choice for many, the milder weather is the time when their Heatrub Move baselayer becomes a popular choice. It offers twice as much warmth as a regular baselayer, which is perfect for when you start to fish, but the moisture wicking properties and construction of the baselayer means you won't be irritated by the build-up of cold sweat on the skin as your day heats up.

Angling Trust SilverFish competitors and members receive a free Thermal Bobble Hat worth £20 when they buy a Zerofit baselayer here – simply enter the code FREEHATSF when you checkout.



Adam Wakelin

Zerofit SilverFish 2024

Qualifying Anglers so far:

Adam Wakelin – Boddington Reservoir; Ritchie Reynolds – Boddington Reservoir; Graham West – St Albans Lakes; Ricky Knott – St Albans Lakes; Dave Wilmott – Makins Fishery; Matt Godfrey – Makins Fishery; Kristian Jones – Makins Fishery; Jake King – Bishops Bowl; Andy May – Bishops Bowl; Joe Cotterhill – Aston Parks; Matty Dawes – Aston Parks; Simon



Lauren Stevens

Willsmore – Meadowlands Fishery; Richard Chapman – Meadowlands Fishery; Sam Collett – Meadowlands Fishery; Mike McMillan – Southend Farm Fishery; Ben Bray – Southend Farm Fishery; Colin Cavanagh – Southend Farm Fishery; Alan Scotthorne – Barston Lakes; Frankie Gianoncelli – Barston Lakes; Lauren Stevens – Barston Lakes; Gareth Clowes – Baden Hall Fishery; Neil Dimmick – Baden Hall Fishery. ■

TRADE PARTNERS

The Insurance Emporium ... leaves you free to sit back, relax and wait for a bite!

The Insurance Emporium

Five Reely Good Reasons To Catch

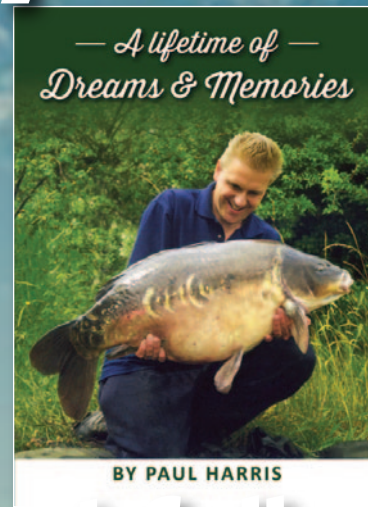
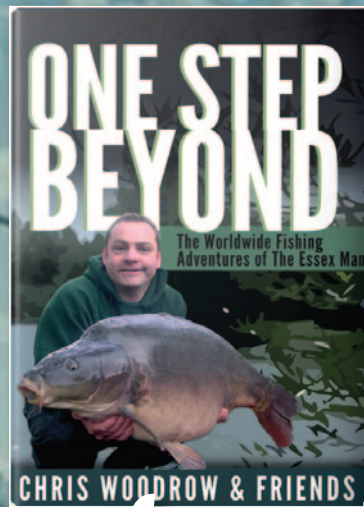
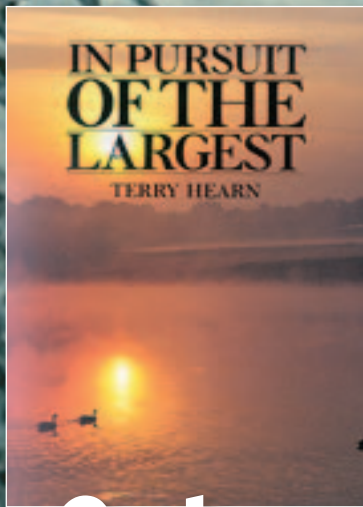
A Fishing Insurance Policy

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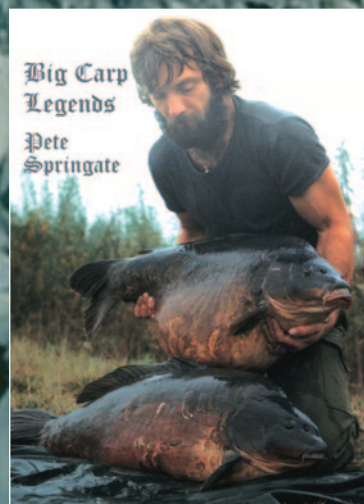
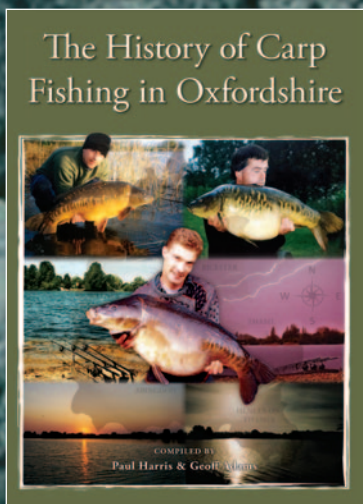
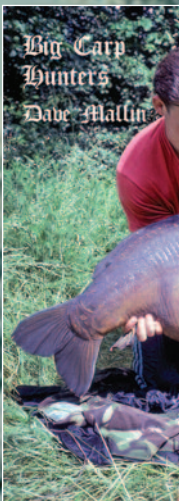
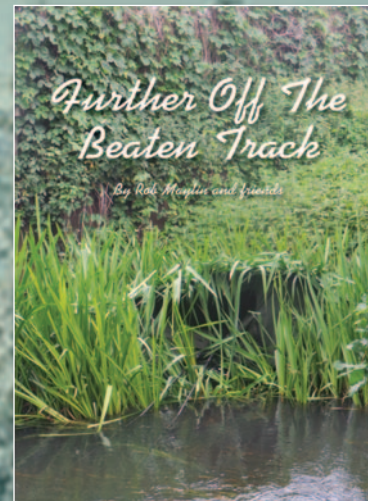
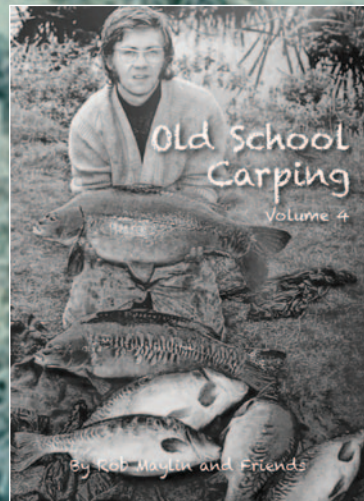
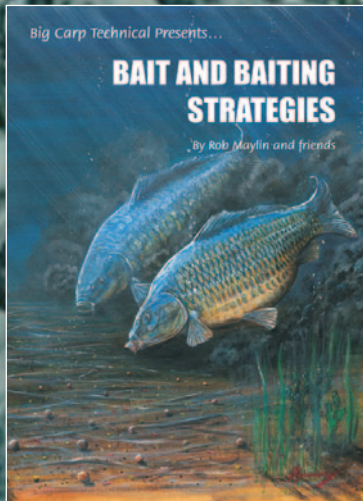
Fishing is a fantastic sport and you'll be aware of how expensive it can be. You've probably accumulated quite a collection of equipment, but when was the last time you sat down and worked out what all that equipment is worth? Angling is considered to be a safe sport, however there's always the chance something unexpected might happen.

Taking out specialised fishing insurance might mean you can enjoy fishing without having to worry about what will happen if something were to go wrong. Leaving you free to sit back, relax, and wait for a bite! ■

Warm Away the Cold

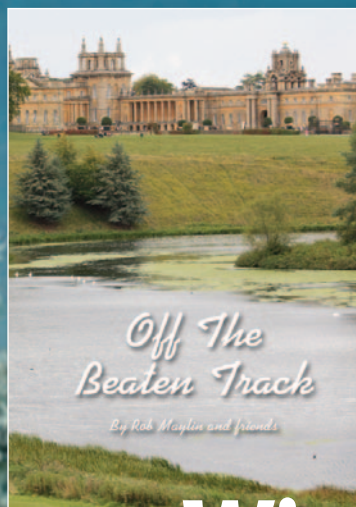


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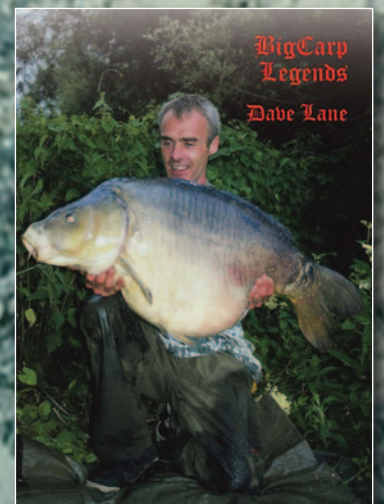
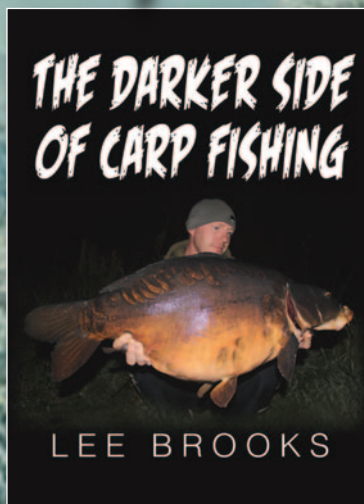


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Our monthly reviews on products currently on the market

In this issue:

- Nite Watches
- Nite Watches
- Nite Watches
- Princeton Tec
- Geoff Anderson

NITE WATCHES: Dave Coleman's Story **Pushing the Boundaries with Nite Maverick**

In an in-depth conversation with Dave Coleman, former Royal Marine, fitness enthusiast, and founder of C2C Training, we delve into the intricacies of his life's journey – from the formative years shaped by the great outdoors to his current role as a NITE Watch ambassador.

Dave's story is a testament to passion, resilience, and the relentless pursuit of excellence.

"I've always been interested in the outdoors and sports. Playing rugby since I was seven, the love for it, the contact, it's all part of my DNA. Climbing mountains, camping, and Marine Cadets nurtured my love for the outdoors." ■



DAVE WEARS THE HAWK



HAWK
£325

Our rugged all-terrain watch, with Swiss-made movement, lightweight polycarbonate case, polymer strap and Tritium illumination.

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NITE WATCHES: Frozen Dagger Expedition

The Furthest solo unsupported ski crossing of Antarctic in history. We are thrilled to be supporting, Ex-Marine Sam Cox on his unique expedition, Frozen Dagger.

Covering more than 1,200 miles (2,000km) across Antarctica he will be completely alone and with no equipment beyond what he can carry himself. Sam will ski in temperatures as cold as -50°C along a route 310 miles (500km) longer than anything that has been attempted.

Consuming 7,000 calories for 75 days, this record breaking route is over 500km further than any solo unsupported skiing expedition.

The expedition starts at the coast of Berkner Island, he will travel to the South Pole and then to the far coast of the continent at Reedy Glacier via the Ross ice shelf. If he completes the journey, Sam will enter the record books alongside the greatest names in Antarctic exploration, including Ernest Shackleton, Douglas Mawson, and Lou Rudd.

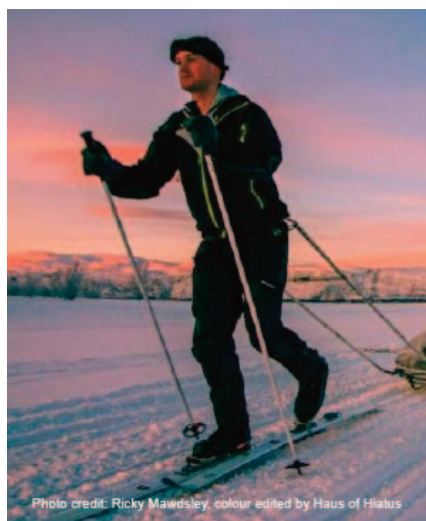


Photo credit: Ricky Mawdsley, colour edited by Haus of Hiatus



Photo credit: Haus of Hiatus

Accompanying him on his trip will be a limited edition prototype of our soon to be launched second-generation Hawk Watch.

This has been specifically designed to withstand the harshest elements, including Antarctica's fierce winds and unforgiving cold. Sam will be wearing his Hawk on his wrist every

step of the way whilst he completes the record-breaking solo unsupported ski crossing.

On his return, the watch is going to be auctioned to raise funds for our supported charity Rock2Recovery, who save and change the lives of those in and who have served in our Armed Forces. ■

THE HAWK OUR RUGGED ALL-TERRAIN WATCH



From **£325**

Swiss-made movement, lightweight polycarbonate case,
polymer strap and Tritium illumination.

NITE WATCHES: New Model MX10



WINTER HAS ARRIVED...

And so has the new edition to our popular MX10 collection. Now available in green dial with contrasting orange second hand. Encased in a complementary stainless steel case on black polymer strap.

MX10 KEY FEATURES





TRITIUM
ILLUMINATION



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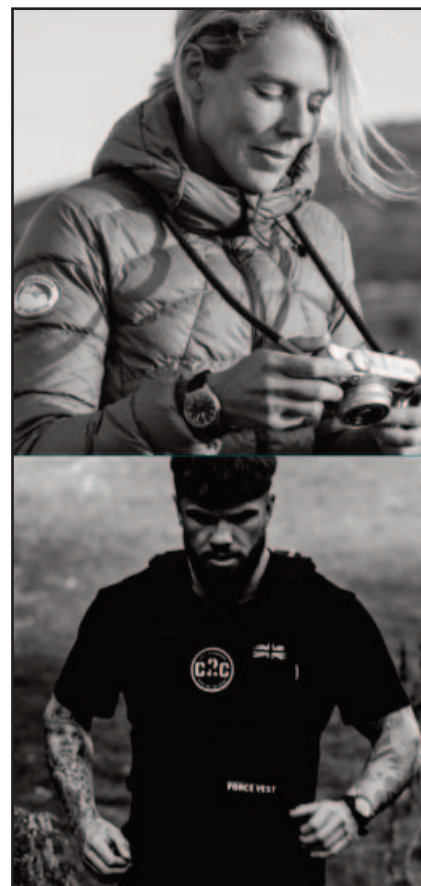
PUSH DOWN
CROWN



5 YEAR
WARRANTY



5 YEAR
BATTERY



Princeton Tec

Axis Rechargeable Led 450 Lumen Water Resistant Head Torch



Updated for this year the lightweight micro-USB rechargeable Axis Rechargeable features a more intuitive interface, smoother dial operation and updated aesthetics. An ambidextrous and glove-friendly side-mounted button lets you choose between four different beam settings (red, spot white, flood white and dual) and the surrounding dial provides dimming in all modes. Dial up for fast-paced activities such as trail running or power down for close range tasks. The built-in battery power meter lets you know when you're ready to go and the sealed lithium rechargeable battery uses regulated circuitry to provide consistent output. If you're ready to ditch wasteful, single use batteries the Axis Rechargeable is your new go-to partner.

Specifications

Power:	450 lumens
Lamp:	1 Maxbright LED w/ spot beam (dimmbable) 1 Maxbright LED w/ flood beam (dimmbable) 2 Red Ultrabright LEDs (dimmbable)
Burn Time:	15 Hours
Batteries:	Lithium Ion Rechargeable (built-in)
Weight:	2.9oz / 83g with batteries
Water Resistant:	IPX4 (splashing water)

Refuel Led 250 Lumen Water Resistant Head Torch



Updated yet again, the newest version of the ReFuel now boasts 250 lumens of dimmable white light. Other upgrades? A painstakingly reengineered battery door featuring sturdier components with a larger lip for easier access, as well as the ability to fine tune your light output with the new dimming feature. The ReFuel is extremely simple to use and takes advantage of our asymmetrical single arm bracket. This design makes directing the light effortless and reliable once on your head. The large, easy to find button controls on/off and with a press and hold, dims the light to your preferred output. Refreshed and Reengineered, the ReFuel is ready to reconnect you to the great outdoors.

Specifications

Power:	250 Lumens
Lamp:	4 Ultrabright white LEDs
Burn Time:	42 Hours
Batteries:	3 AAA Alkaline (included)
Weight:	2.8oz / 78g with batteries
Water Resistant:	IPX4 (splashing water)

Snap Solo Led 300 Lumen Water Resistant Head Torch



Snap Solo's unique design features a magnetic head unit that can be easily detached from its base, empowering it to become the ultimate multi-use light. Snap Solo can be worn as a traditional headlamp, used as a handheld flashlight or attached to any magnetic surface to brighten the area around you or your workspace. Snap Solo features 300 lumens, a 155-hour runtime, and one simple switch that is used for activation and switching between high and low spot beams, as well as a flash mode.

Specifications

Power:	300 Lumens
Lamp:	1 Maxbright LED (dimmbable)
Burn Time:	155 Hours
Batteries:	3 AAA Alkaline (included)
Weight:	3.5oz / 99g with batteries
Water Resistant:	IPX4 (splashing water)

Helix Li Rechargeable Led 300 Lumen Water Resistant Lantern

Whether the evening brings you to the back yard or the backcountry, the Helix Li Rechargeable packs the goods.

A micro-USB port powers up the rechargeable battery that allows this lightweight lantern to put out a bright beam that's easy on the eyes – perfect for around camp or in your tent.

Helix Li Rechargeable has a unique control surface that is free of buttons, yet gives access to a dimmable white mode well as a dimmable red mode for low profile use. The Glow-in-the-dark collapsible globe and folding legs help Helix Backcountry Rechargeable to shine over a wide area and pack down to fit easily in hand. The Helix lantern design also incorporates several hanging and spotlight options. The globe can be removed to swap the diffused glow to a direct spot light.



Specifications

Power:	300 lumens
Lamp:	1 Maxbright LED (dimmbable) 2 Red Ultrabright LEDs (dimmbable)
Burn Time:	110 hours
Batteries:	Lithium Rechargeable (built in)
Weight:	5.4oz / 155g
Water Resistant:	IPX6 (powerful spray)


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Press release



WS7 X



WS7 IS HERE

**WS7
Jumbo X**



**Uncompromising,
rough, waterproof
design**

The WS-jacket is a wading jacket for coastal fishing without a compromise concerning water proofness and durability.

As one of the few jackets on the market, the WS-jacket is designed and developed for coastal fishing in saltwater in the northern part of Europe - an environment with special needs regarding your fishing jacket.

Experience the new WS7 jacket at our website. ■

The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

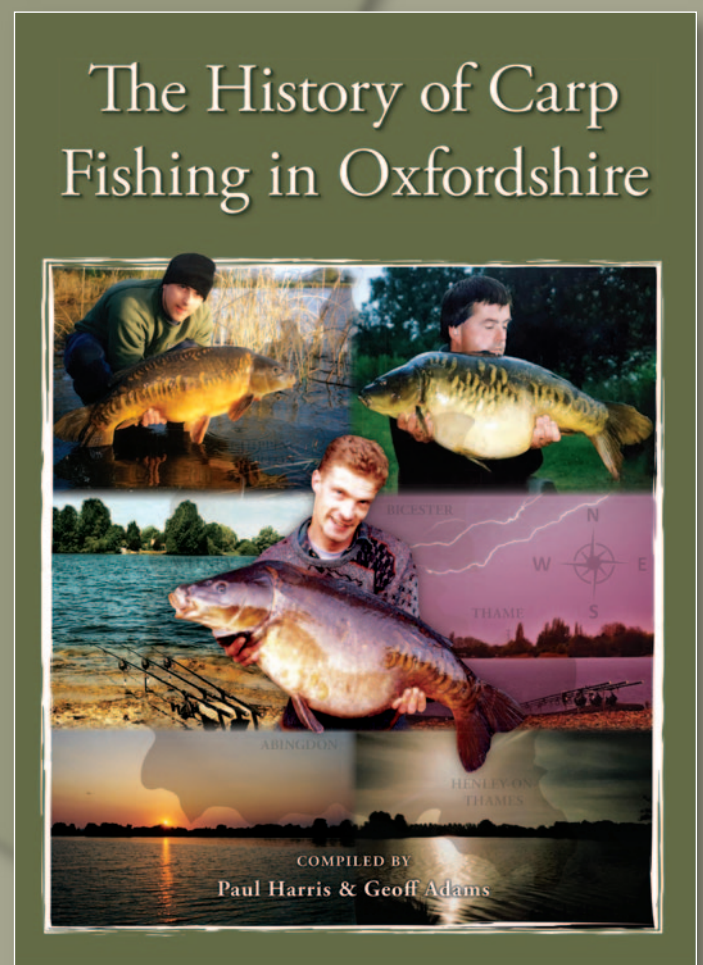
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing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

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

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

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

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



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AVAILABLE THIS AUTUMN



Darren Lamey catch report

Your Misses' at 51lb 12oz! With some savage weather due, Darren Lamey headed to the lake and nestled into a quiet area off the back of the wind and rain. Two relatively quiet nights passed, but on the final morning of the session the left hander pulled up tight, and Darren was connected to something a bit special! A bucket of Krill Active, Krill pellets, Calanus liquid and Bloodworm pellets were mixed a few days in advance of the trip and 'Your Misses' without question took a liking to the mix!



Gavin Campbell catch report

Arriving at a lake very late this time of year can often be beneficial as the carp tend to show later. GT-Speero angler Gavin Campbell didn't get to his syndicate until gone midnight but heard fish in an area he hadn't fished before. Hinge Stiff rigs were deployed with a light scattering of boilie which resulted in 2 bites the next morning, including this 40. Size 5 Covert Dark Chod hooks to 20lb Stiff-Link albright knotted to 25lb Ultra Skin cpated braid hook link. A Camflex Leadfree leader and Hydrosink Noir braided main line completed the set-up. @gavcam44.



Steve Grantham catch report

A new PB for Steve Grantham! 55lb 12oz from his Cambridgeshire syndicate. Congratulations Steve that is a banger!



Dan Booth catch report

Daniel Booth with a truly amazing big common weighing 57lb. Caught late last November, from a large undisclosed UK venue on one of our red S3 crushed cork pop ups. All big carp are worthy. Some are simply far more hard earned, or worthy than others.



Myles Gibson catch report

This absolute barrel of a mirror carp topping what was an incredible 7 fish hit for Myles Gibson earlier this month. The 54lb 10oz chunk was caught on Myles' super effective, Camstiff and Beaked Chod Claw-Rig presentation. This was fished in conjunction with our Sub-Fleck lead-free leader and our 40lb SBX braided mainline



Darron Yeoman catch report

First time fishing with my partner Darron Yeoman at Thatcham Long Lake and I caught this 28lb grass carp who I decided to name Gary and this 28lb 8oz common with the most beautiful tail, we fished in the margins under trees using five spods of Crushed tiger, 3ml pellets and corn, bio baits fatal wafers hook bait, hard waters but a lot of fun, I'm now addicted to fishing lol.

Rod Stewart lookalike – Also, I forgot to add this, just couldn't help it, gotta be able to take the P out of yourself aye.



Specialised Hook Baits Catch Reports

(Left) Carl Williamson with a mirror weighing 44lb 8oz, beating a long-standing personal best. Caught on one of our GPB2 balanced, fished over Inception freezer baits. Carl has since followed this up with another big mirror of 44lb 7oz on our GPB2. Living as far north as Stoke, makes this achievement all the more merit worthy in our humble opinion.

(Right) Sam Lloyd with a new personal best weighing 49lb 4oz, caught from his Devonshire syndicate on one of our pink S2 cc pop ups. Sam has caught some incredible carp this season.



The Double A Team Take Scott Sweetman

Targeting a low stocked pit, Scott had managed to pinpoint an area the carp were regularly using, noticing patches of fizz and the odd 'roll' on his overnight sessions. Before leaving one morning, Scott investigated the area, finding a nice deep spot down to his left, enough for two rods. He baited the area with hemp and boilie, priming it for future sessions. The area was totally neglected, so Scott was confident he could get back in the zone and capitalise on the carp's behaviour.

A couple of bait ups later, Scott was back down and two rigs were flicked side by side. A spinner rig and a blowback rig with a snowman hookbait were the chosen rigs. 'As darkness crept in, it couldn't have looked any better. A big full moon illuminated the lake, with a gentle breeze trickling across the surface and I sat there with my tea, looking out wondering if that big common had fed on me'. The silence of the night was broken in the early hours when a savage bite confirmed a good fish was hooked. With only 15 carp present in the lake, the buzz was intensified when the remaining rod on the spot also rattled off.

In the pitch black, Scott bundled both fish into the net and upon flicking on the torch to confirm his prize, he realised that he'd landed both the big common and the big mirror.

The shots were done soon after as day broke, ending an epic short campaign. A night Scott will never forget and one that cemented the effectiveness of pre-baiting in angling.



Bradley Werner catch report

Baiting up heavy 3 times a week in a routine got the spots established fast, in just 5 nights I managed 17 bites topped this morning by the queen of the pond at a staggering 47lb 6oz's! Yes, the endless spodding for hours is graft, but when the rewards are as sweet as this, it really seems effortless. What's interesting is the fact I was using a test bait for the first time on this trip, which will be coming in the near future! Whether you call it coincidence or luck, it'll certainly be my go to for the forthcoming.

I don't think I've ever been so committed to catching a carp, and for it to come so early into my Autumn campaign was unexpected to say the least. A bit of relaxing fishing over the Autumn and Winter now then time for a new mission in the Spring, however, wherever I end up this carp will be hard to top! I just want to say a massive thank you to some of my best friends at @stanwicklakes_fisheries for giving me the opportunity to fish for some amazing carp over the years. Lastly big love to @lewis.b84 on the buttons for capturing some lush shots and getting wet.



Tom Maker – The Beast 51lb 12oz

I'm still finding it hard to actually believe what happened during this week's session, I had set myself a target of trying to catch the b1 biggun ever since it passed the magical 50lb mark a few years ago, now this fish is one that I have never caught from the complex, not even at a smaller weight, which made me want it even more. The other week I posted on my story about writing everything down and seeing patterns emerge year after year, well this exact week last year I managed a number of fish topped by 6 30s and 3 40s from the peg next to where I was this week and sure enough history repeated itself with the ultimate prize to help me tick off another target all of which was captured for the @fox_international cameras. In total I landed around 25 with 10 going over 30lbs including 5 over 35lbs with one of them going just 2oz shy of 40lbs, but just 5 hours into the session and literally minutes after landing one of 37lbs I had a slow take on the middle rod which just felt different, it was slow moving and just heavy to drag through the water, tbh it didn't really fight and I am super grateful for that, as once it surfaced about 20 yards out I knew exactly what I was attached to.... My first ever day ticket 50 Braesnose 1's 'The Beast' at a whopping 51lb 12oz!



Rocco Connolly – UK 60lber!

At the beginning of the year, I set myself a target of trying to catch a 30lb plus Carp every month and of course, my target of the huge Common from my Kent syndicate. I must say it has been an amazing year on the Carp front, fishing lots of different venues, fishing different styles but ultimately catching some amazing fish along the way. I managed to catch a 30lber every month apart from November, November was an extremely tough month, I'm blaming it on the amount of rain we had, or at least that's my excuse and I'm sticking to it. I caught 30's from 6 different venues and that's certainly something I love, fishing different lakes, constantly learning and fishing like this keeps you motivated and it's something I will continue to do.

I had an amazing summer on my Kent Syndicate, limited to 18 nights I had 20 bites and landed 18 fish. On one of my last trips, my last ditch to try and catch this common, at 9 in the morning my middle rod went into melt down. I couldn't lift the rod as it stripping my braid from my spool at such a rate, with no weed out there it done a 50-yard run before I slowed it down and turned her. My heart was in my mouth. It felt heavy, I prayed it was the one. Eventually I got her close, I saw the massive yellow body plod pass me, I knew it wasn't my ultimate prize but I knew I was attached to the big mirror again only it looked ginormous! This fish fights so hard, it would be up coughing water then flat rod you on 20/30-yard runs. It would do this constantly! Eventually after what felt like an age, I guided her into the net. It was massive! With my Mrs on hand help this time we carefully weighed her and the wheel of fortune settled at a whopping 62lb 4ounces! A joke of a carp, born and bred in the lake. My normal tactics applied, loads of @stickybaitsofficial krill, our in-house mixed particle with @specializedhookbaits hook baits fished over the top... the ultimate combo that never lets me down. I didn't catch the Common, it hasn't been out for over 16 months but One day... One day... More targets set next year, keep motivated, stay positive and enjoy the journey.

David Eatok catch report

How's that for a carp... The Armadillo at 41lb!
A late November Social on the notorious Sandhurst Lake, saw David Eatok land arguably one of the best looking carp in the land. David fished a solid bag stuffed to the hilt with mixed sized Bloodworm pellets, followed by a good squirt of the matching liquid, and finished off with a vibrant Pineapple and N'butyric wafer nestled amongst the contents. What an incredible carp and one we are sure will be at the forefront of his album.





Damian Lenney catch report

Fishing on Gaunts lake, Damian Lenney had a dream session landing 1x20 at 29lb 12oz, 6x30's to 38lb 4oz and 3x40's of 40lb 2oz, 40lb 4oz and 43lb 2oz!!! All caught on DNA Baits Bug/S7 boilie crumb, pellet and sweetcorn topped off with 3 Bug wafers. In his words "A session I won't forget!" Amazing angling Damian.



Tom Maker catch report

Every year I always set aside two or three nights to have my own self-employed Christmas do, a session where I can just sit back chill out and reflect on the last 12 months, this year again was no exception and much like people who love going to their local pub or restaurant I too went to my 'local'. Pitching up on a very quiet Linear Fisheries Official St John's late afternoon Sunday. I set my stool out to fish out into the middle of the lake and with the lovely warm southerly off of my back it made it just that bit easier. Over the three nights I fished, you could pretty much set your clock by when I was going to get a bite, and throughout the course of the session, I had a good mix of eating, chilling, sleeping and catching. Making it, in my opinion, the ultimate carp anglers self-employed Christmas do. If there is such a thing. And this absolutely pristine mirror capped off the trip perfectly just before I left this morning! 7 bites, 7 landed with 4 over 30lbs! All filmed for an upcoming CineCarp TV.



New 50 Pounder for John Flewin

As I head into a few weeks of edits of some mega euro adventures, I can't help but be buzzed up with this insane 50lb common from my recent trip to Bluewater Lakes. The fight was biblical and with a few of the lads watching on my knees were knocking I'm not afraid to say. The fishes first time over 50lb so was lucky enough to give it a name and my ole favourite saying was the obvious choice. So, the WALLOP COMMON was born. 2023 has been my best ever angling season and has seen me on many adventures and luckily breaking a few PBs along the way as well as taking the plunge to go back to full time employment with Trakker. This awesome common fell to a maggot topped MAD Baits 'fizzy' wicked white over Pfish boilies, pellets with a blend of Bilsdale worms and maggots on Trakker terminal.



Dane Elliott catch report

Smart PVA Trick! Dane Elliot banked 6 Kingsmead One carp last weekend including The K1 Leather at 36lb and a VS fish at 44lb. Small PVA bags of 10mm Cell with matching Cell Smart Liquid and Cell Cork Dust Pop-Ups cast to an area where the carp were showing at night was his chosen tactic during his short session on the venue. Good angling, Dane.



Ryan Wickens catch report

I knew as soon as I got the take that this was going to be a decent fish. Minimal take slowly ticking line of the spool, holding its ground at distance then a heavy plodding fight along the margin shelf. Was a bit lost for words when this popped up and I struggled to get the net under all 57lb of it.



Darryl Tilling catch report

The final morning of my final session this year and managed to land this monster... 44lb 2oz caught on a Ronnie Rig made from Bank Tackle components and a Bank Tackle PVA mesh stick. What a way to end the year. Happy days. Well done Darryl, a great end to the year!



Darrell Peck catch report

Grenville was the destination for Darrell Peck recently – so armed with a few kilos of Essential Cell and Cell Boilies it wasn't long before he was into those massive carp. Fishing at range in 30feet of water, Darrell banked some stunning carp including a hat trick of 40s weighing 48lb, 44lb and 43lb all falling to a tight baiting approach. Awesome, Darrell.



Kel Bowers catch report

A Mulberry Dumbbell Wafter fished over a spread of 10mm Cell and Essential Cell Boilies all glugged in Pineapple Smart Liquid did the trick for Kel Bowers during a 48hour stint at Langholme Lake. He told us: I had a couple of liners through the night which was the giveaway sign that fish were present in the area after seeing an earlier show on arrival to the lake. The next morning the right-hand bobbin pulled up tight and this mega apple slice mirror weighing 38lb 8oz graced the cord. What a winter minter. Certainly is, Kel



FISHING RESORT



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



Urban Baits catch report

This year we have seen some spectacular results with anglers using the amazing Fully Loaded range, give a try in 2024!



Kieran Simpson Back with a bang...

Kieran Simpson dusting off the cobwebs in a big way after a brief absence from wetting a line.



Adam Francis is on fire!

Keeping the zone topped up after every trip. Adam is starting to get amongst the better fish now. This jet-black mirror was the cream of the crop from a flurry of quick bites.

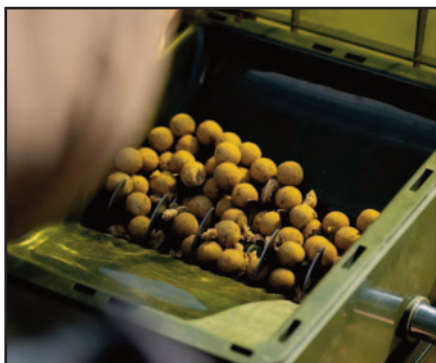
Ricin Connolly catch report

The number of premium big UK carp that Fishon Tackle boss Ricci Connolly has banked in 2023 is simply incredible. He's currently enjoying great results on his third pit of the year, Ashbury Fisheries in Essex. Catching big carp for fun. All whilst running a thriving fishing tackle shop. These two weighed 46lb 10oz (new lake record) and 42lb 12oz. Both caught on our S2 balanced hook baits, fished over Krill freezer baits and the shops prepared particle. He's also banked another 46lb-plus, from a non-publicity venue during the past few weeks too. Ricci recently done a podcast for Nash Tackle, where you can hear a lot more about his fishing. We would like to wish you all a merry Christmas, and a very happy new year.



Target Achieved after four Years!

Leon Sprague managed to not only catch the one he has wanted for many years, but it was also his first UK 50 and new PB! The 'Scarred Lin' had previously come out over bigger baits, so I changed my approach and switched to 20mm boilies with a matching hook bait and was finally rewarded with my target. I had the fish on an Edges Size 4 Curve Shank Hook, Trans Khaki Line Aligna tied to 25lb Camotex Soft. Brilliant Leon, well done!



Marcus Leek catch report

Marcus Leek went down to his winter syndicate Furzebray carp lakes to try and make amends for the previous trip which ended in a blank. He told us: "I dropped into a swim that had deeper water, also a mate of mine had caught a fish from the same area a few days before, it made sense to start there. The night came a went and come the next morning not a bleep, no signs at all, the swim was dead. A heard a fish had been caught up the top end of the lake so I packed down and moved into that area. On dusk as the light was fading and the full moon was shining it looked bang on for a bite, and right on night fall, the fish started jumping in the swim next door which I could easily get a bait too. I brought in the left hand rod and tied up a supple 3 inch rig to go in a solid bag of Cell crumb that had been boosted with Cell Smart Liquid and a good helping of hemp and sent her down to the zone they were showing. I was woken at 3:30am with a steady take and the rod tip clearly bent round in the beaming full moon light. She came in easy at first then went on some powerful lunges once in close, after the third lunge she was mine. A fish called Danny's fish at 35lb 6oz. I got the bag back out on the spot and it was away again at 11am with a lovely 25lb mirror to round the session off." Well done, Marcus.



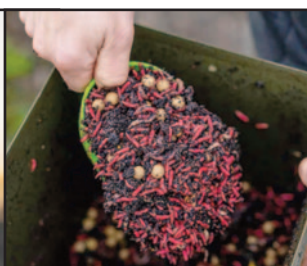
Matthew Jones catch report

Matthew Jones turned up at his syndicate Wellington Country Park at 3.30pm Fri 24th Nov after work, having not been there since the middle of September. There were only 4 people there but he had an area in mind which he hoped would be free. Luckily it was. "I rushed to get the rods out and it was dark by the time I had finished" Matt said. "I caught 2 over that weekend including Dropscale at 54lb 4oz a new personal best and followed that up with 'Rudder' at 48lb. Both falling to Milky Toffee Pop-Ups over Cell and Hybrid Boilies." Awesome, Matt.



Adam Reed

Adam Reed's Winter mix proves a winner at Berners Hall. Adam decided to brave the weather the other week with a short trip to Berners Hall where his simple rigs, consisting of spinner rigs set up waffer style, with Salty Squid wafers fished over a spread of maggots, chopped worm, corn, and 10mm Cell proved un-resistible to the Berners carp. Top angling, Adam.



Dan Taylor catch report

Getting the carp to feed during the colder months can be a task so Dan Taylor tried something different whilst he was out in France fishing the Abbey Lakes complex. Using Essential Cell Stick Mix liquid and lake water poured over a mixed of crumbed Cell and Essential Cell Boilies, matching Response Pellets and lots of Fruit Smart Liquid, Dan produced a very attractive cloud for the fish to hone in on. A couple of days later the bait had worked its magic producing 16 carp with the biggest going 52lb 2oz. Good angling, Dan.

Oak Lakes Fisheries

www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk



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



38lbs 2oz mirror for John Braybrook aka Beanzie. Nice catch, good to see a big mirror after the big commons being caught.



38lbs 8oz Jensens Common caught by Richard Buddha Draycott. Nice angling mate.

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.



21lb common from the Day Ticket Lake. Angler's comment - 'great winter fishing'.



Ricky Collett had four biggest two 21lbs 10oz and 19lbs 11oz.



Predator lake looking very nice today with big pike lurking under the water.



Bill Gregory sent us these photos of pike caught in the Day Ticket Lake.

One-Wrap 60-Pounder

Featuring Saul Gardiner

Scottish carper Saul Gardiner has added yet further weight to the almost indisputable claim Grenville Lake in Cambridgeshire is the lake of dreams, after smashing his personal best with a monster 61-pounder, caught from just a single wrap out!

Despite being renowned for long-distance casting and large beds of bait, Saul did the complete opposite after arriving for his session following a 315-mile drive down from his home near Edinburgh. After finding fish in the margins, that's exactly where he

decided to target them with his ever-trusted Secret 7. The next morning, his short-range trap was sprung by the lake's Big Male, tipping the scales at a colossal 61lb 1oz and obliterating Saul's previous PB of 44lb.

Saul takes up the story: "I drove down from my home near Edinburgh in the early hours of Sunday morning, a journey of 315 miles, which usually takes around six hours if the traffic is okay.

"On my arrival at Grenville at around 11am, it was very hot and sunny and it didn't take long to find plenty of fish in a corner of the lake, not something I've ever seen on

Grenville, as the fish are usually at range. It got better when I observed fish cruising and feeding along the margin in front of the only swim in that corner, so my mind was quickly made up. Upon returning to the office, I was told by the owner the swim I had chosen was limited to fishing the immediate margins due to the heavy weed further out, but fortunately my plan was to fish the margins anyway.

"There were plenty of fish down the margin to the left of the swim, fish that were obviously looking for food, but due to the restrictions I couldn't fish for them, which was very frustrating. However, I had an idea of feeding





them along the margin, which would get them used to my bait and keep them away from my swim while I set up. I crushed up a few handfuls of Secret 7 boilies and scattered them along the margins to my left and it wasn't long before the fish were heads down ripping up the short weed looking for the bait!

"After quietly setting up and getting two rods in position on a lovely clear spot at the end of the reed line to my right, and one as far along to the left as allowed on another lovely clear spot near the bottom of the marginal slope, I baited with a mixture of whole and crushed S7 boilies, which had been coated in S7 Liquid Food and BetaStim.

"Lines were fished super slack with putty on the line to pin it down and the bobbins only holding some tension to the line on the reels to stop line spilling off the spools. The rigs were a mixture of two balanced pop-up rigs and a simple snowman with S7 hookbaits coated in the matching S7 EVO Liquid.

"Not long after I had the rods sorted, a mini storm blew up out of

nowhere! Mega winds had me holding on to the brolly while torrential rain and hail soaked everything, accompanied by thunder and lightning. As quickly as it came, it rumbled off into the distance, reminding me of some daft Monty Python clip and I just had to laugh, even though a load of my gear was soaking wet! What was saddening was the fish had vanished; all I could do was hope they would return.

"Through the night I had to odd bleep on the alarms, but it wasn't until 5.45am that a slow, steady take developed on the right-hand rod. Knowing there was a big weedbed about 30 yards to my right, I quickly put the waders on and was soon holding the fish back from getting to the weed.

"It was just getting light and I could make out swirls on the top just feet from the weed, when I managed to turn the fish and get it heading back towards me in open water. The fight went on without any more drama and soon a large head appeared over the draw cord of the landing net, and as I pulled the fish

further towards the spreader block, I started to wonder if it was going to fit in! Eventually I lifted the net with a feeling of disbelief of what was sitting there in the net – it was huge!

"After calming down a little, I got the fish in the retainer and sent a message to Paul, the owner, to come down to do the photo. It went something like, 'Hi Paul, got a good fish in the sling, might be a PB,' knowing full well my 44lb PB was going to be smashed to bits! Paul's reply was, 'Okay, what's that, about 7 or 8lb?' Cheeky bugger!

"When we lifted the retainer out, it was very evident this was one hell of a big fish. When we opened the retainer on the mat, Paul said straight away, 'Yep, that's the Big Male, sixty-plus!'

"On the scales, he went 61lb 1oz; I still can't quite take it in. My PB had been well and truly smashed with a fish of a lifetime, caught from a rod-length out in 70-plus acres of water. It's not called the lake of dreams for nothing. An amazing water and a huge thanks to Paul Ward for creating it." ■

Danish Carp Record Broken

By Peder Litchtenberg

The Danish carp scene is what we could call 'niche' and could start the adventure with "Once upon a time". In the dark ages, the Danish monks imported carp from afar packed live in moist hay and transported on the back of horse carts to be stocked into lakes for use as a precious food source. Now fast forward to 2023 where most of the general stock are descendants from the imported strain that were bred in the old dams, and even to this day a few of the original estates are still farming carp, more to keep the old tradition alive as carp no longer are seen as good for consumption.

That was a quick history lesson of why we even have carp here in this part of the world, and when I converse with carp anglers from other parts of the world – one of the questions that I am frequently presented with is: "so how is carp fishing in Denmark". Now, having been behind the rods in a few different countries over the last 25 years, like France, Poland, Sweden and even the cradle of modern carp angling the United



Kingdom itself, I would say that I have experienced a few different ways of countries managing their recreational angling and fish stocking programs. My first answer is that it's complicated and in short, I will try to explain the ups and downs of being a carp angler in Denmark.

As previously mentioned, carp angling is relatively small here and since the early 80's only very few public lakes have been stocked legally by a sizable fishing associa-

tion, back when it was still possible to get legal permission to stock natural lakes.

A few of the bigger lakes around Copenhagen received a generous amount of original strained estate carp in the early 80's and a hardy bunch of anglers caught some of these fish and proceeded to move them into smaller lakes in the area, some of which are still being caught to this day! After these stockings in the 1980's, for different reason the





government decided to ban any future stocking of carp in natural occurring lakes and deemed that carp were an invasive species. Here in Denmark it's very popular to invent a load of rules with no one to enforce them, so carp stocking is still being done under the radar with new fast growing strains being imported from different European countries which will make things interesting as most of our original carp don't grow very fast, or to be like monsters that are caught in other countries on a regular basis. I will not get into the debate of our original "old" strains versus the new strains – as everyone can fish for what they like.

Another hurdle is that most of our carp populations on the bigger lakes are not having any luck with reproduction – they spawn most years but whether it's due to our colder climate, predation, huge amount of silver fish or something different, the fry that are being allowed to grow to adulthood is miniscule. This means most lakes here have a very low stock, even the lakes we talk about here as having a 'good stock' and doing the regular bites are nothing like the day ticket waters popular in the rest of Europe

with hundreds and hundreds of carp.

So, the low stock of our lakes tend to result in quite a low number of carp anglers in general – let's just say that

there are a lot of lakes here where you won't see another angler with boilies, buzzers and multiple rods for miles or even at all! Since carp anglers are few





and far between, this can also cause some problems with the general public. Not everyone understands why you have to stay overnight by the lake with 3 rods to try and catch a ridiculous fish in the spot where their dog usually bathes - oh yea and by the way, "you will empty the lakes fishing with 3 rods"! Here you can choose to deploy a bit of diplomacy, understanding and some calm nerves to "help" explain the situation for the 10th time that day.

There you have it - my boiled down view on Danish carp angling and yes there will be exceptions to

the rule - so for the Danish reader out there with access to that high stock private lake catching 10 fish a night thinking "oh none of this is true", please remember why you are fishing that little private syndicate. I have also been a member of smaller syndicate lakes, more to get away from the "agro" there is on a lot of on the public waters. In the end, what I am trying to say is each to their own and their style of carping.

Before I go on, I will give a short insight into my own fishing. I generally fish nights between work and whole weekends in spring until the

carp spawn. I then have a 2-month break before I get ready for baiting and fishing at the start of September. On top of that I also spend 5 weeks fishing in France every year. For the last 10 years or so my fishing has been centred around big lakes here in Denmark.

Earlier I would switch onto the odd small lake to get closer to the carp as drawing blanks time and time again got me stuck in a pattern where I would just endure the blanks to the point where I was missing vital points that would have caught me more carp. As earlier stated, I mostly spend my fishing on bigger lakes and for my autumn sessions I try to switch lakes every year. I only have a few important things I look out for before I decide on a venue - most importantly the stock must be more or less unknown, and another important factor is the lack of other anglers (alone is best). So, the following story unfolds one of the big lakes in late September fishing for the unknown. A month of baiting followed by fishing for 10 days on end (minus a few days due to a massive storm) had resulted in a nice handful of carp which I was more than happy with, and if I blanked the rest of my trips before heading off to France in early October, I would be well pleased with my captures. After the first bite on lakes like this, every run is just a bonus. So, like all the other nights it was straight in the sleeping bag after getting the rods out.

Getting up early after a few hours sleep might be easier with a carp on the mat, but after a few weeks the missing hours of sleep really can be felt. After a few nights without any action but bream, I was not expecting any action but was ripped from my sleep by a one toner! The first thing is to get out of the sleeping bag and into the waders without having an accident and then finding your equilibrium while wading out to the rods struggling not to stumble, fall and drown - yes carp fishing can be a dangerous business sometimes! Long story short, I got to the rod, picked it up and line was still melting of the spool. After applying a bit of pressure, I managed to stop the carp and started to ease it towards the bank. I wish I could explain how electrifying the fight was, but in all honesty after the first run the carp just did what lot

Cold Water Green Beast



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of carp do - waddle back and forth a bit until they are in the net. Luckily I don't fish for carp due to their fantastic fighting abilities taking meters and meters of line during the scrap. For me, it's all about tricking the fish and being out there. Anyway, back to the main event... After lifting the net around what I already knew was a seizable specimen, I was a bit surprised to see the proportions of the mirror now sulking in the net before me. Coaxing the carp into the sling and trying to get an accurate weight of the shaky scales was not the easiest task in the world, but the number the scales read was somewhat bigger than the official Danish Record!! I decided that since I was not allowed to sleep I would wake up a mate to make the hour and a half drive to come over and verify the weight and act as a witness in case I was going to send it in to be verified by the record committee.

Just before first light, my friend arrived at the lake and together we could get a steady reading of the

scales – 24,4kilos! After having its measurements done and a few pictures taken, the massive mirror could swim back into the vast waters of the lake. About a month later, the scales were checked by the record commit-

tee and they were spot on, so the record was officially verified just after I returned from 3 weeks of French carping in the beginning of November.

"What is next?" you might ask...



Well, I would be lying if size was not a factor in my fishing but for a long time it has never been the deciding factor in my choice of lakes, so I will move on to a new lake next autumn. I am lucky to get an unknown record - just shows what gems are hidden out there.

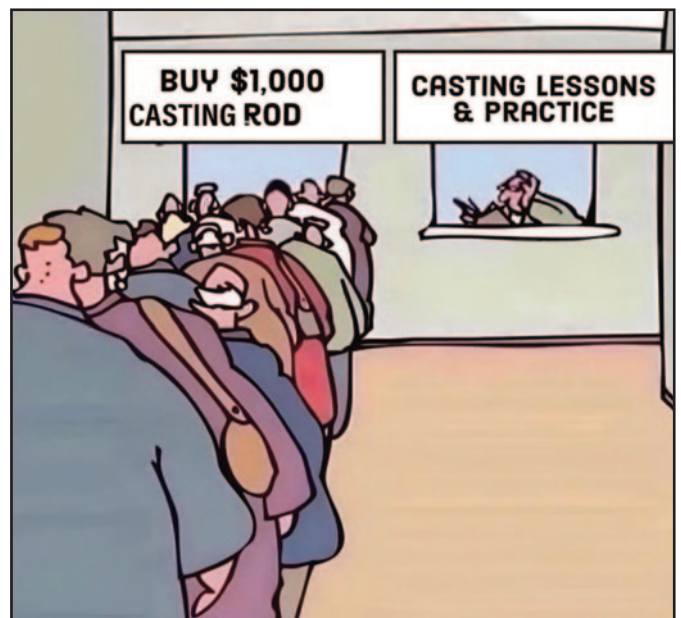
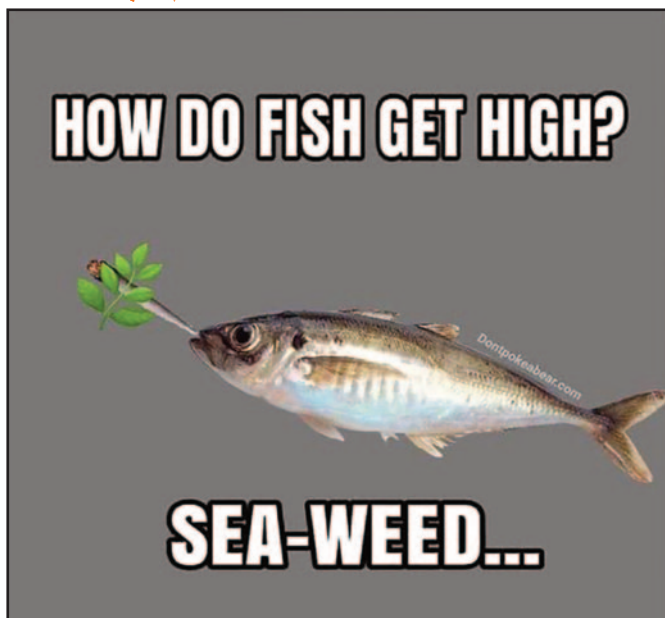
Before I leave you after this inspiring tale of what can be hidden out there, I would like to share the satisfaction of this capture falling to a bait that I had a lot of help putting together. Everybody has their own favourites, but I was missing a boilie with that old school feel. By that, I mean when back in the days we tried and tested attractors and ingredients on the bank to failure or success.

So, I found an old and very effective recipe in my black book from the early 90s and together with Fenton who is the GM of DT Baits, we came up with an amazing bait by mixing some classic quality attractors together, like water soluble milk proteins, GLM, krill meal, kelp, shrimp blend, spirulina and a few other secret goodies to create the bait now known as Crustazia!

I know that a lot of people out there have had a lot of success on this bait after it being released earlier this year. So, if you are looking for the complete food source look no further. And as a closing remark please remember: if you keep chasing luck eventually you will catch it. Tight lines and I hope to see you out there somewhere. ■



Carpy Humour



An African Adventure...

By Dave Charley – A story of a fishery, where no fishery has been before.

Part Three (Part two can be found in the December Issue, page 34)

As 2021 rolled into 2022, we were impressively failing with the stocking of Tigerfish, a meagre 30 fish had been released into the larger dam in half a year of trying. We had a 12-acre dam to stock with one of Africa's most sought after freshwater game fish, along with populating the carp dam with these incredible predators to ensure it never got over run with smallies. We planned to stock 300 Tigers in total, and you don't have to be a maths professor to calculate how

long this was currently going to take. A rethink and a new plan of action was certainly necessary!

One weekend I was given the contact number of lodge owners son, where I had stayed at the massive dam (over 37,000 acres), and had the immense pleasure to catch some small Tigerfish. He informed me he was due to visit on the 14th January, and that he could easily catch between 50-100 Tigerfish a day. 50-100 a day?! I couldn't believe what I was hearing, but he was adamant that was what he regularly caught. He also said he was happy to take us out

fishing over that weekend, and proudly stated he could guarantee 200 Tigerfish!

Plan A was failing; could this be Plan B? The logistics involved would be significant to say the least. If all went to plan catch-wise, to transfer the fish back to the farm we were going need a big truck, loaded with a generator to aerate a couple of large water tanks, each holding few tons of water, and hopefully loads of healthy, live Tigerfish. Even with a decent vehicle, the drive is a good 3hrs, so the truck could be taking in excess of 5 hrs. Add to this that these fish are incredibly sensitive and highly susceptible to karking it if they become too stressed.

We had to think ethically here, as none of us wanted a fish massacre on our hands just because we thought we had a great idea. Then Piet's brother sent through a fisheries document he found from Australia about transporting live fish, and amongst these pages we found something that we all agreed might just make this crazy scheme work!

The use of netted cages attached to the side of boats is an extremely successful method for fishermen to keep their catches live and healthy, by immediately transferring the caught fish into the cages. The stress is very limited & quick for the fish, and they remain in their natural water inside the cages. The through flow of water in these cages means there is never a build-up of toxic ammonia or lack of oxygen. This method was exactly what we needed, and now we were all happy for operation 'Tigers R Us' to proceed.

In the days leading up to operation 'Tigers R Us', Jack from the farm got busy adapting two 5,000l water tanks for transferring the fish, including making ring blowers for aeration and installing fitted nets inside the tanks



Six months of serious trying only resulted in 30 Tigerfish being stocked ...not ideal!

for quick and easy removal of fish. A generator was secured to the trucks flat bed, along with the tanks and air pipes. In the meantime, before our arrival, the lodge owners were busy building a 3m x 3m x 1.5m deep floating cage. This solid structure would be covered in shade netting, and then two separate nets hung inside. This was to avoid, or shall I say hopefully reduce, the chance of predation by the giant crocodiles and massive Tigerfish that call the dam home. The cage would be fitted with four 200l drums as floatation devices, and would be afloat in the dam for when we arrived in the afternoon of the 14th.

Four of us set off to the dam just after lunchtime on the Friday, and the plan was to only send the truck up on the Sunday afternoon, and we would transfer our abundant catch of Tigers to the truck around 4am on the Monday. I was buzzing, everything was planned, prepared and we were on our way to solve this huge stocking challenge. We had bets in the car about how many Tigers we were going to catch, and I put my money on 200 plus. Slightly concernedly, Piet said he'd be very surprised if we even got 50 ... Shame on him I thought! This was going to work, and positive energy brings about positive results.

We only arrived at the lodge just after the sun had set, as we'd stopped for a bit of late lunch and a couple of cold ones along the way. The setting was spectacular; the African skies never disappoint with the depth of evolving colours as the sun bids another farewell by dipping beyond the horizon. We were finally here and everything was in place to make this happen. The evenings conversations around a fire about of the dams giant Tigerfish, along with the countless smallies we were going to catch, made the beers go down even smoother than usual.

My alarm awoke me from my fishy dreams at 04:30, and within half an hour we were launching the fishing boat, out for a day's adventure. The only problem was, there was no floating cage to put the fish into! The lodge owner's son explained that we mustn't worry and it would be ready by lunchtime. Lunchtime?! Why wasn't it in the water already, and why wasn't this mentioned last night?! I didn't want to upset anyone

at this point, but we had made huge efforts to get our side ready for this weekend, and this wasn't an ideal start! Then as the sun began to say hello in the east, something else caught my attention that wasn't ideal to say the least. The water was the colour of pea soup! The algal bloom that was present in the water certainly wasn't going to help us catch Tigers with small spinning lures. I began to think Piet might just have known something I didn't, and was more than likely going to win our bet.

The mornings fishing was slower than we had hoped, but the only favourable thing was we didn't even have a place to put the fish into anyway! Around 11:30 we got the call that the cage was ready and at the water's edge. Finally, some good news, and we motored back to the shore. Upon arrival it was clear that their ready wasn't exactly the ready we had agreed upon. There were no floatation drums attached ...I had a

sinking feeling now. Anyways, all we could do was suffer under the midday African summer sun and fix the four drums to the cage.

Obviously patience was somewhat thin at this point, and when our first cage launch into the water resulted in two drums coming loose and the cage close to drowning itself, a couple of heated dialogues were exchanged. Jack waded waist deep into the dam to help drag the cage out, and even the water did little to cool his temper! A quick re-tie of the drums and the cage was finally floating nicely on the water's surface. So too was a huge 4m plus crocodile that surfaced no more than 20m away from where Jack had been wading in the margins just 15 mins ago! Africa is not for the faint hearted.

Back out into the dam we went, now early afternoon, and nothing to show for our efforts. Eventually I hooked and landed a small Tigerfish, and we had a cage to put it into. I



The floating cage at the water's edge.



...and finally floating as intended!



In the inverted C clearing 15m behind me there was a huge swirl.

quickly unhooked it in the landing net and admired this wonderful fish. Maybe this was going to work after all, it wasn't the start we were expecting, but we had a live Tiger ready for the cage. I dragged the landing net towards the cage still in the water, as I didn't want to stress the fish by lifting it out of the water. Then much to my shock and surprise, it lifted itself out of the water by jumping straight out of my net and back into the dam!

To cut a long story short, we fished the rest of Saturday, and most of Sunday without even a bite! To say the weekend failed our, or maybe my, expectations was an understatement to say the least! The return journey that Sunday evening felt ten times longer than the route we had driven

just two days earlier. What a disaster, and with so much time, effort and money put into it by the team, I was gutted. Sweet FA was the result of our endeavours. I just couldn't see anything constructively learnt from this mission. We returned empty handed, but the weight of pressure to stock the dams with Tigerfish was now weighing heavier than before. Both plan A & Plan B had failed, that was the reality I faced and I honestly didn't know what to do next.

Back at the fishery, another issue was growing, quite literally. The carp dam had been filled with water about 6 months ago, but now about 75% of its surface had shoots of grass protruding vertically into the air, rendering it almost impossible to fish. I needed to find out exactly what

depths we had where this grass was growing, so on the last Sunday of January I decided to get in and find out.

I asked Jack to keep an eye out for me, as we knew there had been a crocodile seen recently in the far corner of the dam. I was heading into the middle of the dam, so was chilled about getting wet, plus I had a metre-long stick with me so I could prod the bottom as I moved further into the dam. I'd left my phone with Jack to take pics showing where the water was coming up to on my body so we could see what was going on. Most of the water was between waist to chest deep, and at around 50m out I turned to face him again for another pic. It was at this point Piet joined Jack, and jokingly commented that this might be the last time we see Dave Charley!

Apparently Piet hadn't completed his sentence before Jack suddenly started screaming at me! I shouted back that he better not be f*#king around, but he certainly seemed quite agitated and loud in his reply that he wasn't. I pivoted to check my surroundings, and in a clearing about 15m away I saw a huge swirl as a croc's tail slapped the water's surface and disappeared.

Bollocks!

I was almost chest deep in water and around 50m from the bank, with a crocodile in very close proximity! In all the fishery management documents I'd studied, nothing was ever



A 2.7m Croc!

mentioned about what to do in this kind of scenario. I genuinely don't remember the following moments clearly, other than running/wading for my life through the weedy water in front of me. I do remember jabbing my trusty stick aggressively into the water behind me, not that that would have actually done much! Piet swears he did see another swirl and to this day is adamant that it was following me. Jack came down to the water's edge to help grab me out, and I was so relieved to find myself safely back on terra firma. I'd just done my best aquatic Linford Christie impression and I was alive and in one piece.

Two days later, the guys at the farm managed to safely trap the crocodile, which measured an impressive 2.7m, and was released into the nearby river in a very remote area. A happy ending to what could have been a disaster ... safety should never take a day off!

Let's just put it this way, 2022 wasn't exactly going to plan and I won't be wading out again ever again if there is any chance there might be a croc in the water, rather stick to a marker rod and float!

There are always positives however, and although I'd had a month to forget, the carp were growing incredibly, with many already exceeding 2kgs, even though they were only one and half years old! Plus, the fishery was starting to mature and look amazing.

Now I just needed to find the solution to stocking the Tigers!

Part Four of an African Adventure to follow soon. ■



At least the carp were growing nicely and the fishery was starting to look amazing!



Monks Pit Record Falls to Bug-Munching Black Spot!

Featuring Phil Candlish

It has been an incredible start to the year for anglers across the country, but this capture has to be highlight of 2023 so far! New DNA customer Phil Candlish decided he would give The Bug a go on his syndicate water, Monks Pit, this winter, and this is the result – a massive new lake record of 57lb 13oz.

“I’m absolutely blown away after catching my new UK personal best,” said Phil.

“It looked big when it went in the

net, but I never realised just how big until I tried to lift it out; I thought the retainer was stuck on the bottom!”

Known as Black Spot, the fish took the lake record from a fish known as Dolly, which was caught just a few days before at 57lb 12oz.

Phil went in with an all-out Bug approach, fishing trimmed-down 18mm Bug Corker wafers in conjunction with PVA bags of crumbed Bug boilies and pellets. Just for good measure, Phil also added a 39-pounder during the same session! ■



Monks Pit Record Falls to Bug-Munching Black Spot! Exclusive



Boilie Crumb

By Luke Vallory

Boilies are often regarded as a one-type approach bait, stereotyped as a 'big spread, big hookbait' style, but for me, they offer so much more.

Boilie crumb and chops play a vital role in my baiting all year, but even more so through autumn and winter. For the last few months, I've been using a 50:50 boilie mix combining SAS Squid and Shrimp, mixed with a few grains of corn. This mix is not only full of colour and flavour, but also easily digestible, something that is particularly important through the colder months.

With the cool water temperatures, the carp become a lot more lethargic in their movements, so bait that is easily digestible is not only going to be better for the carp, but also going to help you.



When using crumb on deep pits in windy conditions, or where there is an undertow present, then I refine from using crumb and prefer to use chops and bigger pieces, just to ensure the bait gets down to the spot and doesn't spread away from the

spot. Adding the liquid from your corn or just a small dash of lake water will help get the crumb down to the lakebed faster.

Using crumb allows you to use less boilie, yet still offer the carp more items to actually feed on, and when





using bits and pieces, you don't need loads of bait. At this time of year, just a couple to half dozen spombs is often enough, topping up after each bite. I favour using small hookbaits (12mm

pop ups) over crumb, usually presented on a Spinner Rig with a size 4 Krank.

I like to use a washed out hookbait, favouring a pale yellow or orange

colour, where I've done really well using white baits, soaked in Pineapple Goo. Once in the water, they turn to a lovely dull yellow, perfect for high pressured carp at this time of year. ■







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A Remarkable Catch Report

By John Allmark

It's a fish called orange tail, a beautiful golden common carp weighing in at 24lbs on the noes, with 3 little dark dots on the left side of his body, he's the biggest carp in the lake, I set off just for a quick session couple of hours, I got there just after 4pm and decided to use up some 2ml krill pellets I had left over from the day before mixed with some garlic, so I got my 10ft feeder rod out and placed it in the margin for 20 mins while I was setting up my carp rods, not even 3ft off the next peg to me to

the right, put my pod together, got my net set up first then got my carp mat at the ready for the session, I'd just started a solid bag ready for my carp rods and I heard my reel screaming on the bait runner, it was in no longer than 15mins, big bend in the rod, I still had no idea what was on the end, I was playing this fish for 20mins or so, watching it swim in one big circle, my phone on record, still no idea, I watched it shake the 28gram hybrid up the main-line more than once, the sun was just setting in front of me, as the moon was rising behind me,

finally right hand on my 42 inch net I saw this big common go in, I looked down and couldn't believe it, unhooked the size 10 hook straight away, couldn't believe the size of it the deep set broad shoulders, beautiful golden scales put it straight back in the water, to grab my scales and sling, tared the scales to 0 held it up to see 24lbs, absolutely gob smacked, put orange tail back into a safety sling, phoned my friend to ask if he could come and take some pictures, 5mins later my friend big Craig arrived, I took it out of the water he



Temperature: 8°C; Time: 4:30pm, Location: Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire UK, On the Bid-dulph and Victoria fishing club pass.

Tackle: Rod 10ft method feeder 1 and half oz tip, 8lbs Diawa sensor main line, 28g hybrid running method feeder, quick change bead, 12lbs 4inch rig size 10 barbless hook.

Bait: 2ml krill pellets with ground garlic, 8ml brown waffer

couldn't believe the size of it and we began to take the pictures .

Hello my name is John I'm 33 and I'm a very keen all-rounded angler and all season angler too, I run my own club called carp catchers UK, it would be a absolute dream and honour to be featured in your magazine, I would love to be able to show my family especially my elderly grandad I'm doing well and work hard when it comes to my hobby and how passionate I am and also how much care I take in my hobby, I am a very respectful person, well known by my local tackle shop Nathans of Burslem any member of staff from the carp lads to the match lads and even the boss Tom know me as a regular customer named Johnno, my local sir Lankan shop keeper even cooks me her lovely food to try, I hit my pb this year of 30lbs from Cudmore Fisheries also being the biggest carp in the lake, lake called tara, on a 6ft cheap rod and reel, 12lb mainline to 12lbs zig line size 10 hook a beautiful 15 minute tug of war, it was my first time on the lake I was over the moon to be in the



same presence as this beautiful big 30lbs common.

Two pictures attached, one of my catch and the 24lb big common carp from my club waters called orange

tail yesterday and also my 30lb PB a few months back at Cudmore Fisheries and also the biggest carp in there to, thank you so much for your time kind regards, John Allmark. ■



Autumn Came Good, In the End

By Charlie Ferris

Coming to the end of my autumn, with an 18-night blank on your mind can be very mentally challenging. One trip could make you forget about those 18 nights and bring a massive buzz going into the winter months and just like that, it all happened on the last trip.

I booked some time off to make sure I could get down for the October full moon. I arrived at the lake an hour before first light as usual. I found the fish quite quickly where I thought they would be, smashing the naturals in the silt.

I watched them fizz all morning and lined up exactly where the fish were fizzing from 2 points to get it





bang on. Once the feeding had slowed and other members had packed up, the marker rod went out to area I saw them fizzing, I quickly

walked next door to line up with the tree marker I got earlier in the day and it was bang on.

I had a different approach this

week and that was simply, boilies - Most of my autumn had been setting traps on small spots over bits and pieces, but this week I wanted to do





the complete opposite. The fish had been ripping up in the silt in a deep open water zone, so the plan was to simply scatter a big bed of 12mm Krill all around the silt, in an area half the size of a tennis court.

I moved the beads up 6-inches to accommodate the softer bottom and as long as I got a good thud through the Sub Braid, I knew I'd be fishing. 3

match the hatch pop ups were presented on Spinner Rigs with Kamakura Wide Gape hooks.

I was unsure whether the plan would work, and as darkness crept in a good social with a couple of mates sparked some anticipation and just before first light, the right hander absolutely melted off, a typical bite with the braid. I mega battle com-

menced under the light of the moon and a nice scaly surfaced and into the net.

I sat up buzzing as I waited for it to get light, then the left-hand rod was away. A totally different fight as she just wallowed on the surface the whole way in. A lovely mirror again and what a way to end a tough autumn! ■



A Fantastic Bit of Kit

Featuring Simon Hartop

Si Hartop with a distinctively ancient looking mirror from a large low stock pit, that was the deserved culmination of a few years hard graft. Si outlines the story:

41.15... A truly adventurous bit of fishing saw me land this – the last of the fish I was after a few years back. I desperately wanted to catch this one before my dad passed away. I wrote an anecdote about it in SUB IV with a mat shot as I wanted to keep it innocuous. I was regularly in touch with Dave Ellyatt of ESP, via texts and pictures, to see just how long my lo-pro brolly would last through the seasons. It remained set up for three years on a wild island and went through three major storms, along with me, bee orchids, marsh frogs and wetland birds for company. A fantastic bit of kit'. Well done, Si!



Post Spawning Assault

By Barry Delderfield

I'd realised during the winter and spring that the fish loved their bait, and when the text came through from the bailiff to confirm the lake was closed for spawning, I knew it was time to put my plan into action.

I visited the lake as much as I could through this period, baiting regularly and together with a good mate, we introduced 60 kilo of Shrimp boilie as the carp were clearly having it.

When the lake re-opened, I caught two 29lb linears, confirming that the fish were well tuned into the bait. Over the next six weeks, I caught regularly, even managing to get my hands on some of the lake's special ones.











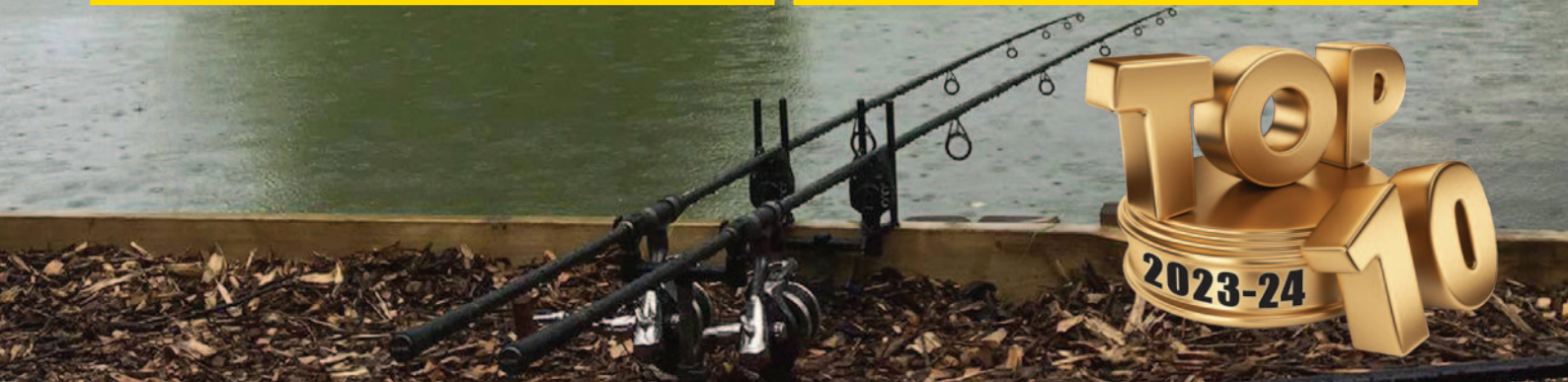
I fished in and around the summer weed, chopping and changing between Hybrid Lead Clips and Heli Safes, both to consistent effect. I rigged up with my usual combi-multis, incorporating match the hatch shrimp wafers, with size 4 Kamakura Choddy Hooks.

N-Trap Semi Stiff multi sections were attached to long Mouth Trap booms, with my usual large pieces of putty near the hook end, helping keep things pinned and really draw that hook home.

It made for a really enjoyable spell of angling between an intense period at work, so getting out at the weekends and catching a few certainly made for a good summer'. ■

BIG CARP TOP TEN

Carp Fisheries



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

Quite possibly the best common I'll ever catch!

By Bradley Wegner



When I acquired this ticket, it was always about this one carp, but even the backup stock was a big appeal, proper old English carp, which are certainly a dying breed! After working through a good number of the stock in the spring, including some other 'A team' members, I never actually saw this one feeding on my edge spots. When the spawning season arrived, I left the lake alone throughout the summer to let them recover, but I knew I needed to change something for the autumn.



Quite possibly the best common I'll ever catch! **Exclusive**



Exclusive Quite possibly the best common I'll ever catch!

October came around in a heart-beat and it was time to settle the score, I started introducing loads more bait, before, during and after my sessions, the thinking behind it was, the more fish I could invite to the area, the more chance I would have of stumbling across the big girl.

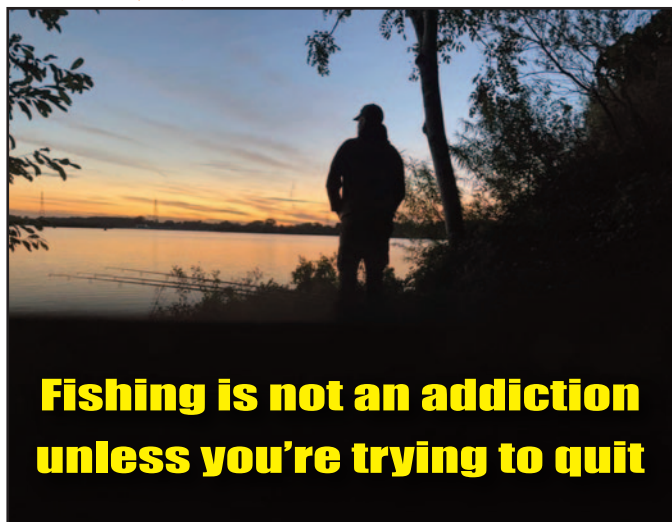
After weeks of heavy baiting, I had her visiting the spot, and actually got really close to catching her before I did, watching it spit out my rig just 4ft from the bank was heart in the mouth stuff! But the next trip she finally made the mistake, after eating so much of the Pro Stim Liver, it was inevitable that she was going to trip up eventually!

Over 40 years old and I'm sure has many stories to tell, it can't be easy living in such a shallow snaggy environment.

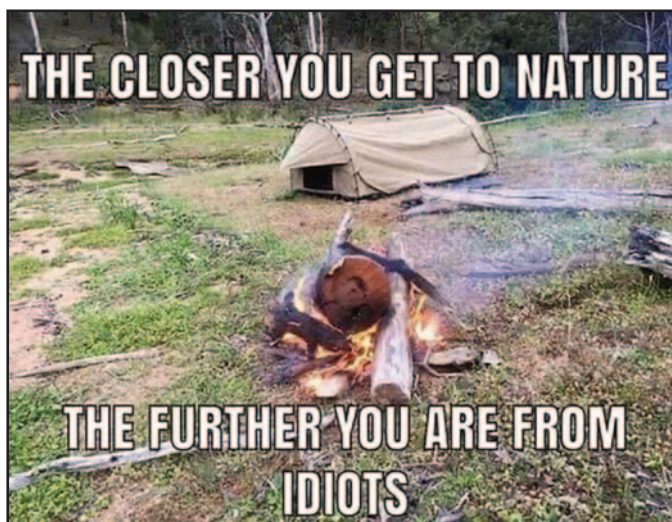
The buzz is real! Onto the next one



Carpy Humour

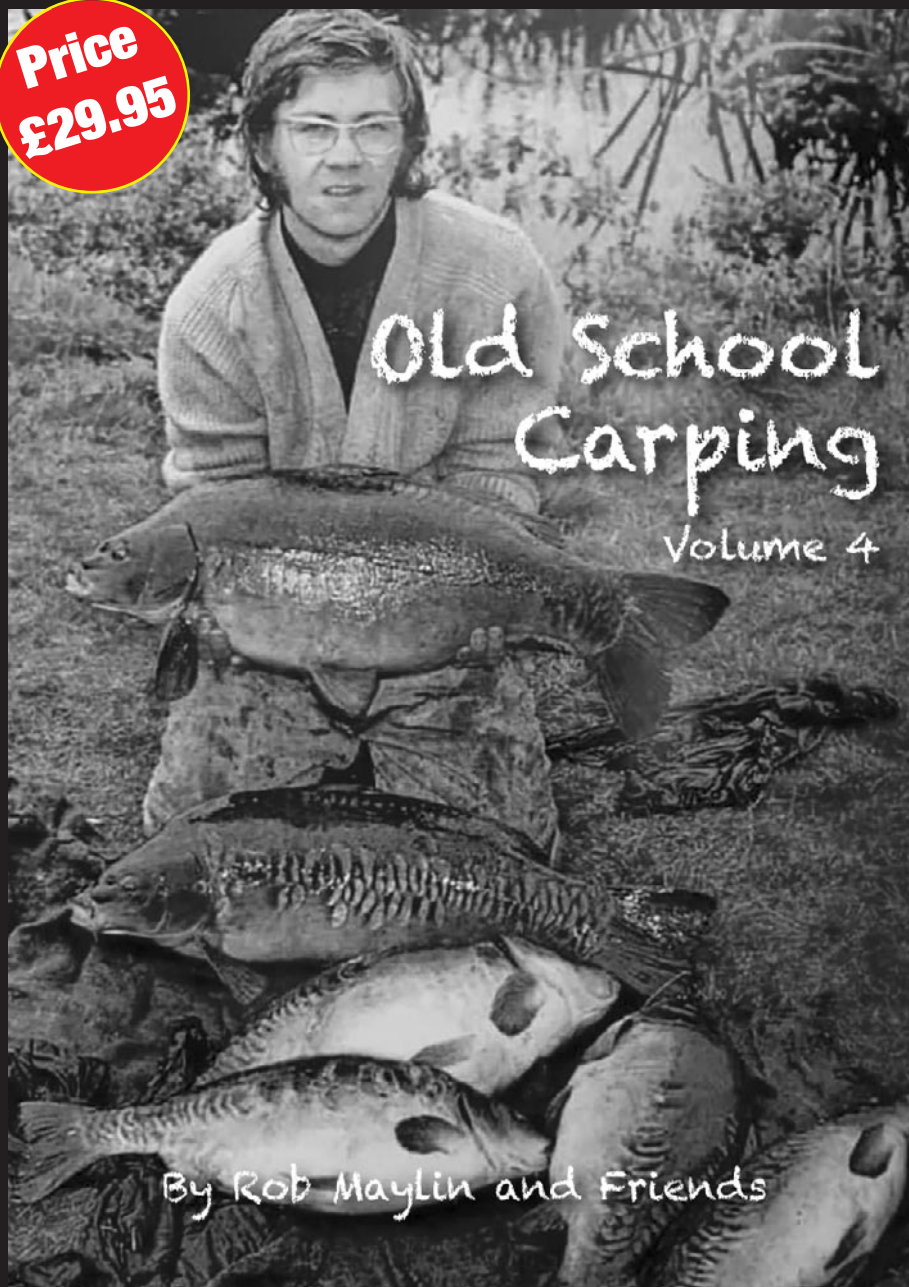


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Our contributors to volume 4 are the unsung heroes of that bygone age who were catching carp years ago before the hair rig when not everyone could catch them quite so easily.

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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Why I Plumb

By Luke Stevenson

I like to use a float, solely as a point of reference for my baiting. If I see fish showing or bubbling in an area, then once the activity has subsided, I like to lead the area and then put a float in the zone as a point of reference. I can then view it from other swims, to triangulate the spot to ensure I'm bang on.

Sometimes, you'll see fish showing in another swim, so by going into that swim, casting the float to where you think the shows were, and then returning to the swim you saw the shows, you can ensure the float is exactly in the right location. Areas can often be deceiving from different swims and vantage points, so by using a float, you can really pinpoint exact areas.

I also like to use the float to give me







the opportunity to go round to adjacent banks and bait much more accurately, and quietly around the float. This worked particularly well on Woolpack's Lakes 5 and 6, where I was casting around 40 yards to the

spot. I'd put the float out, and then walk round to a little headland that sat parallel, just 15 yards from the float. With the Medium Katapult, I was able to spread my bait in a nice, compact line, ensuring no bait fell left

of the float, which would have been sat over my mainlines. It was then a case of walking back to the swim, flicking two choddys either side of the float and reeling it in, knowing my baiting was absolutely perfect'. ■



Maggot Rigs

By Tom Stokes

Maggots are a fantastic bait for carp and adding them into you mix and using them as hookbaits can be a massive edge, especially as we progress through autumn and into winter.

They can be presented in multiple ways on a variety of rigs, but personally, I prefer a bunch of them tied to either a low-lying pop-up presentation such as a spinner, or on a bottom bait rig if the spot is clean enough.

To attach the maggots to my hookbait, I slide the initial hook bait onto the floss as normal, this can be a pop

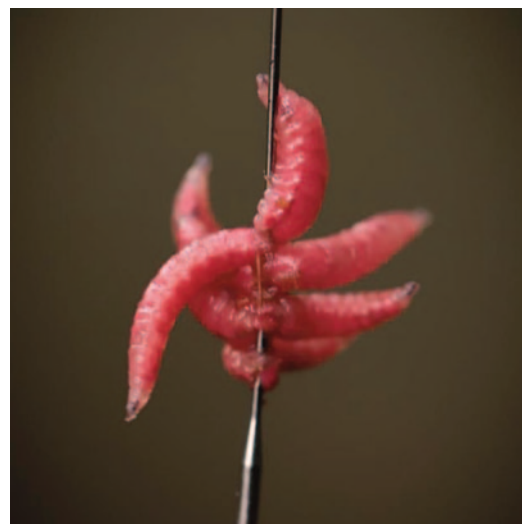
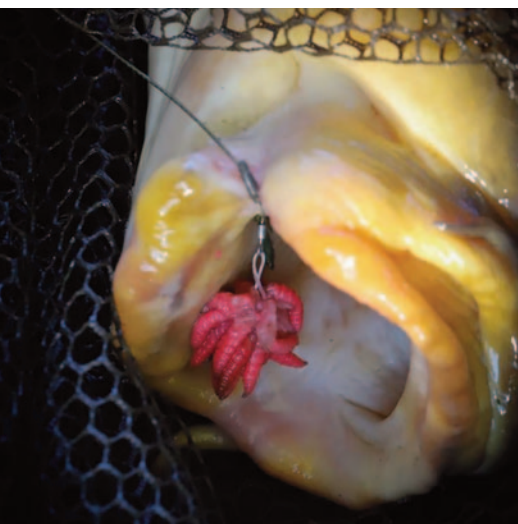
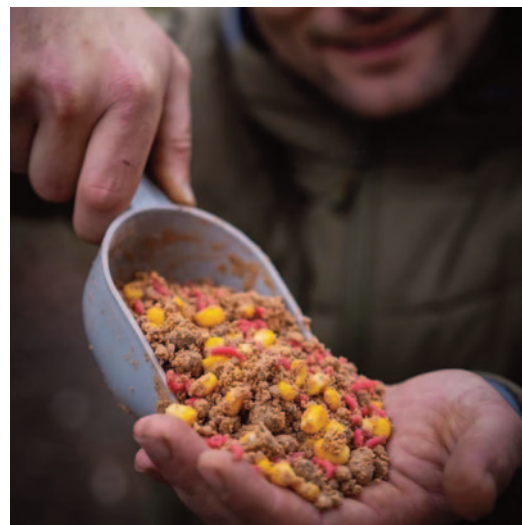
up, a wafter, or even a single piece of Fake Corn, ensuring the tag ends of the floss are long enough to thread the maggots on and then tie them off. I then pierce the required number of maggots with an ultra-fine Korda Braid Needle, these are the ideal tool for the job as they're thin enough to not cause too much damage to the maggots.

The number of maggots I use as a hookbait varies, sometimes it's just seven or eight, sometimes its twenty or more, it just depends on how I'm feeling on the day I guess, but I've had success using just a few and also by using a big bunch, so it's just down to personal preference and how

you believe the carp to be feeding.

Once the maggots are on the needle, I then gently slide them onto one of the tag ends of the floss, before tying three or four simple overhand knots in both tag ends which will bunch the maggots up into a tight ball and secure them in place. By attaching your maggots in this way, they can literally be used to top any hookbait, a deadly cold-water tactic.

When fishing with maggots or caster, I still like to keep my hook size no less than a 4, and keep my usual strong components, where strength remains at the forefront of my approach, using reliable items I know won't let me down. ■



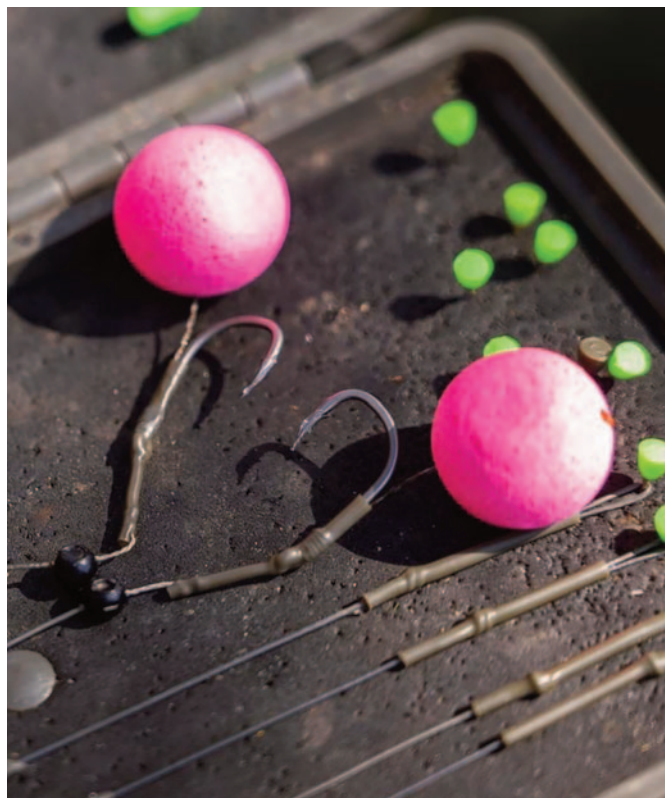
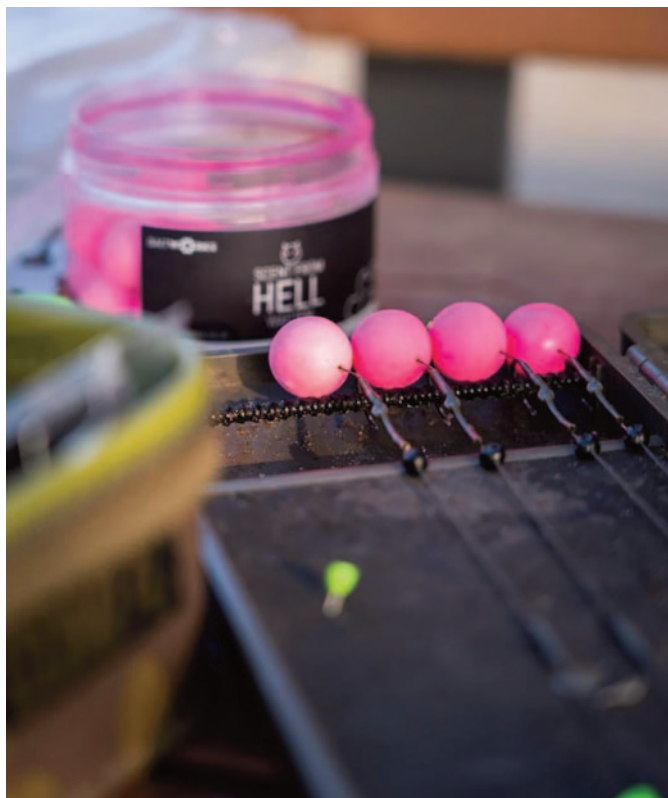
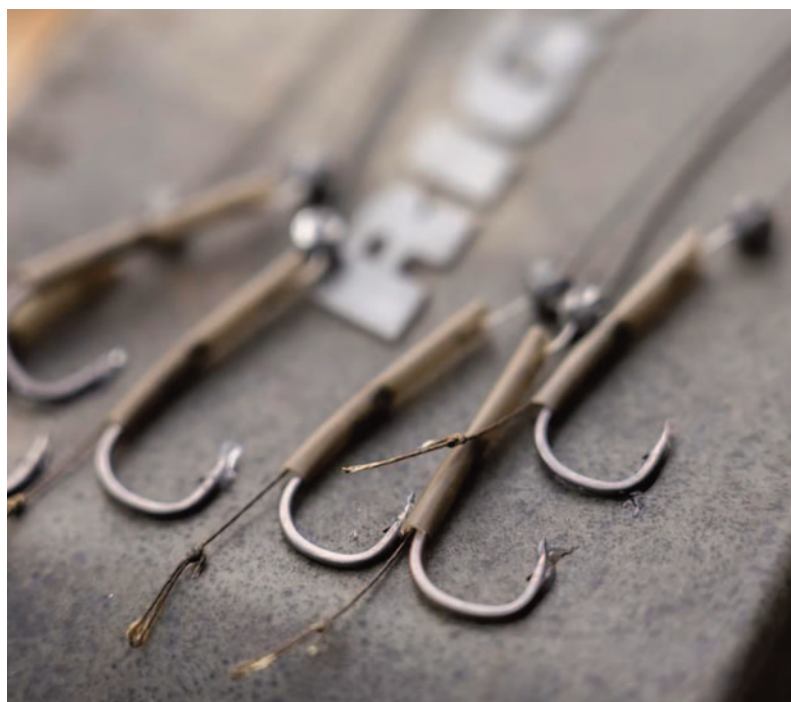
Confidence Is Everything

By Elliott Gray

I've developed so much confidence in this rig now, it's my all round go to and holds my utmost trust. Confidence in your rig is such a crucial element in carp fishing. I leave nothing to chance and need to know, with 100% certainty that I'm fishing and my kit is up to the job.

Fishing a pit like Burghfield, where your next bite could quite literally terrify you, you need to know, that your kit is holding out and is up ready to be pushed to its maximum.

For the last few years, my rigs have stayed the same, incorporating a Scent from Hell hookbait, soaked in Pink Squid Goo, fished on an Area Kord hair alongside a Kamakura Wide Gape, size 4. This is finished with a section of Medium Shrink Tube, fished line-aligner, with an N Trap Semi Stiff hooklink. I strip a small section of coating back, and place a no.4 split







shot on the break of the coating. The stripped section creates additional movement and the shot help pin everything down and pull the hook home.

A small section of Dark Matter

putty positioned half-way up the link, and then a steamed section of Shrink Tube act as a more discrete anti-tangle sleeve.

I've seen first-hand how effective this rig is and it ticks a lot of boxes.

Mainly, when cast correctly, it won't tangle, is incredibly effective at turning and hooking and when it goes in, from experience, it tends to stay in, where I lose very few fish on this set up. ■



The Spot Was Absolutely Rocking

Featuring Scott Sweetman

Casting back to summer 2021, Scott arrived to his target water late one evening after work, a busy car park confirmed a crowded lake, and with no chance of getting on fish, Scott had a rethink and headed to another pit down the road, which he anticipated would be quieter

He was immediately drawn to a

weedy bay that looked like a haven for carp and upon closer inspection, Scott began noticing movement amongst the weed, confirming his suspicions. It looked a devoid swim, clearly an area that wasn't fished by others, the perfect zone to focus on, Scott thought.

He chose the hardest swim to get to, hoping he'd be left alone and then went to work with the weed rake, clearing a nice patch between two

huge weed beds, just short of a set of lily pads, the perfect spot. Once the weed was cleared, he made several casts with a pronged lead to clear any excess weed off the spot. After a few hours of graft, Scott decided to bait the spot that night and leave it for a few days where a bite was much more likely.

Three days later, Scott was back for a quick overnighter and due to size of the swim, he fished just one rod, set



The Spot Was Absolutely Rocking **Exclusive**



up with Sub Braid and a long Kable leadcore leader for maximum protection in the weed. A Heli lead on a Heli Safe was fished alongside an 8-inch IQ2 D Rig, with a size 4 Kamakura

Wide Gape X.

A few quick flicks with a bare lead indicated a hard drop, confirming the spot had been fed on, so Scott's confidence was high. A bite just into dark

turned out to be a real special one, 'The Original Big Common' at 45lb 13oz.

Another big hit of hemp, nut and boilie was deposited the following



Exclusive The Spot Was Absolutely Rocking



morning before he left for work.

Scott repeated this process for the next few weeks, baiting with seed and boilie three days prior to his overnight trip, and then fishing one rod on the spot with simple IQ2 D Rigs, and nut hookbaits over just a few pouches of boilie. In the next two weeks, Scott landed a further four fish to 35lb, a great run of angling. ■



Attention to Detail

By Charlie Ferris

Once I've found where the carp are, the next stages are so important and that's where attention to detail comes in. It starts with spot finding, where I'll meticulously lead the area, establishing where the weed is, the depths, and look for areas to present my rigs. I'll be thinking about line lay, and when needed, can spend hours clear-

ing areas for my lines. Baiting is done as accurately as I can, using braid where possible to ensure everything is bang on.

When it comes to rigs, I keep everything as organized as I can, spending time on each rig, getting everything perfect, safe in the knowledge that when the rods are deployed, they are perfect. I'm not worried if it takes several casts to get it right, I'd rather be sat back knowing they are perfect

than have any doubts about their presentation.

The secret is not to rush, think about everything before doing it, plan your line of attack, think about the situation and what you need to do and the best way to go about it. We commit so much time to our fishing, why waste it? I want everything done to the best of my ability and that mindset, will no doubt, get you more fish through a season. ■





Lac d'Orient

By Darell Peck

For as long as I can remember, Lac d'Orient has been widely regarded as one of carp fishing's most prestigious venues.

A 6000-acre flooded forest that's reputation is both inspiring and terrifying in equal measure. For me, the attraction lies in its history, the boat style of angling, and the challenge of locating carp in such a vast environment.

On top of all this, its crystal-clear waters produce some of the finest specimens that you could ever imagine.

Each and every capture is extremely hard earned, and there is always the outside chance of catching epic 50s and 60s that you've never seen before; and that just as likely, you will never see again! ■





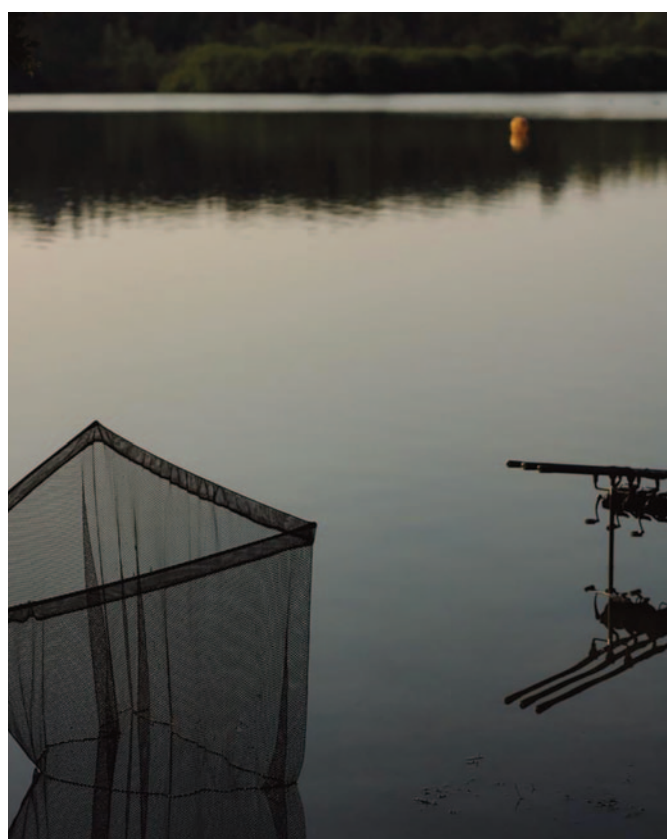


I Never Thought that I Had it in me to Catch

By Oscar Thornton

Not sure what to say about this particular carp. Years older than me, local to home and one that's always been there in the back of my mind, but one in truth I never thought I had it in me to catch.

With a gap in time, it was now or never, so this summer, I properly went for it. I knew the fish spent much of their time living in and around the sailing club's marina, so fishing long to a big clean area, as close as I could legally get to their home, was the approach I went with, baiting heavily from the off. Cell boilies were my trusted go to, which I fed most days



Exclusive I Never Thought that I Had it in me to Catch



around work, dropping in as often as I could, more often than not, simply to look. With few of the originals left (most had been ottered or simply age had caught up with them) there was little to really target, other than the biggun and a backup of around 50 small stockies. I got bites from the off, churners at range, with line hissing from the spools, making for some electrifying fishing, but the stockies were relentless. I kept going, kept the bait going in and kept at them.

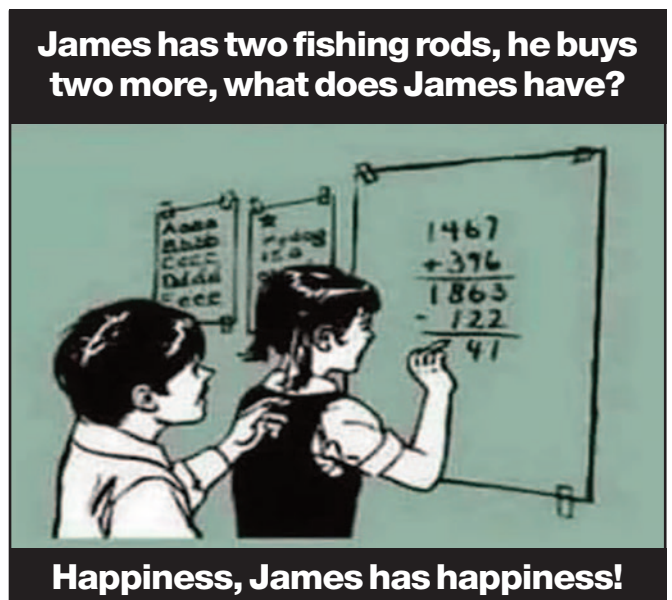
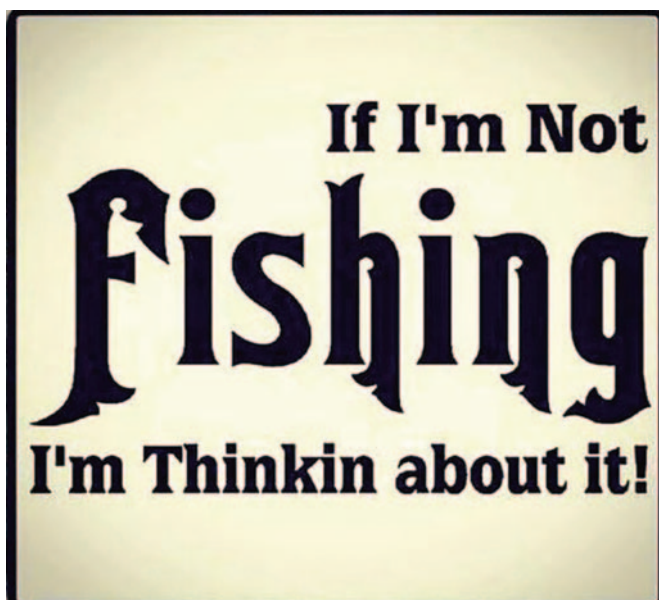
It was frustrating fishing, getting the rods out only to be wiped out by boats or kids swimming. Often, I'd have to reel in by 10am and get the rods back out on dark. I kept plugging and it all came good last week. 43lb of ancient Ringwood common, one that I genuinely felt privileged to hold. What a creature, what a buzz'.

Standard Oscar tactics, long hinges over big beds of Cell. Hybrid Lead Clips, 5oz Leads, 12-inch Dark Matter booms and Mouth Trap sections with size 6 Wide Gapes and Cell pop ups. Textbook big fish stuff. ■





Carpy Humour

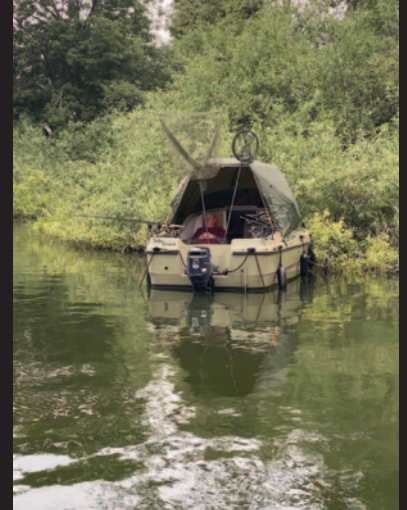


SECRETS OF THE THAMES

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).

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

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

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

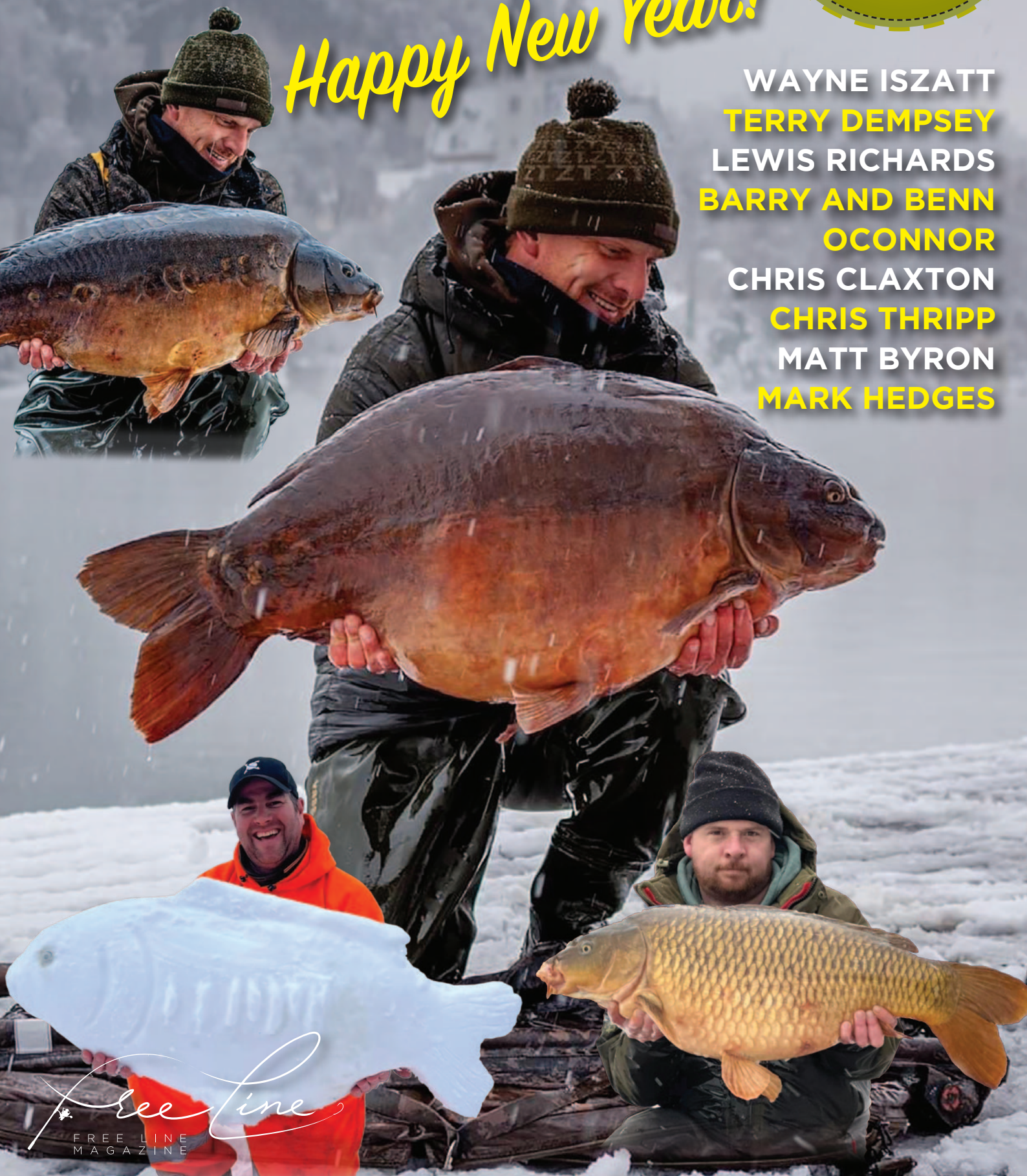
Free Line

FREE LINE MAGAZINE JAN 2024

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FREE LINE
MAGAZINE

VIEWS FROM THE BIVVY

Rob's Ramblings



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Also available this month,

Big Carp Issue 330

Miss it and miss out!

Views from the Bivvy

As its the start of a new year here's something a little different to help you enjoy 2024 to the fullest. Being happy and living life to the fullest might not always be easy in these testing times we live in. Sometimes the stresses of life can weigh us down, struggling to find money alone can make you feel down. Be positive, look at the positives instead of the negatives all the time, and most importantly go fishing, relax on the bank, chat to fellow anglers and read the lessons below. Nine steps to happiness and 7 rules to a better life.

1. True happiness comes from within. Happiness is not a destination; it's an inner state of being that arises from cultivating positive thoughts, feelings, and actions.
2. Change your thoughts, change your life. Our thoughts have a profound impact on our emotions and experiences. By reframing our negative thoughts into positive ones, we can transform our lives.
3. Embrace gratitude as a daily practice. Gratitude shifts our focus from what we lack to what we have, fostering a sense of abundance and contentment. Make gratitude a daily habit by taking time to appreciate the good things in your life.
4. Release the past and focus on the present. The past cannot be changed, but we can choose not to let it control our present. Let go of regrets and grievances, and focus on creating the life you want today.
5. Practice forgiveness, especially towards yourself. Forgiveness doesn't mean condoning wrongdoing; it means releasing yourself from the burden of anger and resentment.
6. Live in alignment with your values. Our values are our guiding principles, and living in alignment with them brings a sense of purpose and fulfilment. Identify your core values and make decisions that align with them.
7. Embrace the power of visualization. Visualization is the art of creating mental images of your desired outcomes. Use visualization to tap into your subconscious mind and attract what you want into your life.
8. Take action and step outside your comfort zone. Personal growth often requires stepping outside your comfort zone and taking action towards your goals. Don't let fear hold you back.
9. Find joy in the simple things. True happiness often lies in the everyday moments, not grand gestures. Appreciate the small pleasures of life, such as spending time with loved ones, enjoying nature, or pursuing hobbies.

Here are seven lessons on something to live for:

Lesson 1: Discover Your Passions

What ignites your enthusiasm and sparks your curiosity? Engage in activities that bring you joy, fulfilment, and a sense of purpose. Whether it's art, music, writing, sports, or volunteering, identify the activities that make you feel alive and energized.

Lesson 2: Connect with Your Values

What principles guide your decisions and shape your identity? Reflect on your core values, such as kindness, compassion, creativity, or learning. Align your actions and goals with your values, allowing them to serve as a compass for your life's journey.

Lesson 3: Cultivate Meaningful Relationships

Nurture connections with people who inspire, support, and enrich your life. Surround yourself with individuals who share your values, encourage your growth, and bring out the best in you. Strong relationships provide a sense of belonging, love, and support.

Lesson 4: Pursue Personal Growth

Never stop learning and expanding your horizons. Embrace challenges, seek new experiences, and engage in activities that stimulate your mind and broaden your perspectives. Personal growth leads to self-discovery, confidence, and a sense of continuous improvement.

Lesson 5: Contribute to Something Larger

Find ways to make a positive impact on the world around you. Volunteer your time, donate to causes you care about, or mentor others. Contributing to something larger than yourself instills a sense of purpose, meaning, and connection to something greater.

Lesson 6: Embrace Gratitude and Appreciation

Cultivate an attitude of gratitude for the blessings in your life. Practice expressing appreciation for the people, experiences, and opportunities that enrich your life. Gratitude shifts your focus to the positive, enhances happiness, and fosters resilience.

Lesson 7: Live with Intention and Purpose

Take charge of your life and make conscious choices that align with your values and aspirations.



Carp Chat Carpy News4

Carp Scene Reviews14

ARTICLES

It's a Fine Margin *by Wayne Iszatt*22

Diary of the Urban Myth *Rob Maylin talks with Terry Dempsey*32

The Park Lake *by Lewis Richards*42

A Year in Carp Matches *by Barry and Ben Oconnor*46

My Thames' Record *by Mark Hedges*58

Tough Times Turn Good *by Chris Claxton*62

Gold in My Hands *by Chris Thripp*74

Sutton at Hone Lake *by Matt Byron*84



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

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE 2023

1st Prize
£2,000
RRP of Daiwa tackle

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 Trent 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. ■

Cold Water Green Beast



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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

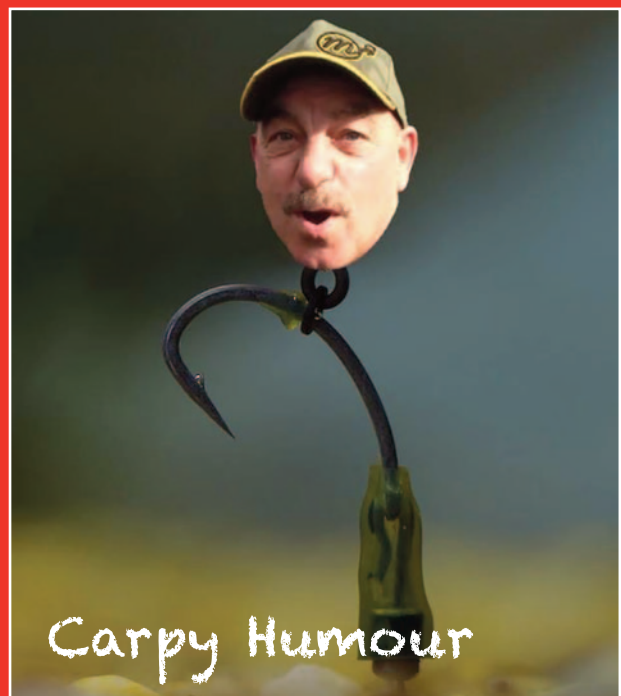


Save £££s on DFDS ferry trips to France and Netherlands

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 ■



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



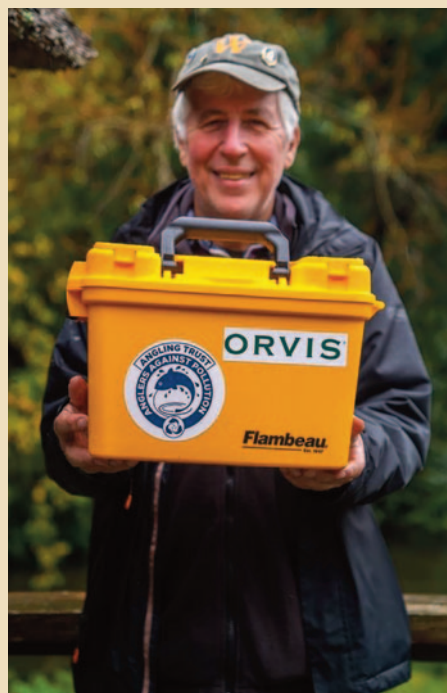
Anglers Against Pollution – protecting our rivers!

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.

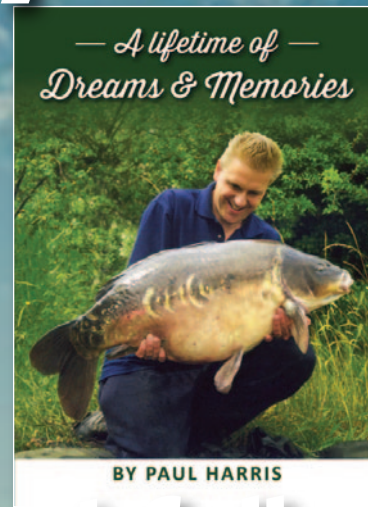
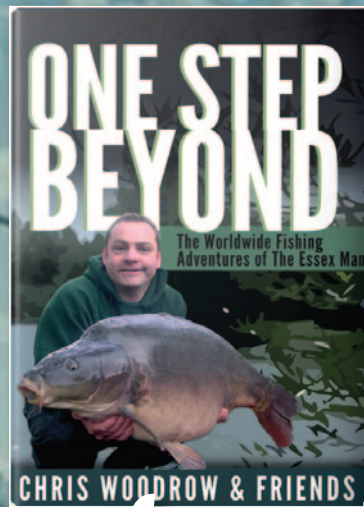
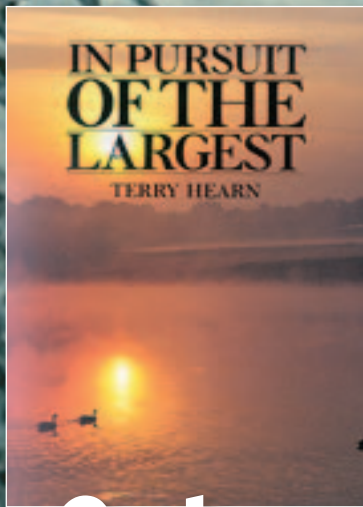
Yet these prized waters are constantly under threat from over-abstraction and pollution. Now the Angling Trust's Water Quality Monitoring Network – a key part of our Anglers Against Pollution campaign and supported by Orvis UK – will be carrying out regular testing on 12 rivers across the Test, Itchen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

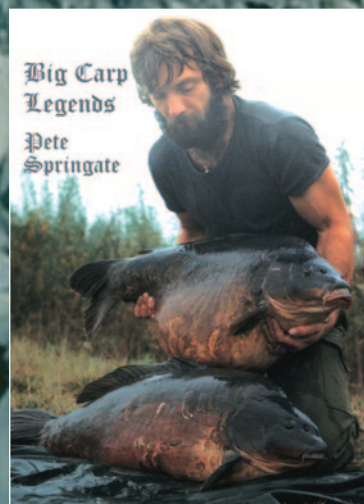
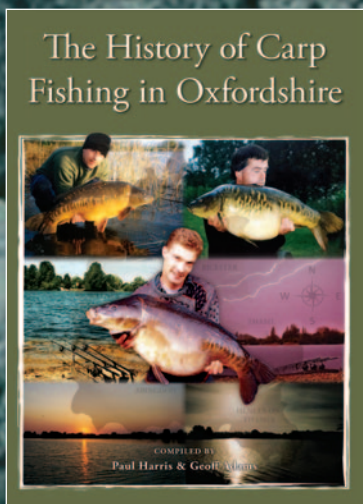
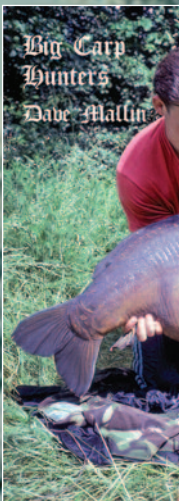
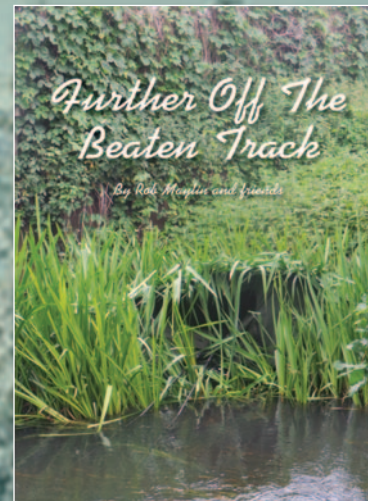
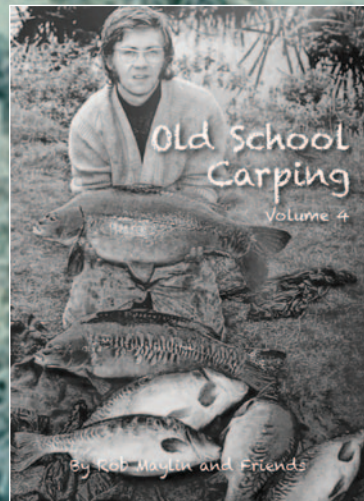
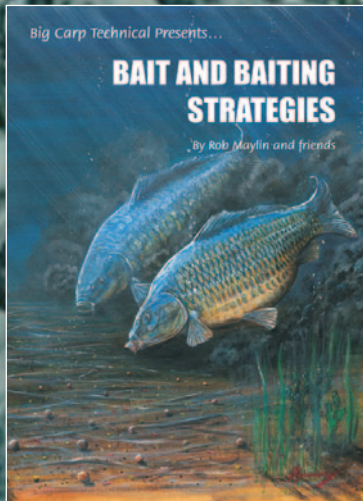
You can read more here: – <https://anglingtrust.net/2023/11/20/testanditchen>. ■



Warm Away the Cold

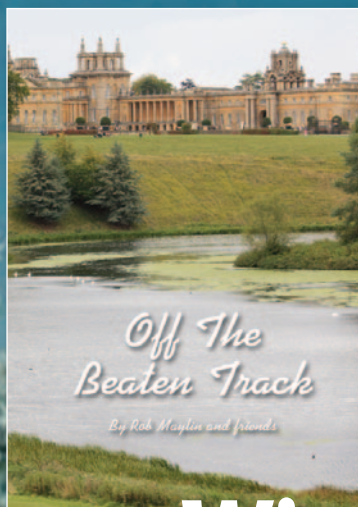
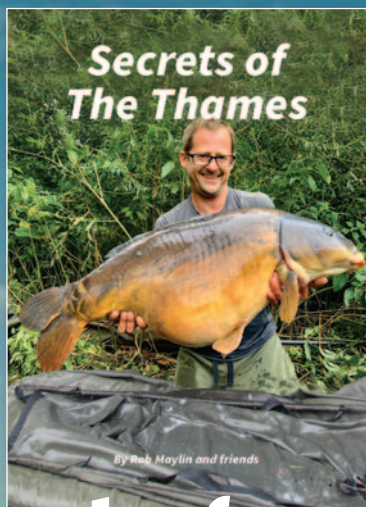


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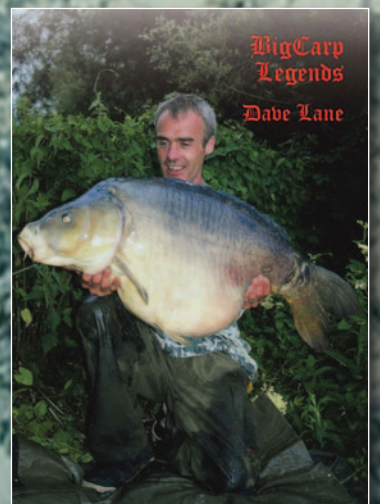
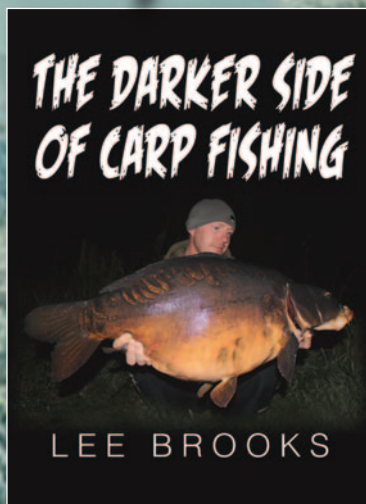


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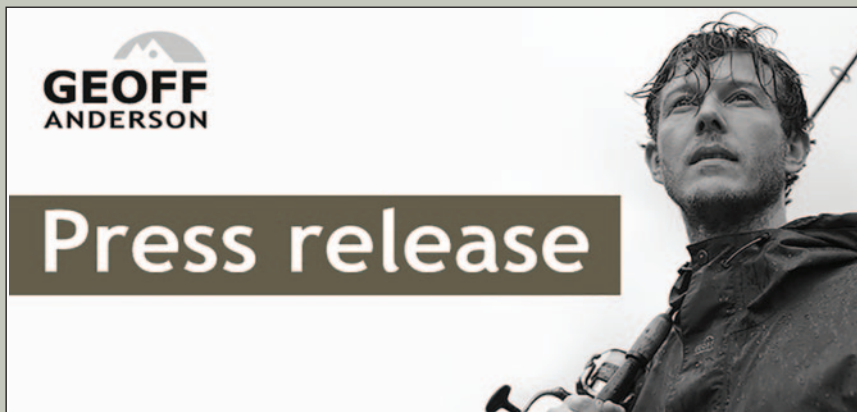
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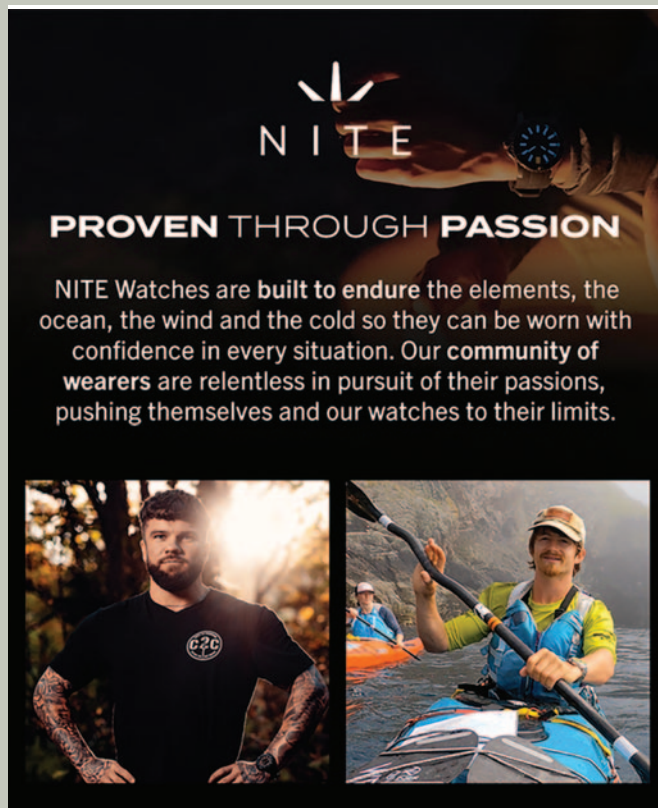
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It's a Fine Margin...

By Wayne Iszatt

Anticipation at bite time.

As I sit here with the good fortune today of having my rods out fishing whilst I write this (it's raining) on a large gin clear gravel pit with a stern north-westerly blowing promise into my face, do I have a trap set in this wind-ward margin? Of course I do. It does baffle me a little why so many anglers ignore the edge of the pit. I'm no expert, but I don't believe carp just swim around aimlessly. They will always be looking for either a point of interest, sanctuary or food, and the margin usually offers all this. I mean, it must be a little mundane for a carp circling over a silt lakebed or acres of weed like the gravel pit I have in front of me.

Wouldn't you agree that the edge of the lake with reeds, snags, overhanging trees and so on would be a little more of an aesthetic playground? Anyhow, whatever the reasons, there is no doubt that on many lakes the carp regularly patrol the margins, and just as regularly this gets ignored by we anglers. I do spend a lot of my designated fishing time watching and

stalking the edges of the pit in more inaccessible areas where other anglers tend not to go, firstly because I get bored quite quickly behind motionless rods, but also because I get more of a buzz out of hunting down and creating the bite. This style of angling has taught me quite a bit about how to get active spots going in the edge of a lake, and I hope some of what I have learnt maybe useful to some of you, so I will dispense my conclusions now.

Hook points

I am starting with this topic because in my mind it is the most important thing to get right with your kit, and if a newcomer to carp fishing asked me for one bit of advice, this would be it. I think it is crazy that we anglers spend a fortune on rods, reels, bivvy and so on, bait, fuel, syndicate tickets etc, but then some will sit behind three blunt hooks because they scrimp on a 50p hook or just can't be bothered to tie rigs. When I say blunt, I mean just one or two retrieves across a hard lakebed, or a tench caught, is usually enough to dull the hook, which is blunt in my eyes and

will reduce your chances of a pick-up turning into a hooked fish. The amount of times rigs are cast out and reeled in over and over, session after session before they are changed by some anglers is madness, and the amount of ejected pick-ups they probably have had is a real shame for their effort. I never forget that we are relying on the carp to hook themselves, so the point needs to be evil.

Even 'out the packet' sharp personally isn't enough for me now, and I send mine to Jason Haywood (Specialist Sharpened Hooks) to expertly make them insanely sharp. So, either learn to hook sharpen yourself or change your rigs regularly and you will catch more. Mine rarely get more than one cast if I think the rig has brushed over a hard bottom on the retrieve. This is where PVA foam comes in handy; in fact I consider it a necessity to my angling when fishing over gravel, as a nugget of foam will keep the hook raised off the bottom for a short while and protected, meaning if I am not happy with the drop, I can retrieve it for another cast without the hookpoint touching the lakebed.



Finding feeding spots in the margins

This can be a case of trial and error, but I have found that you can't really rule out anywhere that has natural cover, a hard bottom and preferably a good depth of at least 5ft. Carp can of course be caught in shallower water (I have caught them in water no deeper than the carp's body depth in the past), but I have found these spots are usually reliant on warm water surface temperatures, so if you are looking for action throughout longer periods of the year then work on spots with a decent depth. Don't be put off by weed, as this usually means a hard bottom, and if the carp want to feed on your bait it will not take long for them to rip it out and leave a clean spot for you to present a hookbait over. Usually three or four bait hits is enough to get a spot polished clean and ready to fish on if the carp have been active there. Weed is in fact a great indicator as to whether the carp have fed on your spots or whether it is

other species or birds, as carp are really the only creature that will tear out the weed to eat the bait, whereas the weed would survive pretty much intact if it was coots or small fish feeding down there.

Look for areas like reed lines or overhanging trees with a good depth that are still safe to fish, both for you and the carp, as ambush points like this are far better than 'open' swims for getting them feeding close in, as they will feel safer here. I much prefer my chances in these tucked-away canopies and poking a couple of rods through the foliage to being positioned in a trodden down swim and casting over to the spot with line cutting through the water. Once you do get their tails up and watch them feed, you can then often see which fish like certain baits and also the way they feed, i.e., are they a greedy snafle that may get snagged on a standard 18mm bottom bait, or are they delicate feeders that might be more catchable on smaller wafting baits like sweetcorn? You can learn so

much by watching them, although quite often it's the case that they will only be prepared to feed regularly in the edge at night, which is why I like to get a spot cleaned off large enough for two rods so I can play around with bait alternatives.

Bait application – build their confidence

Don't put your eggs all in one basket. Different areas or corners of the lake can fish well at different periods, and this can be dictated by weather, angling pressure or natural food like fly hatches. You don't want to bait up a spot several times only to find that when you come to fish it, the party is over the other side of the pit. So rather than dump say 5kg on one spot each time, I would much rather spread that over three or four, basically with a spot in each corner or other likely looking areas, then you can monitor each and look for that telltale sign that weed has been uprooted by carp whilst you have been away. Keep applying the bait regularly to build up



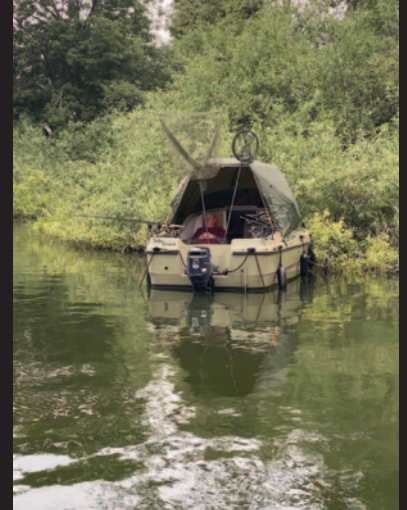
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via the Thames Estuary. On its way, it passes through London, the country's capital, where the river is deep and navigable to ships; the Thames drains the whole of Greater London. Its tidal section, reaching up to Teddington Lock, includes most of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

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One from this spring, hooked under the rod tip at 3am.

their confidence and polish the spot ready for your rig. You may find that all your spots are showing signs of carp acceptance, and then you are spoilt for choice, but this will mean you have more than one option if the lake is busy or the carp are respond-

ing to a new wind for example, and the spots can then be fished on rotation.

Last light is a great time to bait up, as it means the birds won't attack the bait until dawn, by which time hopefully the bait will be eaten by carp. In

my personal experience the most consistent feeding time for carp in the margins is the darker hours anyway. I assume this is because they feel less exposed and safer to be that close in through the dark than they do in daylight. I like to keep back-up spots baited regularly too. Even when I am fishing that night I will often bait up other locations the same night, so if I have no luck, I have a primed spot to jump on the next night I can fish. Remember, just because you have seen fish in the day does not always mean they will be in the same area at night. This rotation fishing has served me well on the times in life I only have work nights to fish and I cannot be at the lake following the fish around in the daytime.

Which baits to use?

The most effective baits for spot clearing are small items like hemp, corn, boilie chops, crumb and pellets. Other larger baits like tigers and boilies are not great for getting the bottom cleaned off, as the fish don't need to dig hard to trough for these,



How a spot can grow. Left is after baiting twice (in autumn). Right is a couple of months later after more baiting and a few captures.

but adding them in your bait mix is obviously a good idea if you intend to use them as a hookbait. Also remember that a dark boilie crumb, small pellets and hemp is pretty much coot proof in daylight, as it is too small for them to see or pick up, so it has a better chance of surviving until the carp show up, providing there are not too many nuisance fish that is. It can also be well worth playing around with alternative baits other than boilies. Although boilies are usually my initial choice, baits like sweetcorn have often picked out the rarer fish for me in the past, and I believe this is because they haven't been caught on that bait for such a long time that they dismiss it as being dangerous and therefore let their guard down a little when eating it.

Peperami is one I have used this summer quite a lot, and it seems to get very quick bites once the fish have dropped down to feed, as they will be craving the oily fats and something new at that time of year. In some cases it was clearly one of, if not THE first food item picked up when I have checked the spot after the capture and found all the other bait to still

be there. That's another great thing about fishing spots you can see, as you can work out how quick you got the bite, or indeed if you have been cleaned out and left unrewarded. That is where a good effective rig is paramount.

Rigs

I am not going to preach about which rig you should be using, as I am sure there are dozens of variations that will catch in this fishing situation, so I will just briefly explain my favourite bottom bait rig and why I favour it. I use a coated braid material (my personal choice at the minute is Korda Camo) with the finished rig being 8ins approx in length. I used to strip about an inch of the coating from the eye of the hook back, which is pretty standard practice.

However, I thought long and hard about this, and I now leave an inch of stiff coating from the eye of the hook, and then strip the inch of coating back to exposed braid, and then back to stiff coated all the way to the swivel. My thinking behind doing so is this will effectively extend the shank of the hook, so when the hook

drops in the mouth from tightening to the lead, the 'hinge' effect of the stripped braid will drop the hook deeper down into the mouth, and in theory give the hook a longer chance to catch hold. I couple this with a D-rig mounted hookbait, as with a D, when a carp tries to eject, the bait is propelled right to the eye of the hook and driving the hook point in a downward force, increasing the chance of connection further. Add an insanely sharp hook with this combination and you won't be getting many ejected pick-ups.

Another critical reason why I use PVA foam on the hook is that I don't want the rig to lie out completely straight from the lead. This may sound madness, as it's been drummed into us that we want the rig to be presented that way, but in all honesty, I disagree. When a carp takes your bait and the hooklength is already tight to the lead then how is the hook going to find the movement needed to extend far enough into the mouth to get a good deep hook hold, especially if the carp is moving in the general direction of lead to hook? With the use of the foam to suspend



One of Cambridgeshire's finest that tripped up on sweetcorn in the edge.

the bait above the lead until it dissolves away, the hooklength then coils around as it drops (aided by the kicker tail rubber so as not to sit directly on the lead) and will generally sit 3 or 4ins away from the lead. This means that whatever angle the fish takes the bait from and whatever speed it is moving at, the hookbait has enough play to get right in its mouth before the tension is hit by the lead.

My preferred lead system is a drop off 4oz inline, which I have made by David Lander with a grit coating to blend in perfectly with the lakebed. I prefer inlines to a lead clip system these days, as I feel that the load from the lead is transferred to the hook more fluently and instantly. There is more 'jangle' going on with a lead clip through lifting the clip, then the swivel and then tilting the lead up before the full load is felt, and that extra split second could be enough time for a successful ejection, so it's in-lines for me. I also have switched to a fluorocarbon leader recently for its low visibility, and I am sure this has increased the amount of daylight bites I have been getting.

Cover your tracks

The one hurdle with fishing at close range in clear pits is that other observant anglers may discover your nice gleaming spots and cast a bait over from the nearest swim, probably unbeknown to them that you have created it. So cover your tracks as



best as you can and pick areas that cannot be cast to from a swim if you want to avoid this unwanted attention. I will often favour my chances fishing tucked away behind a wall of reeds sat over one rod than in a frequently used swim with three rods out at times, so take care not to break reed stems, branches etc if you want your hard work and effort to reward you and not someone else.

Once fishing, don't over-bait

Some anglers like to put in bucket loads of bait from the off and put a rig on it. Now this method may have its good day, but I feel in general this is massively cutting down your chances. It will of course depend on the stock numbers and also nuisance fish numbers to make a decision on the amount to put in, but what I will

say is the more you put out, the longer the carp can take their time on your spot. If they have, say, 10kg to go at, they will feed more casually, giving them more time to suss out your trap, and maybe even disappear for a few hours with the bet they can come back later and have a little more. However, at times when I have only offered a smaller amount, sometimes just a couple of handfuls, it is clear that the competition sets in and the whole group of fish want to take the lion's share and demolish it before it is all gone, and bingo, we have a bite.

Personally, I use just around a kilo of mixed bait per spot per night, as this is enough to hold a group of carp for a while but still little enough to induce their competitiveness. If I have a bite, be it a tench or a carp then I will put another half kilo out, and so on like that. If I don't get a bite then I know the carp have not been feeding hard or at all (I am that confident with my hooks and rigs) and more bait would have killed my chances even further anyway.

Fish on bite times

This applies not just to my fishing in the margins but when I fish in any range too. We often read that the rods should always be the first thing to set up and the last thing to put away to maximise our chances. This is not always the case I feel, and fishing when it is not bite time can reduce your chances, as the fish have had all those hours to casually inspect your spots and feel your lines, which could easily be enough to spook them away



(Top) My favoured bottom bait rig for a hard lakebed.
(Left) My bivvy is centre picture – my kind of swim.



from you when it is bite time. If, for example, the pit you fish has a better bite time at night then it may not be an advantage to leave the rods fishing all day too, as this will give the carp plenty of time to inspect the baited area when visibility is maximum, and if the trap is suspected then it is unlikely to come back and feed there

later. So if you have a busy life and only have overnights to fish then this doesn't mean you are out of the game once you find the prime night time feeding areas. I have care of my daughter half the week, and I gig with my band every weekend. Throw in work with that too, and yes, finding good overnight spots is a must for me,

as I often only have work nights to fish.

Rest your spots

Once a spot produces a few bites, I have often found that it can 'blow' and bites dry up, in which case it is a good idea to rest it for a while and concentrate on another back up spot you have been priming, but don't rule it out completely.

I have often found that once rested and then re-baited to build the carp's confidence up once again, it can produce later in the season. If a spot has blown, it doesn't mean the area has, and sometimes all is needed is to start a new spot a few yards up the reed line or the other side of the overhanging tree etc.

With our winters seemingly getting later and shorter, at least, temperature wise, bites at close range can be expected later in the year more so now, and even in the depths of our cold season you can never say never. Carp can often be found hiding in marginal areas with natural cover even in freezing conditions, so keep the faith as those nights draw in! Happy lines to all! ■

(Top) A margin muncher witnessed here with my daughter.

(Below) Keep the faith in the winter.



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Diary of The Urban Myth

Rob Maylin chats with Terry Dempsey



Rob: It's about three weeks before Christmas, and I have arranged to meet up with Terry Dempsey at our usual watering hole to catch up with his monthly diary in Big Carp, so thank you very much, Tel. We are joined today by one of the legends as well, Brett White, who has walked through the door with him. I am pleased to see Brett, as I haven't seen him since Lee Jackson's wedding, which was a long time ago.

This morning was a bit of a shock really. I got out to the car and there was about an inch of ice on it. I think it went down to about minus seven last night, so it is been the coldest night so far in 2016. Funnily enough, talking about cold nights, I bumped into Dave Lane at the Carp Society winter show at the weekend, and we were talking about keenness and the fact that I am not as keen as I used to be to go out in the cold weather. Dave was telling me that he is as keen now as he ever was. He goes a couple of nights a week, and he loves it. The point that I was getting to is that last night at ten o'clock I saw Dave put a post on Facebook. It was minus five already, and his kettle and stove had already frozen over, he said. Sod that, I thought. I'm bloody glad I'm sitting here watching I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here having a nice cup of tea with my missus and my little one.

It's been a while since I met up with Terry. It's just been so busy with



Urban Bait; it's got absolutely mental, as you know. He's got shops here there and everywhere. He's in all the countries now, and he was just been telling me about a Spanish account that he has been setting up. He will get to tell you about that no doubt. Those of you who are regular readers of Big Carp will remember that the last time I met up with Terry was when Daniel caught that lovely fully scaled mirror. This was at Terry's syndicate water, and I know that Terry has been back down there and had a nice common. Once again he will tell you about that himself.

He has been abroad again too. This time of the year when it gets this cold, people tend to look at places where

they can go and get a bit warmer. I know that Gran Canaria is popular throughout December and January and also Spain, the Mecca of fishing out there with lots of carp and those big cats, as Tel will tell you.

When you will be reading this, it will already be the start of 2017, and the show season is going to start. At the end of January you have the Brentwood show. Both Terry and I will be there, and Urban Bait is going to be represented at the show. After that we have Five Lakes and the Big One, and then I think the last one of the year is the Northern Angling Show up in Manchester. There's normally a bit of snow when that comes around. Hopefully it won't be too bad, as it's a long old drive for us southern boys. Urban Bait will be up at the Manchester show, and so will I. If you want anything taken specifically for these shows, drop Terry a line on Facebook, and I am sure he will be happy enough to bring any special orders along.

So, Terry, the last time we met you had that beautiful fully scaled out of your Kent syndicate water. I know you went down there and had a great stinking big common after that, so tell us all about that, mate.

Terry: It is good to see you again, Rob. It doesn't seem like long ago, but it was probably a couple of months ago now when we had that fully



(Top) Autumn on the bank.

(Left) Simon Hartopp landed this one whilst using the Red Spicy Fish.



Tim Hatton with a lovely 37lb 8oz mirror caught from a London reservoir.



29lb of cracking autumn mirror for Brian Harper.



A fish that most of us could only dream of! This 43lb mirror is just another one of the abundance of Burghfield beauties for Matthew Branch.



Check this carp out called Ulcer Fish at a staggering 56lb 8oz that was caught by urbanist Paul Wyatt – what a creature!



David Prictor with a dark, pristine common weighing 35lb 5oz.



Lee Edwards with a 36lb lake record common from Cromwell Lakes.



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Michael Ruthven with a 44lb 4oz UK mirror on the Nutcracker.



Pete Castle with a 42lb 4oz autumn mirror.

scaled. I planned to go back to my syndicate, but I wasn't finding it easy to get the time. The lake I really wanted to concentrate on was Savay. I had a couple of trips to Savay in the summer, and let's be honest, it had been a bit of a struggle up there for me. I was finding it hard to get on fish, and when I did get on fish, I didn't have the time. I had to pack up early in the morning on two occasions, just after first light to go off to work. If I had stayed I might have had a chance.

One trip that I managed to stay and I managed to have a good go was when I went to my syndicate and found a couple of good fish down there. It was off rota at Savay, so I couldn't fish there that week, and Tania and Daniel and gone to Tania's mum. I had a free pass, and it doesn't take much to encourage me to get down to the lake. I dropped them at Gatwick, rushed home, got the gear and flew down to the lake. I had promised my Uncle Jimmy, who lives down in Cambridgeshire, that I would take him fishing down there, as I rarely see him. He likes a bit of camping, and he used to be a good jockey

and raced in some really good races against some great jockeys. He wanted to come and fish, so I thought alright this is the ideal place. No one minds if I take a member of my family, as it is so quiet down there, Rob, and it is really beautiful. I never see another person, and you don't hear cars. All you get down there is nature and the lake.

Anyway, Jimmy was really impressed, and I said to him, "Some of the guys haven't had a run in the last two or three seasons. Don't expect to see fish, but we will have a go." Anyway, I found three or four fish showing one afternoon in a weedbed,



(Above) Get on the Red Spicy Fish – £110 worth free with a BC subby. (Right) Dick Caldwell has been getting among the chunks on a large tough pit. This stunner was another that fell to the lure of the Nutcracker.





Nigel Sharp's recent scaly mirror on the Nutcracker.

which was just colossal. Out to my left it was like a cricket pitch for 80 to 100 yards – just solid over the surface. Three fish came into the weed really close, literally under my arm. Anyway, I under-armed one rod against the weed and stuck a little pink popper on it and put one kilo of 12mm'ers around it. I flicked the other rod against the weed. I could only fit two rods in my swim because it was so tiny. It was a total weedbed, and it was just a little hole with two rods in there.

Jimmy turned up, and he had a proper Noddy tent. He crept in with his camping gear and he was as happy as anything. He got himself a couple of bottles of John Smith, and he said, "I won't pester you. I won't be a pain in the ass; I will just sit here

and stay out of your way." I said, "Perfect... I don't mind, just crack on, Jimmy." It was good to see him; I hadn't seen him in a couple of years, as we only see each other at funerals.

In the morning I woke up early, just after first light, and there was a lot of fizz coming off the 12mm'ers. All of a sudden I saw a big back cruise off the spot, and then ten minutes later, I saw another big back come out of the weed and disappear over the spot. Then I saw another one come out from the opposite weedbed and disappear over the spot. As it disappeared over the spot, it erupted on the surface, steamed off and with that my tip was over. The rod was flattened, and it was ripping line off of me. The fish went straight into the weed and just stopped solid. It was nodding in

the weed, so I woke Jimmy up by kicking his tent. He came running out, saying, "What's the matter?" and I told him I'd caught a fish. He was sitting there saying, "Oh my God... oh my God!"

After about 20 minutes we got this massive weedbed moving, and I saw this biggest, blackest fish and its massive tail – it must have been over 45lbs, Rob. There are a few fish in there over 45, and this was one of them. It had a massive head and a massive tail, and it looked black in the sunlit morning. The massive black frame was coming towards me, and because the rod was bent double, Jimmy said to me, "Do you ever break any rods?" With that my line snapped! I never spoke to Jimmy for the rest of the trip, and he knows how



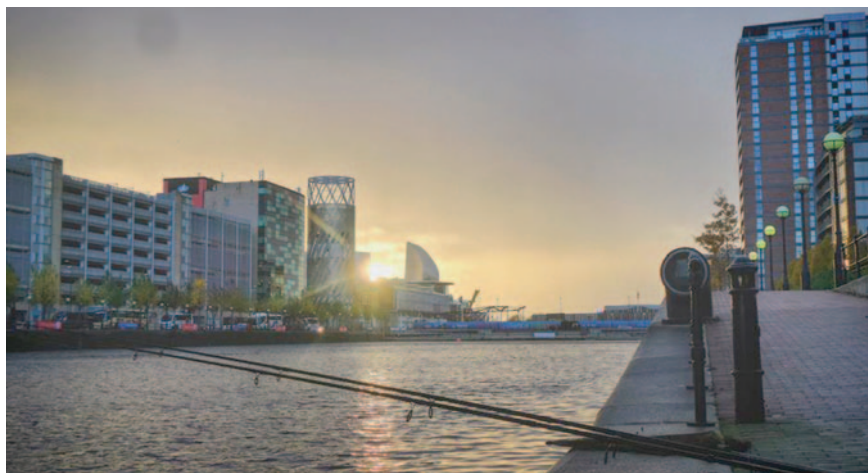
Ron Buss with another cracker on the Red Spicy Fish.



Michael Ruthven with a two-tone zip linear at 30lb 4oz.



Steven Fordham and a big common.



I felt about it because you could see on my face. He was lucky that I am a passive man. It was a disaster, Rob, but the fish were there so I thought, I'm going to do another night.

The following day Jimmy had enough of blanking, so he packed his little tent away and headed off to Cambridgeshire with his towel between his legs. I don't know how the line snapped, but I think it might have been a mussel in the weed or something because I was using really heavy line, and it broke like cotton. Jimmy went home, but I wanted to stay and get a fish. That night I felt really confident, and I put loads of 12mm'ers out. There was probably 3 or 4kg of 12mm'ers piling up on this spot.

Anyway, the morning after, it was really quiet, and as the morning progressed, I could see a bit of fizzing on the bait. I saw a back, and then I saw another bow wave, and then another

back, so they were there in numbers. I remember saying the night before that I wanted to catch one with a big fat belly that doesn't fight because this last one beat me up, you know. I'm sitting there and there was a big bow wave off the spot, and the rod bowed over and I was in. This thing came in like a bag of potatoes with lots of weed around its nose. I netted it, and when I saw it – what a beauty! It had a bit of spawn in it, but it had a big red belly – light, purple and black. When I first looked at it I thought maybe it would scrape 40lbs, but when I weighed it, it was 38lbs 12oz, but what a beautiful carp!

The sad thing was that I lost the next two fish because of the weed. I had one of them on for two hours, and the owner turned up with a boat. We went out, but when we got to it had got off, and the other one cut my hook link. Out of the four bites I only landed that big common, but I'd take that for



(Top left) A bit of urban fishing. (Above) Old school carping legend Dicky Caldwell with a cracking dark, big pit mirror that took a liking to the mighty Nutcracker.

the summer, that fish; it was so beautiful and so dark.

Since then I haven't done a great deal. I had a beautiful trip to Spain; I went out to Mequinenza with Brett White. This is the second year I have been out there with him, as we enjoyed it so much last time. We got right among the carp last time; we must have had 25 carp between us in just a few days. Anyway, this time we



Stu Rennie with a rare one, the Big Lin at 42lb 4oz, the pride of Yorkshire.



Red Spicy Fish is a great cold water bait as this dark beauty proves. As always the proof is in the pudding!



Autumn on the bank.

had five days, and we sent 30kgs of Red Spicy Fish out there, so we had a nice amount of boilies and hookbaits. Brett got hold of some particles in case we wanted to bulk it up too. We were well stocked up and we got out there and went to fish where Ebro meets the Segre. It is not too far from Zaragoza, an hour's drive, and that is where we flew to.

Was I buzzing? For me Rob, catching a fish that hasn't been caught before, that lives in a river, and you don't know what it is or what sort of life it has been through... that does give me a buzz, that type of fishing. It is very rare because of all the fishing I do in England, I find it hard to travel

abroad. But going to Spain is a little different; river fishing is proper wild. I am not going out there to catch PBs; I am going out there to catch wildies. They are amazing creatures, and we did get among them, but the first nine fish we hooked were catfish. We were baiting hard, waking up early and fishing hard and kept hooking cats. I had never caught a catfish in my life. I had fished abroad only a few times and had never caught one. I can honestly say that my first one was over 200lbs. Talk about beginner's luck. It was on a size 4 hook on a 10ft rod, a Cardinal 55 sort of reel, a Shimano original Baitrunner, and to be honest how I got it in I don't know. It was



The Fat One.

fighting so hard that I had no control over it. I had a little bit of luck on my side because it swam towards the boat, spooled me, and it was nearly going to take its last turn off the reel. I was hanging on for dear life, and I said to Brett, "Hang on to my jumper because this is going to be the end! I am going in with it!"

All of sudden it swam towards the boat. It nearly went underneath, and we thought, thank you very much. It was like we had hypnotised it, but what a massive fish. We grabbed him by the jaw and pulled him onto the boat, but once we had taken some photos we couldn't put him back – it was impossible! As much as we lifted and pulled and the boat was capsizing, it was impossible to get this poor thing out of the boat. So I wasn't impressed with the cats – a bit too big for me, Rob. My back just about handles a 30lb carp. Anyway, we moved about a mile away from these cats to get as far away from them as we could, and we did find some carp. It was the same old story – we started catching on the last day, and it was time to come home.

Rob: Will you go back out again?

Terry: Yes, definitely. I would love to. I mean at the moment I have next year when I am going to be fishing Savay because I have a chance to fish nights over there now, so I will fish that more. I didn't really have it planned this year, but next year I will fish that more. I am going to do a bit more on my Kent syndicate in the spring, and that's it. I just hope to catch next year. But again I have had



The Red Spicy Fish has great cold water form!



Whitey Tours captain Brett White with another prime example of a fine Ebro mid 30.



Toby Nathan with a clean looking high 30lb mirror.

another brilliant year – my personal best this year. I don't get many PBs, and I don't think I am going to be breaking that for a while... unless I catch Black Spot.

Rob: Thanks, Tel. You can always rely on Tel for a good story. He really is good value for money, isn't he? Anyway, let's just catch up on a few more little things before we go. Nigel Sharp joins Urban Bait as the latest consultant. I think they paid £4,000,000 for him to transfer over. I am sure he will be good value for money too, Nigel has been fishing at Frimley and the Yateley area for many years and is a prolific catcher of carp and a great member of the Urban Bait team.

Another reason for me meeting up with Tel was to fill the truck up with Urban Bait subby deals. It is a very popular subscription deal for Big Carp Magazine. You have £110 worth of bait in that deal, totally free with a subscription to Big Carp. We are well stocked now. For all those who want to come and have a chat with Tel or me, we will either see you at Brentwood, the Big One, Five Lakes or the Manchester show. Thanks very much, Tel. I will tie up with you in the New Year for a catch-up on how your fishing has been going.

Terry: Cheers, Rob. I will see you at the shows. We have a few new products coming out this year. We are looking at doing a few twists and turns. We are trying to encourage anglers to roll their own baits so we can sell our base mixes and they can

use the Nutcracker themselves. But we are also going to be bringing out a few different twists that you can put in with the Nutcracker for the guys who are rolling the baits themselves and a few old ingredients coming back. We will be looking at particles as well. I am a massive user of the hems – chilled hemp and garlic hemp. I have been using them for

years. We will be trying to bring them out alongside our range as well. It is something that we are looking into at the moment, but I am sure that by the next time I see you we will have much more development on that. Have a good Christmas, Rob, and I will see you soon.

Rob: Have a good Christmas, and thanks very much, Tel. ■



This 8ft long catfish estimated in excess of 200lb was caught whilst fishing for carp on the mighty Ebro at Mequinenza.

The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

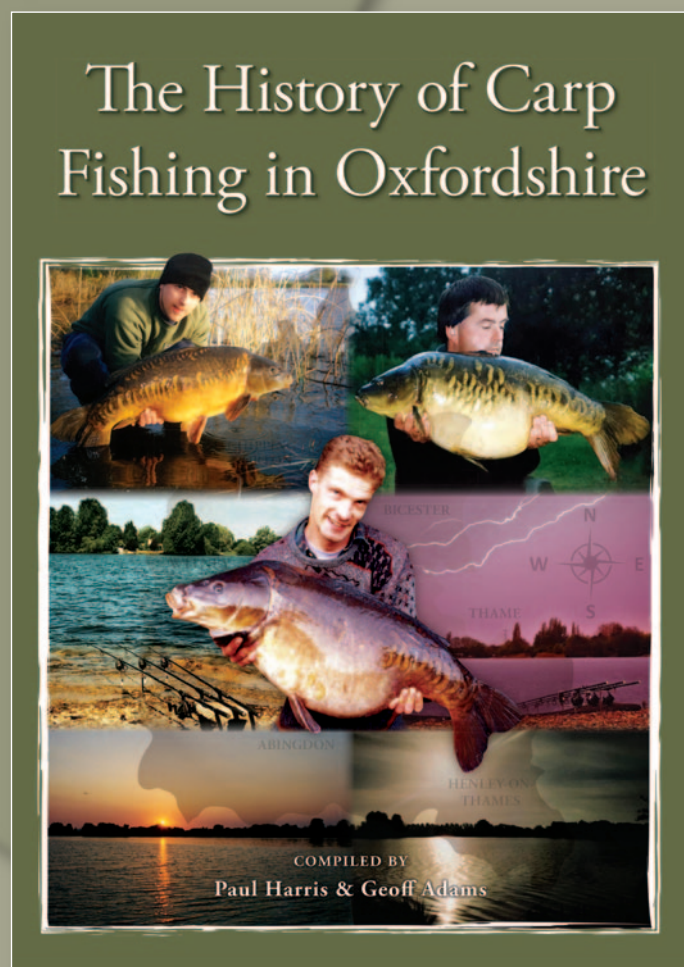
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing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

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

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

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

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



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AVAILABLE THIS AUTUMN

Park Lake Gem – Seeking Shadows/Search For A 30

By Lewis Richards

My New Year's resolution for 2015 was to achieve my long term angling goal, to catch a UK 30lb carp. I thought long and hard on how to accomplish this target, and one lake I knew stood out to me the most. In 2014, I fished it fairly regularly, and by putting time in the results soon came, with various 20s gracing my net, with 28lb being the largest – a new PB at the time. Although this lake tested my patience, I soon started to learn the lakebed – it consists of various features, with my preferred swims consisting of gravel bars and weed. Through this, I felt that using my favourite pop-up rig variations was the key to success in terms of perfect

presentation on the lakebed. My choice of pop-ups were a 'high viz' type with my preference being a washed-out pink and white colour. I stuck to my guns fishing close in, as I saw carp regularly cruising about in the clear water and ripping up the bottom with plentiful bubbles. Although at first, it took me time to put the pieces together, I found it all slipped into place with some pioneering.

2015 was the time when I felt I had to hit it the hardest to reach my ultimate goal. I am a big believer of showing tenacity in my fishing, putting the time in and keeping my eyes scanned on the water's surface watching for signs of fish. Due to my demands at college last year, I was not able to start when I'd liked. I was disheartened to say the least to have

not started earlier, but I was soon fishing by the end of March. After a run of blanks, including one session where I got done by a good fish in the reeds, I felt at this point I just wasn't quite on the fish. To many people, this would be considered wounding, but this lake is known to be moody – it contains a sparse stock of fish, which means if you are not on them, a pick up is unlikely.

After further college commitments, I was back on the lake in mid-May. At this point in the year, it was considerably warmer, which meant the fish were moving about more readily. On this first particular session, I headed out, feeling more optimistic due to the temperature change, with a friend. This was a short afternoon session, and the aim was to get that one special pick-up. I flicked my left hand rod



28lb.

**29lb 8oz.**

into the far margin reeds and waited. Within five minutes it absolutely tore off, and after a quick but feisty battle, a tench of around 5lb graced my net. It was not the target species, but it gave me further confidence my rig was performing correctly. I recast my left hand rod to more or less the same area, and almost instantly I was getting line bites. At this point, my excitement levels hit the roof, as I knew some fish were rooting around in my swim. I remarked to my friend, shaking with anticipation, "My rod's going to go any minute now, mate!" As predicted, minutes later, the rod arched round and absolutely screamed off. The culprit was staying deep, and after a hard, full of character fight a lovely mirror graced the surface. I was shaking with excitement as my mate kindly netted it for me. It was a nice result, as I hadn't got a good bend in the rod for a while. It was a lovely 19lb half linear, a nice way to open my account in the spring of 2015.

All the sessions after this stunning 19 were very productive, with a fair few 20s scattered in. I arrived at the lake on another particular session, and it was lashing down with rain. It

was hard to look for cruising fish, but a few were crashing out, which was good enough for me to get a rod on. I cast towards these fish and presented my rig on a nice gravel bar. As the rain continued to lash down on my brolly, I still continued to have my eyes fixed on the water's edge. After 20 minutes of my left hand rod being on this spot,

I suddenly saw a fish top right on it. Only ten minutes later it absolutely screamed off, and after feeling a heavy weight plodding away on the end and a spirited battle, a lump graced the surface, and I was shaking with adrenaline. My mate hurriedly got the net, and trying to keep my cool, I guided her in. I couldn't believe my

**26lb 10oz.**

eyes, as I knew I had a new PB in the net. At 29lb 8oz, I was absolutely buzzing, and I knew at this point I was getting ridiculously close to my target. To top this off later on, I had an absolute one-toner and was rewarded with a bumper 26lb 10oz mirror. This was a real red-letter session, as I managed four 20s and another high double.

I arrived at the lake at 6.30am with my good mate Andy, at the end of July. As the morning mist cleared, the beautiful Park Lake greeted my eyes, and I looked at it with sheer appreciation of what I had achieved from it. This has become one of my best carp fishing gems in all my years of the sport. A few hours in, my left hand rod absolutely one-toned, and the rod had hooped over. I sprinted to the rod hurriedly and tightened up to it. It was instantly ripping line of the spool, and it was almost like the clutch was singing as I cupped the spool to try

and slow its surging run. As I started to catch up with it in the clear water, it topped, and I knew it was one of the big ones, at least on the same calibre as the 29-plus.

The fish got back down deep as its large tail convulsed, and the battle was absolutely immense! After what felt like several excruciating minutes of watching this prize fighting on the end of my line, I managed to get her head up and guide her towards the waiting net. As she topped for her final lunge, I was shaking with sheer terror and at the same time feeling the most insane adrenalin rush imaginable! I was a nervous wreck to say the least, as she plodded a couple more times, and Andy, having watched the battle to the same extent as I had, was in a similar position as his eyes were fixed on the biggest UK carp he had ever seen in the flesh.

The fish slid beautifully into the net as Andy secured her and rested her in

the margin. He popped the net safely down and firmly shook my hand, wishing me congratulations. I took a minute to calm down, as Andy and I gradually got the sling ready to pop her on the scales. I broke down the net and carried the fish in the soft mesh to the mat – it felt a proper lump.

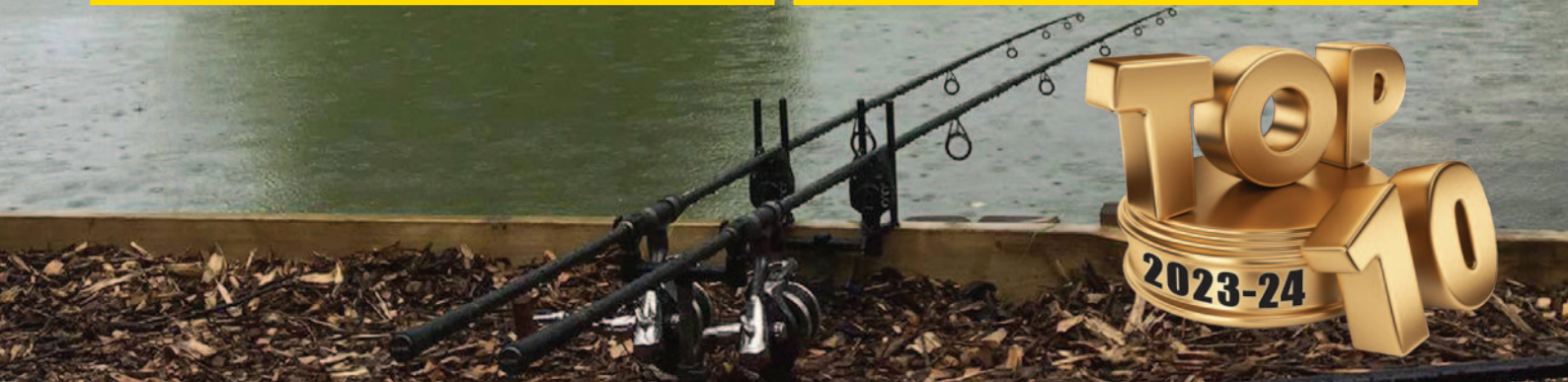
When I popped her on the mat, I saw my size 6 BMG Curve hook absolutely nailed in the huge bottom lip. I quickly nicked it out, and with a safe transfer to the sling, Andy did the honours. The scales flew through the 20lb bracket and settled on a staggering 30lb 4oz – I was in disbelief! I had achieved my long time angling goal, and it just shows how putting some time in and doing your pioneering can pay off to accomplish your goal. I couldn't have asked for more that day, but I continued on to catch eight other fish to 23lb-plus – another red-letter day! ■



30lb 4oz.

BIG CARP TOP TEN

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A Year in Carp Matches

By Barry and Ben Oconnor

Casting into the sunset at Barston.

Ben and I have been competing in carp tournaments for many years now and have been very successful at it. Our trophy cabinet is testament to this. No one has a CV in carp tournaments that is better than ours. We started fishing carp matches as a pair in 1998. Firstly we competed in the British Carp Angling Championships and then the World Carp Classic in France. Ben was 15, and I was... well, younger. In the early years it was not uncommon to have twenty-plus competitors in a qualifier and forty-plus in the final. Now it's usually only twelve. The match scene has got noticeably more popular over the years. There are so many carp matches around now that you can pick and choose which ones you want to enter. Entrance fees cost from around one hundred pounds to over four hundred pounds. The big prize money of some of the matches usually means qualifiers and semi-finals before you get to the final. It can take up quite a bit of your time and money when entering these matches if you take in to consideration practice sessions as well. Becoming more popular

(Top) Jason Budd of the Ashima Carp Championships and Colin Taylor from Anglers Charity Auctions presented the cheque.

(Right) Keep it simple.

(Below) A nice 23-plus mirror caught in the Loggies Car Cup qualifier.

(Below right) Spombs are a must in tournaments.



are the 48-hour matches. Anglers can choose which ones they want to compete in and not get tied down to a lengthy campaign. We run our own 48-hour matches at Cottington Lakes, and they are very popular.

Ashima Carp Championships

Our 2016 match year started at the end of April when we went to Broadlands for our qualifying heat in the Ashima Carp Championships. Having fished at Broadlands many times before, we were pretty clued up on swims etc. In fact we'd won the British Carp Angling Championships final in 2012 at Broadlands. So we knew our way around the lake. The top four in this qualifier would go through to the final. We arrived early so we could have a good look at the swims pegged in the match. Our list



of swims was completed and all we could do now was wait for the draw. Although we came out seventh in the draw we still managed to get our first choice swim. The reason we picked the swim was because it was quite snaggy and snags usually mean carp. You have to fish carefully near snags though. Our hookbaits were placed





near to the snags but not in them. The reels were locked up so line could not be pulled from the spools and the rods were placed in snag bars to stop them being pulled in. With the rods set up like this, when you get a take the rod will bend and the alarm will sound but the carp can't get back into the sanctuary of the snags. Using pink pop-ups and rigs we've used before at Broadlands, it wasn't long before

we had our first carp on the bank. We had five carp in the match for 71lb 12oz, which was enough to put us in third place and into the final in October. TOP TIP: When fishing near snags use bowstring tight lines and four-ounce leads.

Loggies Carp Cup

At the end of May we entered our second match of the year. It was on

Loggies Lake in Kent. We hadn't fished Loggies Lake since 2007, and unfortunately we just didn't have the time to do a practice session there. We turned up on the day, walked the lake and made a list of swims. We came out second in the draw but because of a cock-up (someone wasn't on the list) the draw had to be done again. Obviously we weren't happy about it but what could we do. Having got our second choice swim in the first draw, to beat that we



(Top) UK Carp Championships Singles qualifier at Barston.

(Left) The biggest carp caught in the UK Carp Championships Final on Brasenose 1 was this 38lb 10oz.

(Above) Two markers are better than one.

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

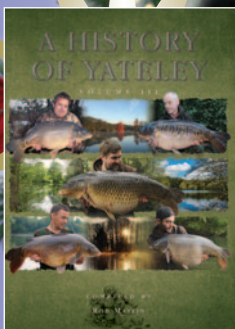
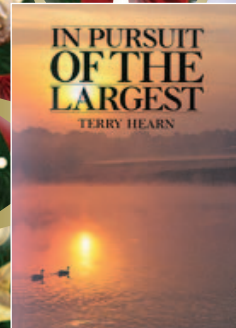
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Further off Beaten Track

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1. Tie a leader to a flexi ring swivel.



2. Get a tail rubber and slide it down the leader towards the swivel.



3. Push the free end of the swivel into an inline lead.



4. Bring the leader over the lead and push the tail rubber tightly on to the plastic stem trapping the leader. Pull the leader so it's tight.



5. Tie a hooklink with a loop on the end.



6. The loop should look like this.



7. Put an anti-tangle sleeve on to the hooklink with a baiting needle. The pointed end of the sleeve should be facing the hook.



8. The loop on the hooklink now hooks on to the flexi swivel ring type swivel.



9. Pull the anti-tangle sleeve over the flexi swivel. This will stop the hooklink coming off on the cast.



10. The completed inline drop off system. When playing a carp the swivel will be pulled out of the lead and the lead will drop off the line or leader.



would have to come out first. The second draw commenced, and would you believe it our names were the first out of the bag. Lady Luck was certainly watching over us that day. We'd now got our first choice swim. The peg was at one end of the lake where we had far margins, reeds and open water to cast to. Ben fished on the right and cast to the far margin and I went on the left and cast to the reeds. We fished our usual short hooklinks combining them with Wafers and small web bags. It was very hot and noticeable that a lot of carp had migrated to the opposite end of the

lake to where we were. Had we chosen wisely? A couple of carp had been out before we troubled the marshals with a nice mirror Ben had caught. It weighed in at 23lb 12oz. The match ended with several competitors managing to catch despite the heat. We had seven carp with the 23lb 12oz mirror being the biggest. This put us in to second and secured our place in the final in September. TOP TIP: If possible always have at least one practice session. You can learn so much from it.

UK Carp Championships Singles

It was now August, and Ben was competing in The UK Carp Championships Singles qualifier at Barston Lake near Birmingham. I went along as Ben's runner. The qualifier was forty hours in duration. Both Ben and I need no introduction to Barston



Lake, as we've fished there many times in carp matches and won a few. We caught over one thousand pounds of carp in a previous match at Barston. It was the second time in a match that we did that. The first being a Carp England qualifier on Drayton Reservoir where we had 1776lbs of carp in 48 hours. At the time it was a world record. Ben didn't fare well in the draw having come out second to last. He was happy with the swim he chose though. At the beginning of the match Ben put out four kilos of boilies around his marker float with a throwing stick and kept it topped up at intervals. It wasn't long before Ben was into his first fish. Most of the carp in Barston are doubles, and this one was no different. After

(Top left) Another 30-plus for Ben in the UK Carp Championships.
(Top right) Snags always hold carp.
(Below left) UK Carp Championships Final score sheet.
(Below right) Ben Smeeth the fishery manager at South West Lakes Ltd and Simon Pomeroy, owner of Pallatrax, presenting us with the winners' cheque.

ukcarpchamps.uk

UK Carp Championships - 14TH - 16TH OCTOBER 2016 6PM - 10AM

GRAND FINAL

NUMBER OF COMPETITORS - 32

Competitors	Name	Peg	No of Fish	Total Weight
1	BENNY O'CONNOR	14	30	446LB 12OZ
2	MAX HUBBARD	23	20	391LB 12OZ
3	STEVE BLOW	21	19	344LB 10OZ
4	JAYE CAMPBELL	22	16	313LB 8OZ
5	JAMIE LONDERO	10	12	279LB 8OZ
6	AJ COLLIER	20	11	206LB 3OZ
7	ROBERT BURROUGHS	17	7	149LB 10OZ
8	BRION BURY	16	4	102LB 8OZ
9	LAM HODGES	6	4	67LB 12OZ
10	BRAD GREENING	27	2	47LB 4OZ
11	ANDREW GRANT	26	1	26LB 11OZ
12	KARL PALMER	4	1	25LB 3OZ
13	PAUL WATERMAN	11	1	18LB 10OZ
14	CHRIS DONOHUE	8	1	16LB 7OZ
15	BEN ANDREWS	13	1	14LB 9OZ
16	PERRY HARRING	2		
17	NEIL RICHARDS	19		
18	MATTHEW SMITH	7		
19	KEVIN HAYWOOD	9		
20	TERRY BOURGONIAN	16		
21	NICK LONGPHE	5		
22	THOMAS PRICE	25		
23	BOB ANDERSON	15		
24	TIM HICKINBOTTOM	28		
25	MITCH ANDREW	31		
26	BEN LAPHAM	24		
27	DARRENE CHEN	12		
28	JOHN BELLER	29		
29	TOM GIBSON	3		
30	PAUL HANLEY	32		
31	ANDREW GRANT	26		
32	BRIAN BYFORD			(NOT FISHING)





catching several carp, Ben began to pull away. He went on to catch 56 carp for 514lb winning his section and claiming a spot in the final in October. A simple rig with a boilie and web bag of chops attached did the business in this match. TOP TIP: Don't overcomplicate things. A match is not the place to be experimenting with rigs and bait. Use a simple rig and a trusted bait.

Thames Valley Carp Masters

The Thames Valley Carp Masters was held on Brasenose 2 at Linear Fisheries in September. This is a yearly one of match with a first prize of £1500. Once again the walk, the talk and the list compiling of the swims preceded the draw. Again the draw wasn't favourable to us, and we came out way down the list. The swim we chose was our seventh choice. Although we were in the general area

that we wanted to be in, we thought we might be just off the going spots. There was plenty of weed in the lake, and our swim was no exception. The best bait to use on Brasenose 2 is maggots if allowed. Out went two markers and a gallon of maggots was Spombed between them. Using two markers is something we do in a lot of matches. It gives us an area to concentrate on. All the rods including spare ones are then clipped up to the area between the marker floats. We'd made up several maggot rigs for this match. Because of the weed we decided to use a drop off lead system. It's constructed in a way that if a carp weeds itself up the lead will drop off and give us a better chance of landing it. It's easy to construct as you'll see in our step-by-step guide. All was going well and we were in the lead. That was until the anglers to our left kept wiping us out with hooked carp that were kiting in to our swim. It

happened thirteen times! There was no excuse; it was just bad angling on their part. The funny thing is, they thought we were in the wrong for complaining! Anyway we went on to win the match with 395lb of carp and pocketed £1500 in prize money. TOP TIP: Maggots are expensive. Bulk them out with groats and rice; it's cheaper.

Pallatrax Carp Open

Continuing in September, South West Lakes Ltd in conjunction with Pallatrax hold the Pallatrax Carp Open on Upper Tamar Lake in Cornwall. Upper

(Top left) In 2012 we won the British Carp Angling Championships.

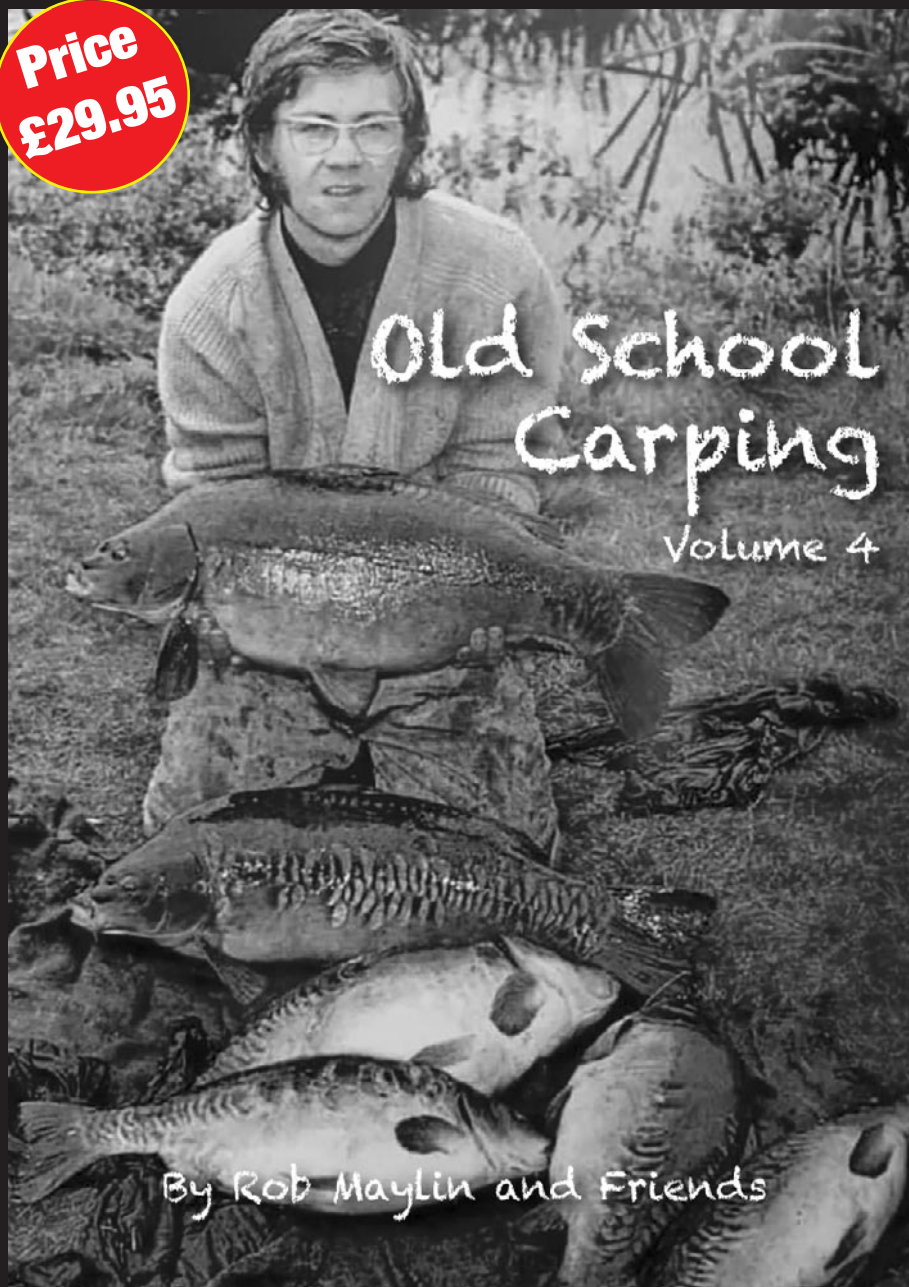
(Top right) One of the carp that helped to win the Ashima Carp Championships final.

(Bottom left) Some of the winners' cheques we were presented with.

(Bottom right) Warm clothing like these Jack Pyke smocks will keep you warm.

OLD SCHOOL CARPING VOLUME 4

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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, Snapchattling, wannabe blogger's world we find ourselves in.

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

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

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

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

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Tamar Lake is eighty-one acres in size and is the biggest lake we've competed on in England. It takes us over an hour to walk around it to check the swims. We eagerly awaited the draw and was surprised when we came out of the bag first. Our chosen swim was at the far end of the lake

(Top) We had some double takes in the Thames Valley Masters.

(Bottom) This thirty was caught in the Thames Valley Carp Masters.

from the dam. In this match all your gear is delivered to your swim. It had been raining hard and there was a lot of mud in the swim. Nevertheless we were happy. Our swim was the last one down our side of the bank so Ben opted to fish a long way down the near margin. I fished the margin to my left. Our tactic was to fish boilies on the hair and put freebies out around them. We always start with a tactic and wait to see how it pans out. If we catch early in the match then

we'll stick with that tactic throughout the match. If it's slow or not working then we'll change things. This tactic started catching from the off so we stayed with it. We put a lot of bait out in this one. Although it rained for most of the match we managed to wrinkle out twelve carp for 118lb 1oz and win ourselves £2000. TOP TIP: Spool up with some thin line in case you have to cast a long way. We used 8.7 kg Ashima Gangster line which is just over nineteen pounds breaking





strain. We don't have to use a leader with this.

UK Carp Championships Singles Final

Late September we competed in the Loggies Carp Cup Final on Loggies Lake in Kent. Unfortunately we came out second to last in the draw and didn't catch a solitary carp. In Octo-



ber Ben was in the final of the UK Carp Championships Singles match on Brasenose 1 at Linear Fisheries. I couldn't be with Ben on this occasion because I would be running our own Elite Carp Masters match at Cottington on the same dates. I did help him to prepare for the match, which is something we always do together. Anyway, he went one way and I went the other. Ben knows a lot about Brasenose 1 and knew where the carp might be during the match. Name after name came out before Ben's name was called. He came out twenty-eighth out of thirty-two competitors in the draw but got his second choice of swim. He went into an early lead from the off using zigs and the maggot rig that had fared well for us in other matches. I spoke to Ben several times on the phone, and he said he was catching consistently. By the end of the match Ben had caught thirty carp including six thirties. The biggest was 38lb 10oz. He amassed a total of 660lb and won the final. He won £7500. I was so proud of him. TOP TIP: Tie up several zigs longer than you need them before going to the match. It's quicker to cut them down to size than to keep tying new ones.

One of Crowesheath's finest at 20lb-plus.

(Top right) Maggots can give you an edge on most lakes.

(Left) Our trophy cabinet tells it all. Ben has all the silverware in his bedroom.

(Right) This spod mix is PVA friendly and contains rice.



Ashima Carp Championships Final

The weekend after the UK Carp Championships we were back at Broadlands for the Ashima Carp Championships Final. We came out second in the draw and went in to a swim we knew very well. Ben took the margins with overhanging bushes and I took the island. The bad weather took its toll on the fishing and we all struggled. Some carp did get caught, and we were lucky to catch three of them for a weight of 54lb 10oz. Pink pop-ups did the business once again. This was enough to for us to win the £2500 first prize. TOP TIP: When the weather is bad make sure you've got good warm and waterproof clothing to wear. If you're cold and wet you won't want to come out of the bivvy. You'll fish better if you're warm and dry. Jack Pyke supply all our winter clothing but there are others.

Deception Carp Cup

In October the Deception Carp Cup was the last match we entered in 2016. We were the defending champions. Ben was at work, so I did the





1. Take a PVA bag and turn it inside out.



3. Pour in enough pellets to just cover the hookbait.



5. Cover the lead with pellets and twist the top of the bag until the bag is fully compressed and tie off using PVA string.



7. Trim off the excess string. Moisten the top of the bag and twist it around the leader. The end product should look like this.



2. Place the hookbait in a corner of the PVA bag.



4. Drop the lead on top of the pellets making sure it sits in the centre of the bag.



6. Press in the bottom corners then fold, lick and stick them down



8. PVA bags are an edge. These were some we made for another match.

draw on my own. I phoned him to tell him we'd come out last and that we were in peg twelve. It took him a few minutes to realise peg twelve was the peg we won it from last year. I hadn't told him that we came out first in the draw. He was well happy and couldn't wait to get there. Our plan was to use solid PVA bags as we had done last year. Solid PVA bags play a big part in our carp fishing whether it's in carp matches or pleasure fishing. They have to be constructed correctly otherwise they won't cast properly, especially if they're going to be cast a long distance. Solid bags are so versatile when it comes to what can go in them.

The smaller the ingredients the better the bag will compact and become more solid. Small pellets, groundbait and ground boilies are ideal. PVA friendly liquids like oil and some dips can also be added to the bag before tying it off. If you follow our enclosed guide you'll create perfect solid bags every time. Ben arrived just after the



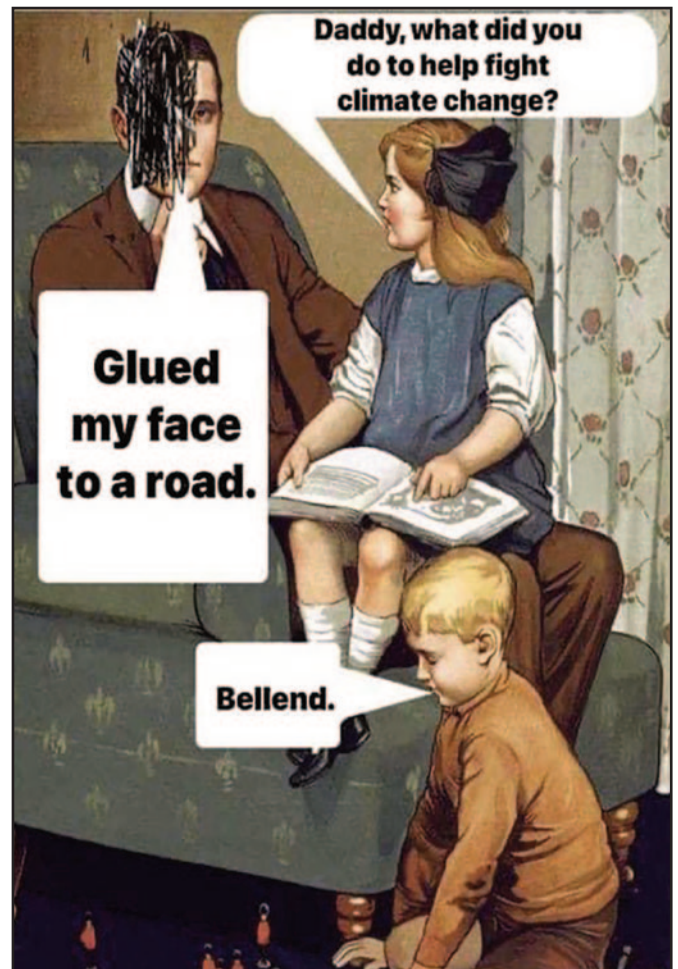
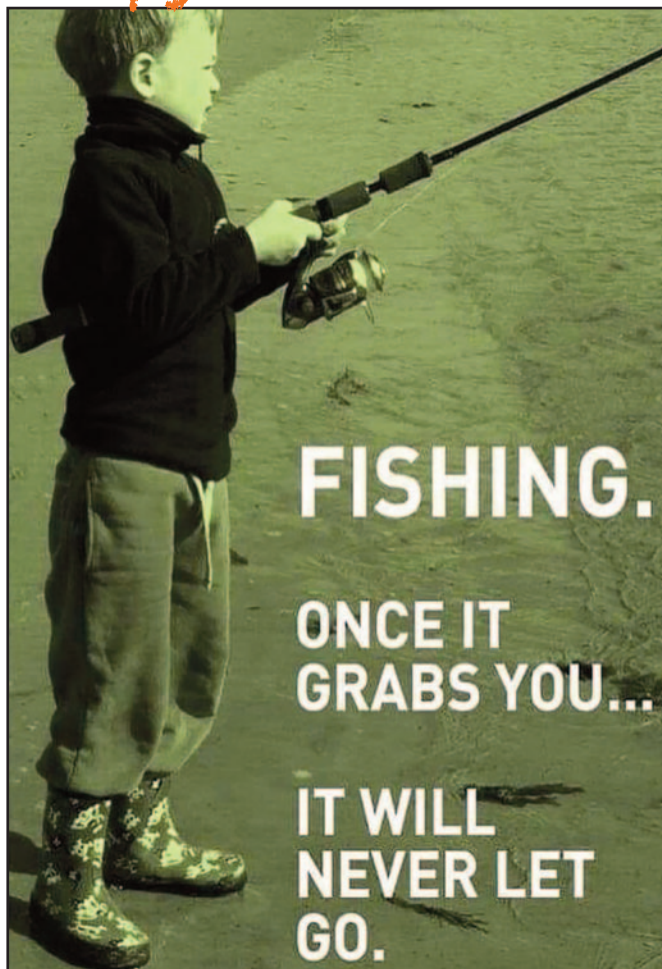
When you're hauling things can become a bit messy.

match started. After a couple of hours we went into the lead. We never relinquished our lead and retained the title we'd won twelve months ago and picked up another £600 in prize money. Our final score was six carp for 84lb 13oz.

TOP TIP: Tie up several PVA bags with leaders on in readiness for the match. It saves time.

We entered six competitions in 2016 and won five of them winning a staggering £14,100. Let's hope it continues in 2017. We'll let you know! ■

Carpy Humour



My Thames Record

By Mark Hedges

I've been fishing the Thames for best part of 20 years, which has seen me land hundreds of carp right up to 29lb 12oz, but never the elusive 30lb one until this year. I had been baiting a certain stretch I knew to hold the odd big fish and decided every effort was going into this particular stretch.

I contacted an old fishing pal of many years, Simon Upperton, and asked if he could supply me with some bait, and he agreed. It was UK Bait Company's Pro-Nut, and boy was I off to a start! After two weeks steadily dropping some bait in off the back of my boat, I created a spot where fish felt comfortable feeding in and that was it! A full blown run saw me land a 36lb fully scaled old Thames warrior. I was thrilled to bits and had achieved my PB for the Thames.

I decided to keep the bait going in, topped up with halibut pellets, which



attracted everything in sight including a 15lb catfish. I was growing in confidence that there was something big in there for me to catch, and just three weeks later I landed a 34lb common and what a fish that was! The one thing Thames carp have in common is that they fight like it's their last moments. They tear off like trains, and having caught carp to 65lb in France I must say nothing equals a scrap with a Thames warrior.

I rang Simon and visited his place of work down at UK Bait Company and fell in love with the smell and texture of their new bait, Tuna Crunch, and I ordered 10kg there and then. I arranged to take an empty spot on a trip to Valley Lakes, but it never came off due to work commitments, so I was all set up for a week on my boat on the Thames. It's a big vessel, F43, and carries all the comforts of home with two big double bedrooms and a



34lb River Thames Common.



36lb fully scaled old Thames warrior.



Holding my first 40lb Thames carp with son Ryan.

60-inch TV, so it beats a bivvy – lol!

I baited up consistently for two weeks, trickling in Tuna Crunch and halibut pellets and some of my old favourite hemp. Armed with my 9ft 3lb test Nash Scopes, my Nash rod pod and Gardner silent alarms, I was ready. The rigs were combi rigs with a stiff fluoro carbon boom of 5ins and a snowman on a 2in braided link tied onto an Advanced Carp Angling size 4 curved shank, which is without doubt the sharpest hook I've ever used.

Two nights into my holiday and all hell broke loose. I had a take, and it was a single note – it just screamed off. I flew out to the back of my boat with my young son Ryan, and the rod was bent over and line was just being ripped off the reel. In what seem like seconds, Ryan got the other rod in out of the way and the battle commenced. Three more 50-yard runs had seen her tire enough for me to get her up to the boat, and Ryan, at 12 years old, was tasked with sliding the net under something that I could see in my head torch to be the biggest fish I had ever caught from the Thames.

After a couple of frantic lunges from the fish, my poor son calmed down, and we slipped her over the



net. I knew something special had just happened – it was humungous! Lifting her up out of the Thames and on to the back platform was a task in itself. I thought the net was caught on something, but it wasn't at all. The fish was massive and so long, and her mouth didn't look like it had ever seen a hook. I set the scales and weighed her three times, and yes, I had done it! I had fulfilled my wildest dream – a Thames 40lb'er, and it was a common!

I just couldn't stop shaking. My wife and her daughter were in total

disbelief; this had suddenly become the best holiday I'd ever had, and it was on the Thames in October, four days away from November.

40.08lb of fighting machine was landed and I was truly the happiness man alive.

Photo taken and all my fishing friends texted and my wife Kate put me in her Facebook page as well and everybody knew the "Hedge" had landed his personal Thames best.

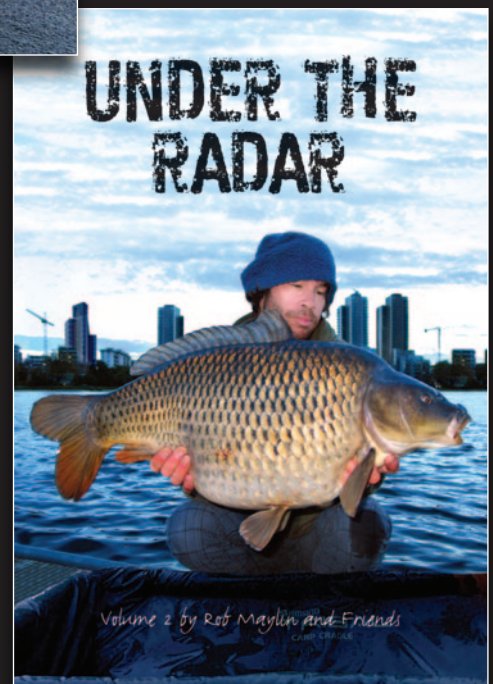
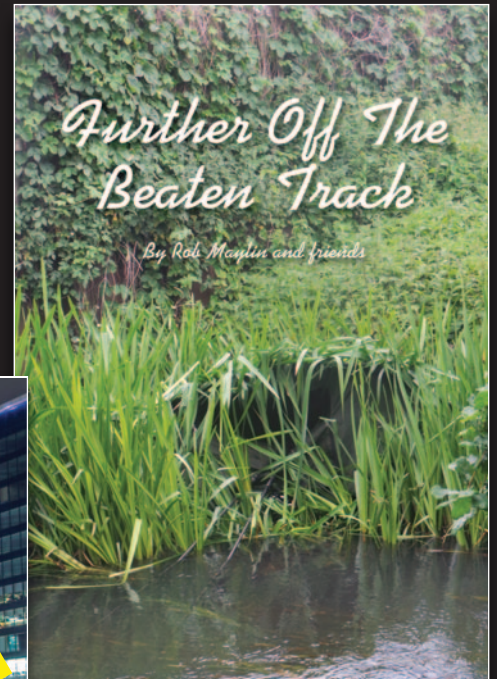
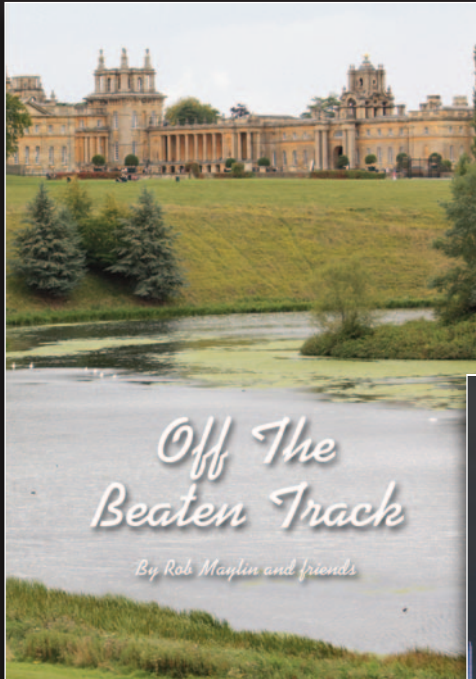
I broke out the champagne and reeled the rods in as this wasn't going to be bettered tonight. ■



My new Thames PB of 40lb 8oz.

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Tough Times Turn Good

By Chris Claxton



During my first season on Swan Valley, I was extremely lucky to nail some of the big girls and get amongst a few fish.

However, that said, as autumn turned to winter, the success turned to blanks. Normally this wouldn't bother me, but the winter was particularly mild that year, and I felt like I could have, and probably should have, put a couple more fish on the bank. Still, I didn't give it too much thought, as you can't win them all.

When I got back at it on Swan Valley in 2016, the carp were still evading me. Tench was about the best I could muster up, and on the whole I was blanking hard. I was becoming slightly frustrated, as I felt like I was angling really well, but it just wasn't happening.

I am never one to get downbeat when the times are hard, but you can't help but start letting things get into your head, especially when others are catching around you, and of course the relentless banter that comes from the boys. This is when you need to stop yourself getting too carried away with things. Don't start tinkering too much with your rigs and ignore what's going on around you – stick to doing what you know works best. I remained positive and kept in mind nothing in fishing is a given – Lady Luck plays a huge part in proceedings.

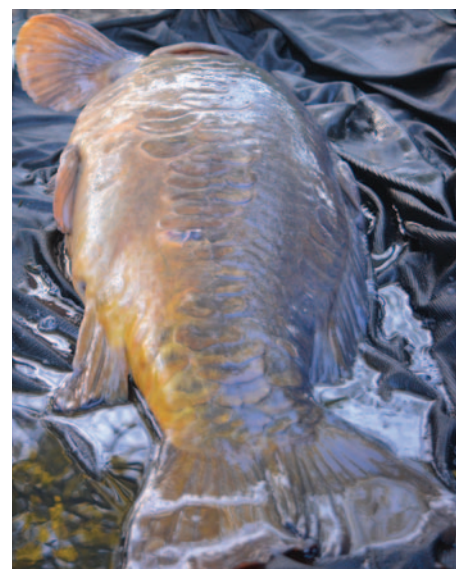


Then came a letter through the post. I had been accepted on Owls Syndicate over at Hollybush Lakes. I have fished the day ticket lake at Hollybush, which really does have some stunning fish in. The fish on Owls Syndicate were rumoured to be on another level, and I couldn't wait to get over there to have a go. The only problem is I was in a slump; I needed to get out of it before starting

the new water. I had to go all out to try and put a fish on the bank.

Now I am normally a two or three-night session angler, but such was the desire to bank a carp before starting Owls Syndicate, I was trying a number of different approaches – overnights, days only keeping mobile and the usual sessions, but unfortunately one thing remained constant – no carp on the bank.

(Top) 29lb mirror.
(Below left) 29lb mirror on the mat.
(Below) 22lb 06oz mirror's scale pattern.





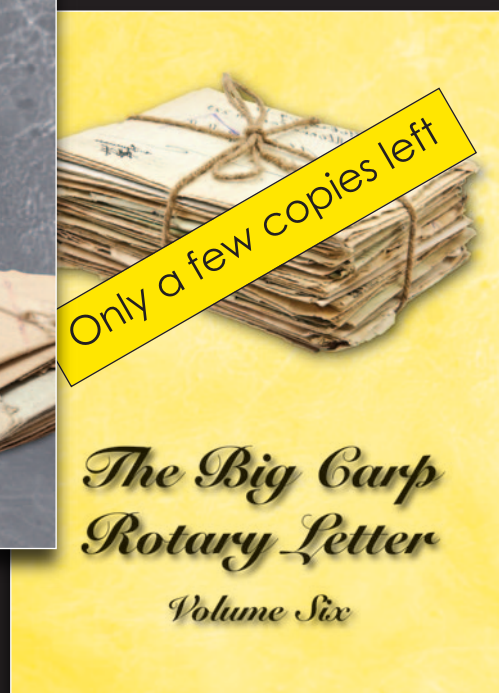
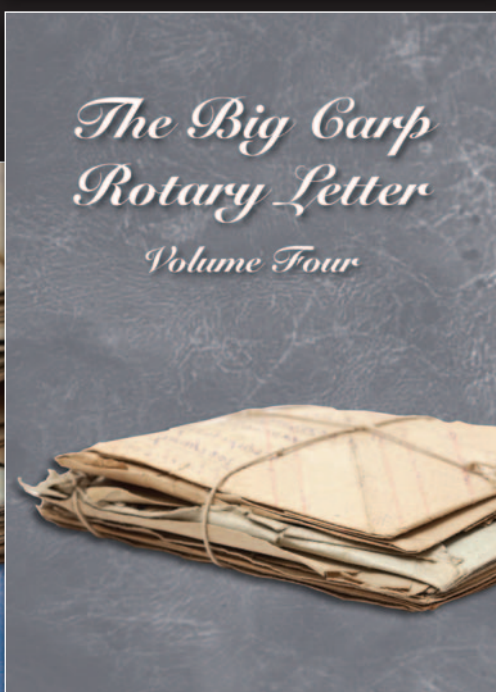
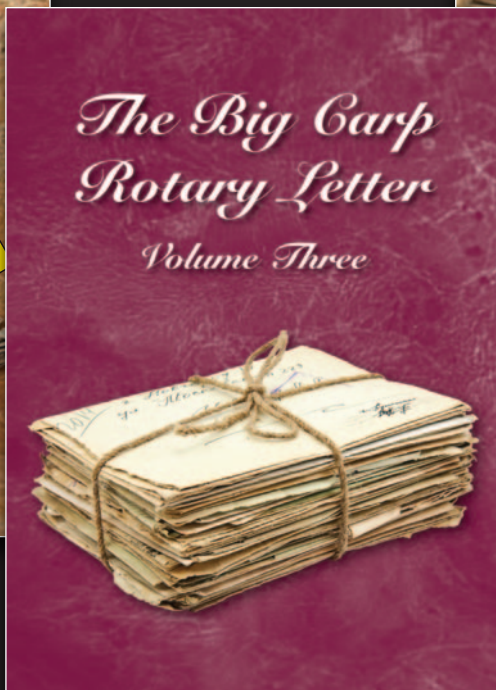
30lb mirror.



31lb 14oz mirror.

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The calendar ticked over to April marking the opening of Owls, unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances I couldn't do a session on opening weekend as planned. The plan instead was to go for a lead about on the Sunday to start to build up an understanding of the water. I will never forget my first sight of Owls Syndicate Lake, a cracking mature lake, overgrown with loads of little islands and channels, something completely different to Swan Valley. This venue was going to present a whole new challenge. I'd heard the fishing was tough, and I could see why – locating the fish was not going to be easy.

I had a walk round and chatted with the new members to get to know them and a feel for the place. By this time my mate Mark had talked me into fishing for a couple of hours rather than leading about, for a quick of a social if nothing else. I wasn't treating it as a chance to catch, more just time on the water getting a feel for it – it was said to be a rock after all.

We settled in a swim called Druids,



as it commanded a lot of water, and with the sun blazing and a slight breeze blowing between a couple of islands, it looked pretty good for it. I flicked both the rods out, one of which was in only about 2ft of water, a rod length or so off the island up to some lilies.

As we sat back and relaxed for a few hours, the end result was almost written in stone before I cast out.

Mark said he was leaving in 30 minutes, and I was going to do the same. Then lo and behold, completely against the script, the rod in the shallows was hit with a savage take, pulling the rod out of the lock-down butt rest, and the reel slammed in to my alarm. I couldn't believe it as I bent into a seriously powerful fish. The rules on Owls states braided mainline only, so what followed was

(Top) Owls – frosty morning.
(Below) 34lb mirror.





36lb 14oz mirror.



Brown Fish 33lb 12oz.

the most heart-in-mouth fight I have ever had. I had almost forgotten what it was like to catch, and I was feeling every knock, bump, twist and turn on the braid.

After a very edgy fight, I finally slipped a cracking old warrior into the net called The Brown Fish, which went 33lb 12oz on the scales and was most likely older than me too. What a way to end the barren spell! I really couldn't believe what had happened; in all my years of fishing, I have never had success as quickly as this on a new water. I was over the moon, and all the blanks before were erased from my mind... temporarily at least.

I decided to stay with mixing up my sessions, and rather than always doing two or three nights all the time, I wanted to get some overnights in also. I had two syndicates to fish after all and needed to squeeze them both in somehow. My next session was a midweek overnighter on Swan Valley, and although I'd had a fish from Owls, the blank sessions were still in the back of my mind. When I arrived at the lake, nearly every fish in the lake must have been in a swim called Weedy Corner. I slipped in there and



**(Above) Mid-20 common.
(Below) Mint scaly.**

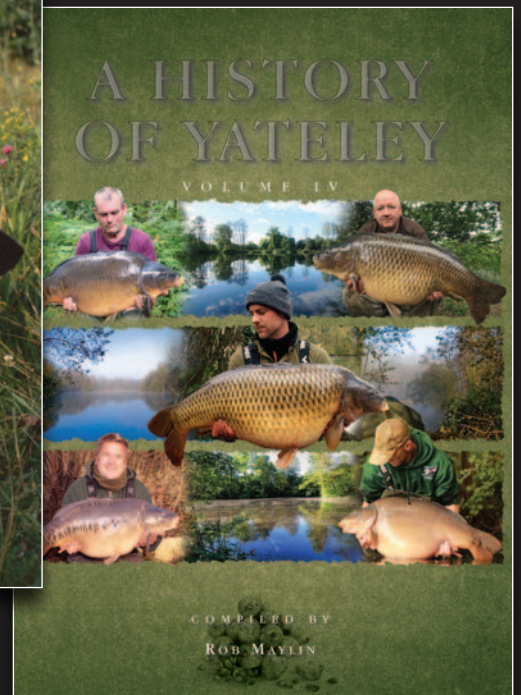
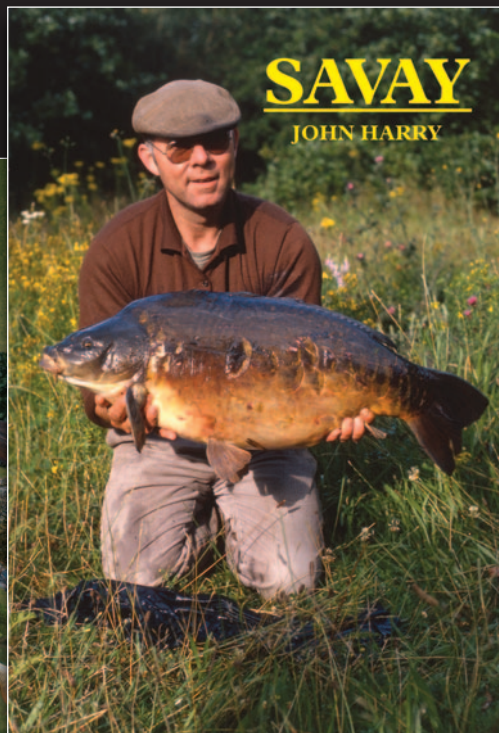
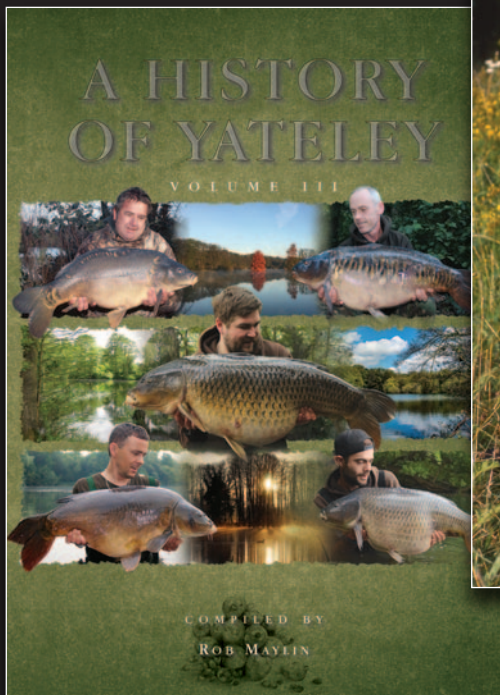
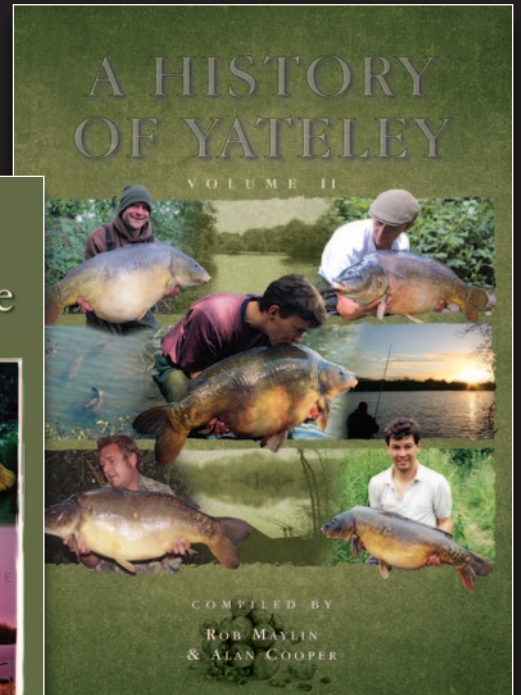
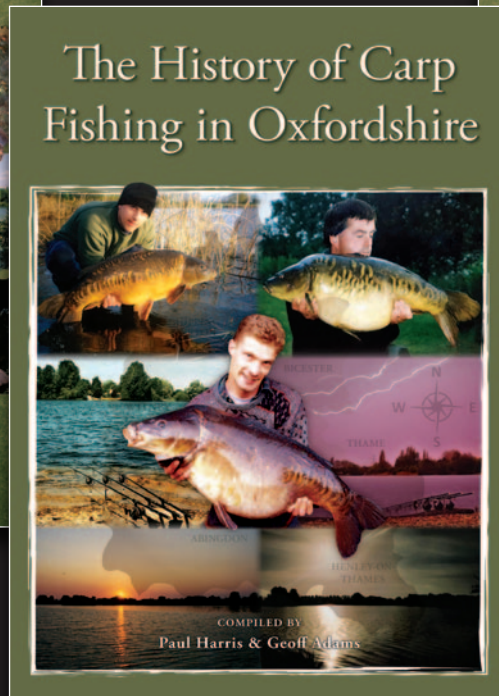
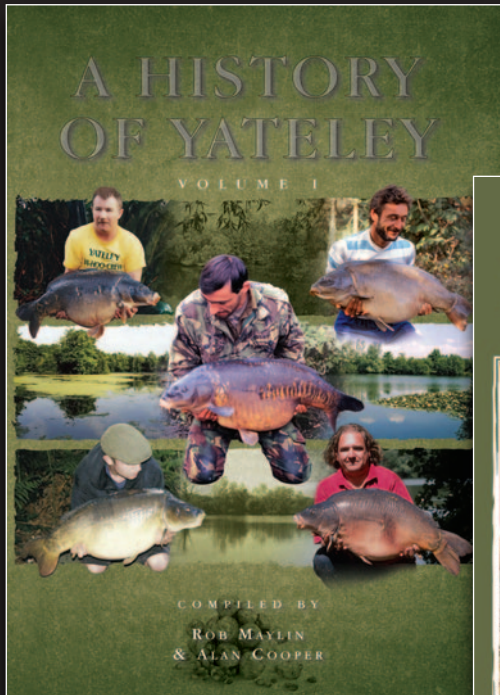
got all the rods out on already known spots. I couldn't help but think if I blanked in here I was never going to live it down. Lucky enough I managed to bank a couple of nice fish, a common of 26lb 6oz and a lovely scaly 22lb 6oz mirror. Finally, Lady Luck had started to swing things in my favour.

Another overnighter ended with a

couple of sprightlier little 20s, but I was now hungry for one of the better fish, and the blanks were already just a distant memory. I had five days off work coming up and had planned to hit both syndicates in the hunt for some of the lumps. Three days passed



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The Gem.



The Long Fish.

on Owls without incident; nothing had come out of the lake whilst I was there, so the going was tough. I decided to move to Swan Valley, and after two nights there it was looking like the worst session ever, and the blanks were firmly back on the cards. On the last morning I had a little blank saver in the way of a mid-double fully scaled mirror – not what I was after, but welcome nonetheless.

I wound in early afternoon on the last day and went for a wander, hoping to find some signs of fish, however I couldn't find anything to fish for. At this point I had almost admitted defeat and had planned to go home. However, once I got back to my original swim, a serious unit crashed on the spot I had been fishing... I couldn't believe it. I quickly picked up a rod and put it out right on the fish. It can't have even been five minutes before it ripped off, and it was easy to tell straight away this was a good fish as it erupted on the surface. The rod was being tested to the max, and the fish weeded me up in no time at all. After a 20-minute stalemate in the weed, it finally came free, and I managed to net it. I was gobsmacked when we lifted her out, and it was a fish known as the Gem at 42lb 4oz. This alone made up for all the tough times. She is a rare visitor to the bank out of the bigger fish at Swan Valley, so I was chuffed to pieces. I had fished four swims across five days on two different lakes, so I had to work hard for this one, making it even more satisfying.

I continued to focus my efforts on Swan Valley after this, as things were going really well, and the thought of catching the Penny Common, which goes over 40lb, was keeping me there. The Penny Common eluded me, but I was landing way more fish than the season before with a good number of 30s, and I managed to bank another 40 called the Long Fish at 40lb 8oz. I was lucky enough to string together a good run and didn't blank again until mid-October. I still managed to get into a few fish between the blanks too and was catching all the way until the end of the year, so the tough times really did turn good, and 2016 ended up being a blinder. ■

**(Top) The Long Fish fixed.
 (Centre) Spring is in the air.
 (Bottom) Upper 20 common.**





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Gold in My Hands

By Chris Thripp



Brogborough, or as others have named it, The Windsurfers' Lake, is set in the heart of Bedfordshire, a windswept, wild place of around 300 acres and a daunting prospect. Most carp anglers (actually any anglers) would pass by in wonderment due to its size and depth and probably wouldn't give it a second thought. One margin on the windsurfer side is 52ft deep with average depths of 12 to 20ft. There is a buried crane in the middle of the lake, full grown trees left after the works were flooded, tree snags everywhere, plus 40ft wide weedbeds top to bottom, some as much as 150ft long, and they are everywhere! There are 30ft deep channels, islands, bays (which would be the size of most lakes), huge bars and massive mussel beds. Fish could be a mile away from where you are, literally, so where do you even begin on a lake of this magnitude? And to top it off, the banks are 20ft high, some straight down to the water, making parts of it unfishable and inaccessible, apart from a few smallish areas on the A421 bank and windsurfers' bank. Most members had access to a boat otherwise there was no chance in hell! And I didn't have a boat!

My wife, Mandy, made a comment that said it all: "Why are you spending this much money on a lake so big with no bloody swims, you idiot?" I couldn't argue with that statement. I will pick that up later and explain why I was even contemplating a lake that was so hostile in every way. Most



of my adult fishing life, I have researched, developed, made and tested carp bait. I learned how to make my own base mix recipes, additives, flavours, juices and dips from scratch. Twenty years earlier, I had developed a particular base mix and an additive/flavour combo that proved to be outstanding on every water I fished, but the trouble with

this was it was the most expensive mix I had ever put together! And that was back in the day when proteins were quite cheap compared to today's prices.

A few years earlier, I had met a bream basher (!) on a previous lake I fished, and he had a well-established business selling pellets. He had seen me haul, not only big carp, but big bream and tench from two swims away. He took a lot of my pictures for me too. When Neil Williamson approached me, he had been asked countless times if he sold boilies as well as the pellets, and as I had been making them for years and knew my bait, after endless tea, biscuits and many nights up talking, a partnership and FF Custom Baits was formed. I tried a few of my cheaper protein and fishmeal mixes, but got very frustrated. We did sell them, and they did catch a lot of fish for people, but I wasn't happy at all. I ummed and



(Top) Broggy view.

(Above) Hard work done, swim built.

(Left) Sunset over a choppy Brogborough.



monster, and I didn't want to know... All that work and effort and no boat... Neil convinced me to go to have a walk around with him and have a look. "Just a look Chris, come on," he said, so I agreed to just look. I kid you not; it took us four hours to walk around it! And you can't just walk around it because of the access! You have to back up on yourselves, go through fields, climb back up onto the roads, back into the fields; it was a nightmare! And I didn't spot any fish at all that day until we finally came back to where we started our trek. I was annoyed by then though!

The banks are very high; some 20ft high, and getting near the water is impossible from all sides. There are swims made on the road bank, but they are few and far between. With my legs cut to ribbons, I made it close to the water's edge – a very reedy area, unfishable, but the first real



intrigue for me. Then going back up the bank I turned... and boom! There they were! I counted six fish moving from a shallow plateau... I could see them swimming back and forth clearly around a row of dead tree snags. Awesome! I watched them for ages, three of them easily in the thirties, but they were milling around on top, not feeding. I was warming up to the idea...

We were there for eight hours that day, and it was time for me to start thinking! I went back a few times,

(Top left) Before the reed clearance.
(Top right) A smile after a 20ft fall.
(Left) Neil raking it in.
(Below) Broggy view.

ahhed over this for weeks, as turning out £3.50 a kilo mixes was not my way of doing it. Neil was happy, his customers were happy, but I wasn't, and Neil knew it just wasn't me. I knew the dilemma was quality, and you can't make a quality mix for £3.50, and that's a fact! But I didn't have the kind of cash to spend on that recipe. We agreed to disagree!

Neil had been writing a book on local waters within a 20-mile radius of his home town, and he talked to me about a lake that once pulled up massive bream, and it had a few carp in it. Also it was a notoriously hard lake due to size and head of fish ratio. "Broggy" was its cuddly name... cuddly my backside! This Broggy was a

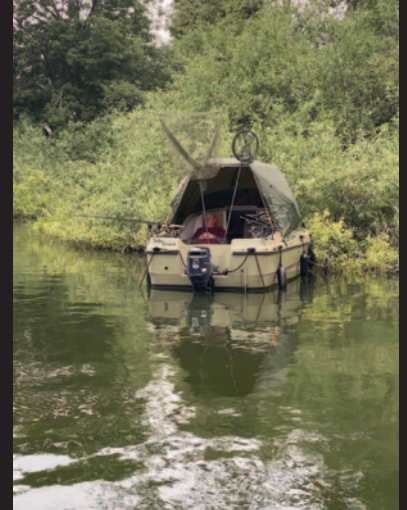


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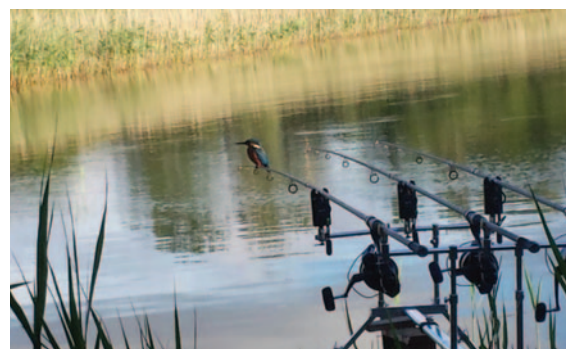
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talked to Bob Jones, the syndicate leader and some of the committee about doing a bait test on there. I was going to fish it hard from the end of May to early September. By mutual agreement I would send my pictures in to advertise their club, and they would allow me to advertise the bait. I was still unhappy about my cheaper mixes, so I made the decision that there was to be no compromise on quality no matter how much it cost. This was going to be a true bait test! My full mix, no dips, tricks, corn or maize... just boilies on their own! My mind was made up, and we made up 20kg of The Thripster Pearl. If I could catch well from here, I knew anyone using it could catch from anywhere! So we were set... Neil was testing a new groundbait for tench and bream, and a juice we designed, and I was testing The Pearl.

Now where to fish? When I tackle a big water, I cut it into sections, almost looking at it like loads of different lakes according to areas. I loved this bay where I had seen those few fish milling around, but had learned from a

committee member who had dived the lake that it was full of cobweb-type matter. It seemed the bottom was undisturbed, and no fish had ever been seen down there – a kind of poison bay if you will. Every lake's got



one! I went down there for another look and thought it would take some serious work, but we could build two swims by tree cutting, getting in the water to cut down the reeds and cutting in some steps so we could get our gear down the sheer bank. It was a daunting prospect, but we got permission! It took us every day for two weeks to build two swims! We put a 30ft platform through reeds just to get to open water for Neil's swim and mine boasted a 10ft platform.

We both knew also once swims were built and ground levelled, the reeds would keep growing, so we would be raking reeds on a weekly basis. It caused a serious amount of laughs and piss-taking from the other syndicate members! We were both exhausted, cut, bruised (I had fallen 15ft into a thorn bush, and Neil had messed his arm up sawing trees) we



(Top left) 28lb 6oz old stock Brogborough.

(Top right) At least someone is catching today.

(Right) Nice Broggy common for Bill.



put in some serious work, and finally, it was emotional when we finished, and we hadn't even put a line in.

We then dragged our gear down to the swims and set up. Quite an excit-

ing time! All that hard work done! Then down came two of the syndicate members, ripping the piss and telling us we are in "No Fish Corner!" We just looked at them... after all that



work and effort!! I suppose you can imagine what I was thinking, but I held my tongue that I had seen those fish, and as I always do in those situations, I just walked to my rods and tapped them three times! They would talk for me! They did inform us there were a few top boys on the lake filming this season – Dave Lane and Paul Forward. I thought nice to be on the same lake fishing with the big boys. In my diary I had written my first words. "Neil and me sat having our first brew... what a fantastic test for the bait! I am in No Fish Corner!" We had been informed there were a lot of fish seen at the Windsurfer end, and that's where all the anglers were bivvied up. If I could have just a few fish out and attract them into this bay a mile away, what an achievement for The Pearl that would be! And I only had 20kg to last me four months on and off of hard fishing. We still had to make bait for orders, and I was out most of July because I was getting married!

I had noticed, having a sneak peek around the lake, all the other anglers were out in their boats, dropping leads and bait 250-350 yards into the abyss, and if they had runs fishing



(Top left) Bill Mann 30lb-plus Brogborough.

(Top right) Common.

(Left) 39lb 8oz Brogborough and Ampthill record.



Great mirror from Broggy for Bill.



Bill with a good mirror.

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Brogborough mirror.

through and over all of those weed beds and bars, they would jump straight into the boat, go to the fish and play the fish under the boat, so to speak. This wasn't my style of fishing at all, but each to their own! In my experience on any lake with any open water, most fish patrol the margins/marginal shelves and under overhanging trees. I fished 40ft out, one to that plateau, one to a sloping bar just off the snags I was telling you about earlier, and the third rod 10ft closer in, down the middle, just short of a weedbed. I use 1oz leads for all my fishing, so before fish go through the weed they normally come up to the surface quicker, giving you more of a chance. Heavier leads in my experience tend to go down and drag you through the weed.

So a few days went by with nothing showing. I put a kilo of bait over each and what I call my MK pattern (Milton Keynes). I imagine three roundabouts, that's where I put my hook baits, then straight roads leading to each roundabout. I also bait up so all bait leads to my (roundabouts) baited areas. It's



Fully-scaled for Bill.

worked for me in so many lakes I have fished, and I work in triangles, two long and one 10ft shorter down the middle (if features allow), as I love to fish in bays, and there's always one rod at least in the margins.

The first fish came on the fifth night out of the blue – a 31lb common followed the next morning by a 25lb common and then a 28lb 8oz old stock Leney. It went from there! On some days I was having six runs a day! It was unbelievable! Admittedly, I was losing a lot of fish due to snags and mussels, but I was having a lot of runs, which made up for it. Nothing bigger that month, and I was averag-

ing almost a run a day at one point, which for Broggy is amazing! It went dead for a week, and I left for a long period due to getting married and going on honeymoon. On my return we made up the bait orders, and I was back on it. Another few days passed uneventfully... Then, Boom! I had a 39lb 8oz mirror! The following night I had a 33lb common. We fished through on and off until late August then moved to the opposite end on the other side of lake. I had another 11 runs, including a 32lb common and an oil painting of a mirror ending my time on there with 51 runs and 35 fish banked. The 39lb 8oz is still the lake

and club record. Only one person, Billy Mann came to see me during my time at Broggy. He ended up testing the baits for me on various lakes. I gave him a test fishmeal called The Thripster Cobra, and he had 30 fish in a season. This year he took The Pearl on Broggy for the first time since I was on there. He did a two-day session and had a 26lb'er and his first 30lb common.

Summing up, I can't tell you how emotional the experience was on that lake. It's an experience that will live with me forever, and from the start, I knew I had gold in my hands when I created The Pearl. ■



31lb.



Large Broggy common.



33lb 6oz.



32lb 6oz.

A person wearing a green hoodie is seen from the back, sitting on a grassy bank and looking out over a calm lake. Two fishing rods are propped up on the bank in front of them. The lake is surrounded by trees with green and yellowing foliage, suggesting an autumn setting. The sky is clear and blue.

Sutton at Hone Lake 2

By Matt Byron

It is now my second season on Sutton at Hone lake 2 (Devon Road), a days-only venue where fishing is permitted from 4am till 10:30pm. As I sit here writing this, looking back on the season so far, I would have to say that it has been a mixture of emotions. Spring and summer were hard going, and due to personal circumstances, I really struggled to get some consistent time on the bank. Couple that with some of the most wary carp that you could fish for, and results were never going to be great – one lost fish due to being cut off was as close as I got to any kind of reward!

However, I was not going to give up, and in the back of my mind I knew that I still had the autumn months to come and hoped that my situation would have changed and that I would have a bit more free time for angling. It was simply a case of keeping in tune with the place and putting some consistent time in, and I was confident that I could turn things around. After all, Sutton has some really special fish: the Peach, Jackson's, Big Fully and Cluster in particular are



known to make an appearance around autumn time, so there was still plenty to play for. I remained optimistic.

Before I knew it September had arrived, the leaves on the trees were starting to fall, and I was finally starting to get down there more. Even when I wasn't able to fish, I would at least have a wander around looking for signs of carp. Now was the time, and if I was going to turn my season

around then keeping in touch with the place was going to be key. Looking back, I think my next two morning sessions proved to be pivotal moments, moments that were to completely change my season.

It was now mid-September, and there were fewer anglers on Sutton by now, which was great. I was coming to the end of a morning session, and I was looking out across the lake when all of sudden I saw a huge carp rise

27lb 8oz common.





from the depths, the sunlight glistening off its head and thickset shoulders. A loud splash followed, which sent a large bow wave rolling out across the pond! Typically this was as I was due to leave.

Just as I began to vacate the swim, I heard an almighty splash, and looking where the ripples were coming from, it was clearly on the same spot,

so this was definitely an area worth keeping an eye on.

Two days later, and I decided to do a morning before work, but the weather was completely different to that calm sunny morning when I saw that immense carp show itself. It was windy and raining, and standing under a tree at 4:45am, I was definitely questioning my sanity! Another

blank session ensued. However, I was walking back to the car feeling tired and soaking wet when another carp crashed out, right in the same area that I had seen that carp on my previous visits. I drove to work thinking to myself that it cannot be a coincidence, and with the weather set to remain consistent for at least the next few days, I was convinced that not only were carp residing in this area but they may continue do so providing they were not disturbed. Nobody else had witnessed these shows, and the swims that were seeing attention were not going to affect this area at all.

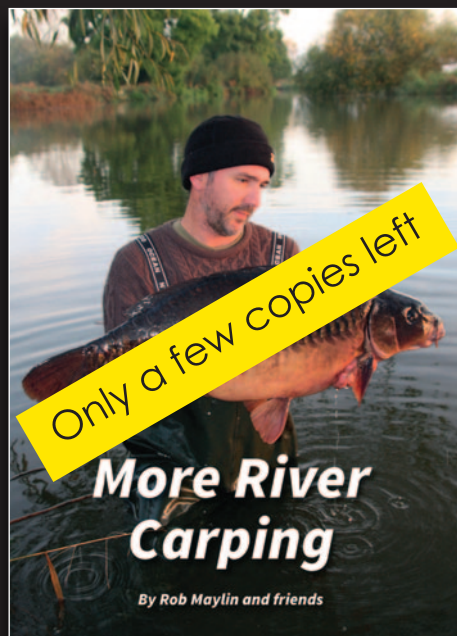
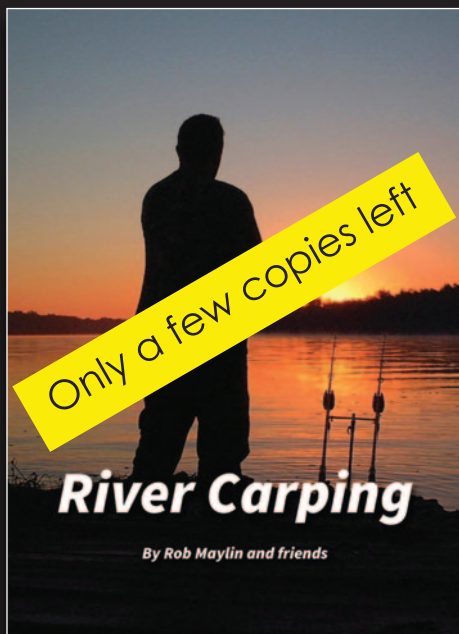
I returned the following evening for a walk around. I stood in a swim that would give me access to the areas where I had been seeing fish show, and although no carp were spotted on this occasion, it felt right, and I knew that this was where I wanted to be the following morning. So I was back on the gate, ready for the 4am start, and quickly and quietly I put the baits out. The traps were set, and I was

30lb 10oz common.



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feeling confident. I sat there sipping a hot cup of tea watching a group of mallard ducks having a tear up on the far bank in front of a swim called Back Pads, and they were making a lot of noise! Just as I thought to myself how lucky I was not to be fishing over there, the Stow bobbin flew up and hit the rod, the line pulled out from the clip and the alarm and spool went into meltdown on my left hand rod!

I lifted into a powerful carp, and luck was on my side, as I managed to get this fish in quickly without any complications – finally, a result! A big weight had been lifted. It wasn't a massive fish by Sutton standards but a beautiful 27lb 8oz common, and I was chuffed to bits. I now had the confidence boost I needed and was back in the swim a few days later, this time for a full day's session. The morning had passed with no action, but at 9:50pm the fish started to show in front of me, and at 10:15pm the bobbin pulled up tight on my right hand rod, and I found myself attached to another Sutton carp.

This one didn't seem to know it was hooked and was soon wallowing



in the bottom of my net. It was another common, and she went 30lb 10oz on the scales. I was buzzing, and finally things were coming together.

I couldn't stay away from the place! I had to make the most of it while it was happening for me, and I was soon back for an evening after work. The evening was very similar to the last. All was quiet with no signs of carp, but as 10pm approached, the lake once again came to life, fish started to

show, and when I looked at my phone it read 10:18pm, and I was beginning to think about packing away when my left hand rod tore off with an absolute one-toner! This fish really wasn't happy and was really giving me the runaround. I had no choice but to be firm what with an overhanging tree to my left with sharp gravel underneath, I could not allow this fish to take sanctuary in these snags, as it would be all over.

36lb 8oz common sutton.



After a tense battle, I finally slipped the net under what turned out to be a large looking common! Another common, and they were getting bigger, as this one went 36lb 8oz, and what a stunning fish! I was on cloud nine.

It was four days later before my next session. I left work at The Tackle Box and was greeted by traffic! I was tired, and at one point I really did consider turning around and going home, but knowing that my last two takes came late on, I decided to carry on and head to the lake. I arrived at the lake at around 6:45pm, and by 7:30pm the rods were back out on the spots. At around 8:30pm the bobbin pulled up tight, and my initial thought was that it was a bream.

The Stow then fell off the line under the pressure, and with my head torch on the rod tip, I could see the line was bowstring tight and kiting off to the left. I still however had it in my head that a bream was going to be on the

end, so mumbling to myself some choice words, I picked up the rod and wound down, lifting into something that felt very heavy, followed by three very aggressive head shakes – this was definitely no bream!

Positioning myself as far right in my swim as I could, I applied side-strain and held on, as I had to take every opportunity to gain some line. Then when a huge boil came to the surface just in front of the tree, it was a relief, as I knew exactly where the fish was, but I was now shaking like a rattle. Judging by the sheer amount of water this fish was disturbing on the surface, plus the fact I had now caught a glimpse of a rather large paddle of a tail, I knew this really was a proper one, a typical big fish fight.

On the second attempt the fish slowly drifted over the net cord, and she was mine. When I shone the torch into the net, I was greeted by the awesome sight of a very big common.

I think deep down I knew which fish this was but couldn't believe it. I had two nice guys helping to get the mat into position and my camera ready. Upon lifting the fish out of the water, I could feel that it was really heavy, and when I got her on the mat and uncovered the fish I straight away noticed a distinctive big, heart shaped paddle of a tail.

My suspicions were confirmed, and it was Sutton's largest, the Peach. This stunning common carp went 45lb 4oz on the scales!

What a feeling! A new personal best and a fish that I set out to catch, a truly special creature from a special water. It just goes to show that there is no substitute for time on the bank. After all the frustrations of earlier in the season, a bit of time and effort was all it took, and in future I will try not to put too much pressure on myself. Next on the list is the Big Fully, and I'll keep you posted. ■

The Peach, 45lb 4oz.



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