

# **FEBRUARY ISSUES OF BIG CARP AND FREE LINE MAGAZINES FREE HERE**

**[www.freelinemagazine.com](http://www.freelinemagazine.com)  
or [www.freelinemagazine.co.uk](http://www.freelinemagazine.co.uk)**



**What a Start to The Year by Dan Chappell**  
**An African Adventure (Part 4) by Dave Charley**  
**Advice Around Dropping Water Temps by Luke Vallery**  
**Think Outside The Box! by Luke Stevenson**  
**Winter Watercraft by Darrell Peck**  
**The Kent Obsession by Russ Crisci**  
**Long Range Fishing in Winter by Tom Stokes**  
**Festival Record Broken With 49lb-plus Rosie! by Garth Flynn**  
**A Look Back at 2023 by Steve Briggs**  
**Years End by Mike Jones**  
**Top Tips for Your Winter Campaign by Scott Sweetman**  
**Casters v Maggots by Kevin Diederer**  
**46lb-plus Big Common Tops 23-Fish Linear Haul!**  
**March 2023 by Aaron McIlwaine**

**The Special Old Ones (Part 1) by Vincent Cole**  
**The Tale of How Spotty Got Her Spots by Wayne Taylor**  
**Moments by Mike Jones**  
**Hyde Lane, Lifting the Lid by Paul Harris**  
**Below The Mist by Rory Paddle**  
**Harefield Gold by James Eames**  
**Yateley North Lake by Russell Godfrey**  
**Day Ticket Fishing by Barry and Benn Oconnor**  
**Day Ticket Carpings by Steve Briggs**  
**Approaching Those Hectic Day Ticket Venues by John Cooper**



**ADVERTISING AT REALISTIC PRICES**  
**[info@bigcarpnmagazine.co.uk](mailto:info@bigcarpnmagazine.co.uk)**  
**Over 35,800 email subscribers**



# BIG CARP

## Top Tens!

### Top 10 Day Ticket Carp Fisheries

1	COTTINGTON
2	LINEAR
3	CHRISTCHURCH
4	OAK LAKES FISHERY
5	BLUEBELL LAKES
6	ELPHICKS
7	SANDHURST
8	FRYERNING
9	FARLOWS LAKE
10	COOLE ACRES

### Top 10 French Holiday Destinations

1	IKTUS
2	LAKE BOSSARD
3	LAKE HERITAGE
4	RIBIERE
5	ABBAY
6	LAC ROSE
7	BERNIERE
8	DREAM LAKES
9	LES QUIS
10	JONCHERY

### Top 10 Bait Companies

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

### Top 10 Carp Tackle Companies (Terminal)

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

### Top 10 Carp Tackle Companies

1	DIAWA SPORTS
2	SHIMANO
3	REUBEN HEATON
4	FREE SPIRIT
5	FOX
6	TRAKKER
7	AQUA PRODUCTS
8	KUDOS
9	CENTURY
10	CHILTERN CUSTOM RODS

### 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 331

# **WINTER WATERCRAFT ISSUE**

**Dave Charley  
African Adventure**

**Darrell Peck  
Winter Watercraft**

**Luke Stevenson  
Think Outside  
the Box!**

**Mike Jones  
Years End**

**Russ Crisci  
The Kent  
Obsession**

**Luke Vallory – Advice Around Dropping Water Temps  
Garth Flynn – Festival Record Broken With 49lb Plus Rosie!  
Scott Sweetman – Top Tips for Your Winter Campaign  
Kevin Diederer – Caster v Maggots  
Tom Stokes – Long Range Fishing in Winter  
Steve Briggs – A Look Back at 2023  
Aaron McIlwaine – Linear Haul! March 2023  
Dan Chappell – What a Start to The Year**

**Still the proper carp angler's favourite read**



For custom  
work



As unique  
as you



info@kudostackle.com  
WhatsApp/textTelegram  
07760260148





## Winter Watercraft

Strong winds wrecking the country as I write this at the end of January, I just heard the Essex Carp Show had to be cancelled as the winds last night smashed the venue, the show is now set to take place after this issue comes out, the first weekend in February. Heavy rain and winds look set for the week ahead, I really hope if people are fishing in this that they are super careful.

I have a couple of great magazines this month to get everyone fired up for some early carp fishing this year. Big Carp being a Winter Watercraft issue with loads of tips and tricks to get some February carp in the net. Free Line is a Day Ticket Carping Special with some great articles from Barry and Benn O'Connor, Steve Briggs and John Cooper, everything you need to know to bank some Day Ticket crackers. So, let's have a look what Big Carp has on offer this month.

This month's cover story comes from long term Big Carp contributor Russ Crisci who has a 'Kent Obsession' sounds like this is some water! Steve Briggs takes A Look Back at 2023, Steve is a consistent Big Carp catcher both here and abroad, 2023 was another great season for this prolific catching machine. Speaking of consistent catchers this angler certainly comes to mind, we don't hear much from Mike Jones these days, but believe me he is quietly going about his business behind the scenes, here is just a glimpse of his Years End. Dan Chappell is also no stranger to the pages of Big Carp looks like he is off to a flier in 2024 as he proclaims "What a Start to The Year". Also, this issue Aaron McIlwaine looks back on the capture of a massive common only ounces from 50lb and part of a Linear Haul! this time last year in March 2023. Garth Flynn writes about the Festival Record, Broken with 49lb Plus Rosie! while Dave Charley continues his African adventure. And so, onto the theme of this month's issue. - Winter Watercraft.

Darrell Peck has been smashing the granny out of Grenville this winter, who knows more about winter watercraft than the master slayer? his article does what it says on the tin. Luke Vallory offers Advice Around Dropping Water Temperatures, Scott Sweetman gives us some Top Tips for Your Winter Campaign, Tom Stokes gives advice on Long Range Fishing in Winter, Luke Stevenson says "Think Outside the Box!" while Kevin Diederer discusses the pros and cons of Caster v Maggots.

Add to this lot, all your 'carpy' news, reviews, competitions and our awesome ten-page country wide catch reports and I think you would have to admit these are some pretty fine magazines, plus both magazines are FREE!! yes FREE!! unbelievable but true.

I hope you have been enjoying our two free monthly carp magazines, Big Carp and Free Line, see them both here - [www.freelinemagazine.com](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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*

DOWNLOAD THE 2023 ADVERTISING MEDIA PACK NOW AND SAVE OVER 50% WITH OUR BIG VALUE DEAL:

<http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk/advertising.html>

DOWNLOAD THE 2023 BOOK LIST NOW:

<http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk/advertising.html>

Just click on the cover you require. Email [info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](mailto:info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk) for advertising.

Order books at <http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk/buy-books.html>

### Exclusive

#### 26 What a Start to The Year

By Dan Chappell

#### 36 An African Adventure (Part 4)

By Dave Charley

#### 42 Advice Around Dropping Water Temps

By Luke Vallory

#### 46 Think Outside The Box!

By Luke Stevenson

#### 50 Winter Watercraft

By Darrell Peck

#### 52 The Kent Obsession

By Russ Crisci

#### 58 Long Range Fishing in Winter

By Tom Stokes

#### 62 Festival Record Broken With 49lb-plus Rosie!

By Garth Flynn

#### 64 A Look Back at 2023

By Steve Briggs

#### 68 Years End

By Mike Jones

#### 70 Top Tips for Your Winter Campaign

By Scott Sweetman

#### 72 Casters v Maggots

By Kevin Diederer

#### 74 46lb-plus Big Common Tops 23-Fish Linear Haul! March 2023

By Aaron McIlwaine

### Big Carp Promotions

#### 45 Oak Lake Fishery





Editor/Publisher

**Rob Maylin**  
**Bountyhunter Publications**  
44 Herbs End  
Cove, Hampshire  
GU14 9YD  
tel: 07768 731425  
email:  
bigcarpstudio@hotmail.co.uk

**Design & Production**  
Colin Spray

**Advertising Sales**  
Bountyhunter Publications  
44 Herbs End  
Cove, Hampshire  
GU14 9YD  
mobile 07768 731425

**BIG CARP 330**  
March 2024

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

© **Bountyhunter Publications 2024**

**Front Cover**  
Russ Crisci.



## News & Reviews

### 6 **Shockleader**

What's happening in the carp scene

### 12 **Tac-Tec**

Latest product reviews

- Nite Watches
- Haymax
- Nite Watches



## Advertising Index

Kudos 2 Sharp Tackle/Carp Punk 5 Reuben Heaton 11 Coole Acre Lakes 24 and 25 Black Swan Lake 29 Bountyhunter 34 and 35 Oak Lake Fisheries 45 IKTUS 49 Cottington Lakes 57 Bountyhunter 61 Bountyhunter 77 Bountyhunter 80



SAVE UP TO

**80%**

ON END TACKLE



GET FREE SAMPLES  
FROM OUR  
WEBSITE:

[WWW.CARPPUNK.CO.UK](http://WWW.CARPPUNK.CO.UK)

**CARP  
PUNK**



# ShockLeader

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

## Tom Maker Joins Korda



With the turn of the new year comes a very big and exciting change within my angling, I'm not the best at putting things into words but here goes.

A post of real mixed emotions this one, I have been part of the Fox international family for almost 16 years and have absolutely loved every minute of those years, the opportunities the tackle the adventures and the people who I have been fortunate enough to work with have been simply incredible, but I feel now is the right time to move onto pastures new and to leave the brand to focus on my future and what I think is best for me.

As we roll into 2024 I'm super excited to announce that I have joined Korda Developments (01/01/2024), I have been carp fishing well over 20 years now and something that will be unknown to most is that Korda were the very first tackle company to sponsor me way back before my voice had even broke, as you can imagine this decision wasn't just made at the drop of a hat and for me I have no doubts that it's the right decision, carp fishing isn't just a hobby or a job, to me it's an addiction, something that runs through my blood and I know without the support of the companies and ultimately you lovely people who follow and support

me then none of this would be possible, I know I have said it many a time before but I am eternally grateful to be in this position and can't thank you all enough.

The past 16 years with Fox has been a blast and I wish the company and all of the amazing guys/girls the biggest of love and success, honestly even writing this post is getting me a little emotional so I'm gonna stop now, wherever your angling will take you this year I wish each and every one of you the greatest of success and no doubt I will bump into many of you on the bank!

Big love Tom

Just to quash any rumours before they even start, I have made this decision personally to step away from Fox, it was done mutually and I still remain the greatest of friends with all of the guys/girls who I have worked with over the past 16 years, I will also be continuing my consultancy role and working with Sticky Baits as well as fulfilling my dream of continuing to build and create content for [cinecarp.tv](http://cinecarp.tv).

If for any reason you feel the need to post anything negative, please save your time and keep it for your own social media where only like-minded people will be able to enjoy your humour. ■

## Joining Forces



Very pleased to announce we have joined forces with Carpcrossing as Big Carp and Free Line Magazines increase their presence throughout Europe. Carpcrossing are a considerable force overseas with 200,000 members. Both magazines will now be shared monthly on their social media.

Rob said " Carpcrossing are a formidable force and I have watched their social media presence grow and grow over the years, I have known the boss Ed Skillz for many years and felt 2024 was the right time to get together, I expect that with pass-on our readership will grow in excess of half a million new readers throughout Europe" lookout also for posts from Carpcrossing on our social media too. [www.freelinemagazine.com](http://www.freelinemagazine.com) & Carpcrossing

## Carpy Humour



**The World is going crazy – I'm going fishing!**





## 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:



### ANGLERS AGAINST POLLUTION

## Milestone as 400th water quality testing kit is delivered to Derbyshire fly fishing club

Our Water Quality Monitoring Network project has gone from strength to strength since it launched as a pilot project on the Severn back in May 2022 and has recently hit a new milestone - we've just delivered the 400th testing kit! It was received by the Peacock Fly Fishing Club on the Derbyshire Wye near Bakewell, and pictured with their kits are river keeper Jan Hobot (on the left) and volunteer Charles Maybury.

We would like to thank everyone involved in the Water Quality Monitoring Network. Your commitment has already led to improvements on some rivers and your findings are invaluable in helping us to hold the government and water companies to account.

If you would like to show your support for the Anglers Against Pollution campaign why not buy a Supporter's Pack, T-shirt, cap or hoodie? All profits are used in our fight for cleaner waters to protect fish, fishing and the environment. ■



### MARINE

## Update on Salcombe Estuary netting opposition



We recently published a story relating to Devon & Severn IFCA's open consultation on changes following a review of the Netting and Permit conditions.

Whilst the consultation deals with some additional items, including recreational and commercial netting of the Emsstrom wreck, our focus has largely been on the regressive proposals that would allow a six month netting fishery to occur throughout the entire waters of the Salcombe Estuary.

Anglers keen to know what the Angling Trust will be doing to oppose this proposal and how they can get involved can find more information from our website. ■



## MEMBER OFFERS

### Planning a trip to Europe in the new year? Save 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 ■

## COMPETITIONS

### Applications open for Guru Team England U15 Talent Pathway



Are you good enough to fish for Team England? The Angling Trust and Tackle Guru are on the lookout for the nation's best young anglers to take part in the 2024 Talent Pathway - with places in the England U15 World Champs squad up for grabs.

Applications are now open for talented boys and girls between 10 and 15 years of age keen to take their fishing to the next level and earn the right to wear the Three Lions at the World Youth Championships in Serbia next August.

National Coarse Angling Championships calendar

The Angling Trust's Competitions Team have published an update of the Nationals Coarse Competitions Calendar for 2024-2026. ■

## SHOWS

### Come and visit us at British Fly Fair International



The British Fly Fair International is the premier fly fishing show in the UK offering everything for the fly fisherman, whether a total novice or a seasoned expert.

It's being held across three halls at the Staffordshire County Showground on 10th and 11th February, and the Angling Trust will be there once again - with some great offers for members and non-members! Don't forget to pop along and say hello!

Right now you can save £2 on advance day tickets or £3 on a weekend ticket. ■

## Carpy Humour

**FISHING**  
**IS MY DRUG OF CHOICE.**  
I don't party every night. I don't get wasted,  
and I don't pop bottles.  
**I GO FISHING.**  
I cast as many times as possible,  
and then I cast once more.  
I read fishing magazines, look at lures,  
and organize my tackle.  
Late nights will never compare to  
hitting the water first thing in the morning.  
**YOU CAN HAVE THE NIGHTLIFE.**  
**I'LL TAKE THE FRESH AIR,**  
**THE BEAUTY OF THE OUTDOORS,**  
**AND THE THRILL**  
**OF A SCREAMIN' REEL.**



## TRADE PARTNERS

## Angling Trust members can get head to toe winter warmth with an unbeatable offer from Zerofit

Zerofit - The World's Warmest Baselayer® - is delighted to renew its partnership with the Angling Trust and to celebrate, the Japanese baselayer brand is offering members a special price on its Head-to-Toe Heating System.

When members buy the Zerofit Heatrub Ultimate Baselayer and Heatrub Ultimate Leggings for £110 (£55 each), they'll also receive a pair of and Heatrub Ultimate Socks (worth £25) and a Thermal Bobble Hat (worth £20) FOR FREE! A saving of £45 on the regular price of the Head-to-Toe Heating System. Simply use code DEC23 when you checkout at zerofit.co.uk.

Plus, Zerofit are continuing to honour their existing offer to Angling Trust members – you will receive a FREE Thermal Bobble Hat worth £20 when you purchase any baselayer. Please apply code TRUST23 when you checkout. Developed in Japan, the Zerofit Heatrub Ultimate Baselayer 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. Technologically enhanced 'Heat Threads' inside the garment are activated as soon as you pull it on, gently



brushing against the skin to generate heat instantly. Unlike most other baselayers, the Ultimate does not work on the basis of 'compression for heat' – so not only does it provide greater warmth for anglers, they also don't feel restricted when casting or stretching.

Crucially, the warmth that is gener-

ated by the Heat Threads is retained for the duration of your day's fishing. The Ultimate has been designed to work best in a temperature range of -10° Celsius thru 10° Celsius - the Heatrub Ultimate Leggings and Heatrub Ultimate Socks are made from the same material, and work in exactly the same way as the top. Anglers can complete their look with the Thermal Bobble Hat, one of the most popular items in the entire Zerofit Collection.

Buy a Zerofit Heatrub Ultimate Baselayer and Heatrub Ultimate Leggings for £110 (£55 each), and receive a pair of Heatrub Ultimate Socks (worth £25) and a Thermal Bobble Hat (worth £20) FOR FREE! Use code DEC23 when you checkout at zerofit.co.uk. ■

## Carpy Humour



Look son, another bent pole. We must go and fish by them.



## Farnham Angling Society Mill Lane – Closure with immediate effect

Please note that the fishery is now closed, and will not re-open until further notice, to enable essential maintenance to take place at the fishery.

**The Executive Committee**



## Thames Warrior

**After three years guided fishing trips, I'm starting lessons for anglers who are complete beginners to expert anglers looking to gain new skills.**

Booking a fishing guide or taking fishing lessons can be highly beneficial for several reasons:

- 1. Expertise and Knowledge:** Fishing guides possess extensive knowledge and experience in various fishing techniques, locations, and the behavior of different fish species. They can teach you valuable skills and techniques that will increase your chances of success on the water.
- 2. Learning Faster:** Working with a fishing guide allows you to learn at an accelerated pace. They can provide one-on-one instruction, helping you understand the intricacies of fishing and providing immediate feedback on your technique.
- 3. Discovering New Waters:** Fishing guides are often familiar with a wide range of fishing locations, including remote or hard-to-reach spots. By booking a guide, you can gain access to new and exciting fishing areas that you might not have discovered on your own.
- 4. Equipment and Gear:** Many fishing guides provide all the necessary equipment and gear, including boats, fishing tackle, bait, and safety gear. This can be particularly helpful if you're a beginner or don't have access to specialized gear.

- 5. Saving Time and Energy:** Booking a fishing guide can save you time and frustration, especially when it comes to researching and scouting fishing spots. Guides have already done the legwork, allowing you to focus solely on enjoying the fishing experience.

Remember, fishing guides have different areas of expertise, so it's essential to communicate your goals and preferences when booking. Whether you're a beginner looking to learn the basics or an experienced angler looking to hone your skills, a fishing guide can offer valuable guidance and enhance your fishing experience. ■







**Fine quality fishing tackle  
since 1857**

[www.reubenheaton.com](http://www.reubenheaton.com)

For more on Reuben Heaton, Sportscale & RH brands  
call 01455 293000 or email [info@reubenheaton.com](mailto:info@reubenheaton.com)

Join Reuben Heaton on Facebook for all our latest news

**REUBENHEATON**



**EAGLE CLAW**  
**TROKAR**



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



## Our monthly reviews on products currently on the market

### In this issue:

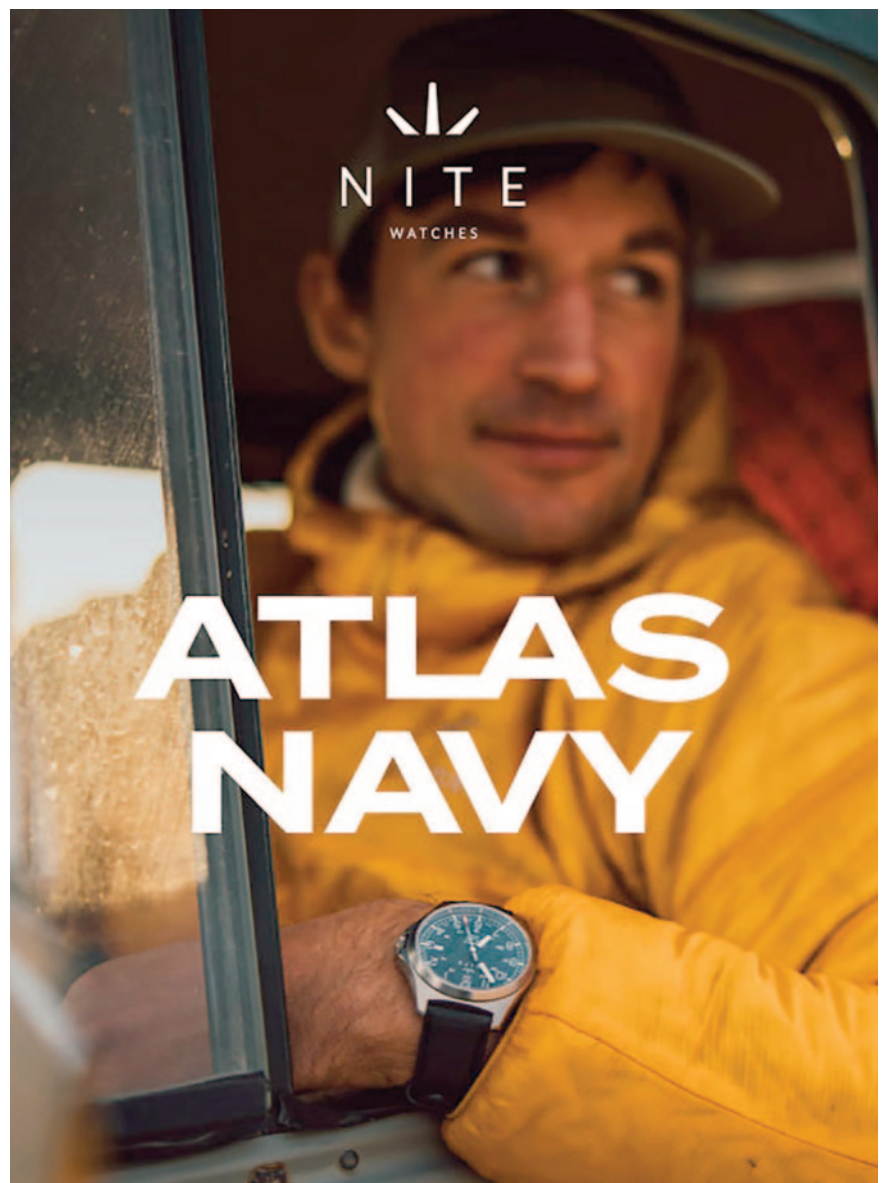
- Nite Watches
- Haymax
- Nite Watches

## PROVEN IN MONGOLIA...

Our automatic field watch, The Atlas, has recently been tried and tested travelling through the vast, breath-taking landscapes of Mongolia. On the wrist of Josh Bakker-Dyos, Royal Navy commando, ultra-endurance athlete and military doctor.

316L stainless, brushed steel case and black hybrid strap, textured Navy Blue dial and sapphire crystal, powered by our Swiss-made automatic movement and lit with tritium illumination so you can tell the time all the time.

Elevate your sense of style with our Atlas Navy timepiece. With its sleek and minimalist dial, this rugged and versatile field watch has been designed for those who value both fashion and function. ■







# ATLAS NAVY KEY FEATURES



£880



## Eight Expert Ways to Help Anglers Cast Off their Hay Fever this Spring

Tree pollen is one of the two main types of pollen which affect hay fever sufferers in the UK. Tree pollen starts in February or March and peaks in April or May. Airborne allergens expert Max Wiseberg explains the body's reaction to the pollen and gives his 8 top tips to reduce the effects of tree pollen for anglers with hay fever.

"The most common hay fever symptoms," explains Max, "include sneezing, a runny nose, a stuffed up nose, itchy and watery or streaming eyes, nasal congestion and a general stuffed up feeling in the nose and throat. Some people also experience itching around the face and mouth including an itchy mouth, itchy roof of mouth, and a burning sensation in the throat. Headaches and wheezing can also occur."

"Hay fever is the result of our immune system's overreaction to innocuous substances such as pollen. The body produces histamines. Normal amounts of histamines in your brain are good – they are the things that keep us alert, attentive and awake. But, when there are too many in the body, they produce the sneezing and other symptoms common to hay fever sufferers."

There are many ways to help reduce or prevent the symptoms of hay fever – Max's Top 8 Tips are:

"Stop pollen from getting in your eyes

and hair. When you're out angling, wear a cap, hat or other head covering so that tree pollen does not get blown into your hair. And wraparound sunglasses will help stop pollen getting into your eyes as you sit."

"Apply an organic, drug-free allergen barrier balm, such as HayMax, around the rim of the nostrils and bones of the eyes before you go out fishing. This will stop some of the pollen getting in your body. Everyone can tolerate a certain amount of pollen without reaction – known as their 'trigger level'. Once this level is reached, an allergic reaction will start to occur. HayMax organic drug-free allergen barrier balms have been proven to trap over 1/3 of pollen grains before they enter the body [1]."

"Follow a healthy diet for your hay fever. What you eat and drink can affect how much – or how little – you will suffer from hay fever. Stay hydrated and eat lots of fruit and vegetables to stay healthy and support your immune system. Some foods such as capers, red onions, watercress and kale contain quercetin, a natural antihistamine. Avoid alcohol as it contains histamines. Herbal teas can help, for example ginger and green tea work as natural antihistamines whilst peppermint reduces congestion."

"Don't bring pollen back home with you.

Remove your shoes at the door to avoid bringing pollen into your home. Changing your clothes and showering when you get home will remove any pollen from your hair and clothes."

"Wash your clothes and dry them indoors. If you wash your clothes after each angling trip, they will be free from pollen and drying them indoors will prevent pollen particles being blown on to them by the outside wind."

"Create your own Hay Fever First Aid Kit if your symptoms are particularly bad, or pollen counts are really high. I recommend one or more natural products, including an allergen barrier balm, one (and only one) antihistamine, one (and only one) steroid nasal spray and eye drops."

"Understand which types of pollen you are allergic to, to help you to plan your allergy management better. If you know that you are allergic to beech or oak pollen for example, you can plan to avoid fishing near areas where these types of trees grow, or at least prepare if you know you are going to be near those trees."

"Check out my website [haymax.biz/hay-fever/](http://haymax.biz/hay-fever/) for more ideas on how you can help reduce the effects of tree pollen. There is currently no cure for hay fever, but there are many things you can do or take to help. Good luck." ■





NITE  
WATCHES

NEW RELEASE

# HAWK 2.0

ALL TERRAIN WATCH

STRONGER | LIGHTER | TOUGHER

**AVAILABLE TO PRE-ORDER  
WITH GUARANTEED DELIVERY  
BEFORE CHRISTMAS**

## HAWK 2.0

### HAWK 2.0 KEY FEATURES



SHOP HAWK

**HAWK**  
NIGHT FALL

ON  
POLYMER  
STRAP

### Nite Watches Hawk 2.0 (Tac-Tec)

At NITE Watches "Proven through Passion" is more than our tagline - it's the ethos that propels us towards excellence. It's the challenge that spurs us to ask, "How can we elevate what's already exceptional?" In this spirit, we're excited to unveil the evolution of our best-selling Hawk - the Hawk 2.0.

The Hawk 2.0 introduces a significant advancement in design with its new case, which combines carbon and polycarbonate to achieve an optimal balance of lightweight comfort and enduring strength. Its dial, protected by a sapphire crystal with a triple anti-reflective coating, ensures maximum legibility in all conditions. Inside, the reliable Swiss-made movement and tritium illumination continue to be the core of our trusted timekeeping, now secured further with a screw-down crown that reinforces its resistance to water and dust.

The Hawk 2.0 is not just a timekeeper; it's a testament to endurance - crafted for those who demand more from their equipment. It's for the relentless, the adventurers, the pioneers who push beyond the expected into the extraordinary.

Welcome to the next chapter of precision and resilience. ■

**HAWK**  
BLACK OUT

ON BLACK  
STAINLESS  
STEEL  
BRACELET



SHOP HAWK





# Carpy Humour



## Fancy 24 hrs with Ali Hamidi Angler?

Ali Hamidi, founder and CEO of 'One More Cast' and star of 'The Grand Fishing Adventure' is one of the most recognisable faces in carp fishing.

Our lucky winner will spend 24 hours fishing with Ali, tapping into his extensive experience both at home and abroad, learning what it takes to create successful fishing content for television and hopefully catching a few lovely fish along the way.

Tickets for our Great Fishing Prize Draw are just £2 and remember, the more tickets you buy, the better your chance of winning!

Just click on the link below for your chance to win!



<https://anglingtrust.net/the-great-fishing-prize-draw-2024/>





### Craig Runham catch report

Well this park lake has been tough going for me since joining. Recently I'm feeling I'm working it out. 3 fish in a 24hr period landing my biggest ever January carp of 40lb 8oz. The biggest and most sought after common in the park lake. Got drenched doing battle as it tore line of a tight clutch all over the swim. Immense carp and one I feel truly honoured to hold. Big up to Jason Pincham who came out in the horrendous weather last night to do some pictures of the incredible carp.



### John Paul McCuske catch report

Carp Online Team member John Paul McCuske is seeing in the new year in with a 5-night session on my syndicate; "It's probably the warmest January and the wettest ever session for a long time. It was tough going at times. But I had a great social with Steve Haylett helping me no end along the way. And on the 4th morning, just as the light was breaking, I had a slow take on one of the rods. I knew instantly I was into something very good. After a very, very tense battle resulted in this unit of a mirror going 46lb-10oz, a known fish called Henry. Caught on size 4 Scorpion Crank ready-made Ronnie in a solid bag. Simple as that". Well done JP!





### Darrell Peck - Grenville!

This mega 45lb linear was taken with several others over 30lbs at the back end of November. Squid Goo soaked snowmen hook baits fished at range over a large bed of crumbed and whole Mainline Baits Cell, mixed with the Grenville house bait.



### Mark Harris catch report

Mark Harris only got his Sandhurst winter ticket in early December. Here he is at the start of January, proudly holding one of the oldest fish in the Yateley area 'Niges'. Weighing 44lb, she was caught on one of our S2. Just one of a few big carp that Mark has banked already. Well done, Mark, great angling as always.





### **New Iktus Record catch report**

New carp record at Iktus Béarn with "Sam" weighing 37kg!



### **Scott Carr Green catch report**

Last fish packing up 41lb 2oz, that'll do.







### Dusan Schneider catch report

A new Slovakian record falls to Dusan Schneider and Test Nash Bait! After three days of everything that late autumn can throw at you, @dusanschneider\_nashtackle had endured rain, snow and days of seriously cold weather... for zero carp! However, his persistence was about to pay off! On the last morning of the session, a 15 minute period turned what was looking like a blank into his ultimate carp fishing moment. A moment that was hard to comprehend, cradled in his net was something otherworldly! A carp of 36.2 kg (ounces under 80lb), the biggest carp ever caught in Slovakia! Get out there, be persistent, use a good quality bait, powerful natural boosters and Make It Happen!



### Daniel Weaver catch report

Crazy catching my third UK 40 on Christmas Day, and my first 40+ common to boot. Even better it was backed up with five 30s to 37lb!



### Kris Bingham catch report

Finishing the year off with a bang. Back in the spring I lost my cousin to cancer. This morning I landed this absolute winter wacker from my syndicate at 48lb 6oz! I'd like to dedicate this capture to 'Sid'. He was smiling down on me that's for sure! Thank you to the lads for all the help and pictures this morning! Certainly, feeling the love.





## Fishon Tackle Shop Catch Report

To be honest, I was still buzzing from last week's capture and although confident this week the temperature had plummeted. It felt freezing! The first night passed with nothing, no surprise really but I did see a couple show and remained confident.

Ash came down to visit and as the kettle was boiling for the second time my alarm let out a series of bleeps indicating a drop back. I walked up to my rods wound down and lifted into a heavy weight. We both agreed it was a gooden by the way it was fighting. Big head shakes and staying deep. Annoyingly it picked up one of my lines and so it came to a halt. Paying line off from the other rod meant the fish was on the move again but shortly after stopped again. I couldn't move it! I put on my torch and lit up absolute unit that was sat on top of the weed only 10 yards out! I put the waders on a hoped to walk out to net it. Ash said it was too deep and it was, as I got closer a good helping of freezing cold water went down my waders! Christ it was cold! I got the line in my hand and with a different angle the fish started coming towards me, it was just a case of slowly pulling it back until it was over the net that. It was a proper struggle to lift but, wet legs, freezing, the fish was in the net! We both cheered and laughed.. what just happened? I was half way through making a tea!

Ash confirmed it was a fish called Orange Spot, one that hadn't been out since August. And it looked massive! A very front heavy old carp, a proper character and one I had my eyes on hoping to catch and I had! She weighed in at 42.12! It's biggest ever weight and my third 40lb+ in a few weeks!



## Leon Sprague catch report

Proper made up to finally catch a fish that I have been after for over four years. 'Scared Lin' at 50lb 3oz a new PB and my first English 50. Sticky Baits Krill and Manilla Active baits, Fox International terminal gear, Lakebed Leads Leads.





### DT Baits catch report – Neil Messenger

Baits Used: N blend Rig of Choice : Korda hellisafe tubing with 25 lb weedy green pb products jellywire and size 7 esp hook Weight of fish : 40lb.4oz cat, 40lb.4oz , 36lb.8oz, 30lb mirror 27lb.4oz and 26lb.4oz Venue : Weeley clayfields Catch details : Another amazing trip at Clayfields resulting in two 40s in a night one carp one catfish and a host of big 30,s and twentys . All fish were caught using dt baits N blend with cpuk particles.



### Jim Shelley catch report

Jim with his first ever January 40lb-plus caught on a nuts hard hookbait with a 15mm wafter, over a spread of nuts boilies.



### Derek Ritchie catch report

First fish of the year here at Heron Lake Huntingdon Racecourse a drop back on my right-hand rod lovely scaley sucked my steel Mainline baits doing the business.





### Rick Golder catch report

Rick Golder – Baits Used : Pukka Fish Rig of Choice : Stiff Hinge  
Weight of fish : 45lb.6oz Venue : Berkshire syndicate Catch details :  
45.6 mirror from a 70 acre Berkshire lake. Caught at 20 yards range  
on a stiff rigged crustazia pop up fished over 5 kilos of pukka fish  
boilies. 2nd 40 in 2 trips.



### Wokingham Borough Council Catch Report

A monster carp has been caught at Dinton Pastures Country Park. The fish, just over 3lbs short of the British record (68lb 1oz), is currently the biggest of its kind in the UK. It was stocked in the fishing lake at Dinton in 1991, and seems to be growing at a rate of four to five lbs per year over the last six years. The fish was returned to the lake and we hope to see it become the new record later in the year. Photo credit: Spencer Lunn.



### Perry off to a flyer in 2024!

Perry Alabaster certainly isn't messing about this year, having already bagged himself his first forty of 2024! Fishing the Monks Pit syndicate in Cambridgeshire, Perry kick-started the year with mirrors of 42lb 10oz, 32lb 2oz and 31lb 10oz within the first 20 hours of his session. Both Crayfish and PB wafers did the business for Perry, fished in solid bags of Crayfish Mini Mix pellets over a large beds of crumbed Secret 7 boilies, Crayfish Maxi Mix pellets and hemp.





### Sam Jeffreys catch report

It was a hard year on the fishing front for Sam Jefferys, for many reasons – but with this immaculate mirror making an appearance on the lead up to Christmas, all was worthwhile.



### Kenny Naylor – Atlantic Heat

Starting the week with a serious bit of high grade for @kennynaylor1 in the shape of a fish known as hijack at 42lb 6oz. This was the first time Kenny used our Atlantic Heat on the venue also. After twenty years in the bait game, we still let the results do the talking. Well done, Kenny, what a carp. IT-works.



### Michael Savage catch report

After a two month campaign on a very tricky winter venue, my sheer persistence and hard work finally paid off. After banking a few smaller ones, I knew a 'biggun' was on the cards. With some amazing weather rolling in for December and January and a huge storm, mega south-westerly winds and low pressure, it had to happen! The planets aligned and I managed to smash my personal best to bits, in the shape of a mega 'half lin' at 44lb 12oz. What a way to start the new year. I'm over the moon to say the least! Effort always equals rewards!

### Dan Foakes catch report

Urban Consultant Dan Foakes with another 40 plus Berners banger! Nutcracker once again producing results during difficult conditions. [www.urbanbait.co.uk](http://www.urbanbait.co.uk)



# COOLE ACRES NEW FISH FOR 2024 (stocked end of 2023)

## Everyone meet LJ – weight 36lb

LJ is named after an incredible boy and son of Levi and Sharon, LEVI JOHNEY. Levi Johnney's passion for angling and the fishery is incredible and he aspires to step in the footprint of his dad Levi. He is hard working, intelligent and shows us all how it's done on the Fox Lake. This boy also picks, in my opinion, some outstanding fish. As you will surely agree, the fish Levi Johnney picked is something that is really hard to beat and is definitely a future 40. At age 11 he really is an awesome young man.



## Everyone meet SHAZ – weight 35lb



Shaz is named after the incredible Sharon Marie Finney. Not many people will see Sharon walking around the lakes, as she is always really busy running around for me and the boys. She does absolute wonders for all us and I'm positive that without Sharon we'd all fall apart. She's like the magnet between us. She also has a really good eye for a carp. This carp is something that you don't see very often and is definitely one that no one could say they wouldn't want. So, thank you Sharon for not only all the amazing things you do, but picking possibly one of the nicest fish our Facebook followers will see today.

This fish was named by our good friend Chris Swain. Chris is not only an amazing person but also a tremendous help to us at Coole Acres. He's always there for us, lending a hand and providing excellent support and guidance. It's wonderful to have someone like Chris who is so dedicated and reliable and if it weren't for him, we wouldn't have our beautiful fishery. As he built the lakes himself. So thank you to Chris and the Swain family. I hope you love this fish as much as we do, it's honestly incredible and is a great reward for us, and you the anglers. We have worked our socks off for 22 months but these last three weeks have really taken their part, so it's lovely to sit back and admire these absolute beasts. I do believe that this fish will do 40lb in the next 2-3 years. What great potential this fish has.

## Everyone meet FAT TONY – weight 32lb



## Everyone meet BIG GEORGE



Well guys we saved the best until last! This beast is a colossal 40lb stunner. Levi promised in September that he had a surprise for the anglers. He has had a 40lb on order since last year. He was pleased when he got to pick one himself and Big George stood out to him and Jayden for his length, frame and uniqueness. What a beauty! Levi has put into Coole Acres since he took over the fishery February 2022 and has completely transformed the place. He has such a passion to make it unique and put his own stamp to the fishery. You guys wouldn't believe the time and work that has gone into Coole Acres since we've owned it. Looking forward to seeing not just anglers' fish here, but guys who have become friends to the team. We want to make this fishery enjoyable and the best for you all. And I think with the mirrors we have added last year and especially this year! Plus the netting that has been done 6 times now since we have had it.



# Coole Acres Fishery & Leisure Park

Day tickets are available - Sun -Thur  
Min of 24 hrs - Friday and Saturday.

**swimbooker**

Our Premier Carp Fishery offers 3 well stocked lakes for anglers of all abilities and preference. Fox is our specimen lake with Carp up to 40lb and Catfish up to 54lb.



Fox lake is 5 and 1/2 acres with a path all the way around it with 14 pegs barked, 4 grass pegs 4 of these can be used as doubles.



Call: 07899 735 052

Email: [cooleacresfishery1@gmail.com](mailto:cooleacresfishery1@gmail.com)

[www.cooleacresfishery.co.uk](http://www.cooleacresfishery.co.uk)

Coole Lane, Nantwich CW58AY





**Exclusive**

# What a Start to The Year

**By Dan Chappell**



**I** set off for France and caught the last tunnel on New Year's Eve just before 11pm. Decided to set up on a canal I had a pin for as I knew it would be the early hours of the morning!

The following day I got settled in at one of my best friend's lakes slightly further into north France. That night after placing some rods out in the boat I managed a brace of 40 commons!

The next day (2nd) my friend turned up to join me for the rest of the week so I decided to switch my rods to the other lake next door that was also owned by him and another friend of ours. Knowing the stock that he now had it was a no brainer. The target was a handful of the scaley residents that reside in there. To be honest I didn't expect much with it being January but we always seem to be able to get a few bites when we get together and the two fish from the night before filled me with confidence they would still be feeding!

The rods went out on dark and I









# Black Swan Lake

## Exclusive premium carp lake

- 2hr 45min from Calais
- Three swims – maximum three anglers
- Boat and all facilities included
- 100% private location



**BOOK  
NOW FOR  
2025**

Information and prices:  
**[www.blackswanlake.eu](http://www.blackswanlake.eu)**  
or email: [catchme@blackswanlake.eu](mailto:catchme@blackswanlake.eu)

















stuck 3 rigs on the bottom of the shelf from the shallows to the deeps. A nice helping of boilie corn and pellet around each rig! Within 10 minutes one of the rods was away and that was the beginning of a hectic 3 days of non-stop action!

Between the open water spots and

a bit of stalking the snaggy margins we ended up on around 50 bites with 20 off them over 35lb and 13 over 40lb to just under 50. And absolutely insane session for January and once again, one I'll never forget. Every time we get together for a session something special happens.

Was great to meet a new friend Nicky Helsens who joined us for the weekend.

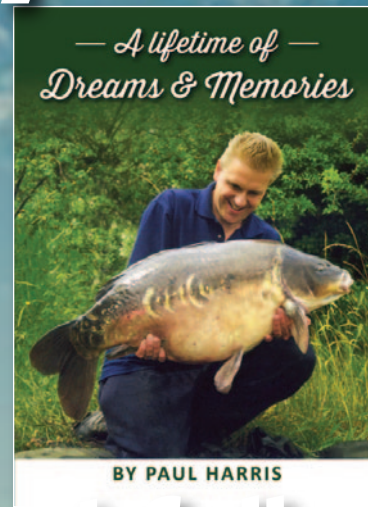
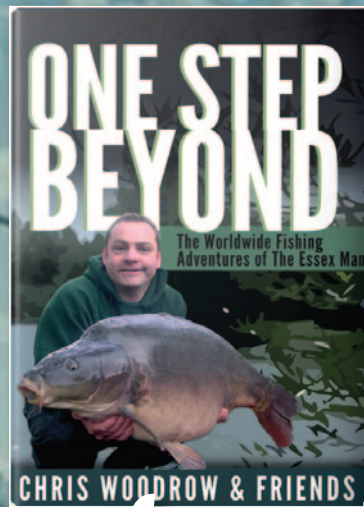
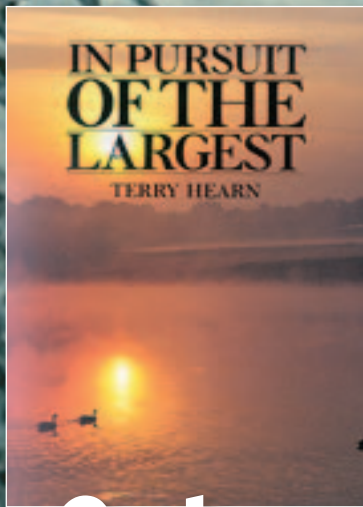
And of course, a lovely catch up last night with Ruben Lefevre and his leg-end of a dad! Can't wait for the next one brother! It's going to be a special one! ■

## Carpy Humour

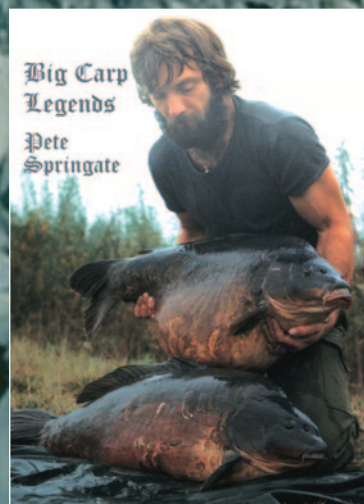
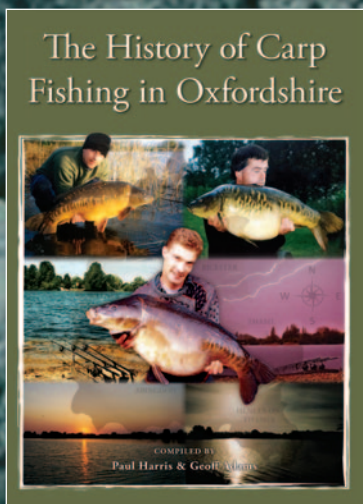
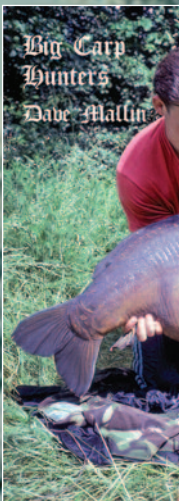
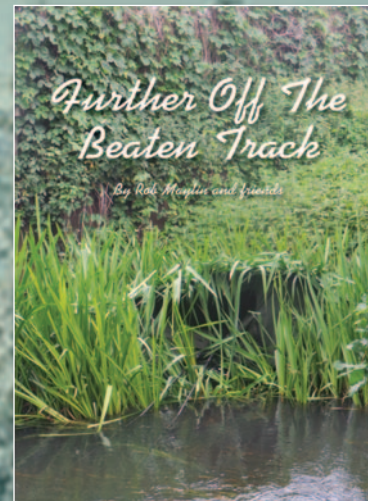
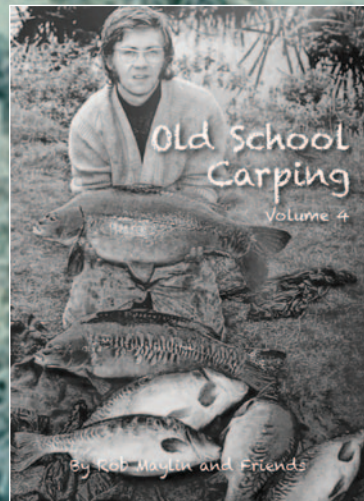
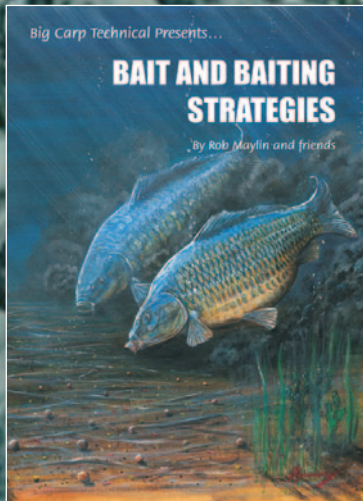




# Warm Away the Cold



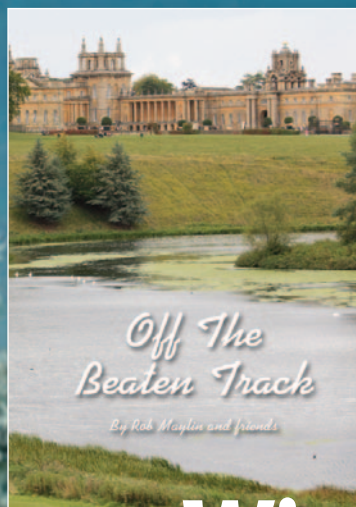
Order one of our Best Sellers and



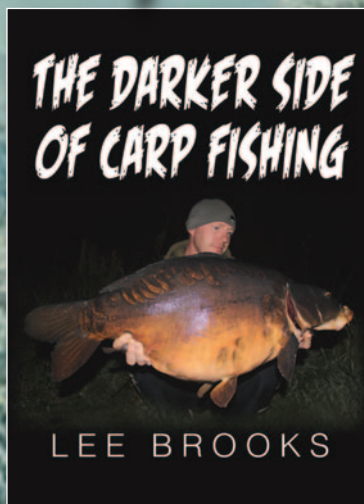
NEW BOOKS [www.bigcarpmain.com](http://www.bigcarpmain.com)  
NEW AND OLD BOOKS: [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)



# and Weather This Year



get ready for some Winter Action



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



**Exclusive**

# An African Adventure

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

Part Four (part three was published in the January issue, page 48)



Fishermen with the new cage.



**S**o after my close encounter with a toothy crocodile, and the complete failed Tigerfish mission, the beginning of 2022 hadn't quite been the start one would have hoped for. However, with a positive outlook on life, all I could think was that it could only get better from now on!

My biggest challenge was still how to figure out a way of successfully transporting and stocking Tigerfish into the two dams. The larger dam was going to be a predator venue with over 200 tigers in, whilst in carp corner, I wanted around a 100 or so to ensure the water didn't get overrun with lots of small carp from natural breeding. So far in 7 months we had

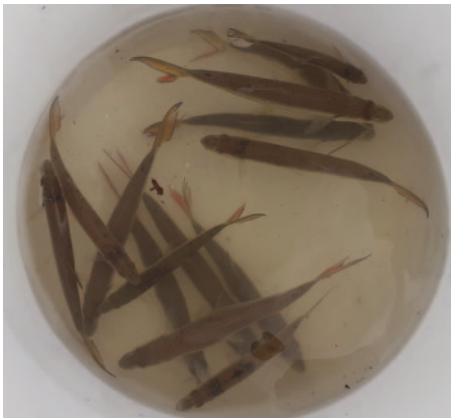
managed just 30 tigers.

Back to the drawing board, and I wanted to explore the concept of cages for a quick transfer of tigerfish once they'd been caught. We had tried building the 3m x 3m floating system for the huge dam mission, but now I wanted to construct something far smaller that we could leave with the local throw-net fishermen at nearby rivers.

We welded up a steel box structure and then covered it with shade cloth, nothing complicated! There was a flap-like opening at the top for the fish to be transferred in and out of, and then we attached a rope so the cage could be safely secured in the water from the bank or a boat. The next day we delivered a few of these to our

trusted fishermen.

Two days later I got a call from one of the fishermen telling me that he's caught some tigers and they're swimming around healthily in the new cage. I jumped straight into the car to drive down to his location, which was just under an hour away (nothings very close in Africa). I excitedly arrived and scrambled down the steep muddy bank of the river to meet him. He was smiling from ear to ear, and so was I when I transferred 14 healthy tigerfish into a bucket to bring back up to the car and a waiting holding tank. I was so excited and nervous as I made the return journey back to the farm, and that hour seemed to take forever! I called Piet in advance to tell him the amazing



**A bucket full of small tigers, success at last!**



**Carp corner was covered in grass, making almost impossible to fish most of the dam.**





**A drained down Carp corner and the problem was dealt with once and for all.**

news, and as we both lifted the holding tank from the car and safely released the tigers into their new home, we were overjoyed at what had just been achieved. One day with the new cages had accounted for almost 50% of what we had achieved in the previous 7 months!

Persistence and perseverance had finally paid off. The next day we released another 12, and then 9. It carried on like this, and although it was a

2hr round trip each time, it was well worth it. Incredibly by early April we had stocked over 300 tigerfish into the two dams. To this day I'm still not aware if anyone has even attempted to try anything like what we accomplished with regards to stocking tigerfish.

It was during these successful stocking months that we also had to address the issue of the grass covering over 70% of carp corner dam.

When the dam was filled, the terrestrial grass was still present, and clearly didn't mind being covered in water! The shoots were breaking the surface of the water over most of the dam, making it almost impossible to fish in. The only clear patches were where the excavator had removed the top soil to build up the banks or islands.

We had no option but to drain down the dam and tackle the problem





**Some new arrivals at the fishery:  
African Spoonbills, Fish Eagle and  
Diderick Cuckoo.**

at root level. There were a couple of very long, deep channels dug into the dam, so there was no issue of losing our tigerfish, as there was still plenty of deeper, grass-free, water for them to swim around in. The shallower areas slowly but surely began to dry out in the African heat, and it wasn't too long before we could start burning the grass and solve the problem once and for all.

We were very fortunate with the timing of this undertaking, as the winter rains started to come down in the middle of April, and literally didn't seem to stop for over two months! The dam quickly refilled and the grass thankfully hasn't been seen since.

The heavy rains also worked wonders for all the native trees we had been planting around the venue, and seeing the growth of these was really exciting.

The dams were becoming something of an oasis, as the fairly bare surrounding lands were formerly cultivated for agriculture during the colonial times, meaning nothing much was left of the indigenous flora. We were noticing more and more new species of birds visiting, which was very exciting for an enthusiastic bird watcher such as myself. To create a fishery from scratch, where there was literally almost nothing when we started, and then to start



seeing an environment beginning to flourish, is an incredibly rewarding feeling.

Towards the end of August we had the very exciting task of netting our carp from the grow-out pond, to select future brood stock fish, and start to populate the Carp Corner dam. It had been 1 year and 5 months since the 100 baby carp arrived at the farm, and now was the first time I would be able to see exactly how they had developed.

I knew from the hours spent watching them feed that there were some pretty impressive specimens present, but with the turbidity of the earthen

pond, you couldn't clearly see everything in front of you.

Having reared carp back in the UK, I was used to seeing fish of around 1lb, or 0.5kgs, after a year or so. These fish would now be classed as C2's, having grown through 2 summers, although they were still 2 months away from celebrating their 2nd birthday!

Well to say I was blown away by some of the carp would be an understatement, and what a wonderful feeling to finally be stocking some carp into the dam that we'd been working so hard on for the best part of two years. ■



**I'll let the pictures do the rest of the talking for this article.**



18th March 2021.



22nd Aug 2022.



18th March 2021.



22nd Aug 2022.



18th March 2021.



22nd Aug 2022.





18th March 2021.



22nd Aug 2022.



18th March 2021.



22nd Aug 2022.



Stocking carp into Carp Corner dam.



Sunset over the dam after a very exciting day.



# Advice Around Dropping Water Temps

By Luke Vallory

**A**s we move through the autumn towards the winter the water temperature will begin to drop rapidly and the carp will naturally respond to this. Their metabolism will begin to slow down meaning they will be feeding less and compared to the summer, when they're often spread out and moving around the lake, as it gets colder, they will start to group up and favour certain areas.

This undoubtedly makes the fishing more difficult, but with a little bit







of thought on bait application and location, the carp can still be caught. When it comes to location, look for areas of the lake that are likely to still hold a bit of warmth, deeper, siltier

areas of the lake are always a good place to look at the tail end of the autumn, as are areas of the lake which are sheltered from the wind. That being said, on those warm,

sunny days, the shallower bars that receive the penetrating sun, will more than certainly draw carp in as they look for this warmth.

As for bait, they're often not looking







for big beds of bait at this time of year, a few spombs, or a PVA bag in the right place is often all that is needed, and natural baits such as maggots, casters and worms come into their own, forcing a feeding response when nothing else will. And lastly, and a personal favourite of Simon Scott, good old sweetcorn. As cheap as it gets, but can get them feeding on the coldest of days. Just a handful of bait in the right place can be all that's needed. ■





# Oak Lakes Fisheries

[www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk](http://www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk)



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



29lb 4oz catch and a 24lb catch for Ricky Collett. Rounding off the 2023 season.



34lbs 8oz carp known as Two Face caught by Mark Sinclair at 3.30am New Years Day. First recorded catch on Pipe Lake for 2024.



22lbs 8oz and an 18lbs mirror, no pic. Nice way for Ricky Collett to end 2023.



Despite the arctic cold wind conditions Buddha landed this cracker weighing 22lbs 10oz. Lovely looking fish.

## 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.



Pike and perch caught on Oak Lake day ticket lake recently in a day session. Day ticket has a good stock of both these types of fish.



Nice.



# Think Outside The Box!

By Luke Stevenson

**T**he last few worthy ones from a thoroughly enjoyable autumn. A key element to my autumn success was the spot I decided to concentrate on. I'd noticed them regular sheeting up and rolling in a zone, a fairly neglected area and

upon leading the spot, it was clear why the spot was neglected. The drops were soft, and the lead was coming back with weed and bits of chod.

A haven for naturals and clearly the reason they were visiting this area. Because of the dirty bottom, I anticipated this was why it was being left

alone by others. The usual tactic followed, where I popped the float up, mapped the area from various swims around the lake to make sure I was bang on where I'd seen the activity and then kept the bait going in throughout the autumn.

Fishing the hinges and low-lying pop ups, I knew I'd be presented. I











was regularly bringing in bits and pieces of weed and even bloodworm on the rigs, I knew the area was a prime autumn zone, with a good depth overhead.

A couple of rods fished in the area with a kilo or so of 12 and 16mm Krill sprayed via the Medium Katapult made for simple, easy fishing.

When you get a spot rocking like this, there's nothing more enjoyable. Autumn's can be tough, but if you choose your venue wisely, keep your tactics simple and importantly, let the carp tell you where and how to fish. Don't be afraid to think outside the box.

Be different with either you're baiting or spots, that's the key'.

Luke used his normal super slack Kontour mainline, Hybird Lead Clips with 2oz Heli Leads for faster hooking. Long N Trap soft booms tied via albright knots (as pictured) to MouthTrap chod sections with Kamakura Choddys at the business end. ■







# FISHING RESORT



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



# Winter Watercraft

By Darrell Peck

**W**inter fishing can be incredibly daunting, especially so on the more difficult lower stocked venues. The fish are unquestionably moving less, but ultimately, if you're in exactly the right spot, with the right stuff on the end you can still catch them. There was snow on the ground when I set off for Rockford in January 2013, and the lake itself had been frozen in the days leading up to my session. In my mind, I knew where they'd be, and this, combined with the mild conditions forecast lead to a feeling that there 'might' be a chance of a bite.

What unfolded over the next few days could never have been predicted and to this day, stands as a stark reminder that anything is possible.

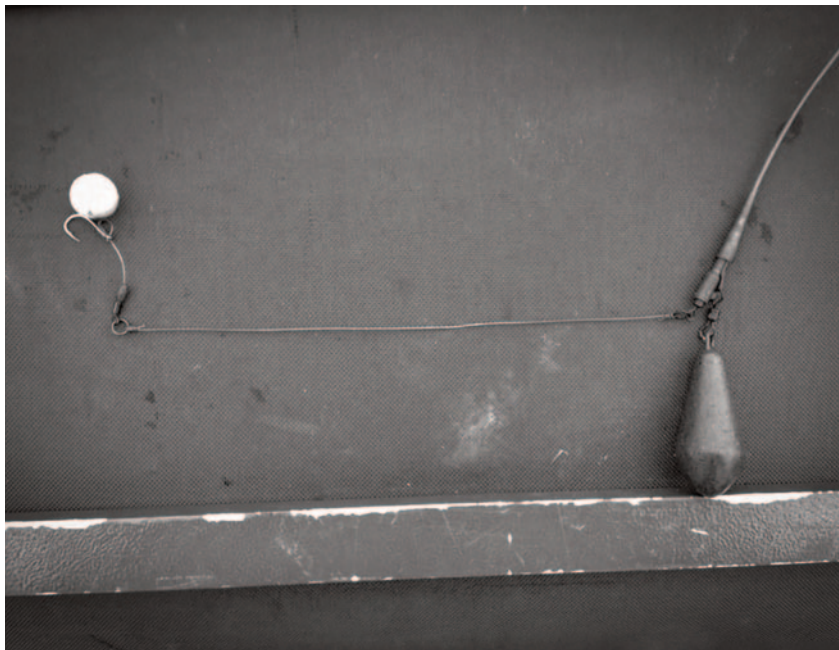


My advice is to stay positive and accept that it's not supposed to be easy. For me, the hunt is as important

as the capture itself, and it's sure as sh\*t you won't catch them sat on the sofa at home. ■









# The Kent Obsession

By Russ Crisci

Once again, I found myself re-joining the Kent water I fished the last two summers, I only ever buy the summer ticket because of the cost but it's a lovely place to spend time nestled in the middle of the Kent countryside, and its home to some lovely big home-grown carp up to sixty pounds plus.

August and the ticket start could not come quickly enough. After a successful spring flitting around a few local waters', I'd managed fish over thirty plus from seven different waters up to low forties, so I was on a roll and for the challenge to come. I also knew that come October or November the big girl can creep over sixty!

Having limited nights on the ticket and only four months I'd have to plan my weekend trips around moon





phases and weather; also, not really wanting to catch these big fish in there spawned out weights and condition.

The first few trips I couldn't really get on the fish and with warm conditions and the extensive weed beds this lake holds, the fish seemed to be more than happy just chilling and although a few were caught it was slow going, I sat up during the night not even hearing them show.

On my third trip down, I started noticing fish using a really weedy corner of the lake and they were definitely going through the weed for food as from aloft up a nearby tree I could see the water was very coloured as I watched them ghost in and disappear.

With a few people already on I decided on the best plan of attack, which was to flick a couple of Choddies over into the corner and sprinkle a few handfuls of Dynamites new test bait I was using over the top and keep that going in with a few pouch loads every hour or so to get a decent amount out there to get a feeding

response without spooking them out.

The night came and past without a bleep and I heard nothing in the corner, with a possible show somewhere in open water past the island, so I was thinking a move was needed for the second night.

I climbed the corner tree to assess the situation and straight away noticed the water had cleared up and I couldn't see a single fish, so I got down and decided on tea and a sausage sandwich was in order before wrapping up for a move.

Just as I finished my tea, I had a liner on the middle rod and wondered if they were returning for the day as my lines were running through the weed into the corner.

Out of the blue about ten minutes after the liner I was into one on the right-hand rod fished nearest the bank and I found myself with a full test curve in the rod trying to extract an angry carp out the weed.

After what was a long five minutes of hoping it kicked out and I lead a huge weed bed in. I had to wade out, hand lining it into the net. I'd seen a

tail and on ridding the net of weed I had a lovely mid thirty heavily scaled mirror awaiting me.

The next two trips, although one on the big harvest moon were blanks, although I did manage a low twenty common on one night, but I felt the big girl was due anytime now.

A few weeks later I was speeding down the motorway lake bound for another go. After catching up with my mate Streetwise I plotted up in an area with a series of bars running parallel to the island Infront of mw, and through previous knowledge I knew they can often feed in the silty gullies between these bars at this time of the year. With that knowledge I set about laying a feast of Dynamites frenzied particles, chopped up test boilies and some Hot crab and krill 15 millers.

It was another wet pack up on Sunday morning and although I had another twenty common, I knew time was slowly running out and the main prize was definitely gonna make an appearance before Xmas, I just knew it!

Next trip down I fished a swim on a







wim really thinking they could be tucked up in the vast weed beds that were still in situ behind the island, but after a quiet night and being picked up repeatedly by the tufti squad I move round to the prime Big Girl swim going on previous autumn captures.

Spodding out approximately ten kilos of the usual mix followed by three Rigmarole Hydrolink rigs to the silt gulley I decided to get my head down early as I was knackered, it had taken me best part of the day to pack up move and get the bait to the seventy-yard spot between bars.

I started to hear fish over the baited spot in the early hours of the morning and felt they were definitely eating off the area and by the morning I had had a mid-thirty mirror followed by a double take of twenty commons, all passing bait on the mat, I was pretty pleased with that night's fishing to be honest but no big one yet.

By now we were into November, the weather had definitely gone downhill with cooler temperatures and yet more rain, rain, rain, a couple of the A team had been out now and

all at decent weights so the big girl must be over sixty and was due out any day! Typical big carp seeming to love the quality water conditions and only gets caught spring and autumn time.

I turned up the following Friday to a few cars in the car park, I wasn't the only one on the ball down there.

After a lap of the lake and a chat with Chris, he told me he heard a few go up to his right during the night but wasn't sure where exactly.

With someone already in the prime swim and here for another three nights, I saw one show Infront of a swim on the opposite bank, so I ran round for further inspection.

There was definitely fish here as I saw two more during the next hour very close in and one was a lump of a mirror not more than ten yards out!

Tonight, was the big 'Hunters Moon', I saw a big fish Infront and although I felt I needed the swim opposite as it had form, I had the next best option, I just needed some luck.

I decided on just two rods and to only make just a couple of casts at most and follow that with a few

pouches of chopped boilies; as to not make too much disturbance as they were so close in.

So out went the hook baits with three bait stringers, both onto nice firm silt spots amongst the weed, tonight it had to happen surly!

It was a quiet evening, seeing no more shows so I decided to get my dinner done and get in the bag early.

It was showery and had been dark since five, so I climbed into the bag to warm up and troll through social media before going to sleep early.

A few hours later I'm looking over to a lot of light activities opposite and immediately thought oh no! After hearing the shouting, I knew the big girl was out and although I was chuffed for the fella (who I congratulated next morning) I felt deflated, and I literally rolled over and went to sleep sulking.

A single bleep on the rod fished up the right margin had me slipping the crocs on as the line was slowly ticking off the clutch, I tightened the line and pulled into a real heavy fish that quickly found the weed.

I kept the pressure on, and it moved







out along Infront of me picking up a branch that obviously fell off the marginal trees, then it locked up again in the weed no more than a rod length out, nightmare

So, I got right above her with the rod tip and put as much pressure on it as I dare until I felt her kick and pop up, with a big cream belly in the half-light I could see it was a lump but, in the net, she went first time.

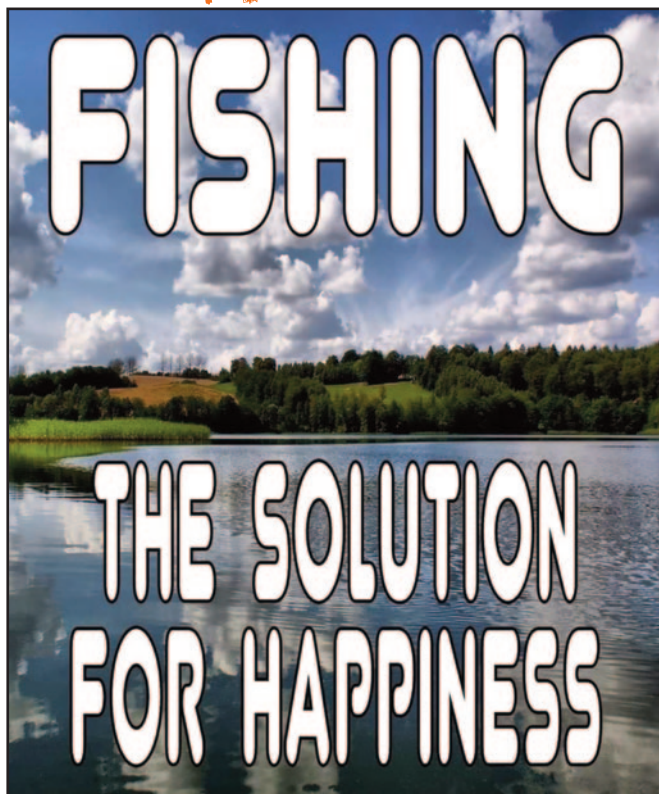
I put the kettle on to chill out a bit and let the daylight improve before getting Chris to help out with the photos, it was one of the A-team and possibly the second or third biggest in the pond at 50lb 6oz, I was chuffed to bits!

I stayed in the same swim for the second night but didn't see any fish anywhere and it felt a very different lake, that night it seemed dead. I felt my chance of the big girl had gone for that year and with only two weeks left on my ticket I decided there and then to call it a day.

I was lucky enough to be offered a winter ticket on a lovely local place with a good head of carp and was looking forward to starting there and getting a few bites in the cold, so I wrapped it up until next. ■



## Carpy Humour





# BIG CARP TOP TEN

## Carp Fisheries



Web: [cottingtonlakes.co.uk](http://cottingtonlakes.co.uk)  
Email: [cottingtonlakes@outlook.com](mailto:cottingtonlakes@outlook.com)  
Tel: 01304 380691



# Long Range Fishing in Winter

By Tom Stokes

**A**s the water temperature cools, carp will naturally begin to hold up in large groups where they feel safe, and on many pressured lakes that 'safe zone' will often be out in the middle, beyond the majority of the angling pressure.

Being able to fish effectively at range can be a massive edge at any time of the year, but especially so in the winter, and ensuring you are set up with the adequate tackle will make reaching the required distance both achievable and comfortable.

Choosing the correct mainline is probably the most important aspect of long-range fishing. If your line is









## Exclusive Long Range Fishing in Winter



too thick, you're going to struggle to get out there, if your line is too thin, then you're likely to run the risk of a crack off. This is where the tapered long chuck comes into its own. The 12 and 15lb versions have been my go-to for the past few seasons, although there is also a 10lb version for extreme range. It casts like a dream and with a 'built in' 30lb leader at each end it means the likelihood of a crack off is virtually eliminated, it also has minimal stretch, helping you to feel the lead down.

A heavy lead is essential for long range casting, the size of the lead will often be dictated by the test curve of the rod you are using, but my go too tends to be 4 or 4.25oz. I favour the tournament style of lead as its streamlined shape is optimal for fishing at range.

Something that is often overlooked when fishing at range is the length of your leader, the shorter the leader, the easier it is to cast. My go to for most situations is 3ft of lead core, but I will drop down to a leader of 50cm if I require those extra few yards. Of course, you can tie your own leaders, but pre tied 50cm ones are available for those who would rather buy them ready tied. ■





# The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

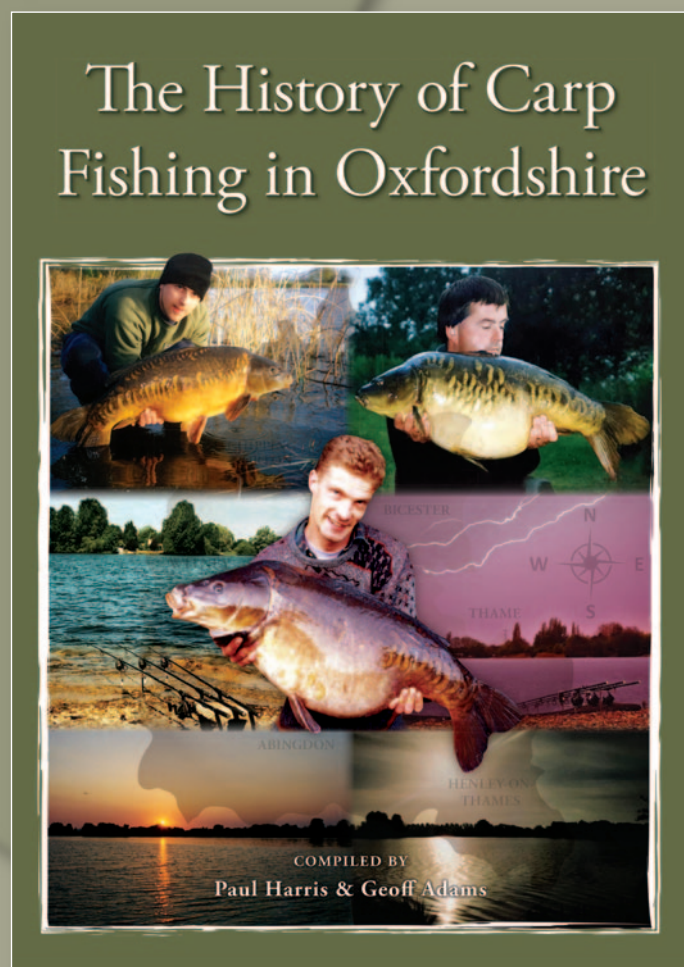
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing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

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

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

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

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



CARD: 07768 731425

PAYPAL: [www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk)

**AVAILABLE THIS AUTUMN**



# Festival Record Broken With 49lb-Plus Rosie!

By Garth Flynn

**G**arth Flynn has ended a four-year quest for Festival Carp Fishery's big 'un at a massive new lake-record weight of 49lb 3oz.

The capture of the colossal day-ticket mirror known as Rosie came as a huge shock to Garth, who thought he was in the wrong area for this particular fish, but much to his delight, she proved him wrong!

Garth takes up the story: "I have been chasing this fish for nearly four years now and have always managed to miss her by a couple of days.







“As part our Christmas bailiff social, I drew a peg where I started the year in, peg 11. It’s not a peg I fish when I’m targeting the big girl, because she usually comes out of peg nine. Regardless, I was happy to be out after a very difficult session I had in France the previous month and not being able to get out all that often in the second half of the year.

“The lake was fishing slow and not a lot came out on the Friday or Saturday. On Sunday morning, the bobbin lifted on the right-hand rod to signify a slow take and I lifted the rod into what was clearly a heavy fish. After a slow and knee-shaking battle, she went over the net cord and I couldn’t believe it! I didn’t realise she was due out and never in a million years expected it to come from this peg, but here she was, Rosie at a lake record weight of 49lb 3oz – a new UK personal best! What’s more, I got to share the moment with the rest of the bailiffs down at Festival.

“The big girl slipped up to my absolute favourite combination at the moment of chopped 15mm Bug boilies, whole Bug mini dumbbells and 12-millers, and house pellets,

with a nice soaking of Bug Liquid Food and a covering of Insect Meal.

Over top was a fluorocarbon D-rig baited with a PB wafter.” ■





# A Look Back at 2023

By Steve Briggs

**E**very year seems to go by faster than the last but 2023 was another great one out on the banks of various waters far and wide.

The year started with a frozen lake in France and I had to work hard on that one but it turned out ok in the end with a cracker on the final day. Back in the UK I averaged a fish a night on a tricky little local water but as spring arrived things really took off!

My first trip to Slovakia saw me using the first batch of the new test bait - would it work? It was so incredible that I ended up fishing just in the day using one rod and we caught loads topped by commons of 55 + 59lb and 62lb! Stopping off in Germany on the way home it was just as hectic with a string of big fish in just















a few days.

I was keen to try the test bait back in the UK and Kingsmead was my main target for the summer. It worked a treat with several multiple captures along the way and plenty of the sought after scaly beauties. Mind you it wasn't all about just piling the bait out, I still had to fish well, it was all about doing the right things at the right times.

Trips to Rainbow Lake, Chavaignac, Canal du Midi, River Tarn, some huge wild reservoirs and back in the UK there was Waterside Fishery, Boat Pool and Thorney Weir amongst others. A wide variety of fishing and it involved a variety of tackle too! From the Hide XL when I'm out on my own to the Blockhouse and Titan T2 pro when on longer sessions with Joan and when it was hot it was nice just being under the Tarp! From boats to Bushwhackers - my fishing never gets monotonous.

It was great to get back out to Portugal after a break of 25 years and not only that but to get my hands on a Portuguese 50lb carp that made it fifties from 18 countries and that was a great way to round up the year!

For 2024 there is already plenty lined up, starting off with a continued quest for a UK PB and of course plenty of trips abroad too so exciting times

are ahead.

With show season approaching we'll be at many shows over the com-

ing months so hopefully I'll get to see plenty of you there! All the very best for 2024!" ■





# Years End

By Mike Jones

**F**antastic close to the year for our consultant, Mike Jones! Check out below for the full story in his own words. To be honest the pit did look good with a South West wind blowing and dew to pick up over the next night to 50 mph. I went for a good walk around and with a few of the swims flooded I went to the high bank where the wind was starting to push into the corner. I found my spots two out on a gravel strip then one down a deep margin I baited up with Mainline Cell in 10mm crumb and some hemp. The rigs consisted of Sly fish size 4 long shank curves Ronnie swivels and the stiff fluorocarbon

weighted down with their putty.

The wind really started to pick up and around 2.00 am I had a funny drop back then it pulled tight. I struck I was into a fish in the wind it gave a good account for itself until I slipped the net under her. The hook was stuck fast in the bottom lip I quickly put her on the scales which swung around to 32lb I was buzzing.

The next day I sorted the rods out and baited back up the wind had dropped so I could get the rigs bang on. As the night fell, I did feel confident on hearing a few out in the middle of the lake. This is crazy for December I fell asleep and at around 5 am I had a single bleep on the left rod. Then it went into meltdown. I

was up boots on and on the rod, it was ripping line off then I slowed the fish down and slowly started to wind. The fish felt so heavy and it was just hugging the bottom then after a few minutes I saw a big fish of colour. It slipped over the net and kept on coming this was one serious fish. I collapsed the net slid the sling under it and got it on the mat.

Wow, this was a huge fish and in December the scales went 50+. I was over the moon, to say the least, it just goes to show that you can still catch them with the right mindset. A few pics and she was slipped back into the lake that drive back with a smile on my face is a winter trip I won't forget. ■









# Top Tips for Your Winter Campaign

By Scott Sweetman

**S**electing a good winter water can make a hard time of year much more enjoyable with a new buzz and lake to work out. Look for lakes with good winter form, a reasonable stock and realistic for your time and expectations.

Once you've decided on a lake, do your research. Spend a day or two early on leading around and establishing depths and features. This will pay off later in the campaign meaning you can get rods out with much less

disturbance.

Use rigs you're confident in. Reduce your baiting quantities until the carp are located, then use bait (little and often) to keep them in the area.

Put in the time early on to keep in tune with the lake and familiarise yourself with the carp's habits.

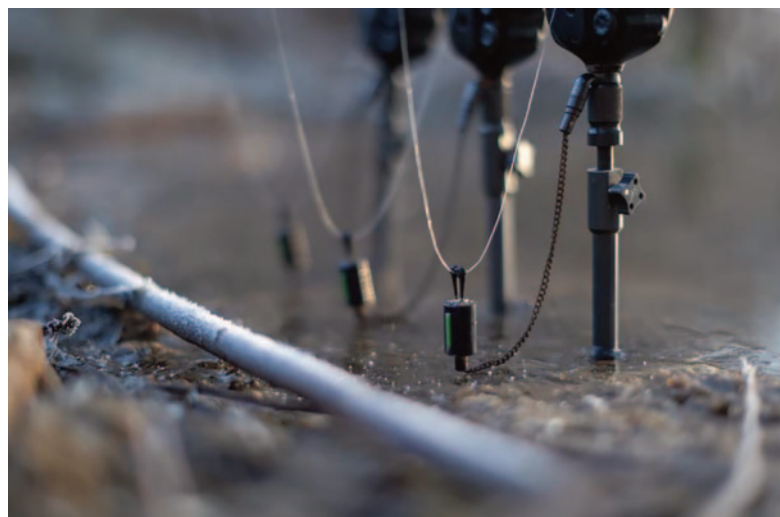
Keep active and stay mobile. Scale your kit down and travel light.

White visual hookbaits have been really kind to me in winter's past, a firm favourite of mine of small pouches of boilie. Don't ignore the

zigs either, as the carp will look to use the upper layers.

South facing banks and features will receive the most sunlight. Reedbeds, lilies and snags will provide the carp shelter and protection, and the back of a cold wind can be a great place to find them.

It's about putting in the effort, watching and reacting. Stick to what you know, fish for bites, keep the baiting minimal to begin and keep watching that weather. A mild period through the winter can be as effective as any other time of year. ■

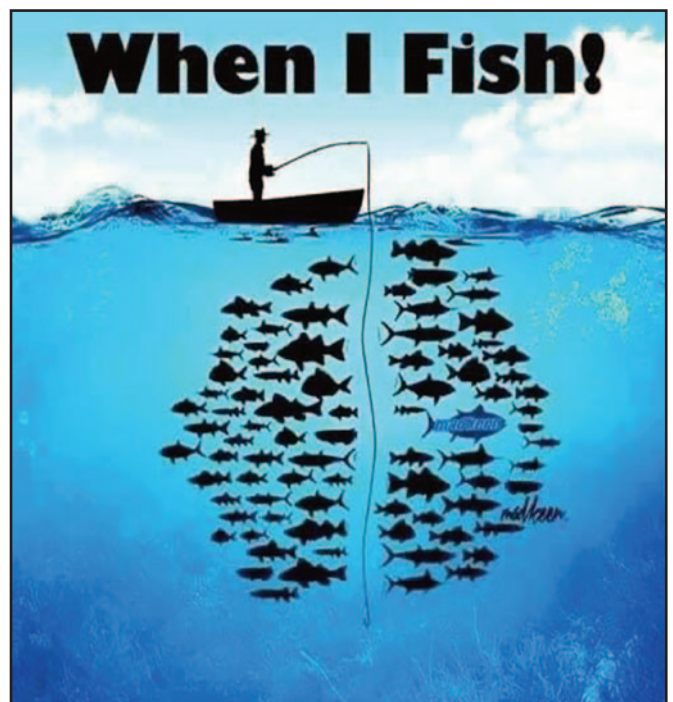






## Carpy Humour

**WHEN SOMEONE TRIES  
TO FISH YOUR SPOT**





# Casters v Maggots

by Kevin Diederer

**A**re casters better than maggots? With the water temperature being low and nuisance fish being less active this is the time of the year where natural baits come into play. Although maggots are really popular for many, others certainly have a preference for casters.

"I do like to use a combination of

casters and maggots. Although I do have preference for casters as I think they are and edge as a lot less people use them. Carp absolutely love them and they have the benefit of not wriggling away.

The reason I like to still add maggots is for hookbait options. I do like to put them on bait floss using the super fine baiting needle and combine them with a pop-up or wafter hook bait." - @tom\_stokes\_

@kevindiederer also used casters to catch fish up to over 50lb. during the colder months: "For a lot of my specimen fishing in recent years I've been using casters combined with plastic ones as hookbaits.

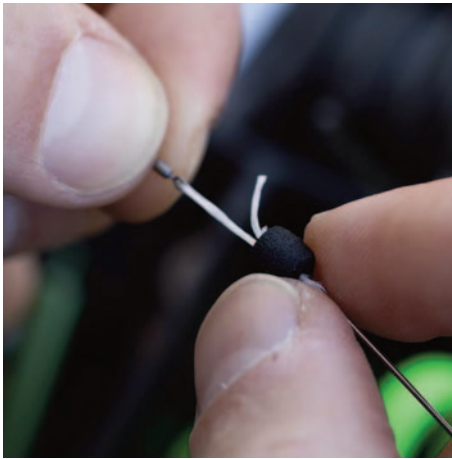
And this combined with of course seeing the way Terry Hearn used them gave me a push in the back to start using them for carp as well. Last winter I've made them out of the Micro Ring Swivel, some fake casters





and foam and caught great fish on them. You can fish the caster clusters on Spinner or any kind of "D" presentation you would normally use to present a wafter kind of hookbait."

The best way to store casters on the bank is by getting them in small bags and putting those in a medium sized Cool bag. Wrap the ice packs in an old reel pouch or newspaper so they stay dark and prevent the casters from getting frostbite. After opening one of the bags it's recommended to keep the remaining of the bag in a tub of water to stop them from becoming floaters! ■





# 46lb+plus Big Common Tops 23-Fish Linear Haul! March 2023

By Aaron Mcilwaine

**A**aron Mcilwaine's March visit from his home in Belfast to the Guys syndicate at Linear Fisheries proved well worth the trip once again, with no fewer than 23 fish coming his way from three different lakes!

The highlight of the trip was

Gaunts Lake's Big Common at a PB-breaking 46lb 2oz, which was backed up by four thirties and loads of twenties.

"After having a look around the three lakes on the ticket upon arrival, I decided to start on Gaunts," said Aaron.

"A fresh south-westerly wind had arrived and, to my surprise, the end of

the lake that received this was empty!

"I settled for a swim I had fished before, so after a quick lead about just to check the areas from my notes were still good to present on, the rods were soon positioned.

"The first take came at around 4am and I was off the mark with a lovely 36lb 12oz mirror – what a result! Once











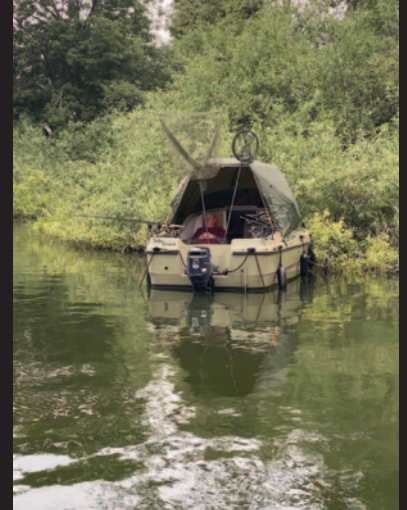


# SECRETS OF THE THAMES

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>**



**Exclusive** 46lb+plus Big Common





the rod was repositioned and daylight arrived, a lovely mid-twenty called me into action, soon followed by a chunky 37lb 14oz mirror.

"The rest of the day passed with no further bites until evening, which was when something very special indeed happened!

Once I caught glimpse, I quickly realised that I was attached to Gaunts Lake's Big Common! She pulled the

scales around to 46lb 2oz, this being her heaviest-ever recorded weight and, for me, a new UK PB!

Admittedly, this was a recapture, but I definitely wasn't going to complain with such an immaculate and sought-after carp!

"I went on to catch 10 fish from Gaunts before the fish moved off. I then dropped on to Unity Lake where I landed another two fish, one being a

lovely 33lb 3oz common. Then, I finally moved on to Yeomans lake to bank a further 11 fish, including a mega-looking 31lb 2oz mirror, bringing my total for the session to 23 fish!

"I used solid bags of Crayfish Mini Mix pellets, crumbed Bug boilies and the new Insect Meal powder, before pouring in plenty of Bug Hydro Spod Syrup. Hookbait-wise, I used The Bug Half Tone wafers." ■



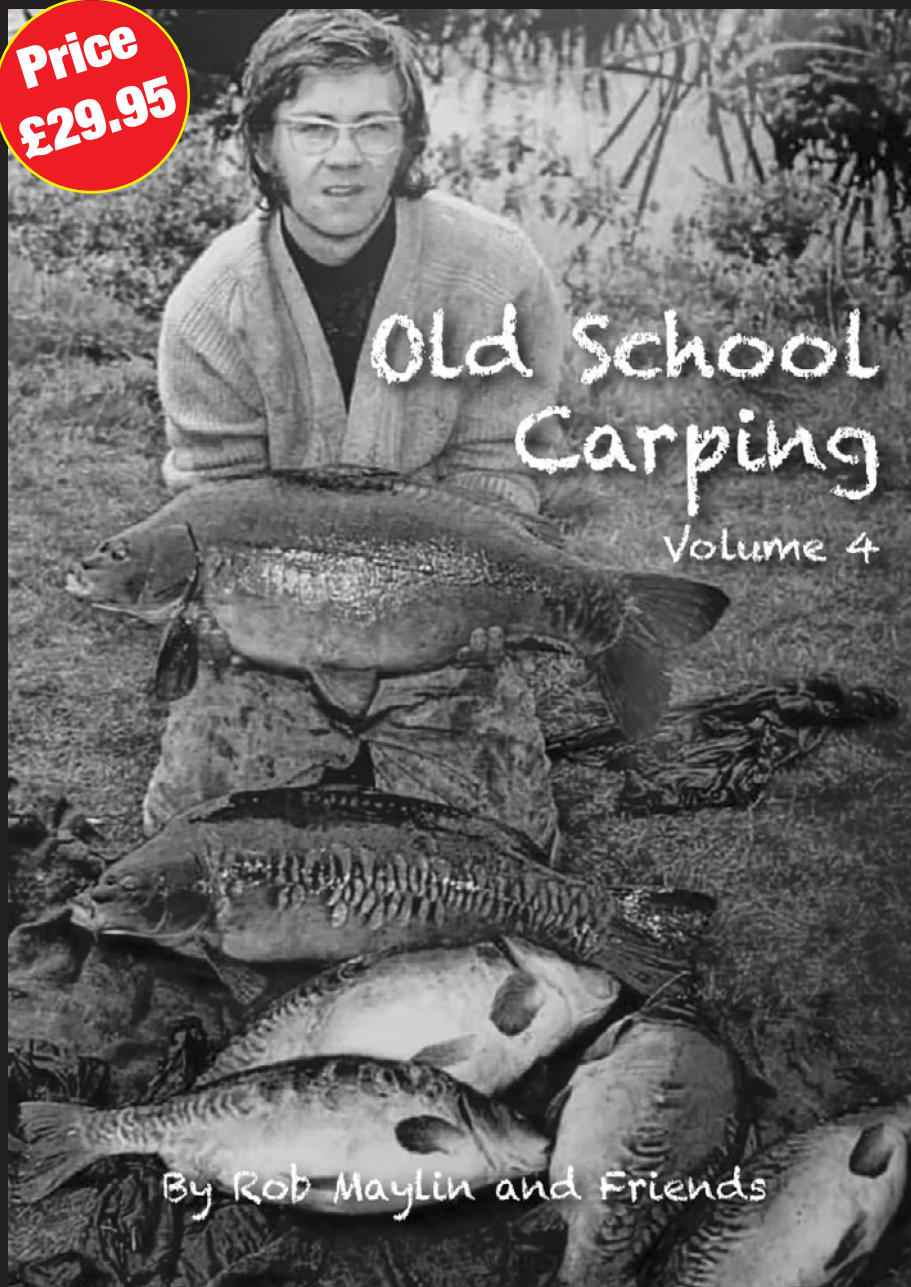
## Carpy Humour





# OLD SCHOOL CARPING VOLUME 4

Price  
£29.95



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

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

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

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

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

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

**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 FEB 2024

77<sup>th</sup>  
*Free Line*  
**EDITION  
FREE**

# DAY TICKET CARPING

BARRY & BENN  
O'CONNOR  
**RUSSELL GODFREY**  
WAYNE TAYLOR  
**JAMES EAMES**  
VINCENT COLE  
**RORY PADDLE**  
STEVE BRIGGS  
**JOHN COOPER**  
MIKE JONES  
**PAUL HARRIS**



*Free Line*  
FREE LINE  
MAGAZINE



# VIEWS FROM THE BIVVY

Free Line Rob's Ramblings



## Editor/Publisher

Rob Maylin

Bountyhunter Publications  
44 Herbs End, Cove, Hampshire  
GU14 9YD

Telephone 07768 731425

Email: bigcarpmagazine@hotmail.com

## Advertising Sales

Rob Maylin

info@freelinemagazine.com

catchreport@freelinemagazine.com

advertising@freelinemagazine.com

www.freelinemagazine.com



Also available this month,

Big Carp Issue 331

Miss it and miss out!

## Thinking of starting a new Angling Club?

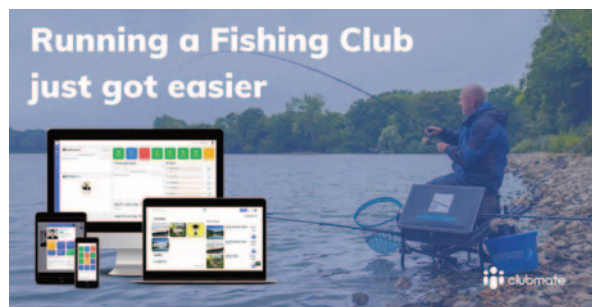
**WATCH: Running a Fishing Club Just Got Easier**

**Are you on the committee of your local fishing club?**

Join Ian Pearson as he shows you how Clubmate has helped 1000's of Fishing Club committee members eliminate unnecessary admin, grow club income and free up more time to focus on the things that matter - like more time on the bank! You'll learn why hundreds of clubs are using Clubmate to manage payments online securely, whilst improving communication and automating time consuming club tasks. In under 20 minutes we'll cover:

- Who is Clubmate
- The benefits of using Clubmate compared to traditional methods
- How to manage online payments securely
- Simplifying the joining and renewal process
- Streamlining & automating member communications
- Automated financial reporting
- Bailiff tools
- The costs involved
- Some words from clubs already using us

There will be an opportunity to ask questions and organise a dedicated 121 session for your club too.



## Clubmate - Running a fishing club just got easier

In this overview and product demo, Ian Pearson will introduce Clubmate and show you how it can simplify the running of your fishing club.

You'll learn why hundreds of clubs are using Clubmate to manage payments online securely, whilst improving communication and automating time consuming club tasks.

### Agenda

- Who we are.
- The benefits of using Clubmate compared to traditional methods.
- Managing online payments securely.
- Simplifying the joining and renewal process.
- Streamlining & automating member communications.
- Automated financial reporting
- Bailiff tools
- Common misconceptions
- Pricing & available discounts.
- Testimonials from some of the clubs already using us.

Register now!

**Your Presenter:** Presented by

Ian Pearson, Sales Executive.

Ian is a keen coarse angler, fishing rivers and stillwaters in and around Hampshire, with the occasional beach fishing trips on the coast of Hayling Island. Ian plays a crucial role as our fishing club specialist, assisting club committees in recognising the advantages of utilising a dedicated online membership system. This offers several benefits to the club and its members, ultimately allowing everyone to devote more time to their favourite activity - fishing - and less time on administrative tasks like processing paperwork and payments.







Carp Chat Carpy News .....4

Carp Scene Reviews .....20

## ARTICLES

The Special Old Ones (Part 1) by Vincent Cole .....28

The Tale Of How Spotty Got Her Spots by Wayne Taylor .....38

Moments by Mike Jones .....46

Hyde Lane, Lifting the Lid by Paul Harris .....50

Below The Mist by Rory Paddle .....58

Harefield Gold by James Eames .....60

Yateley North Lake by Russell Godfrey .....68

Day Ticket Fishing by Barry and Benn Oconnor .....70

Day Ticket Carping by Steve Briggs .....84

Approaching Those Hectic Day Ticket Venues by John Cooper .....94





# 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 hence-

forth 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](mailto: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

ON THE BANK  
TUITION

OPEN TO  
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](mailto:sales@thecarpsociety.com) for more information





## 2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTICE SUNDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 27<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> 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 29<sup>th</sup> June**



SAVE UP TO

**80%**

ON END TACKLE



GET FREE SAMPLES  
FROM OUR  
WEBSITE:

[WWW.CARPPUNK.CO.UK](http://WWW.CARPPUNK.CO.UK)

**CARP  
PUNK**



## 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 Lockeeee 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







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,



# Black Swan Lake

## Exclusive premium carp lake

- 2hr 45min from Calais
- Three swims – maximum three anglers
- Boat and all facilities included
- 100% private location



**BOOK  
NOW FOR  
2025**

Information and prices:  
**[www.blackswanlake.eu](http://www.blackswanlake.eu)**  
or email: [catchme@blackswanlake.eu](mailto:catchme@blackswanlake.eu)



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

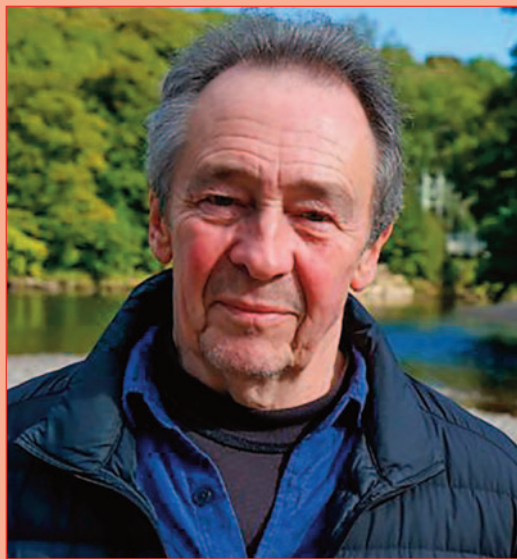
a Gypsy curse put on him, and on the start of every full moon he now turns into a Werewolf. Though in folklore some say he is half Werewolf, half Vampire.

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. ■





For custom  
work



As unique  
as you



info@kudostackle.com  
WhatsApp/textTelegram  
07760260148



## ANGLERS AGAINST POLLUTION

### Chalk stream volunteers join fight against pollution

Volunteers from the Test & Itchen Association and the Watercress & Winterbourns 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



Lauren Stevens

### 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

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  
[Read our Blog](#)

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! ■



# COOLE ACRES NEW FISH FOR 2024 (stocked end of 2023)

## Everyone meet LJ – weight 36lb

LJ is named after an incredible boy and son of Levi and Sharon, LEVI JOHNEY. Levi Johnney's passion for angling and the fishery is incredible and he aspires to step in the footprint of his dad Levi. He is hard working, intelligent and shows us all how it's done on the Fox Lake. This boy also picks, in my opinion, some outstanding fish. As you will surely agree, the fish Levi Johnney picked is something that is really hard to beat and is definitely a future 40. At age 11 he really is an awesome young man.



## Everyone meet SHAZ – weight 35lb



Shaz is named after the incredible Sharon Marie Finney. Not many people will see Sharon walking around the lakes, as she is always really busy running around for me and the boys. She does absolute wonders for all us and I'm positive that without Sharon we'd all fall apart. She's like the magnet between us. She also has a really good eye for a carp. This carp is something that you don't see very often and is definitely one that no one could say they wouldn't want. So, thank you Sharon for not only all the amazing things you do, but picking possibly one of the nicest fish our Facebook followers will see today.

This fish was named by our good friend Chris Swain. Chris is not only an amazing person but also a tremendous help to us at Coole Acres. He's always there for us, lending a hand and providing excellent support and guidance. It's wonderful to have someone like Chris who is so dedicated and reliable and if it weren't for him, we wouldn't have our beautiful fishery. As he built the lakes himself. So thank you to Chris and the Swain family. I hope you love this fish as much as we do, it's honestly incredible and is a great reward for us, and you the anglers. We have worked our socks off for 22 months but these last three weeks have really taken their part, so it's lovely to sit back and admire these absolute beasts. I do believe that this fish will do 40lb in the next 2-3 years. What great potential this fish has.

## Everyone meet FAT TONY – weight 32lb



## Everyone meet BIG GEORGE



Well guys we saved the best until last! This beast is a colossal 40lb stunner. Levi promised in September that he had a surprise for the anglers. He has had a 40lb on order since last year. He was pleased when he got to pick one himself and Big George stood out to him and Jayden for his length, frame and uniqueness. What a beauty! Levi has put into Coole Acres since he took over the fishery February 2022 and has completely transformed the place. He has such a passion to make it unique and put his own stamp to the fishery. You guys wouldn't believe the time and work that has gone into Coole Acres since we've owned it. Looking forward to seeing not just anglers' fish here, but guys who have become friends to the team. We want to make this fishery enjoyable and the best for you all. And I think with the mirrors we have added last year and especially this year! Plus the netting that has been done 6 times now since we have had it.



# Coole Acres Fishery & Leisure Park

Day tickets are available - Sun -Thur  
Min of 24 hrs - Friday and Saturday.

**swim**booker

Our Premier Carp Fishery offers 3 well stocked lakes for anglers of all abilities and preference. Fox is our specimen lake with Carp up to 40lb and Catfish up to 54lb.



Fox lake is 5 and 1/2 acres with a path all the way around it with 14 pegs barked, 4 grass pegs 4 of these can be used as doubles.



Call: 07899 735 052

Email: [cooleacresfishery1@gmail.com](mailto:cooleacresfishery1@gmail.com)

[www.cooleacresfishery.co.uk](http://www.cooleacresfishery.co.uk)

Coole Lane, Nantwich CW58AY





### Warm up on winter fishing trips...

Banish cold hands while waiting for your rods to ring off with lightweight Kupilka dishware. Including a robust side plate, woody whittled spoon and a strong thermal cup, the range is perfect for keeping your soup, stew, tea or coffee piping hot. With Kupilka, you can say goodbye to eating from conventional fishing dinnerware and add a bit of natural style to your fishing trip.

Made from a 50/50 blend of natural pine fibres and thermoplastic, Kupilka's super strong dishware pairs the attractive and natural styling of traditional wooden products, with the outstanding practicality of plastic. Designed to fit perfectly into any fishing rucksack or rod bag, the dishware has a natural style that'll suit any woodland fishing environment. The products also boast exceptional eco-credentials and can be fully recycled at the end of their long life.

Kupilka products also benefit from impressive insulating properties that will help to keep your food and beverages warmer for longer. So, if you manage to make that all impressive catch just after cooking up some hearty grub or making a cup of tea, your food and drink will stay warm. The Kupilka set also has a practical wipe-clean interior and exterior so if you're fishing overnight it makes for easy washing when needed the next day. Once home, the Kupilka set can be popped in the dishwasher for maximum hygiene ready for your next fishing trip.

Find out more at [www.kupilka.fi](http://www.kupilka.fi) or email [sales@rosker.co.uk](mailto:sales@rosker.co.uk) to find your nearest stockist. ■



### 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.

**BUY NOW**



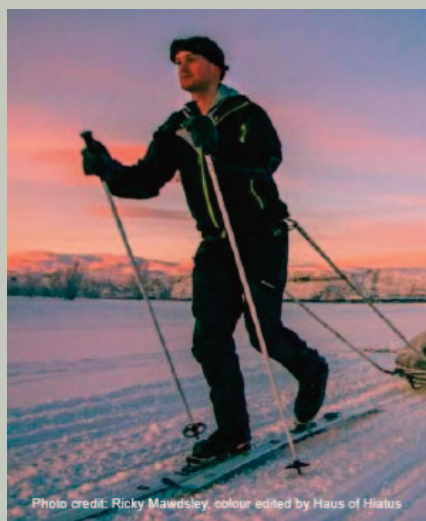
## NITE WATCHES: Frozen Dagger Expedition

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.



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



SAPPHIRE  
CRYSTAL



5 YEAR  
WARRANTY



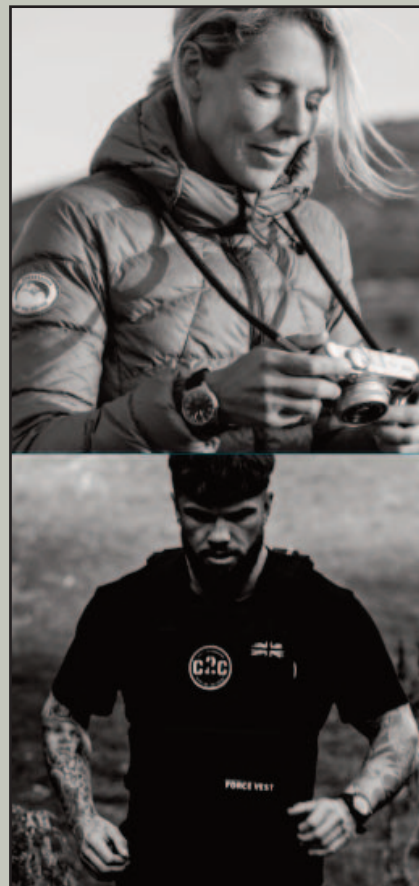
SWISS-MADE  
MOVEMENT



PUSH DOWN  
CROWN



5 YEAR  
BATTERY







**Fine quality fishing tackle  
since 1857**

[www.reubenheaton.com](http://www.reubenheaton.com)

For more on Reuben Heaton, Sportscale & RH brands  
call 01455 293000 or email [info@reubenheaton.com](mailto:info@reubenheaton.com)

Join Reuben Heaton on Facebook for all our latest news

**REUBENHEATON**



**EAGLE CLAW**  
**TROKAR**



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



## 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 (dimmable) 1 Maxbright LED w/ flood beam (dimmable) 2 Red Ultrabright LEDs (dimmable)
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 (dimmable)
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 (dimmable) 2 Red Ultrabright LEDs (dimmable)
Burn Time:	110 hours
Batteries:	Lithium Rechargeable (built in)
Weight:	5.4oz / 155g
Water Resistant:	IPX6 (powerful spray)



**GEOFF  
ANDERSON**

## Press release



**WS7 X**



## WS7 IS HERE

**WS7  
Jumbo X**



**Uncompromising,  
rough, waterproof  
design**

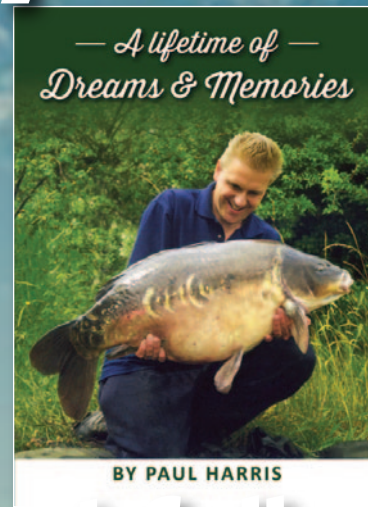
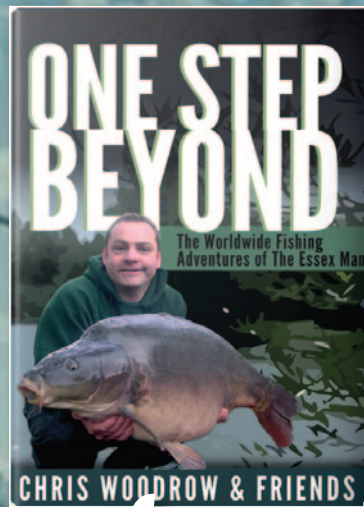
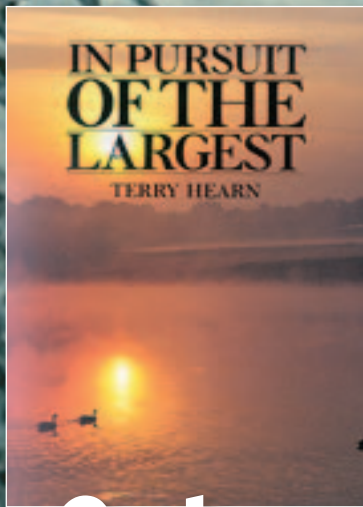
The WS-jacket is a wading jacket for coastal fishing without a compromise concerning water proofness and durability.

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.

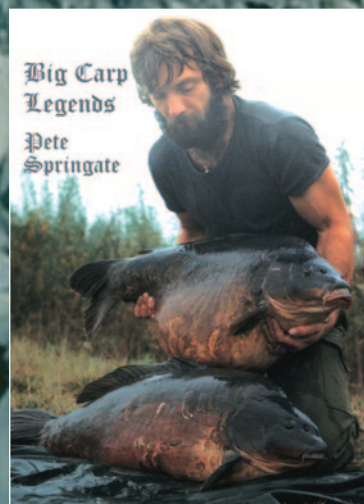
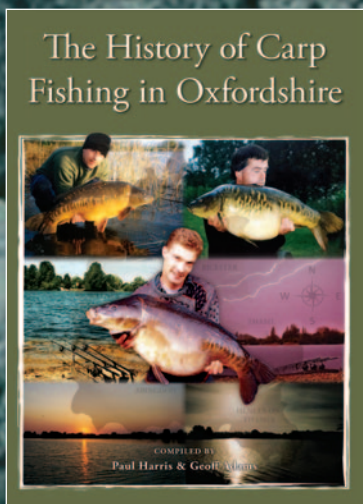
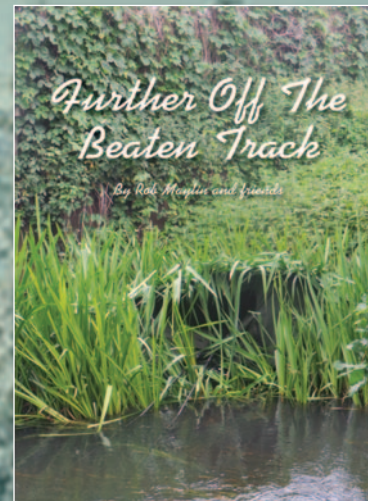
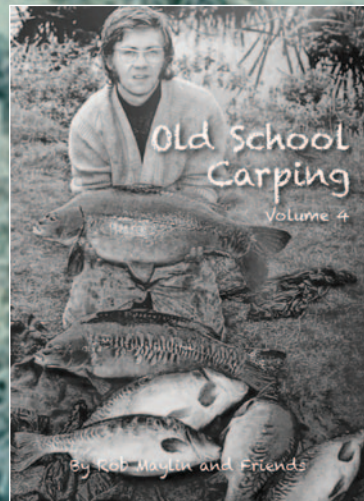
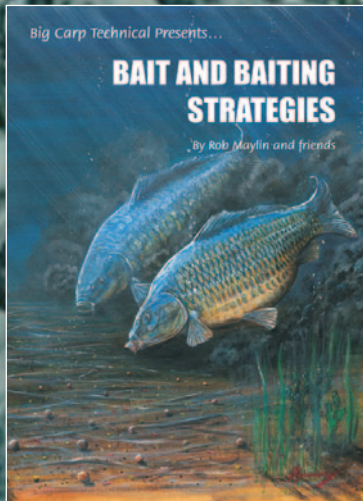
Experience the new WS7 jacket at our website. ■



# Warm Away the Cold



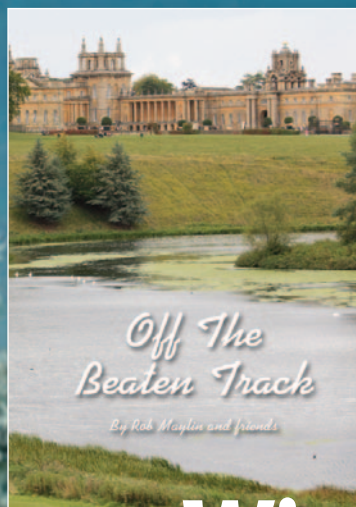
Order one of our Best Sellers and



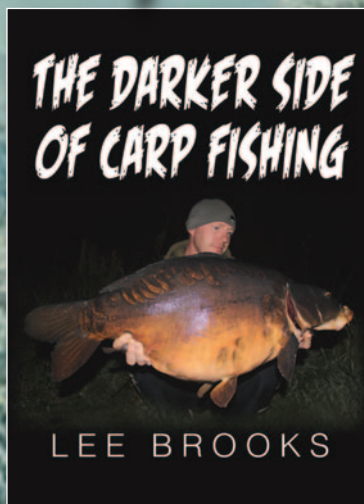
NEW BOOKS [www.bigcarpmain.com](http://www.bigcarpmain.com)  
NEW AND OLD BOOKS: [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)



# and Weather This Year



get ready for some Winter Action



[gazine.co.uk/online-shop.html](http://gazine.co.uk/online-shop.html)  
[.co.uk/usr/rarecarpbooksunlimited](http://.co.uk/usr/rarecarpbooksunlimited)



# The Special Old Ones

Part 2 by Vincent Cole



## Syndicate – Queen of the pond

I'm self employed, which has its advantages and disadvantages, but the main advantage of it is I generally finish work before the standard 5.30pm, thus getting to the lake before others. The other advantage is having time off, which means more time to go fishing. It just so happened that the person I work with was going on holiday for two weeks, which coincided with the last two weeks of the season and hopefully prime time to catch one more fish before the season ended. Plans were carefully put to the wife of doing a 48-hour session then 24 hours at home followed by another 48-hour session then the weekend at home with the family then repeat it for the second week. This would enable me to get four nights in during the quieter time of the week and still spend the weekend at home. Much to my surprise she agreed, and I couldn't wait to start. Unfortunately the first 48 hours coin-

cided with a bank holiday weekend, so a social trip was organised for that period on a different lake. As much as I really wanted to get down to my syndicate, it was nice to spend some time fishing with my brother who I had not fished with for a good few years.

On arriving home, the gear had a quick shakedown, more bait came out of the freezer, food stocks were replenished, and after a shower and change of clothes I was back out the door heading towards my syndicate. It was midweek and there were spaces available, but not as many as I had initially hoped; it seemed others had the same idea as me. After a few laps, I set up in a corner swim where I saw a fish and soon had two baits out in likely looking areas. That day and night and following morning was dead, the water was gin clear, and I watched jack pike nose the boards at the front of the swim, making out every little detail of their camouflaged bodies. After a quick chat with the lad next door who was packing away, he suggested taking a walk, as the new

wind that had picked up may have moved the fish towards the other end of the lake as he had not seen a fish since the previous day. With him being more experienced than me and nothing else to go on, I reeled in, picked up my bucket and went for a stroll.

Arriving down the other end of the lake, I stood watching the wind pick up and blow towards me when suddenly a fish crashed right out. Placing the bucket down, I went to fetch my gear. It wasn't long before I had two rods out, both going down well, and I sat expectantly, waiting and waiting and waiting some more. From my previous social session I had about 10kg of partblend mixed up, so I turned around to face the adjacent lake and spooned in about a half a kilo of it into the margin. Settling back down again looking out for more signs of carp, I was growing more impatient by the minute, as nothing had shown since the earlier crash out, and I wondered what the fish were playing at. Turning around to break up the monotony of looking at the same piece of water, I







looked down to where I baited up, and I could make out two or three dark shapes coming into the spot, tails lifting up and cloudy flumes rising where they were having a good old munch of my free offerings. At the very least, I thought to myself, I can watch these fish feed. As the day went on and more and more particle got scooped in, the fish returned with more and more friends and fed with even more confidence each time. I was in a proper dilemma now – do I stay on my target lake and hold out, or do I move behind and have a good chance of catching one? At one point I counted about nine or so fish come in and a couple of them were definite 30s!

Seeing these fish having it off so much got the better of me, and I was soon turned around and set up in the swim behind. Just on dark a shoal of what sounded like dolphins arrived in the swim that I had recently vacated, and I had never seen anything like it. Every couple of minutes a carp would crash out, followed by another then another, this went on for about an hour, and I couldn't believe I'd moved. Why didn't I just stay? Within half an hour a lad was soon set up in the swim, but surprisingly by morning he didn't even have a sniff of action. Setting up my traps, I deposited boilie, particle and pellet over two spots, which by the morning accounted for a 19lb 4oz common, a stunning 30lb 12oz mirror and a 26lb 10oz mirror. So even though if I had stayed in my initial swim, I might have had a good chance of a fish, I really wasn't grumbling with what I had had, and it was

soon time to go home.

After spending the day at home the following morning, I returned to the lake. In my mind I half planned to fish the same swim that I had caught from on the easier lake, and with the wind blowing into that corner, I thought I could have a really good chance of a big hit of fish. It was a lovely April morning, and on arrival the regular that I had seen countless times on my trips was tucked away in a corner, so I decided to grab a bucket and wander round for a chat. Over a couple cups of tea he informed me that the fish, which were in abundance the previous day, were nowhere to be seen, and it looked devoid of life. I informed him of my plan, and he suggested I at least take a walk around the lake to see if anything was occurring, so after another cup of tea I was soon on my way. There were only two anglers on the lake and scanning the water, it looked like the fish were not only absent from the corner, but absent from of the whole lake! Going from swim to swim I soon arrived at the one I fished the previous week and looked into the water. No longer was it gin clear but was now murky and clouded up. Looking even more closely, I could just make out the silhouette of a pike, just visible – it was such a contrast to the previous week. After checking out the rest of the swims nothing else was happening, so I went back to the lad and sat down for another cuppa and told him of my findings.

"Grab your bucket and go sit down there for half an hour" was his advice. He said that the water was gin clear

yesterday, so something must be down there stirring the bottom up. And am I glad of his sound advice! Sitting in the swim, I looked out, and after ten minutes I looked at my phone to check the weather forecast. Something caught my eye, and when I looked up, I just made out a glimpse of a fish of some description leaving ripples as it went out of sight. This happened again, and I was sure there were carp present in this corner. I made out a patch of bubbles that were bubbling up like a cauldron and just did not stop. This was an opportunity that I could not pass up, so with the bucket in the swim, I double quick marched back to the van and loaded up as quickly as humanly possible.

Arriving back at the swim, I was in a slight dilemma, as the patch of bubblers was at such an angle that to cast to them, I would be casting past a potential snaggy bush. It wasn't close, but if the fish kited towards the margin instead of out towards the lake, I could end up in trouble. So leaving the gear on the barrow, I picked up one sleeve from the quiver and assembled my tackle, which consisted of a stiff hinge rig, and attached my ever faithful CC Moore Northern Special on the end. Carrying my rod, the net and buzz bars, I made my way to the next small pokey swim a couple yards away and cast out with a 1oz lead to where it was bubbling up, but it went too far. Second cast landed just past the area, and I felt it swing down and touch the lakebed with a firm thud. Placing the single rod on the alarm, setting the clutch and bobbin, I scanned the area and noticed that the bubbling had stopped. Damn! Had I blown such a great opportunity?

I went to sit down when I heard the gentle noise of my alarm beeping. Thinking I must have kicked it, I turned around to watch the slack line tighten and the bobbin pull to the top. This can't be real, surely? In pure disbelief, I stared down, and then it hit home – this is a fish! Lifting the rod up, I connected with something which pulled the rod back downwards. After a couple of reel turns all went slack – Noooooooo!! Oh well, it must have been a liner, I thought to myself, when suddenly after another couple of turns of the reel handle, I was in contact with something again!



She must have swum straight towards me, but all that I cared about was I had a second chance, and I was not going to make any mistakes.

I was standing there looking out, rod bent double, and with each heavy lunge the spool spun as the clutch gave line to whatever had taken a liking to my white pop-up. Staying deep and with slow, purposeful movements, I thought this could be a decent fish, but how decent was yet to be discovered. Playing her, still in shock that after hour after hour I had sat behind motionless rods and this had been out less than a couple of minutes, I got my first glimpse of what I was connected to. Teasingly the fish half rolled on the surface about 15 yards out and gave me sight of what I was doing battle with. Each perfectly arranged scale shimmered as the April sun caught its flank. First my knees then my hands started trembling as the realisation hit home that I was connected to a common carp. This may not seem much, but I knew that the lake contained a couple of mid-20 commons, one or two low 30s and the big girl, the Long Common, which sometimes did the magical 40. Ignoring the fact that I had a potential 40lb common on the end, this was a fish that was extremely old and a very rare visitor to the bank, so if it was what I thought it was, there was no way I could lose this fish.

After a few hair-raising moments with her steaming towards a nearby set of tree roots, she soon rolled in front of me and created a huge boil as I tried to slide her over the arms of the net. As the name suggests, she is long, and I wasn't quite aware of just how long until I tried to put the net under her. She only just about fit in the 42in gap. Looking down and just staring, I couldn't believe what I had in front of me. This fish is one of the most sought after fish in the lake, and so many good anglers, far better than me, have been after her, and she has avoided them. But here she was in MY net. Making sure she was safe and secure, I got in touch with the regular who was soon making his way round to give assistance. With all the equipment ready and water to hand, I lifted her out and carried her to the mat. Peeling back the mesh of the net, I was in awe of this beautiful creature. Perfectly proportioned, with a body of scale perfect armour plates,



she lay there patiently for me to admire. On the scales the needle pulled around and around and settled on... "Is it? Is it?" I asked my assistant... only to get the response of "41lb 12oz!" I was ecstatic! Not only had I caught a fish that I had heard about, and if I'm honest never thought I was good enough to catch, but it went 40lb-plus. A 40lb common was a fish I had dreamed about as a child, and here it was in reality.

Some amazing pictures were taken, and she behaved elegantly and posed like the star she was. Cradling over, holding her in the water as she regained strength, I was still in a state of shock. This can't be real! I was soon awoken from that state with a powerful flick of her tale sending water upwards and bringing me back to reality. After thanking the regular continually for his sound advice and great pics, he passed on his congratulations, and I was left alone. I just stared out at the lake with a smile on my face and took in all that had happened. Looking through my diary, I

tallied up that this season I had done 30 or so nights on the lake and had three fish, all 40lb'ers. My PB had been broken and equalled with the common, and I just couldn't believe my luck. With the disturbance of the capture, the area went dead, and the next day I moved to the easier lake where within a few hours I had a plump 25lb mirror in my net. Safe to say that weekend a few beers were consumed to celebrate my capture of the queen of the pond.

## Syndicate – Submarines

With the start of a new season came new dreams, and I couldn't wait to get started. The freezer was full of bait, hard hookers and pop-ups freshly rolled and all that was left was for me to get on the bank and haul. What could go wrong? Risking it being packed, I went for the first weekend, and I couldn't believe it when I walked around the lake late Friday afternoon only to see a couple of lads on. After a few laps of not see-



ing any signs of fish, I planned ahead and set up in a swim that would be hard to be affected by the oncoming crowds. To cut a long story short, that weekend was extremely poor; the lake was extremely quiet in terms of anglers and carp, and I only managed a tench for my efforts. I hoped that this wasn't a sign of things to come.

Four nights later I finally got lucky, and when it rolled into the net I couldn't believe what I had caught – my old friend, my first ever fish from the lake. It was two years and two weeks from the date of the first capture, and on the scales she weighed exactly the same at 35lb 4oz. After taking pics of her in the morning light, she looked immaculate, and she was soon placed back in the water to fulfill another angler's dreams. Reflecting back on it afterwards, I was extremely happy to have caught her and on a home made hard hooker, especially as she is a tricky one to

tempt, but I had a slight feeling of guilt. I had already had the pleasure of catching her once, and I wished somebody else who really wanted her in their album could have been the lucky captor. Not only that, in total I had only caught nine fish out of my lake, and this was already my second repeat capture. I was desperate for different fish, regardless of size. Saying that, I was quickly over my 'downer' and was soon smiling happily to myself with my latest achievement.

Over the two previous seasons, it almost worked out that I had a take every eight or so nights on average. It so happened that my next capture was to come eight long nights after the first fish. Eight nights may not seem long, but when others around are catching and you aren't, it feels longer than it is. To make matters even worse, on a few occasions I had found sure signs of fish and fished

well for them, but to no avail. Waking up in the early morning light and seeing huge flumes of bubbles erupting bang over your baits and not getting a beep had me contemplating all sorts of rig and bait adjustments. I just could not understand what I was doing wrong. After talking to one of the lads down there who was top rod, I could only think of one thing that I could possibly do differently, and that was bait choice.

As previously mentioned, being self employed holds advantages and disadvantages, and this weekend I was planning to fish. Unfortunately this was one of the times it was a disadvantage, as the job took longer than expected, and instead of arriving at the lake late Friday afternoon, I ended up going Saturday morning instead. With the phone alarm waking me from my slumbers, I was soon on my way with a cup of coffee hoping to arrive before sunrise. Unlocking the



My old friend 35lb 4oz





# FISHING RESORT



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





gates revealed cars, cars and more cars in the car park, and my hopes of a decent choice of swims faded. A quick lap of the lake proved what I had feared, and what was free didn't look at all promising. Head hanging low, I trudged around to see a couple of mates who were fishing and see how they were getting on. After a quick scan of the lake and a chat, it was evident that there were carp and lots of them down this end of the lake, and I just wished I could have been in one of the swims. The swim I most fancied was one I had fished for a few weeks on the bounce and already knew of some lovely spots that just had to produce in the right circumstances, this was one of those times, but unfortunately my mate was in it!

With it being Saturday morning some of the lads who start on Thursday pack away as their 48 hours were coming up, and my mate announced that he was moving to one of these

newly vacated swims. I couldn't believe my luck, my bucket was soon deposited down, and I joyfully walked back to the van trying my hardest not to run. Back in the swim, the fish were still about, and I soon had the rods set up and walked out to the desired distances. First cast on both hit the clip, swinging down on a tight line and hit the now firm bottom. All I had to do now was wait. With a light scattering of bait over the area, I was as confident as I could possibly be, and it was time to set up camp. Sitting under the brolly on that warm September afternoon with the mild wind blowing towards me just felt so right. I've read many articles, stories and memoirs over the years and now understood what people meant when they said it.

Watching the fish through the 'binos' it transpired they were hanging around just behind a patch of weed, which separated them from my

bait. A better vantage point was needed, so I climbed a tree and slid on the Polaroids. Looking out, I could see the dark backs of fish of varying proportions glide through channels of weed and vanish to then reappear in a clear hole minutes later. Something caught my eye, and I looked down to see a nice fish glide over my left rod, slowly heading towards the bank. This got my heart beating, but then looking at the path it had entered in from made me nearly fall out of the tree. Two shapes that looked like submarines glided in and then nestled up to the smaller fish. For context, the smaller fish, which I guessed at around 30lb was totally dwarfed by its two companions. These things were bloody gigantic, and they had to be the big girl and possibly one of the other biggies. Now the big girl hadn't been out this season, but the second biggest had recently been out at 46lb. For the time of year all the fish were



well up in weight, so I could easily be looking at two near on 50lb carp and the 'small' 30. The most amazing thing of all was that the three fish were no more than ten yards from the bank, directly in front of my rods. Appearing to get bored, they separated, and the two big'uns left as they entered. I watched the smaller one go over to my right hand rod, and I'm sure I could see its mouth opening and closing as it was picking up my freebies, but then it soon also vanished.

Feeling like I couldn't do anything right, I was at least happy to have witnessed something amazing, and then I snapped out of my daydream. With the southerly wind getting slightly stronger, the leaves started fluttering around me, and the ripple on the water picked up. It was as if I was being alerted, and looking down I could just make out a dark shadow coming in along the same path as before. Out of nowhere the clutch went into meltdown, the alarm screaming its head off, and I was frozen solid in shock for a nanosecond. Adrenaline kicked in, and I clam-

bered down the last few feet of the tree faster than a trained chimp and was soon bent into an angry carp. From my previous viewpoint up the tree I knew there were large patches of weed that this fish could bury deep into, but for once it all went exactly to plan. After the initial supersonic run, it seemed to have used up most of its energy and was soon in front of me wallowing about. Deep, dogged motions got me wondering what it was that was so close yet so far from being mine. Within netting distance, I could make out that whatever fish it was, and it was big and a new PB. Mouth wide open, gasping, hook on show, it came to the surface where I slid the net under her and let out a sigh of relief. Only 15 minutes beforehand, I was wondering what I had to do to catch another carp, and now I stood by the waterside with an absolute beast in the net.

A couple of lads came around to assist, and once ready, I lifted her out and nearly pulled my back. I really should start working out, I thought to myself. Not being able to contain myself, I parted the mesh hoping to

see the big girl or one of the other biggies that I had yet to have. On inspection I was slightly disappointed to find it was the first 40lb'er I had out almost a year ago. By disappointed, I mean I felt a slight twinge, and that was soon forgotten when I saw just how big she was. When I had her previously at 40 on the button she looked good, but didn't have the belly that I had seen in most of the photos of her. This time she did. Between us, all was supported and the needle was pulled around to a whopping 47lb. 47lb! I couldn't believe it; I had to ask again if they were sure it was that big, and they confirmed it. With the video camera recording and pictures being taken, I just held her in my arms for as long as possible and felt that somebody up there was looking out for me.

Supported by the weigh sling, I carried her back to her watery home and sat by her waiting for her to be ready to leave me. The width of her back was just astonishing, and I just stared at her, wondering what she was thinking. Within a couple of minutes enough was enough, and it was time to say goodbye. Her powerful flank







arched and tail and fins fanned before she gave the sign. I lowered the sling down below her head, and she gracefully swam further and further out of view.

She was definitely one of the fish that I had watched come in and teasingly sat there letting me admire her before vanishing to come back to say hello. It just goes to show that sometimes you just have to keep trying and trying, and it will come good in the end.

## Syndicate – Déjà vu

Buzzing from the previous weekend's capture of my new PB, I was desperate to get back down. Having to look after my little girl that Tuesday, I didn't return until the one after, and the day couldn't finish soon enough. With the songs blaring out of the stereo, I made my way down towards the lake. Pulling into the car park entrance, I quickly unlocked the gate and did the usual routine of dipping my net, sling and mat before filling up my water bottle ready for the evening and morning cuppa. On first glance it didn't look busy, then when I got further down I was in shock, it was almost empty!

Quickly stripping out of my work gear and into the fishing clobber, I soon had a bucket in hand and Polaroids perched on top of my head. Arriving at the first swim, I slid the glasses down and stared out, looking for any signs of fish, but there were none. Onto the next swim, and this also showed no signs of fish. This continued for the whole lap of the

lake – great. On my second lap, I stopped where I had caught the previous weekend and noticed that the majority of the surface weed was down this area. This brought me back to a few seasons ago when finding the fish was extremely hard, except for one area where the fish seemed to all reside – under a large area of surface weed. With this in the back of my mind, I ascended up the tall tree that gives such a large view of the lake and stood at the top and looked. At first I didn't see much, then after looking for a bit longer, I noticed the still calm water lift slightly in a small opening amongst the weed. Straining my eyes, I looked, and in half of these openings, fish sat just under the surface, some mouthing the surface weed, others just happy to be out of view of the anglers.

Most of the fish didn't seem of any size, not that I cared, but one did seem bigger, a large leathery creature, which I estimated at around mid-30 was in one of the holes that was closest to where I was going to place my bait. This spot that I had been baiting had gone from being a small clearing to a significantly larger one, and with the water level going down, the spot was starting to glow. Bait attached, the trusty PVA tape wrapped around the shank to avoid tangles and clipped up, I soon had both rods in position with a scattering of bait applied over both areas.

Sitting under the brolly, it was another of those evenings where it was just a pleasure to be sitting beside the lake, especially as I had the

lake pretty much to myself. The wind was blowing a gentle easterly, mozzies were staying away and there were fish in my approx area – perfect. Reminiscing about the previous year, I checked my diary, and I had a feeling of déjà vu. It was this Tuesday, well two days' difference to the year, that I had turned up and had the lake to myself. And after a quick walk around I had found fish, then that night I had had my first 40 out of the lake. Could this happen again? With it being a midweek session and having to pack away early morning, blanking is always on my mind. Luckily I didn't have to leave until around 8am the next morning, so I was feeling positive with the extra hour gained at prime time.

The night under the brolly passed uneventfully, and I stirred at just gone 6am. The feeling of waking up and looking out at stationary bobbins and silent alarms is always one I dread, but I would get bored of catching all the time, wouldn't I? Who am I trying to kid? Of course I wouldn't! Through dreary eyes I looked out to a beautiful morning, sunlight piercing through the trees sending shards of light like a kaleidoscope onto the water... and turned over for another ten minutes' sleep. Sometimes things happen exactly on time when a split second's difference would mean they would be missed, like when you look up and catch a fish lifting out and silently returning to the water, and this was one of those times. Turning over and pulling the cover back to reveal the lake, I looked out to my spot, and a large vortex appeared over it. Half asleep for a millisecond, I couldn't comprehend what was going on... that was until the alarm went into meltdown. FISH ON! Throwing the covers back, sliding my feet into the carefully placed shoes whilst keeping an eye on the lake, I was soon by the waterside with a rod bent double.

Adjusting the clutch to try and stop it reaching the large weedbed that I had tempted it from, the rod bent in an aggressive arc. I went through the ritual of praying to the carp gods: 'Please stay on, please stay on' over and over in my head. For me, there isn't a much more rewarding feeling than slogging through nights and nights of late starts and early pack-aways during the week to finally get one. With the line singing, making me



aware of the tension it was under, a smile crept on my face as I gained distance on it, and it broke free from a small bed of weed. Staying deep out of sight, it came in without much trouble, and when it was within a couple of rod lengths out, it started to give a better account of itself.

Go Pro attached to my head, I wondered what was about to make its debut on film, and then it rolled, showing me what I was doing battle with. It was dark chestnut brown, and from what I saw for that brief second, it looked quite big. Sliding the net under the water slowly so as not to spook her, it wasn't long before I had her in the mesh. Slack line pulled off, rod placed on the alarm, I knelt down to inspect my prize. As the mesh opened up, a broad, sparsely scaled back met my eye with a distinctive lump on her side. Whilst talking to one of the regulars the previous weekend, he had told me of one of his targets, a fish that was easily identified by a lump on its side. This fish went the magical 40lbs at the right time of year. With the fish all up in weight and it having come out a week or so ago, I was silently confident that it would

hopefully do 40lbs. With the fish still in the safety of the net, the unhooking/weigh gear was organised and camera set up ready for picture time. Lifting her out of the water, she felt big, but it was going to be a close call. On the scales the needle pulled around and around until it settled on 40lb 10oz. I was in utter shock – two 40s on the bounce and a different one to add to the tick list. It was definitely déjà vu of the previous year! This I'm sure was the larger fish that I had seen and estimated at mid 30 on arrival the day before.

Having another hour before I had to start packing away, I climbed the tree and didn't see a sign of a fish so decided to recast the rod, as this was the producing spot. Clipped up, and first cast landed spot-on with the 1.5 ounce lead causing little disturbance, so I hoped I might get another chance, though I was made up to say the least with what I had had. An hour passed, and nothing was happening – time to start the pack-down, not that I was disappointed. With only the rods left out and with half an hour to spare, I climbed the tree once more to see if I could spot any signs of fish

to try and work out where they may be hiding. Not a carp in sight, the earlier capture and cast must have spooked any fish out of the area.

Elated thoughts of how my season had been transformed were soon interrupted by a clutch going into meltdown – my clutch! Hitting into it, it felt quite powerful, and I instantly thought I had another lump on the end.

As the fight progressed, it didn't have the dogged feel that I had previously experienced in the last two captures, and when it rolled, it was a mere 'baby' in comparison to the giant I had a few hours ago. On the scales she went 20lb 10oz, so by no means a small fish. With large apple slice scales down its lower lateral line, which glimmered in the sunlight, I looked on, gone from being happy to ecstatic. Going from struggling for months and months to now having caught on consecutive sessions and now having two in a morning made those long blanks a thing of the past.

With every blank, you're closer to catching (that's what they say anyway), and that's how I was starting to feel! ■





# The Tale Of How Spotty Got Her Spots

By Wayne Taylor

Home made 1½lb TC Conoflex rods.



**M**y first encounter with the Railway Lake was a pike fishing trip during the winter of 1979. I was an impressionable fifteen-year-old looking for something to be impressed by, and I certainly found it. It seemed a different world back then to the one I inhabit today – a simpler, less complex place perhaps. Thatcher was about to take up residence in number 10, Carter was in the White House, Sid Vicious was found dead, and John Lennon was still alive. When the Shah left Iran and Ayatollah Khomeini took over, it didn't seem to be of much relevance to us. Walker still held the long-standing carp record, and Chris Yates was unknown. We were heading towards two million unemployed and a major recession, and as a young man looking to make his way in the world there seemed little rush.

It is hard to comprehend now just how much physical effort was involved in a days fishing for a determined teenager back then. Every trip was an adventure of epic proportions and just getting to the lake required a herculean effort. Cars were a rarity in my world, and on the little council estate where I lived there was only one person who owned one, the same person who owned the only private telephone. If I wanted to get anywhere, I walked, rode a pushbike or used public transport. The start of a day's fishing would see me walking for a mile and a half to the local railway station with my gear packed in an old granny style shopping trolley, full live bait bucket slung over the front and rod holdall over my shoulder. From there it was a 40-minute train journey and a 20-minute walk to the lakes. By the time I arrived I would be exhausted, my legs and shoulders would be aching, and I would be dripping in sweat no matter how cold it was. However, in return for my efforts I was transported into a fishing wonderland where unseen monsters waited in the depths to devour my bait, and every dip of my pike float would turn me into a quivering mess. Little did I know it then, but the seeds of obsession were sown that winter, an obsession that would grow to fill a lifetime.

The following 1979/80 season

found me back on the banks of the Railway in pursuit of the monster carp that it contained. In an attempt to put into context just how far out of my depth I was that summer, I need to confess a few things. My tackle consisted of a 10ft Green Vortex carp rod and a Blue Bass "beach caster", I slept on an old sun lounger under a 45in umbrella, and my landing net had solid aluminum arms and needed two hands to lift. I didn't own any buzzers and would use a 2p piece balanced on the spool over a tin plate as my main means of waking me up if I was lucky to get a bite. I'd never heard of a boilie or a particle and considered luncheon meat to be the height of bait sophistication.

I fell in love with the Railway that summer and spent many days and nights on its banks but never caught a fish. To be honest I never even had a run! I did get to know some of the regulars, however, and would spend a lot of my time talking to them, listening to their stories and asking questions. In fact I acquired something of a reputation for being a pest! I also got to see some of the residents on the bank in their full glory. Their beauty totally beguiled me, and I

became completely obsessed with catching one of them. Little did I know just how much effort that would take.

One evening I wandered around to Dave's swim to pester him for the umpteenth time that day. He was my hero, fresh from the banks of DDAPS Brooklands and equipped with all the latest "in" tackle – Optonics, Terry Eustace LR glass fibre rods, Send Marketing broly camp, rods set up four feet from the ground and baits cast to the horizon. He also had a very effective secret bait that used to stain his hands red when he was rolling it. I was trying desperately hard to find out what it was, as it was clear that it had been very effective on many different waters across Kent.

When I arrived, Dave's bivvy door was closed, and I could hear him moving about inside. I thought that Dave must be bait making (common practice on the bank in those days), and that this could be my chance to get a good look and a sniff, but how could I get closer without being too obvious? I tried clearing my throat loudly in an attempt to attract his attention but he seemed not to notice.

"Any luck, Dave?" I asked in my



**My hero of the hour, Dave the carp man.**





**A shot of my "snag ear line clips" from a few years later.**

most innocent voice.

It was a pointless question since I had asked him the same thing only an hour previously, and as I was only fishing a few yards away I could hear his buzzers as well as he could. Still there was no response. I was just about to play my trump card and offer to make him a cup of tea when his head appeared out of the bivvy door.

"Hi there," he said with a big smile on his face. "How's things?"

This friendly greeting threw me for a second, as I was expecting the usual gruff "What do you want?" or worse. I soon recovered though and my mind began to think of a subtle way to guide the conversation towards the subject of bait, or to be precise his bait.

"Have you been making up some bait then, Dave?" I asked casually, looking expectantly at his hands for signs of the telltale red stains. (I never have been very subtle.)

"Yeah, it's in the carrier bag just inside the door," he replied grinning like a madman, "Have a look if you want."

Well, I couldn't believe my luck. At

last here was my chance to find out what he was using, and after that I would be "stacking 'um up like breeze blocks." I could see my face on the front of the Angling Times with a brace of thirties on my knees, and it was all in the bag in front of me. As quick as a monkey up a needle I was in the bivvy and had located the bag. As I picked it up I could feel the heat of the freshly cooked bait through the thin plastic. With my heart pounding in my ears I pulled open the top, plunged my head inside and took a deep, deep sniff. The stench that filled my nostrils made me reel backwards and turned my face green, for there in the bottom of the carrier were three fresh, steaming turds laid by Dave just a few minutes earlier!

That incident taught me a lesson, as well as causing me a good deal of embarrassment as you can imagine, and I began to spend more time by my rods and less by everyone else's. Unfortunately my results did not improve.

Before I move on, I must mention one other larger than life character that I met that year that I knew only as "Big Bob" the pike angler. Bob was both the hardest and softest man you will ever meet, 20-plus stone and permanently dressed in a blue boiler suit, summer and winter alike. Bob came across as an angry, violent man, but if you got to know him then you soon realised that he had a great love for the lakes. It was Bob who planted many of the trees along the Larkfield Bank and made a number of the swims. It was also Bob who moved water lilies out of the nearby Trout Lake and planted them in the Railway... that is apart from the patch of broad leaf water lilies that still grow in the car park corner. I planted those from cuttings taken from a plant in my pond.

Bob, like me, didn't drive and used to catch the train down from Dartford each weekend, but oddly never seemed to carry any tackle with him. The mystery was solved one day when I was hiding up a tree watching fish and noticed Bob come along the bank and suddenly disappear into the reeds on Larkfield 2. After a few minutes of causing quite a commotion, he emerged carrying his tackle from where it had lain hidden since the previous weekend. I'm not sure if anyone else knew his secret, but I do

know that no one ever tried to steal any of it. I think they were all too frightened of him for that! Bob was a constant feature on the water for a number of years, but then suddenly, without warning, one day he was gone. I have a vague recollection of being told that he had suffered from a heart attack, and I often wonder if his tackle is still in those reeds where he left it. I rather like to think that it is.

The 1980/81 season found me back at the lake again, determined to catch my first resident. I'd made some major tackle investments in the interim period and was now the proud owner of a set of three matching 11ft Conoflex 1½lb fiberglass rods, hand built by me over the winter from blanks, with Mitchell 300s mounted on them. I had also purchased a Dave Barnes bivvy to sleep under and a new massive Trevor Moss canvas rucksack replaced my shopping trolley. Even the old camp bed had been upgraded from the flimsy canvas covered version to a new heavy duty one with a robust cover made out of woven plastic on permanent loan from Auntie Vi next door, having been liberated one night from her shed.

The final piece of tackle that I had made over the winter is probably the most significant to my story, as will become apparent. Nylon carp sacks were yet to become widely available, and most used an old hessian potato sack to retain their fish. Unfortunately, these were at best unreliable and if the weave was not loose enough then there was a danger of the fish suffocating in them. Not wanting to put any fish in danger, I decided to make my own sack out of an old landing net mesh with a thick rope threaded through where the arms had once fitted. In theory the end result looked to be a lot safer, and I stashed it away in my new rucksack with my scales without giving it much further thought.

Of all my new tackle I was proudest of my "custom" Optonic bite alarms. I had purchased these secondhand but soon found that the original wires from the head to the sounder box were far too flimsy and would keep breaking. They were also too short to allow the sounder to be placed in the bivvy out of the rain. I replaced these with a much heavier gauge screened cable and better quality connectors. The third alarm had originally been of



# BIG CARP TOP TEN

## Carp Fisheries



Web: [cottingtonlakes.co.uk](http://cottingtonlakes.co.uk)  
Email: [cottingtonlakes@outlook.com](mailto:cottingtonlakes@outlook.com)  
Tel: 01304 380691



the compact variety. The sounder on these was far too quiet, and so I removed the internals and built a new circuit board at college and added the same heavy gauge wire. My sounder box was also custom made by me with three inputs, an externally mounted speaker and a volume control. I was so proud of my efforts that I even took them with me to my first job interview, and I am sure they were the main reason that they offered me an apprenticeship as an electrician.

Another problem with the original Optonics was the design of the rod rest head, which was far too shallow to prevent your rod blowing off in high winds. I solved this problem by making a little extension frame out of the metal from an old coat hanger sprayed black and bent into an extended V-shape to fit around the heads. Not wanting to drill the Optonic case and risk water getting inside, I held them in place with thick elastic bands that I also used to tuck my line under to prevent false bites. I guess I invented not only snag ears but also line clips! (To be honest I copied the design from Dave, but such trivialities as honesty don't seem to bother the claims of other carp related "inventors").

The days of train travel were now behind me, as I had acquired a bright red secondhand 50cc Yamaha motorbike (OK, moped but don't spoil it). God knows how, but I managed to use this to carry all my tackle and me to the lakes. It still fills me with horror when I think about how dangerous those journeys were, and on more than one occasion I ended up in a heap on the floor surrounded by bits of tackle. Fortunately I never suffered much more than a scraped knee. The other downside of the bike was that I was paranoid that it would be stolen if I left it in the lake's car park, so I used to wheel it along the bank into my swim and park it behind the bivvy, much to the amusement of my fellow anglers, especially when it would fall over during the night and frighten me to death.

Information of any sort was hard to come by back then, but I had read everything that I could lay my hands on over the preceding winter, my copy of George Sharman's *Carp* and the *Carp Angler* was worn thin, and I could recite the Fred Wilton piece by heart. I'd also joined the CAA and

met Bruce Ashby, Duncan Kay and Kevin Maddocks at a local meeting. I was completely in awe of them and made a complete fool of myself by standing there staring at them open-mouthed whilst they were talking to each other. God knows what they must have thought of the spotty, gormless kid dressed in camo!

I'm not sure if it still happens today, but back then it was common to write letters off to famous anglers and ask for advice. I had indulged in a degree of this myself and had somehow managed to get in contact with Rod Hutchinson. Rod was just starting out his Catchum business and was selling bait from his garage in Louth. It just so happens that my parents ran a pub just down the road in Cleethorpes, and I managed to talk my father into taking me over to visit him on the pretence of buying some bait.

When we arrived, Rod was sitting at his dining table writing a book. The working title was "A Collection of Fishy Tales", but I think that it eventually became Rod Hutchinson's *Carp* book. Before I go on, I'd better explain that my father is a natural salesman and rather outgoing with the ability to talk to anyone about anything for

hours on end. Rod naturally assumed that he was an angler, and, father being father, he wasn't about to tell him otherwise. At the time Rod had a relationship with Alan Brown who was marketing his "big pit specials". Before I could stop him, Rod had retrieved one of his own rods from the garage, bitten off the rig and handed the rod to my father. Rod then proceeded to run up and down his garden pretending to be a carp and extolling its virtues with my father hanging on to other end and trying to sound like he knew what he was doing. Now my dad does not know one end of a fishing rod from the other, and within seconds there was a bloody great bird's nest on Rod's DAM reel. I was just so embarrassed, but dad managed to change the subject to Rod's grape vine that was growing in the garden and distracted him whilst I sorted the mess out before he noticed.

During the visit, Rod also told me about the time that he had fished on the Railway a few years earlier with Brian Hankins. Now forgive me if I get any of the details of the story wrong, as it was a very long time ago, but the tale went something like this: They



Del White.



were both set up along the road bank with the swim Brian was in having a hump in the margin, which proved to be something of a hotspot with Rod waking up each morning to find that Brian had caught a fish. Rod was becoming a little fed up with the situation but couldn't work out how to get Brian to move out of the swim so he could fish it. Apparently the pit that used to exist adjacent to the road bank was still being filled in and was overrun with rats. Brian had a fear of rodents, so Rod set about catching one and sneaking it into Brian's bivvy each morning to frighten him off. I believe it worked and just goes to show that carp anglers have always been a bunch of stroke pullers! It was just an incredible afternoon; I learned so much, and I just wish I'd taken a camera with me!

Now knowledge is a wonderful thing, but in the hands of the inexperienced it can sometimes cause more harm than good, and so it was for me

at the start of that second season. I had come so far so quickly, but so much of what I had crammed into my head was confusing me. I had been very inspired by Fred Wilton's writings in George Shaman's book and had put together a Casein based milk protein HNV bait in an attempt to emulate him. Unfortunately, I found that the fish were not as impressed as I had hoped. I changed over to using the chickpeas that Rod had recommended, followed by black eyes, a couple of Bait '78 concoctions and Rod's Mingle Fruit, but by August all that I had managed to catch were tench. It was all getting very frustrating.

I made some more new fishing friends that season including Derek (Del) White and his sons. Del was a lovely chap who I stayed friends with for many years. You would never know it if you met him on the bank, but he was the manager of the Ritz Casino in London, the only clue being

his tendency to chain smoke big fat cigars when fishing.

There is going to need to be a bit of artistic licence required for this next part of my story as it actually happened a couple of years later so please forgive me, but why spoil a good story with the facts?

I was going out with a "good Catholic girl" at the time, but since we both lived at home and her parents were quite protective there was little opportunity for any... er... "private time", so I invited her on a fishing trip so that we could get a little closer in the comfort of my Dave Barnes bivvy. It just so happened that we were set up on the Willows bank and that Del was in the next swim along. We were both rather inexperienced in the art, what with me having mispent my youth fishing rather than chasing girls, and, without going into too much detail, we were having a few difficulties with the practicalities of applying the necessary protection. After messing up the first two "items", we managed to sort it all out and were just about to get down to business when there was a shout from Del in the next swim. To my girlfriend's amazement, I quickly pulled a pair of trousers on and legged it out of our love nest to net and photograph the fish.

Once the proceedings were over, I was desperate to relieve myself, but with all the excitement I totally forgot my situation... with somewhat amusing consequences. That was the last of our supply gone, and despite my enthusiastic claims of "Don't worry; you'll be fine," she wasn't having any of it. We all know the sacrifices we have to make to put in time on the bank, but I bet there are not many who gave up the chance of their first "female close encounter" in favour of helping to land a Railway carp! I hope my old mate appreciated the sacrifice.

My other hero at the lake was Don Foster. Whilst Don's rods were far too close to the ground and his accent from too far north of Watford for him to be a real ultra-cult, he had something far more important in his favour, which was that he was a good friend of Fred Wilton (yes THAT Fred Wilton). Don was a different generation to me and very much of the old school even then, and I think that he viewed me as something of an annoyance. I had been working very hard



The rash marks can just about be seen in this shot.



over the months to win him over, but with little success, my well-intended greetings often being met with nothing more than a grunt. I was determined not to give up on befriending him, so I set about devising a plan.

It came to my attention that Don had booked a week's holiday and intended to spend it at the Railway. This, I felt, would give me my chance to win him over, so I arranged to be there at the same time and fish a nearby swim. Throughout the week I showed off my newfound dedication to Don, limiting myself to just two visits to his swim per day – one first thing in the morning to bring him his early morning cuppa (what a creep!) and once in the evening for a quick chat. After a few days, Don's resolve was starting to wane, and by mid-week he actually started to visit me for a chat. On the last day of the session my "new friend" invited me to breakfast and afterwards set about giving me the advice that I so desperately needed.

In this day and age bait choice for most anglers is a simple case of choosing the latest concoction from the tackle shop freezer. However, back then it was a very different affair with most things being a closely guarded secret. Ingredients were starting to become available via the likes of Rod, Geoff Kemp and the Watford Carp Cellar, but knowing how to use them was a different thing. I explained to Don what I had been doing, and he kindly pointed out where I was going wrong. I'll try to summarise what he told me, not in his own words or even necessarily in the way that he described it all to me, but in terms of the effect that the conversation had on me and the thinking that still stays with me today.

I never think of a carp bait in isolation. It is not simply a list of ingredients mixed together, rolled into balls and boiled. To truly realise the potential of any bait, you need to think of it in terms of its relationship to the water and carp you are fishing for. To try to explain what I mean by that, let's take an example of a bait marketed as an HNV at your local tackle shop. If you purchased such a bait and had it analysed, you may well find that it contains all the necessary nutrients to make it a food source to carp (which is not to say that I am arguing that it needs that to catch



**Unfortunately, it's not easy to see the marks here, as we washed the fish off for the photos. I think there may be a little Photoshop magic as well, as it's an old scan!**

fish... please bear with me). Take that bait to a lake and you need to start considering other things. Has it been used before? Do the fish associate it with food or danger? How fresh are the ingredients? Does the guy down the in the next swim using it know how to look after it on the bank, or has he wrecked your chances by using it rotten?

It was quite clear after my chat with Don that I was changing baits too often, that I wasn't making enough of it available and that I wasn't giving enough consideration to the freshness and quality of the ingredients that I was using. He recommended some items that could be purchased from supermarkets, health food shops, chemists and pet shops, which all came in sealed packets with a "best before" date on them. These could be used to produce a bait that, whilst not as high in protein as the one I had been using (considered significant at the time), would have a guaranteed quality. This he felt was of much more importance. He also advised that I should prebait the lake for a few weeks before fishing so that the fish would come to recognise my

little balls as a safe food source. I went away and spent the next few weeks following his advice. Using some of the ingredients that he had recommended I put together a bait consisting of (from memory) Complax, casilan, soya flour, wheatgerm and Equivite with a maple essence. I then baited every other night for two weeks. By the time that I finally came to fish with it, my confidence tanks were full to overflowing.

After a long, slow walk around the lake I found a couple of fish in the Bridge area. For anyone that does not know the lake I would explain that at this point the Railway is joined onto the adjacent Larkfield 2 by a narrow channel. In order to prevent the fish swimming through this, it had been blocked off with wire mesh, and, back then, some old submerged oil drums with planks over the top to form a bridge (Big Bob's work again). The fish could often be seen in this area on warm days, even occasionally nudging at the wire presumably looking for a way through.

I set up here and positioned three baits at close range in some clear spots. A ten-ounce mix was spread





**Note "sack" in the foreground.**

between the three rods (oh, the innocence!), and I sat back to await events. Time passed, night arrived and my eyelids felt heavy. Despite my efforts to prevent them, they dropped and slowly closed. My head swam, and I slipped into another world.

I woke with a jump, and at first I did not know where I was. Slowly the green walls became less strange as I came out of one dream world into another. After what seemed like a lifetime, but what in reality was only a few seconds, I realised that I had a

take. I panicked, like you do, and nearly cocked it all up when my sun lounger tipped over and almost deposited me in the lake. I ended up striking on my knees with the sleeping bag around my ankles. I soon managed to gain control and found myself attached to an angry carp that was bending my rod double. It was the first big carp that I had hooked on my through action rods, and it soon became apparent that there was a fundamental design flaw. As the rod bent under the cork handle, the collars that held the reel in place moved causing the

reel to fall off! I somehow managed to retrieve it and fit it back in place and keep it there for long enough to land the fish, but it was more a case of luck than judgment! I carried her ashore and placed her carefully on the ground, there being no such thing as an unhooking mat back then. I couldn't believe the size of it, and I started to shake uncontrollably. Fortunately Dave arrived from the adjacent swim just in time to help me out, and we soon had her weighed at twenty-six pounds exactly.

Dawn was still a few hours away, so we put her in the deep margins in my new mesh sack, and I stayed awake for the rest of the night drinking coffee and making sure that she was ok.

The next morning, Dave came back to take the photos for me, and we noticed that there was what looked like a rash on her and a small amount of bleeding. I was really worried about it, but the fish seemed otherwise in good health and swam off strongly after the pictures were taken. It was only after putting her back that we realised what had happened and that the irritation had been caused by the roughness of the net sack. That fish went on to grow very large and became quite famous, being affectionately known as Spotty, as the damage that I unwittingly caused her that day left lasting marks. I don't believe anyone ever knew how she acquired them until now. I always felt a pang of guilt whenever I saw her, and needless to say the net sack was consigned to the bin and never used again.

Some years after my capture of Spotty she was move into the adjacent Larkfield 2 lake for reasons that I have never understood. This caused her to become very disoriented and start to get captured far too frequently, her condition deteriorated and people began to fear for her. Following yet another capture she was apparently moved again into an adjacent quiet water that was little fished. I subsequently tried to find her in her new home on a number of occasions but never did, nor did I ever hear anything of her again... Maybe you know differently? I hope that she enjoyed her retirement and take solace in thinking that some of the fish that have been caught from that special place in subsequent years may have been her offspring. ■



**Tim Marks with Spotty some years later.**



# Moments

By Mike Jones



**I** arrived at the lake early that morning, and the car park was empty with only one car. I started to unload, and Spud pulled up. After a quick chat, we departed, and as I walked to the lake you could feel a slight chill in the air. I love this time of year with all the leaves on the trees changing colour and dropping to the floor. I signed in at the hut and started a walk around the lake. I stood in one of the open water swims and looked for any movement, but I saw nothing, so I moved to Bramble Bay where I had been having a few fish, but yet again nothing.

I walked around to see my mate the Doc, and we chatted for a while. He was fishing the Bush swim, which commands a lot of water, but he had not had a tap. I said my goodbyes and walked back across Bramble Bay. We all know that feeling of something pulling you into a swim as you go by. I stood in the Up and Over for a while, but still seen nothing, I walked back, passing Turtle Corner and spotted a few bubbles popping quite close to the bank. With only this to go on, I went and got my barrow. I set up in

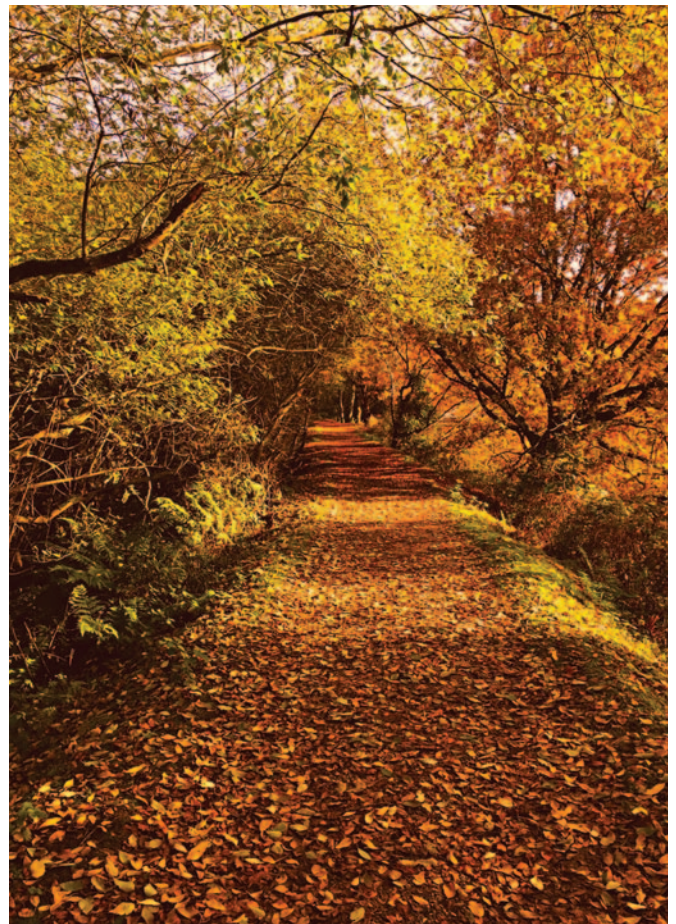
the Up and Over and found some spots that were rock hard. My setup consisted of one snowman setup and two low pop-up rigs. I baited each spot with a few handfuls of bait, cast my rods in and sat back to take in the view of the lake.

The night passed with a few liners. The morning was a chilly one with a slight hint of frost, which the sun burned off within the first few hours. After a lovely hot breakfast, I sat and watched the water once again. At 11.30 my right hand alarm gave out a single bleep and the line lifted. I know how crafty these fish can be by just shaking their heads to get shot of the hook. I lifted the rod and bent into a solid resistance, and then it moved slowly across the small bay trying to get into a load of overhanging bushes, so I kept the rod low and kept on winding and pulling.

I soon had the fish in front of me, trying to dive deep and shaking its head. I grabbed the net, got it into the water, and I then I saw a huge set of shoulders come to the top. I quickly slid the net under the fish, and she was mine. As I opened the folds of the net I could see a huge mirror. I



phoned Pete to come over to help me out, and as he arrived, he could see the smile on my face. He asked, "Big fish is it, boyo?" in a bad Welsh accent. As we turned the fish over in the net we could see the one eye was glazed over, so this could only be one fish – Little Big Head. We got her on to the mat, and giggling like a pair of naughty schoolboys we lifted the fish up on the scales, which went around





to 57lb 8oz. I was buzzing to say the least! We got a few photos and slipped her back in. I was shaking! I said my thanks to Pete and rebaited the spots.

As you could imagine, that night I couldn't sleep. The pressure was dropping, and a fine rain moved in – proper carp weather. At around 4am my middle rod was away, and this fish was going crazy, ripping line off the reel. After about ten minutes the fish was just in front of me. I could see white in the water; it was a ghostie, and it was soon in the net. The scales went to 32lb, and I was happy with that. I slipped her back and recast the rod to the spot.

Morning came, and I started to pack up with this huge grin on my face. I have always wanted to catch that fish. I had seen it on the bank only once, but that was enough. I was smiling all the way home. This is why we do it, to have moments like this!

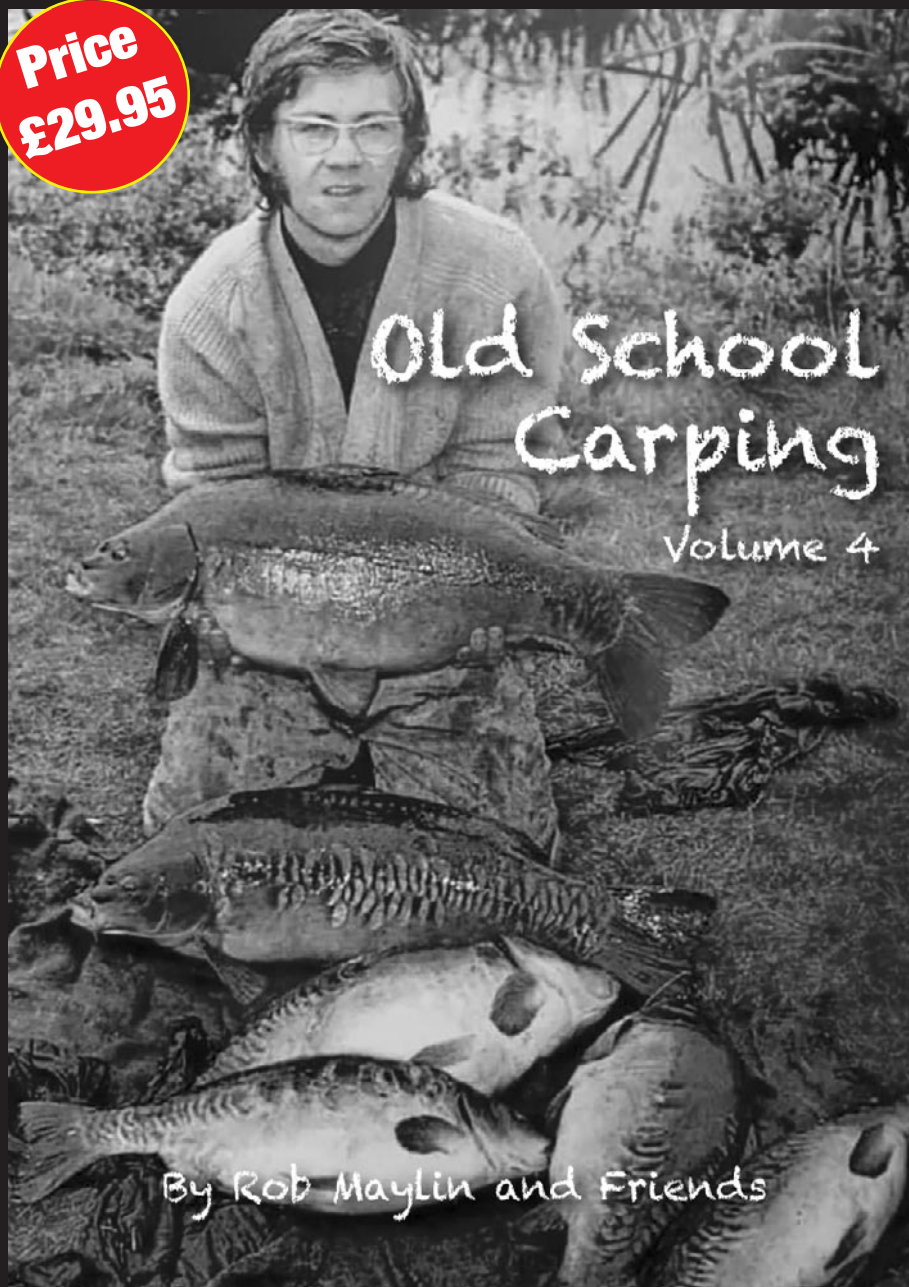
Be lucky! ■





# OLD SCHOOL CARPING VOLUME 4

Price  
£29.95



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Hyde Lane, Lifting the Lid

By Paul Harris

My favourite little swim, to the left of The Headland.



**I**t was fascinating to read in Big Carp 240 that this famous old water is under new ownership. I wasn't aware of this, as I haven't had a ticket since 2010, and the friends I knew on there either finished on Hyde before me or have since. There are probably far better people to lift the lid so to speak on this water than me, but it really holds a special place in my heart, so it's a pleasure to share some of my memories of Hyde Lane. I don't know which type of angler you are, whether you fish from the head or from the heart, whether you were a Carp Fever or Carp Strikes Back advocate (early eighties guys, come on, keep up!). Do you smell the hops along the way, or do you have to have your zig rig or choddy fishing at every available moment in your mud filled dugout? If it's the former, carry on along with me; if it's the latter, move on to the next instructional article.

It's a feeling. It starts before you get to the lake. With me it starts way before that... Usually on the drive home from a session, I'm dreaming about what the next will be like. It's hard to sleep the night before you go;



**The bay to the left of The Headland.**

it's hard to concentrate on a day's work if you are going fishing afterwards. In my slightly older years now (is that a nice way of putting it?), I have learnt that if I don't feel this way then it's not the place for me. I have numerous lakes within ten minutes of my front door that have huge sought after carp, and most of them are truly stunning, but I don't fish for them. The

fish are only part of the story to me. It has to tick all the boxes for me; it has to have that "feeling". It's strange but true that I can't find it on my local lakes. I still now dream of fishing in the Birches on the Copse at Yateley, or the End Point on the North Lake, wondering if this session is the one Basil will pick up my bait. I wish I could walk that high bank from the



**Leafhead at 37lb 4oz.**



car park at Elstow 2, down past the Sunken Island and look down on those sunken bushes for the Mother or the Twin to emerge. There are others I could think of, but I would just be indulging myself and lose you as a reader. What I would also need would be a time machine, because all of those places have now changed forever.

I first heard about Hyde Lane the best way you can: around a Coleman after dark, drinking tea and swapping stories. He won't thank me for mentioning his name, as he doesn't like any publicity, but now a very good friend of mine, Greg Richardson, was the one telling these Hyde Lane stories around the Coleman. It was the spring of 1996, and we were fishing one of the gravel pits in my home county of Oxfordshire. Greg was having some success on there, but it transpired that he was only there until his "main" water opened up on 16th June. He told us a bit about it and that it contained two carp over 40 pounds at the right type of year. Now this will not make you raise your eyebrows nowadays, but 20 years ago it certainly did! He even showed us a photo or two but always swore us to secrecy, as there was a strict publicity

ban on the water.

It was probably a year or two later that I plucked up the courage to enquire how you went about trying to obtain a ticket for the place (always been quick on the uptake me – not!). I was good friends with Greg by then, and he explained how you went about trying to obtain membership. I had to laugh when he explained it to me. There was a waiting list you had to put your name down for, and local anglers in the Buckingham area would have priority. Apparently there were two lists: one for people who may get on, and one for people that wouldn't! This may seem a bit unfair, and it probably was in a way, but don't be naive enough to think this doesn't go on at a lot of well-run syndicates. All they are doing is using a vetting system, and in this case if they don't like you, you don't come in! In other words from outside of the area you would need to be proposed by a current member who could vouch for your character. I don't want to get off track here, but years later, Greg very kindly proposed me for another syndicate where I still had to meet the syndicate leader before I was accepted, and at that meeting I was told if I break the rules and lose

my ticket it would also be Greg's ticket that would be lost as well! Nothing focuses your mind like having that bit of information!

I can't remember the exact year I went on the list, but it would have been sometime in the late nineties. I didn't think they would really want me on the syndicate, mainly because at this time I was doing quite a bit of writing for the magazine, and I thought they would think I would publish my captures from Hyde if I got in. As it turned out it obviously didn't count against me, as in the spring of 2004 I was offered a place. My first session was in June 2004, and it was also the first time I had walked Hyde Lane's banks. Greg and a few of his mates were already set up around the Headland area, and I went to their left in the mouth of the bay; at this point in time it was still joined to the middle lake. Nothing happened apart from a tench to me that session, although it was nice to get to know some of the others and learn a little about Hyde. It was also good to learn about how to try and get around all the crayfish in the lake, as it was the first (but sadly now not the last) place I had fished with a large head of signals.



Clover at 39lb 1oz.



# The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

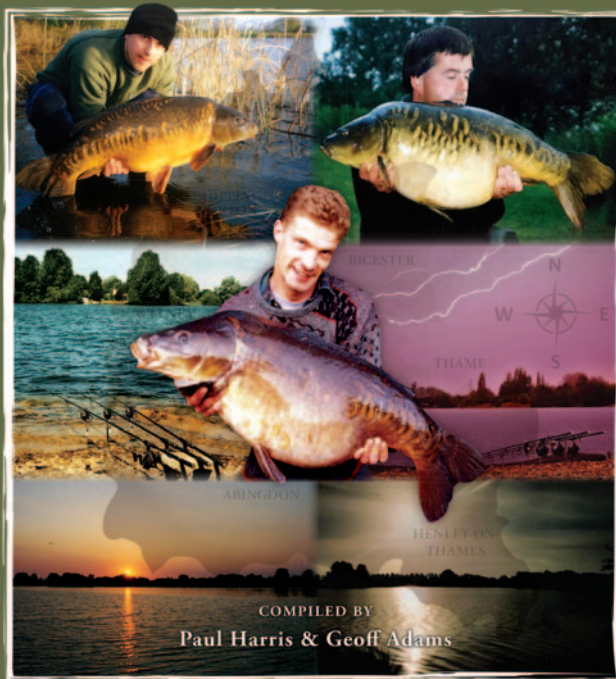
We have brilliant chapters on Newlands from Ginger Robinson and Milton Pools from Stuart Rothwell. Danny Aplin has written about his time on Linch Hill which will just blow you away! His pictures alone are worth purchasing this book.

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

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

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

## The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire



CARD: 07768 731425

PAYPAL: [www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk)

**AVAILABLE THIS AUTUMN**





**Prehistoric at 31lb 1oz.**

It's funny; when I look back now I always remember Hyde from this area – the second car park, opening that old wooden gate and walking through the cattle or sheep, past the middle lake, around to the left, past the middle lake again and up to the Headland. It was far easier to park in the first car park and fish off the high bank, but I just loved it on the Headland. You had so many options as well: you had straight out off the Headland Point or you had the bays to the right and left. The southwesterly wind blew into the bay on your left as well, and a favourite tactic of mine was to fish off the Headland Point and cast slightly to the left, which intercepted any fish coming down the main lake into the bay. It was fishing exactly like this that I had my first take a few weeks after that first session.

I arrived after work and made my way around to the Headland. It was cloudy, but muggy and breezy. I set up, had something to eat and a cup of tea and settled in for the night. It was 3.45am when I was woken by the take. It was typical of a big, old carp in that it didn't tear around the place but just felt heavy and steady, and to be honest it wasn't long before it was in

the net. Now the Headland Point swim where you have your rods is down below where you bivvy up, and it can be a bit on the slippery side to get down to your rods or up to your bivvy with a net full of fish! I remember struggling to hoist it all up to the top of the bank, thinking I must have a load of weed in the net as well. Well there was a bit of weed, but most of what was in the net was all fish! She weighed 37lb 4oz.

There was nobody about, so I texted Greg telling him I'd got a lump but didn't know which one, and he was kind enough to get Baz, who lives close by, to come over and do the photos and identify the fish (very kind, remembering this was still silly o'clock in the morning). Baz came over and recognised the fish as Leaf-head, a stunning dark, old warrior who just happened to be one of the two forties I had been told about in



**Looking down the lake and The Canal Bank.**





**28lb 8oz mirror.**

hushed tones over the Coleman back in 1996. She was down in weight slightly due to spawning and old age, but it mattered not a jot to me. I felt very lucky that my first fish from the lake was one of the big two.

A few weeks later in August I was back. The weather was similar, but this time it brought with it heavy rain. I can't remember if I'd seen fish in the bay, but this time I set up to the left of the Headland Point in a little swim

that faces off the Headland into the bay. At almost the same time as I'd had the take from Leafhead in July, I was in again, and the fight was pretty much the same, making me think it was another good fish. Once in the net I could see the bulk of it even in the darkness. I could also see it had some tail damage, which Leafhead had, so I thought it was a recapture at that point. Once on the mat though, I was pretty sure it was a different fish.

The weight of this one was 39lb 1oz.

The same routine was used with Greg giving poor old Baz an early morning call to come and identify and photograph the old warrior for me. Believe it or not, before Baz arrived I lost another lump at the net! (it was light by this time) and then landed a 17lb common. Baz duly arrived and identified this one as Clover, and yes, you've guessed it, it was the other forty talked about around that Coleman eight years earlier! How lucky was I? My first two carp takes (I was catching plenty of tench) were the two biggest fish in the lake! As is the way with waters like this, my luck ran out, and even though I didn't fish it much after this in 2004, I received no further action.

The following year the area that joined the main lake to the middle lake was filled in, so now we only had the main lake to fish. I wasn't sure about this and wondered how many of the old warriors wouldn't be in the main lake but stuck in the other lakes, but as it turned out I didn't need to worry. It was also a very special year, as my daughter was born! 21 days before she arrived (she arrived in July) I had my only take that year. I was fishing in my favourite little swim to



**Set up along the Canal Bank.**





**Prehistoric at 35lb 8oz.**

the left of the Headland Point, and early in the morning, I had a take and landed what looked like another really good fish. There was some confusion as to which fish it was, as another angler was fishing that morning, and he wasn't sure. She weighed 31lb 1oz, and this chap did the photos for me. I showed them to Greg; he wasn't sure but thought it could be Bashers. To cut a long story short, it wasn't until some years later that it was confirmed as Prehistoric (to be fair to Greg, he did say at the time it could be Prehistoric, but I believe Prehistoric was an upper thirty at that time, so nobody realised I'd had her spawned out).

I changed jobs around this time, which meant my fishing time was really limited, and also on my day off in the 2006 season there was the small problem (or joy!) of looking after a small baby when my wife went back to work. I did manage a few sessions that year, but alas no carp came my way. I do remember having a take from my favourite little swim and landing a good thirty but was absolutely gutted to find I'd hooked a line trailer, so I couldn't count it. Amazingly it was the same one I'd had the

year before (so I still thought it was Bashers at this point when it was Prehistoric). I did weigh her, and she was 33lb. The following year I kept my ticket, and even though my daughter was in nursery now my time was still very limited, so I fished mainly locally. In 2008 again I did very little fishing on Hyde, but I did manage a brace off of the main Headland Point, a low twenty stockie and an old original at 28lb 8oz.

The next few years I had tickets for other waters that I was concentrating on, so even though I kept my Hyde ticket, I didn't fish it much and didn't have that many fish out of there. I do remember one amazingly frustrating session coming so close to one of the big girls on a floater. From the first car park there is a high bank that leads you to the canal bank, and one hot day a number of fish were cruising close to this bank. I managed to get them taking floaters and came agonisingly close on several occasions but just couldn't hook one and left as a nervous wreck that afternoon!

Another amazing session that springs to mind was the flood. Do you remember that crazy weather we had

in the summer of 2007? Heavy rain had been forecast for that session, and I was set up in one of the swims along the high bank. I spoddied out some bait in the drizzle, and before long I started to catch bream... then more bream. The more bream I caught, the heavier the rain got. The afternoon I was due to go home it was ridiculous. I said to myself that as soon as it eased off I would pack up, but it got heavier and heavier. It was like one of those torrential downpours you get in the summer when it's been steaming hot that lasts a few minutes and then the sun comes out. Well this was just like those, but those few minutes went on and on, and the sun never came out! Where the inlet comes into the lake, it became a raging torrent. I could see water pouring into the lake, and I was a few hundred yards away (it's normally just a trickle).

At some stage that afternoon I looked down at my rods, and I couldn't understand why the front rod rest had slid down. Then I realised that it hadn't slid down; the lake was coming up! It was quite scary then. My wife rang to see where I was, as



loads of roads in Oxfordshire had been closed. It took me ages to get home; I kept getting detoured, but somehow I made it. When I went to work the next day there were cars abandoned on The A34 because drivers couldn't get anywhere!

My final year with a ticket was in 2010. I wrote to the club, explaining I wouldn't be rejoining in 2011 because I believed that by holding onto my ticket I was depriving someone else of being able to fish it when I was only coming over a few times a year. I explained how much I'd loved it on there and enquired if I could go back to the bottom of the waiting list, as I would very much like to fish it again in the future. Sadly I never even received a reply. I had one last great session, luckily for me in late August 2010.

I finished work early that day, as I was travelling up to see my beloved Everton in the league cup that night. I hatched a crazy plan, which involved a session at Hyde on the same night! I took all my gear to work

and drove straight from Oxford to Buckingham. The wind was southerly, but with a bit of east in it, making the corner between the very bottom of the high bank and the bay to the right of the Headland (if looking out from the Headland) perfect. I think this area was called the Flats? (old memory isn't what it was).

I set up and spodded a load of tigers around a nice area I had found, out into the bay towards the Headland. I then cast both rods to it, clipped them up, and took them back to the car where they promptly came up the motorway to Merseyside with me for the match! I left my bivvy set up and my spod and marker rod in the swim (I know, crazy and probably stupid).

It was after midnight when I arrived back; it was raining, and the wind had swung round so it had blown straight into the bivvy, soaking my sleeping bag! (serves me right!). I managed to get the rods out after having first repositioned the bivvy, and finally managed to drift off to

sleep in a wet sleeping bag! To make things even worse, in the early hours I had a screaming take and proceeded to lose it! I had the last laugh though, as from ten to six until twenty past nine I hooked a further three carp! It was the most intense action I had ever had on Hyde Lane. I had two mid-twenties, and then believe it or not, Prehistoric at 35lb 8oz, which proved to be my last ever fish from Hyde Lane. It was the perfect way to finish.

I feel very fortunate in being allowed to fish this very special lake; it was a privilege. I've never published a single capture or written a single word about the place until now out of respect for the publicity ban, but as that has now been lifted and the fish I fished for are no longer, I guess it is ok to open the lid on Hyde Lane. I do hope some others like me will have read the articles in issue 240 and feel able to share their memories. I for one would love to hear them, and it would give me that feeling once more. Be lucky, all. ■



## Fancy 24 hrs with Ali Hamidi Angler?

Ali Hamidi, founder and CEO of 'One More Cast' and star of 'The Grand Fishing Adventure' is one of the most recognisable faces in carp fishing.

Our lucky winner will spend 24 hours fishing with Ali, tapping into his extensive experience both at home and abroad, learning what it takes to create successful fishing content for television and hopefully catching a few lovely fish along the way.

Tickets for our Great Fishing Prize Draw are just £2 and remember, the more tickets you buy, the better your chance of winning!

Just click on the link below for your chance to win!



**<https://anglingtrust.net/the-great-fishing-prize-draw-2024/>**



# Below The Mist

By Rory Paddle

**D**eep in the Sussex countryside lies a magical crevice of lowland, punctuated only by small forests and meadow-fringed waters. Whilst not a seldom seen environment throughout the area, it is below the surface of these waters at Longreed lakes where the magic really starts to become clear. There's an often pondered thought by those fortunate enough to wet a line in these parts – how are the larger of these aquatic residents best measured, by their pristine condition or by their colossal size? Well, in my opinion, that argument is almost as broad as it is long, much like the unique breed of mega carp fishery owner Miles Gosling has spent the past 20 years or so rearing. My initial attraction to the lakes was for an experience of peace, quiet and beautiful surroundings, maybe the odd fish if I were lucky, and, even now as a fairly well acquainted member, I'd still suggest that this was the best "approach" for success.

I remember my first few sessions well. They largely consisted of getting sunburned, sleeping and blanking. On about my fourth trip I decided to target two of the lesser-fished areas, armed with a single rod, a float and a cocktail of worms and mixers. That day everything just seemed right. Practising this ancient art form exactly how I best felt comfortable, and, as a result, it was not long before I had my first Longreed fish. Nestled out of sight in a swim known as the Finger, my worm positioned no more than 5ft from the bank, I noticed the fringed water lilies gently twitching, one after another in a line, heading straight for my bait.

All of a sudden the red tip of my

A then PB common carp for the fishery at 39lbs.



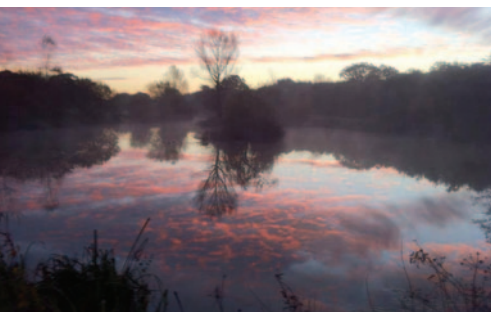
float slowly glided away, and I was striking into the fish right under my feet, with heart racing and fish racing even faster. A very spirited and intense fight followed, and after negating the obstacle course of reeds and pads, I had her in the net. My prize was quite unique to Longreed in that it was both a mirror carp and a fish of under 20 pounds, however this weight wasn't much below my PB, although considerably less than the average size for the lake. After a quick selfie with the 'fin-perfect and mint-mouthed mirror, I slipped her back absolutely beaming, jovially jesting inside that based on the Longreed stocks the next one would be a 30... and it was... later on the same day!

And it is no surprise, as the environment here is perfect for the development of these fine specimens. There are thick beds of Norfolk reed (often frequented by bitterns), numerous islands and plentiful other safe

areas such as bays, pads and deeply vegetated margins. At Longreed all of these factors, plus the fishing limited to three people over two acres, add to the immense feeling of being well and truly under nature's thumb, with the environment encouraging wildlife, growth, balance and beauty, whilst simultaneously well and truly deterring any unnecessary infringements by man. It makes the fishery such a wonderful place to spend time, so much so that I can even enjoy the winter months as much I do the summer ones, and it is in this time that I have in fact had my best fish... best because they are usually near top weights, but also best because they look so stunning through the colder seasons.

Longreed lakes is run by Mayfly Aquacare – Fish Farmers and Fishery Managers producing some of the finest common carp in the UK.

... to be concluded. ■



Miles Gosling • [www.mayflyaquacare.co.uk](http://www.mayflyaquacare.co.uk) • 07974 7666 74



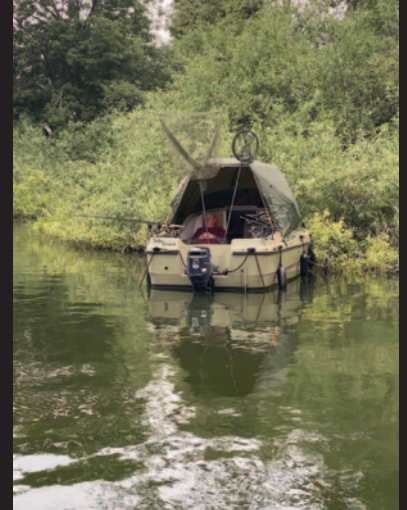


# SECRETS OF THE THAMES

**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>**



# Harefield Gold

By James Eames

I would like to start this by just giving you a little insight into my carp angling. I first started fishing local lakes to me (Rickmansworth, Chesham, Denham and Tring resses) being the main ones. Rickmansworth was a lake called Batchworth, also known as the Aki, Chesham was simply known as the Pit, or Tolpits, which needs no introduction! There are also other lakes on the complex: Thurlows, Castles and Stanley's Pool. Also I fished Sabey's Pool in Rickmansworth and a lake in Denham, Farlows. The reservoirs in Tring were a haven of big fish at the time with massive roach, bream, perch, tench, but to be honest, the carp weren't all that with most of them being only singles/doubles and the very odd 20. That didn't ever stop me from trying for them in those days, but I was constantly catching tench and the very odd small carp, which at the time was great of course! Then, as winter approached, the carp rigs would be put away and out came the pike rods.

These were my main waters in my early carping career, especially the reservoirs in the late 80s and early 90s. Obviously being so young, I had to be taxed everywhere I wanted to



go fishing. So every weekend, it would be, "Daaaad, can you take me to..." and as my dad drove so slowly, I had plenty of time to think about where I would like to be dropped off!

Going back to Tolpits for a second, I did fish there quite a bit and caught some of them, but I mainly concentrated on Thurlows, from which I had nearly every fish, including a PB mirror one night of 28lb 6oz, which I didn't have any photos of, as it got out of the bloody sack while I was wait-

ing for it to get light!

Tolpits itself just teaches you how to be a more intelligent angler, I feel, and by that, I mean doing things for yourself. I did, and I caught a few on my own terms, tweaked the bait and then changed my rigs a bit – job done. I'm not going to bore you with any more of rigs and bait before you all close the magazine... well, just a touch later on then...

From tolpits I went onto Farlows more and more regularly. I started off slowly, I must admit, as I couldn't get my head round fishing such a water, as I was used to fishing small lakes of up to seven acres or so (apart from the resses), but what got me was the features in Farlows – it's full of 'em! There are bays, open water, pads, bars, weed and islands – it really was a sight for sore eyes (even though there were plenty of undesirables that frequented the lake at night). The carp in Farlows... acted like carp! They would show, bubble, head and shoulder and even eat my bait now and again – bloody brilliant! I spent a few years on the lake on and off and caught pretty well over that time too, with plenty of 20s gracing my mat



(Top) Harefield's famous Point swim.  
(Left) My first Harefield carp!



and also receiving good action throughout my time I was there. But you know what? Something changed in me, and I wanted more.

I could have quite easily have stayed on at Farlows, and no doubt I would have caught lots more carp, as at the time I was really enjoying going fishing and catching. I was making my own boilies at the time too; I know it was a chore, but it simply had to be done! I actually did see a certain Mr. Maylin and Mr. Briggs fishing Farlows outside the café. I recognised them of course back then, but I daren't talk to them... Blimey, I would have looked like some sort of weirdo! (Actually I was scared).

While on a weekend trip fishing the Bodgit and Legit swim, Tristian, the head bailiff of Boyers, came up to me and got chatting. Now I had known Tris for a good few years prior to this and he is a superb bloke – very kind and chatty, a decent bloke all in all. I'm sure he wouldn't mind me saying that. Now as we were chatting, he suggested I put my name down on the waiting list for Harefield. Now, Harefield... where do I start? It's got everything – bays, pads, islands, open water, pads... So, I got my name down on the waiting list... and waited.

I'm not sure how long it took now; I think it was approximately one season that I waited until and I got the letter in the post, and I was on! I was put on the "A" rota – superb. As it turned out, I knew two people who fished on that rota already – bloody lucky, eh?



So, I went to see my dad... "Dad, can you give me a lift?"

Dad: "OK. Where to?"

Me: "Harefield."

Dad: "What the bloody hell are you going over there for?"

Me: "New water, never seen it before. It's 15 minutes in the car, so it won't take long... well, shouldn't do!"

Dad: "OK."

I was off.

As I got dropped off, all I could see was water! "Jesus Christ !" I thought. "How big is this place, and how am I going to catch a fish out of here?" Padlock code in hand, I wandered through the gate. There were a few cars there, so I thought I would have a



chat with people fishing, just to get a feel for the place and also to see if I'd like it, as it was alien to me to fish a big water. Not only that, but the stories I had heard in the past about people casting 150-plus yards just to get to the fish was in my mind as well, as I seriously wasn't geared up for such a water with my 2¾lb TC Powermesh carp rods and Emblems with 15lb Big Game on!

To cut a long story short, I had to change my setup to simply fish the lake, as if I was in any open water swims, I would be approx 50-60 yards short them with my casting ability! So it was down to the tackle shop for new rods, which were 12ft 3.5lb TC Daiwa Dictators – sorted. Mainline was adapted to suit with 10lb mainline (Big Game), and the spare spools were filled with either Gardner GR60 in 15lb or again 15lb Big Game. After a good wander around the lake, I loved it. Although daunting at first, I was excited at fishing it as soon as my rota was round again.

Two weeks later, I was there for my first night – wahey! I had got even more excited because I had a mate who had the “Harefield Haulin’” videos done by Rob Maylin, and after seeing them, I couldn't wait to get fishing! So, I arrived on a baking hot Friday afternoon. As my mate Danny was also a member, we decided to go to the pub. After all, the “Horse and Barge” was a swim – it's in the rule book! So without further ado, we



went, just to wait till it cooled down of course. Well, famous last words and all that, eh?

We got back to the lake at approximately 1am after a bit of Oliver Twist, of course... I did doubt if I would cast the rods out, but seeing as it was my first night on the lake, I thought, sod it, let's get 'em out, shall we?" I actually managed to get onto the Point swim, which has a bay at the back of it, and during the day there were a few fish cruising around. Before I went to the pub, I actually found a spot that looked good in amongst the weed and stuck about 50 baits on it, all my home made Solar Dairy Cream boilies. This swim was what I was used to – my sort of fishing really. So,

there I was, fiddling about sticking baits on while slightly blurry eyed and eventually got the rods out... sweet... bed!

At about 2am, the left rod was flying, and the Delkims were screaming at me to get up! Now, I don't know what it was, but I just seemed to go into autopilot! After picking the rod up, it went solid... It had weeded me up big time! Eventually it gave way, and it had little dive to my left and right here and there. Then, along with a ball of weed, it was in the net! And yess, I'm ashamed to say, up went the shout of “HAULIN'!!”

Right, first night on the lake, and I'd caught one... Bloody hell, what's going on here, then? I could see it wasn't a massive fish, and after unhooking and weighing it, it went 17lb 8oz – lovely! I put it in the sack till morning, as it wasn't far away due to the short nights in July, and I went and lay on the bed. I left the rod out, as it was in a right state, so I had one rod fishing just to the right of the left one, and to my amazement, it went off at 6.30am. This one though, although I got it to move a fair distance through the weed, eventually fell off. After that session I had no further action for another two rotas, but all in all, I was glad at the time to catch one! During that first season I had a total of eight bites with three landed. Mostly I was getting hook pulls – nightmare.

Now let's forward a bit here, as I'm running out of space! When I joined Harefield, as with any water, I looked at the fish it had in it. Harefield was known for its commons and a few old warriors like Little Pecs, Round Tail,





# CARP Watching

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



**No.1 – THEY'RE 'AVIN IT!**

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



**No.2 – MARGIN MONSTER**

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



**No. 3 – CARP ON!**

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

**AVAILABLE IN 3 SIZES:**

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

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

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

**[www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk)**





the Fully Scaled (big and small), the Turd, Nelson, Morris, Half Tail, the Road Bank Common and countless others, which I cannot remember. The commons always interested me, and the two that stood out most were the Willow and the Chinese. At the time they were mid 30s, and I was fortunate enough to see both of these carp on the bank, doing photos for the anglers that had had the honour of catching them. I photographed the Chinese for Gary Mac at 35lb 8oz and the Willow, for Isle of White Paul at 35lb 12oz.

They really were stunning commons without a mark on them and well looked after by the anglers that had caught them before. These became, not a target as such, but after seeing these in the flesh, you think, "I wouldn't mind catching either of them – it would make my bloody season!" So, I kept up with my rotas, two to three nights each rota, catching a few here and there, and then one night in the point I caught a new PB mirror of 29lb oz! I remember this session well, as the first night I was fishing with my long-term fishing friend, Gary Newman (who has gone onto bigger things now), and he caught Round Tail at 37lb 12oz – very, very nice! It goes without saying that we went to the pub to celebrate both captures, and even our friend Nick Helleur joined us for an hour! I was ecstatic for a couple of rotas – on cloud 100, let alone nine!

A couple of rotas later, I found myself on the Point again, and with the success I had already had, I was brimming with confidence. So out

went my trusty old size 6 Drennan Continentals and some clear Amnesia around 8ins long. I had sorted out my spots, and out went 2kg of Carp Company Icelandic Reds – sweet. With the rods out, I was all sorted, and now the wait began. The left rod was cast between the two islands on the back of the Someone's Coming Island, and there was a channel that was 6ft deep with a really clear, smooth patch, possibly a bit of sand, which just screamed "Bite!" The middle was cast in front over the back of a bar at 40 yards, and the right was cast even more right in front of a bar at 60 yards. Both were baited with a scattering of boilies.

The funny thing was about this was that there had been two other



members on the Point all week, and they hadn't even seen a carp! I felt confident I would have something happen, so I just went with my gut feeling and got in there! Sometimes you just have to do what your heart's saying, but whether it's right or wrong is anyone's guess! So, I was all set up for a three-nighter

At 7pm, I saw a carp top right over my left hand rod. I sat by the rods, willing it to go. Anyway, at 8am, I'd had nothing, so I went through the







A photograph of a young man with light brown hair, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt, holding a large, golden-brown carp. The fish is held horizontally in front of him. The background is dark, and some green reeds are visible on the right side.



At about 9pm-9.45pm, I heard a few fish jumping, and they sounded a bit big! I was just lying there, wondering when it was going to go, not if! At 10pm, the left rod went bleep... bleep... bleep... bleeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeep! This was different, so I hit the rod, and it started stripping line. It felt heavy! It went left, the exact thing I didn't want it to do, so it

It was plodding up and down, left to right, fairly uneventfully really – just heavy! I got the net in the water, and the fish came in front of me. The rod... well, it was 3.5 TC and it was bent right round! The fish just plodded, nothing spectacular, just the odd lunge, so I got the net ready... "Please, hook, don't pull now!" I caught a glimpse of the fish. "Jesus H!!" I thought to myself... "That's big!" So, up she came again, and with one big gulp of air, she was in the net... "Hauliiiiiiiin'!" went up the shout.

I hadn't really looked at the fish at this point; I just glanced at it, thinking, "It's a good'un." I lifted onto the mat, and... well, you could have knocked me down with a feather! I was speechless (for a change). I recognised it as the Chinese Common that I had seen before on the bank – awesome, just awesome! Well, without further ado, we got everything ready – photos, scales etc. Bearing in mind I hadn't caught a 30 before, I was shocked when it went 37lb 8oz! The rest of the night passed uneventfully, but did I care? The following day, it was the Harefield tradition of café, pub, Chinese! The funny thing was though, while in the pub, I turned to Gary and said, "I ain't gonna beat



that for a few years, son," and we both agreed!

After going to the pub and everything else, I said I wanted to get back and sort the rods out. With the amount of fish I had seen and heard before I had the take, I was still convinced there were fish in the area. I still felt confident... even with a couple of lagers going to my head! So, back we went, said our farewells, and normal procedure soon followed – bed by nine, as I felt knackered! It was now raining, really mild, and it looked superb. The night passed quietly, but I think I did hear a large crash just before dawn.

Anyway, at 8.30, I just turned my radio on, and I heard a fish jump! "Blimey, that sounded a bit close, or it was big?" At 8.34, I was just getting out of the bag, and then... bleep! Left hand rod... bleep! I looked up, and the tip was being pulled round as if I was snag fishing! I forgot my boots in the panic... wet feet... whack!

I looked out to where I had hooked it, and there was a massive eruption on the surface – it wasn't happy! Then the nightmare scenario looked me in the face – there was a big ball of weed that had gathered on the line where it entered the water, and it wasn't coming off!

So out I went, wading to the ball of weed. When I got there, it was a proper chunk of weed too! "I don't believe this! Why now?"

So I slackened off a touch to scrape it all off, and although it probably took



20 seconds, it seemed like an age! Finally, it was free! I wound down to the fish again, and yes, it was still on. Right, take it easy... I calmed myself down and began to play it as normally as I could. My legs were shaking as well as my arms! It felt very different, plodding again left to right. Then it got closer, and off it went on a 50 yard run, but then, slowly but surely, I started to win the battle.

30 yards out... 20... 15... 10... "Bloody hell, that looks massive!" Then, it happened... There was a ball of weed that had lodged itself onto the line about the size of a golf ball, and I was beginning to think I might

lose it, but I thought, keep calm. So, what did I do? I put the rod down, got the line in my hands and pulled the weed free, as you do! I picked the rod back up, and yes, it was still on! "Jesus! Was I ever going to land this fish?"

Eventually it started to give up. It must have been ten minutes or so since I had hooked it, and I could see it well now. Another burst... I stuck the net in, and she was mine. I was knackered and soaked, but I didn't give a toss! I got Gary round, and I said I had another common... "It looks smaller than the last one though." He looked, and said, "Bloody hell! That's BIGGER than the last one!"

We got everything ready. A crowd had gathered by this time, and it was





recognised as the Willow Common. I was just in a daze to be honest, taking it all in, but not actually realising was happening to me! Up on the scales it went 39lbs, bang-on. Afterwards, normal Harefield service was resumed – café, pub, pub, pub...

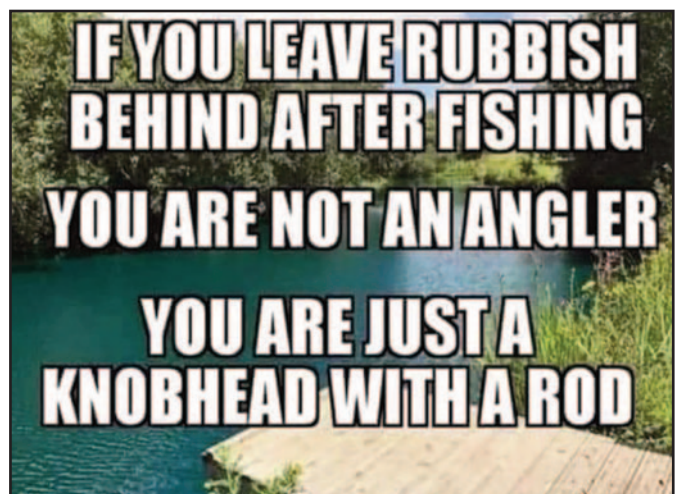
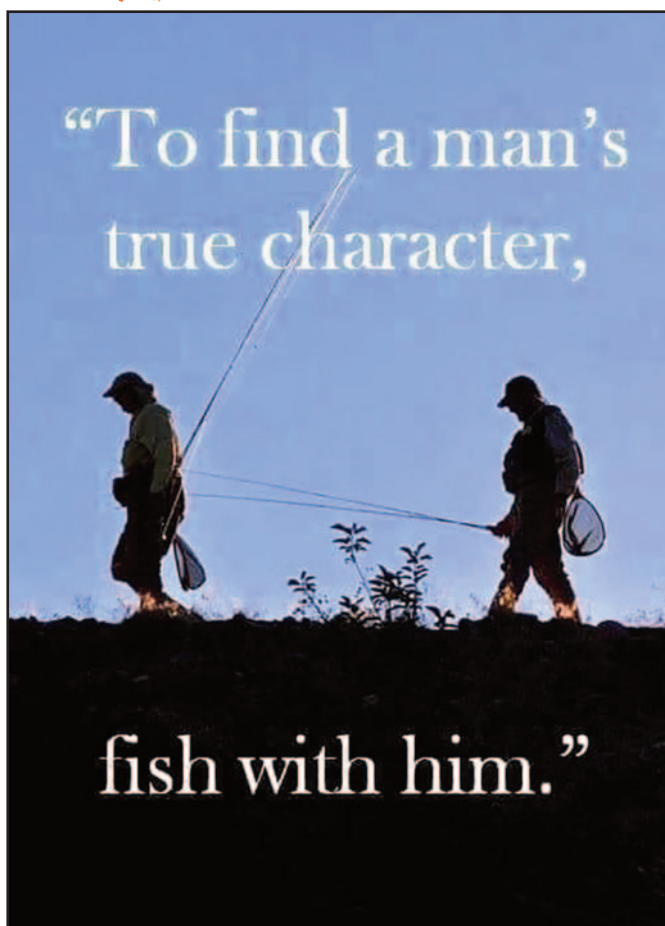
Well after the photos and a few words that aren't printable, all I can say is that it was absolutely amazing to be the captor of such a fish. Harefield has done my fishing the world of good, as it offered so many challenges... not only in beer drinking but shorts as well... and anglers that will remain friends for life, and I still see some now.

Unfortunately, Harefield is pretty much finished these days, what with the gravel workings and the threat of the dreaded HS2. THOSE were the days, and I wouldn't change a thing. I hope you enjoyed my memories of the fish and fishing Harefield as much as I did writing this piece. It brings back some fond memories indeed.

Tight lines! ■



## Carpy Humour





# Yateley North Lake

By Russell Godfrey

**I** turned up at the lake early Friday morning and bumped into a few of the regulars. After a bit of a walk round and chatting to the others, they said that not a lot had been seen. Luckily I had been down earlier on in the week for a walk and had seen a couple of fish show long behind an island and decided that as the swim I could cast to that area from was free, I would drop in to there for the first night and see if anything showed the following morning.

I had a lead around and found a nice clear gravel spot next to a clump of weed off the side of the island. I then Spombed about 2kg of chopped Manila corn and pellet over the top and cast out at about 15.30. A few hours later the bobbin pulled up tight. As I lifted my rod up to make contact with the fish, I felt a small kick and nothing else happened. This one got away. I topped up the swim with another 2kg of bait and got my rig back out on the spot.

At 20.00-ish the bobbin pulled up

to the top, and I was in contact with another fish. After a hard 20-minute battle, I finally slipped the large common into the net. On closer inspection we realised it was the elusive Black Common, which only makes a few appearances on the bank per season.

As you can imagine, I was absolutely made up, as it was my first UK 40 at 43lb 4oz and a new PB! All the regulars came round to help with the photos and to congratulate me. What a night to remember!! ■





# Big Carp Magazine!

*a history of excellence*



## AVAILABLE AS A DIGITAL DOWNLOAD

Yes, you can  
purchase Big Carp  
magazine as an App  
downloadable to your iPad,  
iPhone, iPod Touch, PC and  
Mac and read the only carp  
magazine worth reading  
anywhere you go...



Available on the  
App Store



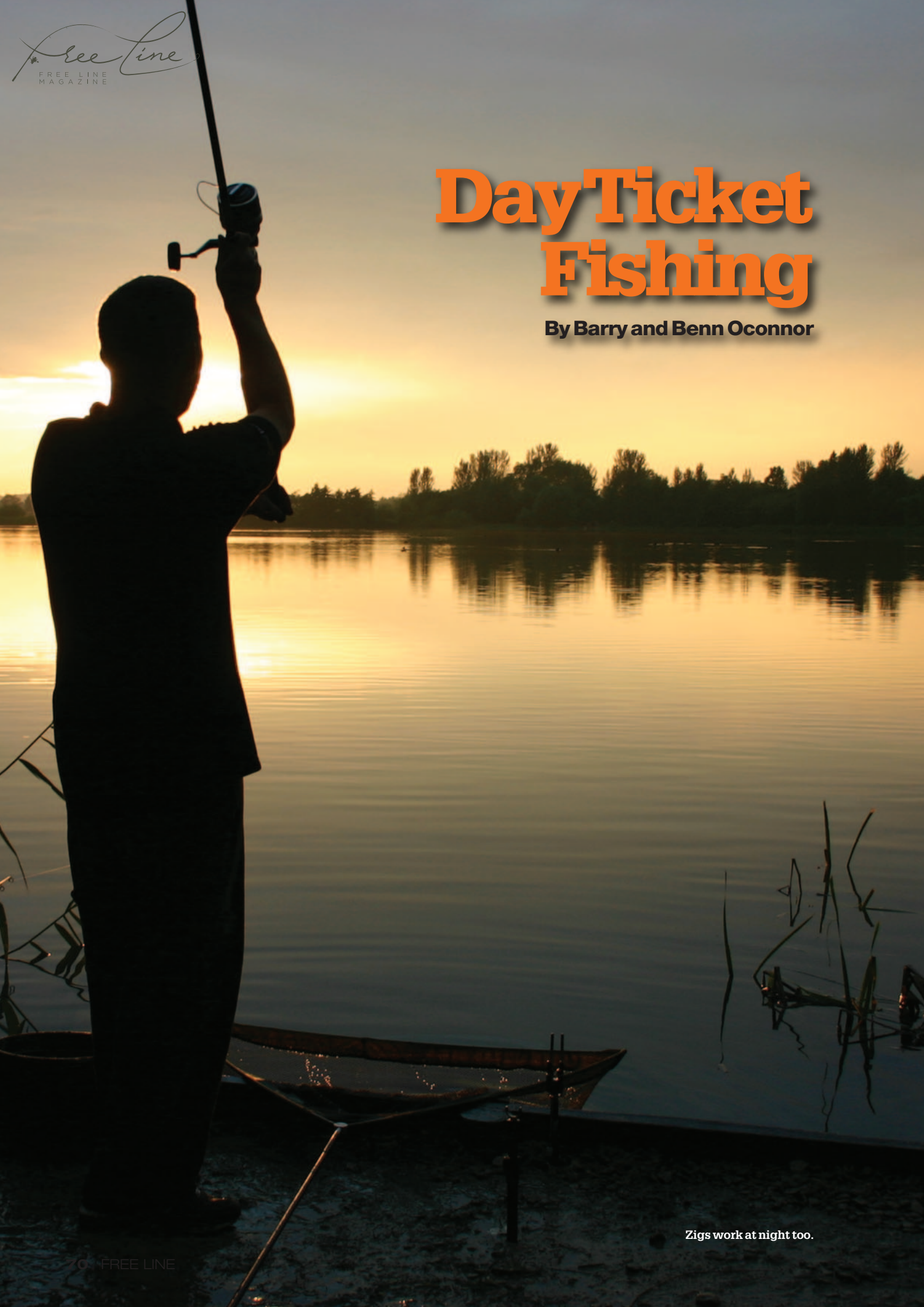
Available on  
Android





# Day Ticket Fishing

By Barry and Benn Oconnor



Zigs work at night too.



**W**hen spring arrives, many carp anglers will be looking for new waters to fish, and day ticket venues will be high on their list. Mother Nature is waking up, and water temperatures will be on the rise. This will almost certainly stimulate the carp into feeding. Anglers that don't normally fish during the winter will now be on the banks, again making some fisheries very busy. Most carp anglers would have probably started fishing on day ticket waters at a very early age. To satisfy the demand for fishing, coarse fisheries began to spring up all round the country, although some had been around for years prior to this. These fisheries contained most coarse fish including carp. The early carp anglers visited these fisheries to try and catch the large carp that were purported to be inhabiting these lakes. Eventually

**(Top) Spodding over zigs with a sloppy mix that clouds up in the water is an excellent tactic.**  
**(Below) A good quality bait will catch big carp anywhere.**



carp-only fisheries started to appear. These lakes were either purposely dug to contain carp or they were existing lakes that were netted to remove all the fish except carp. More carp were then stocked into these waters to make them carp-only waters. Today carp are prevalent in many lakes and rivers around the country.

Ben and I have fished on day ticket

waters up and down the country. We spent several years on venues such as Linear, Farlows and Cottington to name a few, honing our tactics for these venues. The secret to catching on day ticket waters is to fish there regularly, move around and make changes until you find a successful tactic. We'd been fishing on Linear for a long time, and one thing we learnt was that Spombing and spodding is a







way of life on there. Deciding on a change of venue, we opted to go to Farlows. On our first trip we took a load of spod mix with us. As we were spodding it out, another angler came along and told us that spodding didn't work on Farlows. Well, we carried on with what we were doing, and by the end of the session we'd caught several carp. Either that angler hadn't tried it or was told by someone else that it didn't work on there. The point we're trying to make here is don't believe everything that you are told. Try things for yourself. Some things might work on one lake but not on another. Until you try it you'll never



know. Amusingly we made zig fishing popular on Farlows and were also told that zigs didn't work there either. We absolutely blitzed the place with zigs. Now everyone uses them.

We've been asked why we are so successful on day ticket waters. Throughout this feature we'll try and impart some tactics and knowledge that might help you on your day ticket

**(Top) A blast from the past at 30lb 6oz from Manor Lake in Oxford.**

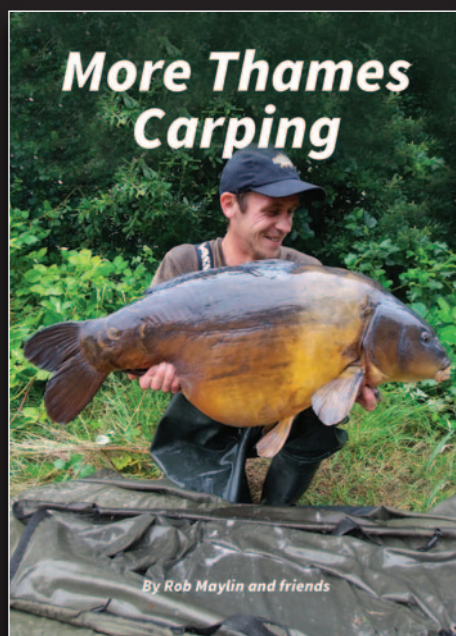
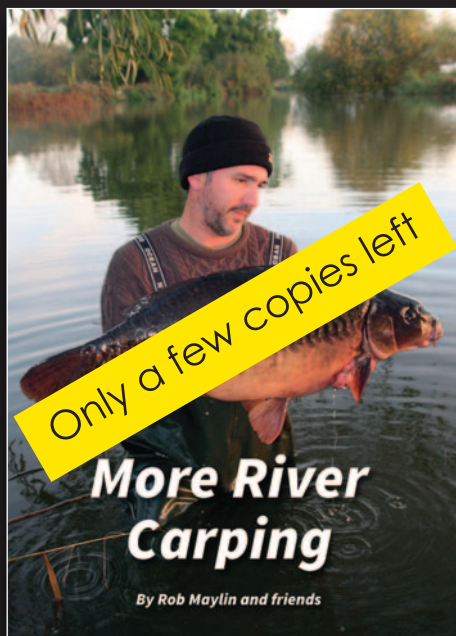
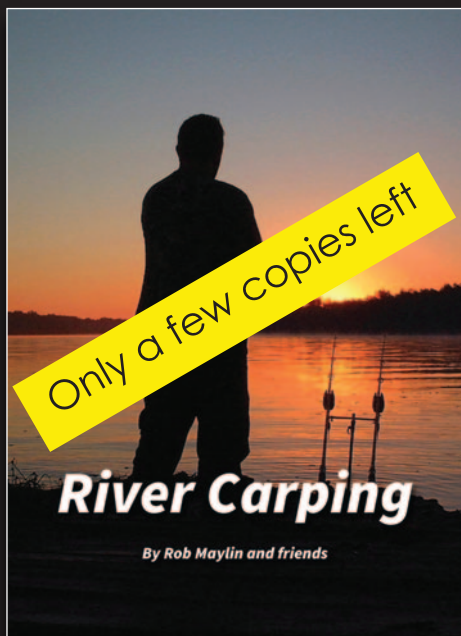
**(Above) Carefully returned to fight another day.**

**(Left) Fishing opposite each other on Loggies Lake we found a hard spot which we took advantage of.**



# THE RIVER CARPING SERIES

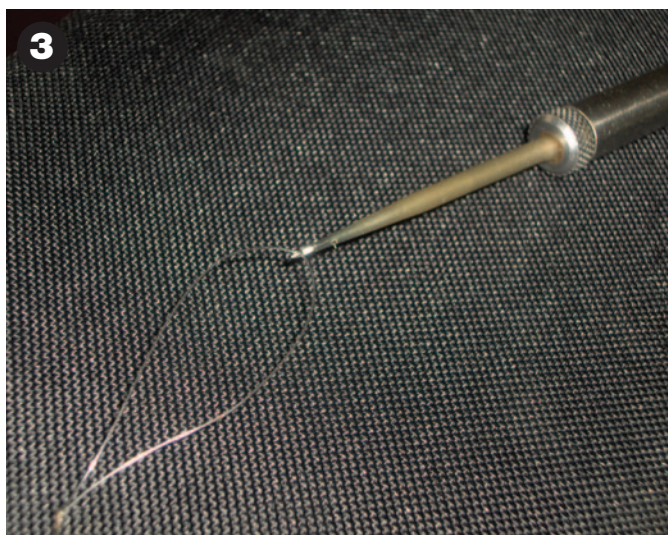
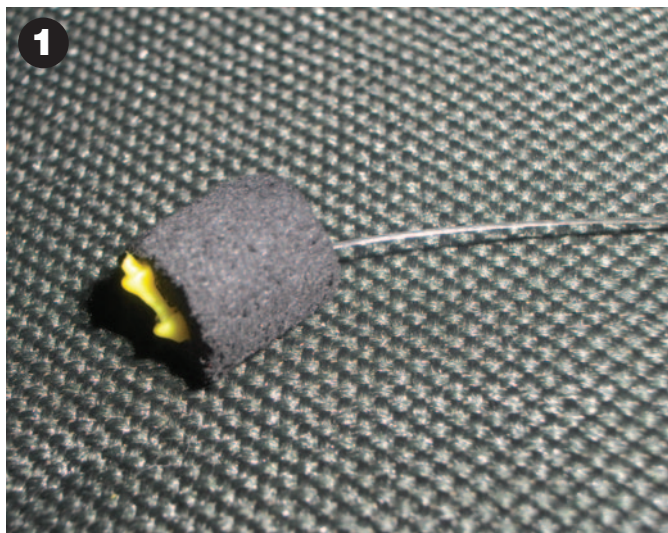
*Tales and Technical, a must-read series for the river angler*



07768 731425

[www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk)





1. Take a length of zig line, tie a loop in one end and place a piece of foam or cut down pop-up on the loop.
2. Tie a hook on the line using a knotless knot.
3. Put an anti-tangle sleeve over a baiting needle and slide the sleeve onto the zig line.
4. Pass the loop through the swivel on the lead. Then pull the baited hook and sleeve through the loop. Finally pull to tighten.
5. Now push the sleeve over the eye of the swivel.
6. How both setups should look when finished.





teen-foot zigs in seventeen feet of water at Drayton. As a general rule if we can use three rods, we'll fish one zig at mid depth, one at two feet above mid depth and one two feet below mid depth. We might keep changing them, but once we've found the depth the carp want to feed at, all the zigs will be changed to that depth.

Our zigs are constructed with ten or twelve-pound Double Strength line tied to a size ten hook. Don't use fluorocarbon because it sinks. Attached to the hook is a small piece of foam or a whittled down pop up. Colours will vary. Whether we're in a match or just pleasure fishing we'll tie up several zigs before we leave home. These will be tied at longer lengths than we actually need. Then when we're on the bank we'll just shorten them to the required length after putting a marker out to find the depth. If you follow the sequential photos you'll see how we construct our zigs. After the zigs are cast out we begin spodding over them. A mixture of ground-bait, chopped boilies, hemp, groats, maggots, pellets and other particles can all be used in the spod mix. Put things in the spod mix that are of different sizes and density because they will fall through the water at varying rates. Some will fall fast and others



lake. Firstly, if you want to catch big carp go to venues that have several of them in their lakes. Not just one or two but enough to give you a chance of catching one. Alternatively if you just want a bend in your rod and are not bothered with size then pick a runs water. We'll start with the runs waters. There are day ticket venues

up and down the country that fit into this slot. Some of the ones that we've fished are Barston Lakes near Birmingham, Thorpe Lea near Chertsey and Drayton Reservoir near Daventry. Take Drayton Reservoir for example. We took a world record amount of carp in a ratified carp match using zigs. On that occasion we used thir-

**(Top left) Keep the spod going out when fishing over zigs on runs waters.**

**(Middle left) Here we are both playing fish on zigs while Barry's other rod was going.**

**(Below left) Lilies are a good holding area for carp.**

**(Below right) Mix some maggots in with the spod mix.**







much slower. The mix is liberally doused with salmon oil and left to soak for a few hours. Flavours can also be added. When the mix is spodded out, the groundbait forms a lingering cloud in the water while the bits sink to the bottom. The Salmon oil, which had been soaking into the mix will begin intermittently rising to the surface in columns creating a large slick on the surface. This creates a massive attraction in the water and can send the carp into a feeding

frenzy. They'll feed voraciously on the spod mix as it drops through the water. In turn they'll come across the baited zig and go for it. In this situation if you're allowed three rods, a devastating tactic is to fish two rods on zigs and one on the bottom or vice versa. The idea being that some of the spod mix will fall around the hookbait on the bottom. This way you're maximising your chances of catching.

Zigs are also a good method for catching big carp. We've caught

**(Above left) Pressure was applied to stop the carp going into the snags. (Above right) Snags are productive at anytime of the year. (Below) Plantation 32lb-plus.**

some big fish on zigs and without spodding over them. It's important to have confidence with this single bait zig method though. Some anglers just can't get their heads around putting out a single piece of foam or a pop-up high in the water with no bait around



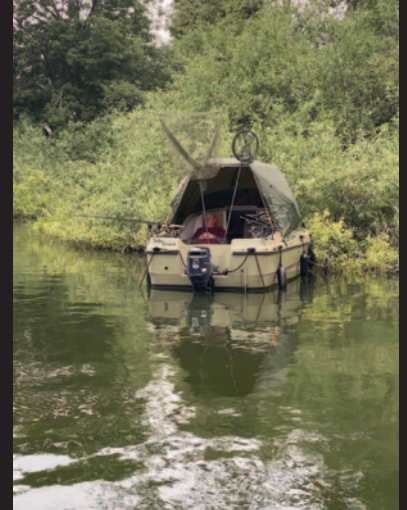


# SECRETS OF THE THAMES

**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).

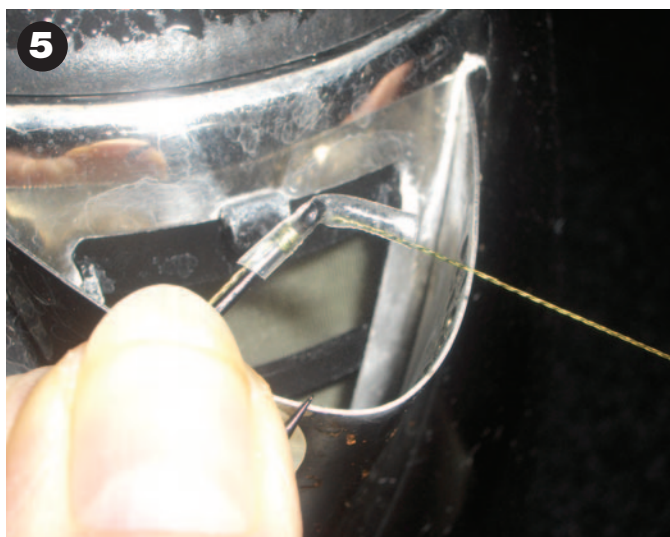
By far and away the largest carp water in UK. Now sit back and enjoy just a few of its many secrets.

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

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



## Hooklink construction



1. After tying a hair loop in the hooklink, place a small piece of shrink tube over the hooklink.
2. With the point of the hook facing the hair, pass the hook point through the shrink tube and pull it onto the hook shank.
3. With the hair now trapped on the hook shank, tie the hooklink to the hook using a knotless knot.
4. Place a piece of shrink tube over the eye of the hook.
5. Carefully steam the shrink tube so it forms an angle to the hook.
6. The finished article.





it, so they don't do it! Believe us when we say they're missing out big time. Casting out a zig without spodding round it can bring excellent results. Equally, continuous spodding over zigs on runs waters will bring multi-

**(Top left) Ready prepared particles have saved us a lot of time.**

**(Top right) Spodding can be hard work, but it's worth it.**

**(Below) This is the Small Italian at 29lb 8oz caught at Farlows in winter on a zig a few years back whilst doing a feature.**

ple catches. Unfortunately, spodding is hard work, and because of this a lot of anglers won't do it. Just a thought – how often have you walked round a lake and seen carp topping on the surface and all the anglers are fishing on the bottom? Many times, we bet. Be different and whack a zig out when you see them on the surface, and you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Alternatively catching big carp from a day ticket water can be a bit demoralising, and sometimes a lot of patience is required. You're not normally going to have multiple bites like



you can on a runs water. Yes you can have red-letter days but they are not the norm. Instead you could be sitting around doing a lot of nothing for many hours. Our approach to any day ticket lake that holds big carp is to take it slowly unless we know it.







**(Above) Spodding over zigs with a sloppy mix that clouds up in the water is an excellent tactic.**  
**(Below) This one was quite a long fish.**

Firstly, we would look for carp holding areas such as weed beds, gravel bars, troughs, lilies, snags, islands and the margins to name a few. Find one of these and you immediately increase your chances of catching. Use a marker setup to find depths and also what's on the bottom, and it will increase even more. In open water look for hard areas because this is almost certainly where the carp have been feeding. On one occasion we were fishing on Loggies Lake in Kent, which is an excellent day ticket water and managed to get opposite each other in a narrower part of the lake. We found a hard spot midway across the lake. Two markers went out on the hard area, and we put twenty boilies over it. We didn't go mad with the bait because we weren't sure if it was going to work. This area produced four carp for us on an area that was probably overlooked by many anglers. We can't stress enough the importance of using a marker. How many times have you seen anglers turn up and fill it in, only to go away disappointed? Don't do it unless you know a lot of bait works on a specific venue. Remember you are not the only angler to have visited that venue, and

you can bet your life they've all put loads of bait in. Sometimes just a single boilie and a small web PVA bag is all that's needed.

When it comes to bottom rigs for big carp on day ticket waters there is no difference to the rigs we use for matches or syndicate waters. Yes, we might tweak them for certain situations, but the basics are the same. Years ago we used small hooks for all our fishing in the belief that the smaller and lighter the hook was, the more undetectable they were. We soon discounted that theory after lots of trials and testing. Now it's big hooks for us when we're fishing on the bottom. Our basic rig, which has served us well over the years consists of a size 6 or 4 hook tied to six inches of a 15lb sheaf type hooklink. We use this for bottom baits and pop-ups. Take a look at the photo sequence to see how we construct it. Making up several hooklinks before you go on a session is a good idea. We always carry several hooklinks with us. All the hooks are checked before tying and sharpened using a small hand held vice and a file. Although hooks are quite sharp straight out of the packet, you can make them much







sharper by using one of the proprietary sharpening kits. After you've sharpened the hooks you'll certainly feel the difference. Try it on your hand and you'll see what we mean, but be careful.

All our bait requirements except particles come from Eclipse Baits in Essex. We have our own boilie on the market now that we formulated with the help of Dave Poxon. Dave is a renowned bait maker who has been making bait for years and years. There's nothing he doesn't know about boilie making. Our own bait, which is the first in the Oconnor Range, is called Secret A-Peel. No it's not a spelling mistake, it's because there's an orange flavour in the bait (i.e. orange peel!). We've been testing it for about six months and have had very good results with it. Some friends tested it in France during winter and had several carp up to fifty

pounds on it. There are pop-ups, dips, groundbait and hookbaits that complement the Secret A-Peel boilie. There will be more boilies in the Oconnor Range coming out at a later date. Particles also figure in our carp fishing and are supplied by Hooked On Baits. These particles are excellent and come in buckets ready cooked. As long as they're not opened they'll last for over six months. If you do open them but put the lid back on after use they will last about two to three months. There are several differ-

ent mixes to suit any fishing situation.

When we're fishing on day ticket waters, or any other waters for that matter, as we said we are aware that the person who was in the swim before us could have filled it in with bait. With this in mind we sometimes put the rods out with a pop-up or wafter on the hair without putting any boilies around them. When we've been struggling, we get out the pop-ups, or sweets as we call them, and sometimes they catch us some bonus carp.

When all else is failing, a brightly coloured pop-up or wafter can make the difference. Balancing a pop-up can be done by adding a split shot to the hooklink or by trimming the pop-up with scissors so just the weight of the hook pulls it down. With a split shot you can either use a large shot to overweight the pop-up so it sinks quickly to the bottom, or use a smaller shot so it sinks slowly. This can also be done with tungsten putty. With most wafers, a size 6 or 4 hook will normally pull it down. If it doesn't, or you want to use a smaller hook, then the wafter will have to be trimmed down. Carefully cut a small piece off the wafter and then try it in a bucket of water. If it's ok, it should sink slowly to the bottom of the bucket. If it doesn't, keep trimming until it does.

Finally don't be daunted by the fact that some anglers are catching more fish than you are on your day ticket water. Speak to them and try to find out what they're using as bait, what their tactics are and remember the swims they were in. Those swims could be the hot pegs; every fishery has them. Hopefully we've given you something to think about when you're next out on the bank of a day ticket water. Good luck. ■



**(Top) Another one comes to the net.**  
**(Above) We've had some hectic spells on day ticket waters.**  
**(Right) Using maggots on day ticket waters can be deadly. This one certainly liked them.**



# BIG CARP CLOTHING RANGE

## 3 DESIGNS AVAILABLE

In 9 different colours: Black, Grey Marl, Red, Navy, Bottle Green, White, Orange, Royal Blue and Brown

### "GEEZER"

**FRONT PRINT:** UNION JACK BC WITH "LET'S AVE IT!"

**BACK PRINT:** GEEZER GETS EVEN WITH THE TUFTIES,  
**DRAWN BY**  
**GLYN GOMMERSHALL**

**DESIGN**  
**A**

£32.95  
+£4.95\*



**DESIGN**  
**B**

£32.95  
+£4.95\*

### "SAVAY"

**FRONT PRINT:** UNION JACK BC WITH "SEX DRUGS AND CARP THAT ROLL"

**BACK PRINT:** SAVAY SCENE,  
**DRAWN BY**  
**JOHN HARRY**

£32.95  
+£4.95\*



### "LEGEND"

**FRONT PRINT:** UNION JACK BC WITH "WHERE LEGENDS ARE MADE"

**BACK PRINT:** LEGEND, **DRAWN BY** LEN GURD WITH "STAND CLEAR APPRENTICE LEGEND"

**DESIGN**  
**C**

£32.95  
+£4.95\*





**RANGE AVAILABLE: ZIP HOODIE, SWEAT SHIRT, POLO SHIRT, T-SHIRT, TRAKKIE BOTTOMS, BEANIE HAT, BASEBALL HAT – ALL MADE USING TOP QUALITY GARMENTS – AVAILABLE IN 9 DIFFERENT COLOURS (Black, Grey Marl, Red, Navy, Bottle Green, White, Orange, Royal Blue and Brown)**

Please note the designs are only on the tops, but the Union Jack BC appears on all garments



Only available in Black

## HOW TO ORDER:

- 1) Choose Garment
- 2) Choose Design A, B or C
- 3) Choose Colour
- 4) Choose Size: S, M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL or XXXXL

**NEW  
SUBTLE**  
JUST THE BC LOGO  
see website  
for details



[BIGCARPMAGAZINE.CO.UK](http://BIGCARPMAGAZINE.CO.UK)

Place your order online at THE BIG CARP SHOP

[www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk)

Phone the order hotline 07768 731425

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK 9.00AM UNTIL 9.00PM

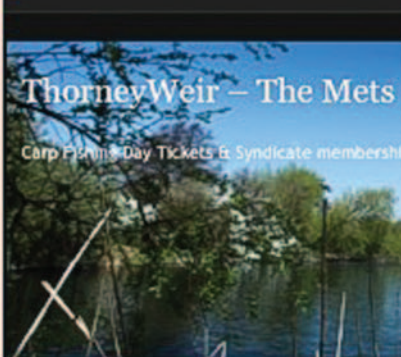


\*All orders subject to a  
postage charge of £4.95 for  
'Signed Delivery'.  
PLEASE ALLOW TEN DAYS

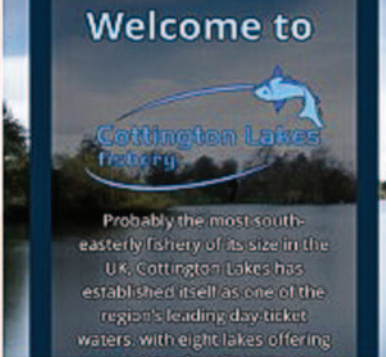




Welcome to  
Farlows Lake



Thorney Weir – The Mets  
Carp Fishing Day Tickets & Syndicate membership



Welcome to  
Cottingham Lakes  
fishery

Probably the most south-  
easterly fishery of its size in the  
UK, Cottingham Lakes has  
established itself as one of the  
region's leading day-ticket  
waters, with eight lakes offering

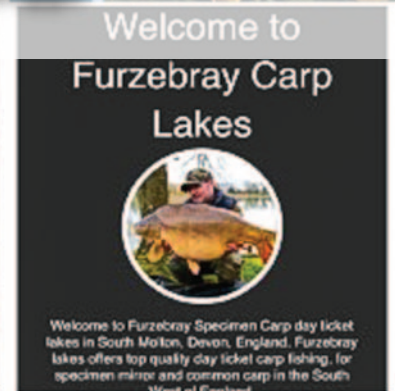


# Day Ticket Carping

By Steve Briggs

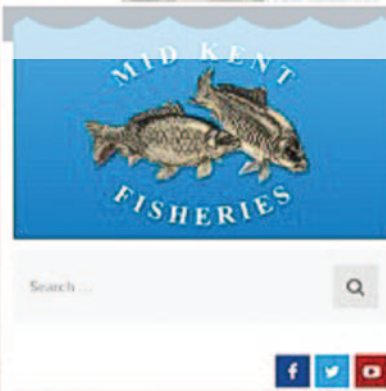


Elphicks has been  
designed and built with  
the modern angler in  
mind



Welcome to  
Furzebray Carp  
Lakes

Welcome to Furzebray Specimen Carp day ticket  
lakes in South Molton, Devon, England. Furzebray  
lakes offers top quality day ticket carp fishing, for  
specimen mirror and common carp in the South  
West of England



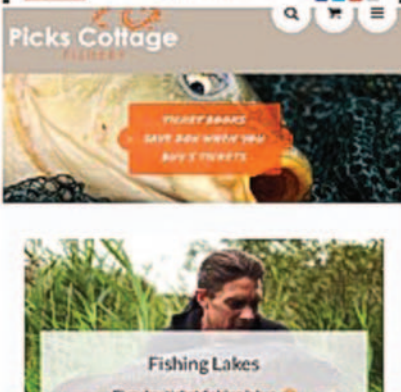
Dartford & District  
Angling & Preservation Society

DDAPS BROOKLANDS FISHING VENUE

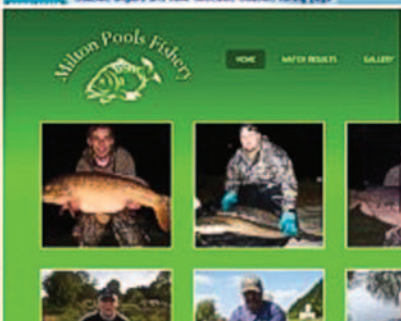
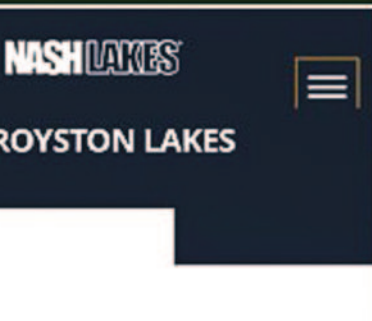
Brooklands is DDAPS day-ticket water and is situated near Dartford town  
centre. Tickets can be purchased on the bank from one of our helpful  
staff.

The complex has been under DDAPS control since the early 1950s and  
was one of the early pioneering waters of modern carp fishing. Carp  
have been there from the very day!

For those who have not visited this approximately 17 acre gravel pit  
complex for a while there have been some dramatic changes to the  
landscape. Many previously inaccessible places can now be fished at  
reasonable comfort via rebuilt pathways.



LINCH HILL FISHERY  
WELCOME





I'm sure that for most of us, day ticket waters were our first foray in to the world carp fishing. When I first became interested in carp I was lucky enough to live close to Brooklands and Horton Kirby in Kent. They offered some of the best carp fishing in the country at the time, and people travelled far and wide to fish there. Things have changed a lot since those days of course, but day ticket waters still offer the same service, and that is carp fishing that is instantly open to everyone. We are a fairly small country that has a large population of anglers and carp are by far the most popular species, which means waters are always in demand, and over the years more and more day ticket waters have been created to cater for those needs.

Day ticket waters come in all shapes and sizes, but most of them have one thing in common, and that is they are nearly always under pressure, some of the most popular ones being filled to capacity almost every week. Carp adapt their lives to living with that pressure and get used to feeding knowing that there will likely be a baited rig somewhere nearby. But carp still get caught of course – if a water is too difficult then it's most likely that people would stop fishing there and look elsewhere, and the fishery would struggle or go out of business. So most of them will have a reasonably high stock of carp to hopefully ensure that anglers receive a steady amount of action. But it goes without saying that carp that are under pressure can be very tricky to catch, and the best day ticket anglers are always the ones that are one step



ahead of the others and have little edges that most don't know about. What are those edges?

Well, I've seen a few in my time, and I've had a few up my sleeve too, and they really can make all the difference. It's not easy to come up with something new, as a large turnover of anglers means that the carp will be seeing all manner of rig variations and presentations and plenty of different baits too. You often hear that a certain bait is taking a lake apart and that's the one you need to be on. To a certain extent that's true, but I've always been loath to do that, as I feel that I'm fishing off someone else's thinking, and if everyone's on the same bait then you're hardly likely to be catching more than anyone else. It proba-

**(Above) Day ticket waters provide accessible angling for all of us. (Below) At times maggots will get the carp totally preoccupied.**

bly will get you a few fish in the short term, but you will have gained little in experience.

There are loads of examples that I can think of, but one that sticks in my mind is fishing at Farlows Lake when fishmeals were doing the business. The fish were used to seeing fishmeal baits, and people were catching every week on them. But the best catches had already been made by the people who had got on them first, and after time those catches were leveling out. Sure, like everyone else I was catching a couple of fish every weekend, and I could go home reasonably happy. But it felt as if I wasn't getting anywhere, and just for the hell of it I decided to go completely against the grain and use highly flavoured single pop-ups. I was making my own rather than using something off the shelf, and I think that because they were so different, they worked. In fact they worked incredibly well, and I caught around ten fish the first weekend I tried them!

It didn't stop there, and I caught consistently well for quite some time until other people cottoned on to what I was doing and the single pop-up approach then became the norm on the lake. The fish had simply







become conditioned to finding similar beds of bait around the lake, and there weren't many areas where they wouldn't find bait. So a single bait on it's own wasn't particularly out of place, but it wasn't amongst a group, and the extra attraction just made them sample it.

You need confidence in what you're doing to go it alone, and you won't get

it right every time, but in my experience if you want to get the best out of any situation then it is the way to go most times. There are times however when carp get so preoccupied on one particular type of bait that you simply struggle to get a bite on anything else. Maggots are a prime example of that. I know of many day ticket waters where maggots have simply

taken over, especially in the winter, and to use anything else can almost be a waste of time. I must admit that I'm not a big fan of using maggots, so I'm always looking for alternatives. Worms are actually one bait that get overlooked by most people. You see many people using maggots, and yet hardly anyone using worms, but I do know of a lot of very good fish that have been caught on them either chopped or whole.

Corn is another one that does get used more, but sometimes it's the way it gets used that makes the difference. Corn has been used forever, but it still works, and at times it can out-fish everything else. But how you bait depends on the situation. For stalking just a handful will do; the fish will recognise it instantly and it will get you a bite or two. But for open water fishing there are times when going in really heavy with corn can pay dividends. Again it's a case of knowing that other people haven't

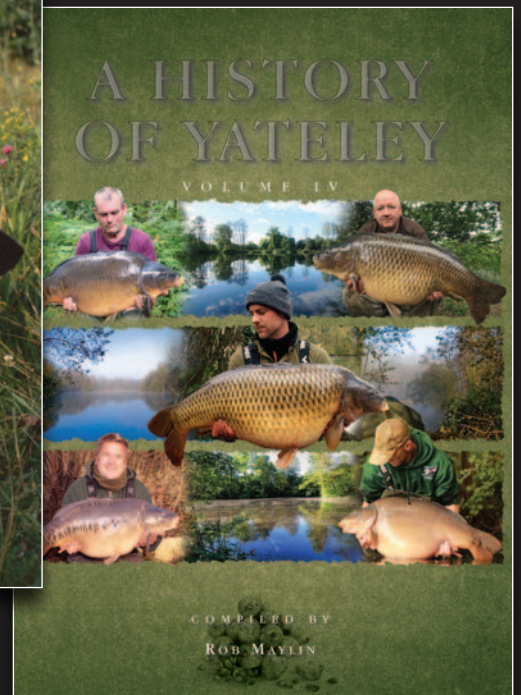
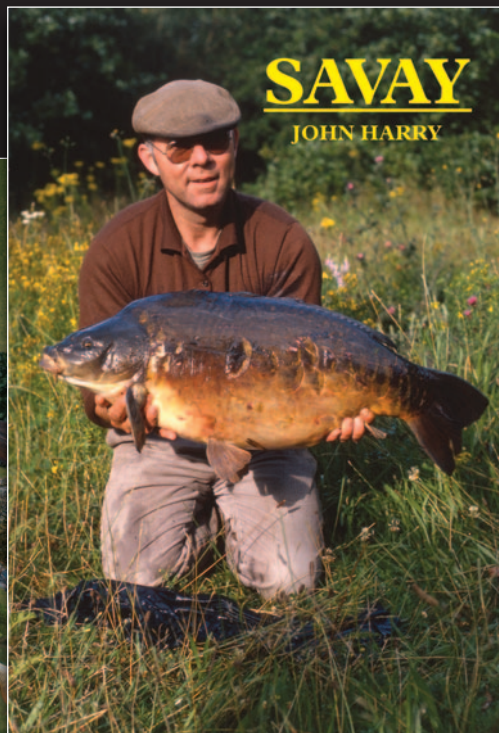
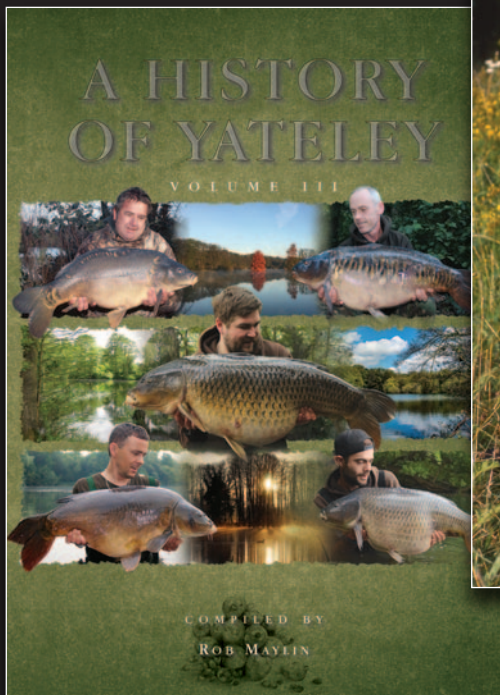
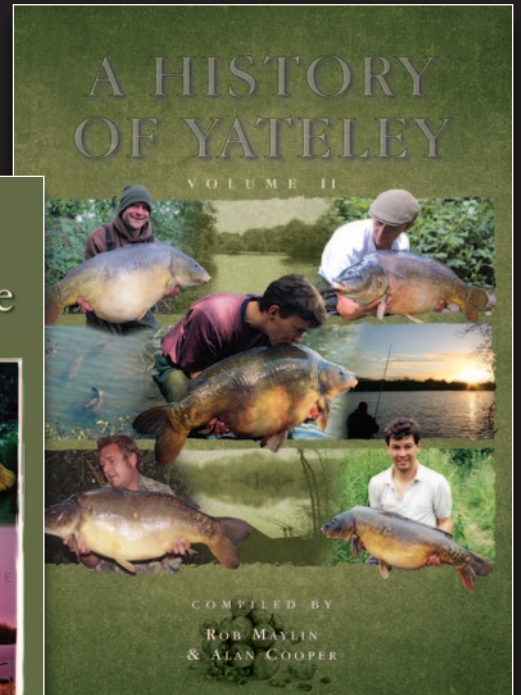
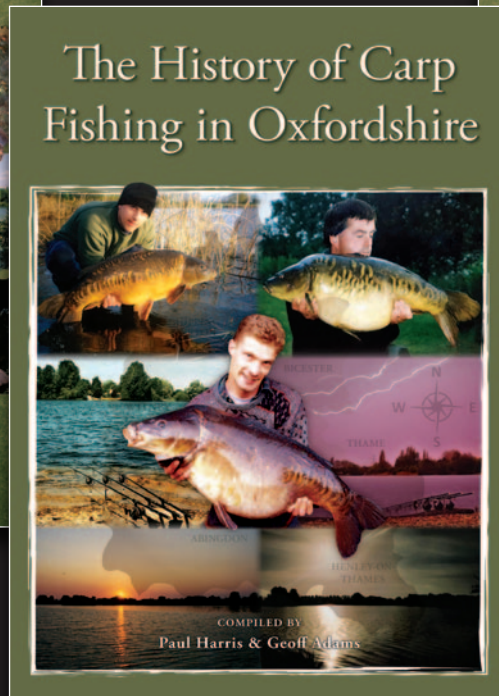
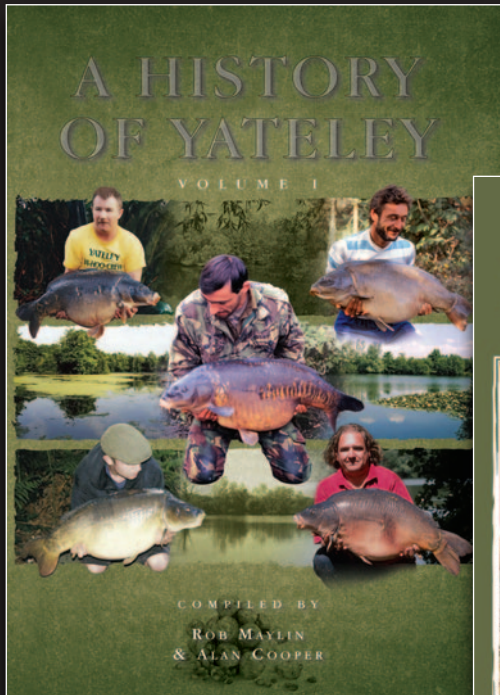
**(Top) First light on Thorney Weir, a good quality Colne Valley water.**

**(Below) First time at Royston Lakes and a fish on the bank quickly.**





# THE HISTORY SERIES



07768 731425  
[www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk)



done it before you – or at least not for a while. Friends of mine have had incredible catches on corn when they've literally emptied the shelves of the local shops and filled it in!

But I am mainly a boilie user, and there aren't many times when boilies won't catch, and if anything they do consistently sort out the bigger fish. Day ticket fishing tends to be more one-off fishing for me, so it's not always about establishing the bait but standing out and being noticed. For that reason I might go with the Instant Action type of bait. It's one of the ranges of Nash Bait that are designed for the short term and to get you bites quickly, and the Coconut Crème or Tangerine Dream have done exactly that for me on many different waters, and perhaps the Citruz has been the best of the lot. But the top quality baits can be incredibly attractive too, especially when the fish are not used to seeing them. The Key and the Key Cray have both caught me very good fish very quickly on pressured waters, the former catching me the biggest fish in one lake after just one hour of them seeing it for the first time, and although people complain about the price, if a bait can do things like that then it has to be worth considering.

Just as certain baits can work on their day, so can certain spots. It's amazing how as carp anglers we tend to think the same way. Several different people could fish the same swim and without realising it, fish in very



**(Above) Nightfall on an open access water, and I'm just hoping that I've done everything right!**

**(Below) Few people actually see the work that goes in to creating a day ticket water.**

similar ways. Some spots like overhanging trees look obvious, and if they look obvious to you then they will do to everyone else. They could well be great areas to fish, and it's often the case that the extra care in getting the right presentation will make the difference. Getting close to the trailing branches might not be close enough, but getting right under the branches where other anglers can't quite manage or aren't quite brave enough tends to get the bite that the others couldn't get! All swims have their known spots like bars, weedbeds, snags etc. On some waters the fish get used to finding

food in those same areas regularly, so they keep coming back for more, but other times you might just get the one bite before they realise that the danger is there and move somewhere else.

There has been a lot of talk about carp 'marking' spots after one has been hooked, and it's something that I've noticed more on pressured day ticket waters than anywhere else. I don't know if the carp give off some sort of signal when they get hooked or if they can communicate the danger to other fish, but it's something that can happen over several spots, especially when the lake is busy and the carp tend to end up nearly all in one area, where the anglers then catch really well while everyone else struggles. It might not be that the anglers are fishing better than anyone else, but the fish just could have spooked from the other swims and feel a bit safer in greater numbers.

There will always be information and signs to look for, and how you interpret those will determine how you fish that swim on that particular day. One of the best bits of advice I ever received was given to me years ago by the owner of a busy French fishery. It was a tricky small water, but the fish were often fizzing and bub-







bling, and the owner asked me why I thought they were bubbling so much. I replied that it must be natural food in abundance, and the fish preferred to be on that. But he said it wasn't that at all, but the previous anglers hadn't put enough bait in, and the fish were so hungry that they were trying to find any food that they could, and that naturals were basically their only

choice! Guess what – he was absolutely right! I put more bait in, and the fish stopped bubbling and I started catching! What's that got to do with UK day ticket waters, I hear you say? Well, quite a lot actually...

I had a 48-hour session down at the West End Lake in Kent and was presented with a very similar situation. We arrived to find that the guys who

had been on before us and had the lake to themselves for ten days had all blanked! They had scaled everything down, as they felt the fish just weren't feeding, and at the end of the day it just hadn't worked. But as I walked around I could see fish bubbling in several spots, and I knew what I had to do! On a small, pressured lake I got some strange looks as I set about spodding out a whole ten-litre bucket of hemp and about four kilos of boilies. But as before, the fish stopped fizzing and I ended up catching two nice mirrors of 43lb and 34lb. The bigger one of the two came from a spot that looked to be in the middle of nowhere, with no obvious feature there, but I used the bait to make it a spot worth visiting.

I guess the problem that day ticket waters can suffer from is being victims of their own success. What I mean by that is the more popular venues tend to get worn, grassy

**(Top) I've done really well on bright, highly flavoured baits.**

**(Below) One from the margins when the normal spots weren't producing.**





banks can soon turn to mud, and nice overhanging trees can be chopped right back because of the amount of lines left trailing from them. It's a big job for the owners of these waters to keep them in good shape, and it's often work that goes unnoticed. Farlows Lake is just up the road from where I live, and that is one such water that has been incredibly popular for many years now. But a great deal of work has been carried out by owner, Ed McDermott, to keep it up to scratch and make it a venue where people want to keep visiting. In actual fact Farlows is in better shape than ever now with commons and mirrors over 40lb and a fantastic onsite tackle shop and café.

Many of the better venues have been well established over several years, but there are new ones that crop up from time to time. One such venue is Royston Lakes in Cambridge, which were bought by Kevin Nash with a view to giving people more access to carp fishing in that area. Most people will have little idea of the

sheer amount of hard work that has gone into getting that venue ready to open up to the general public! It was a club lake that was only fished by a handful of people and was full of snags, which in many cases were whole trees that had gone in to the lakes and been left there. I took part in work parties myself there, and that was when we were digging out the swims, which was no easy task, believe me! The banks are very high there, and each swim needed a long set of steps running down to it.

On a cold February week it wasn't what I'd call fun doing that in the snow, but it was rewarding to see it all take shape and become a good fishable venue. It was particularly nice when several of the old members came to see what we'd done, and all of them thought we'd done a good job. The lake did already hold some very nice old mirrors and commons to over 40lb, but as I've said previously, for a day ticket water to be successful, people will want a bit of action, or at least be in with a chance of it. So a stocking program took place, and many new fish were added, which were good looking scaly fish that anyone would be pleased to catch.

Before Royston lakes were officially



opened there was an open weekend organised where some of the Nash team and other guests could fish, and the public could come down and see the lakes and have a chat about things in general. We all had our allotted swims, and I'd been given a swim named The Snags, as it was one of the areas that had a whole tree in it! All I'd been told about the swim was that there was a nice plateau at about 50 yards range, but literally as soon as I pulled up and opened the car door I saw a fish show just a few yards out from the bank. So, did I fish the

**(Top) I still rely heavily on quality boilies for most of my fishing.**

**(Below) One of several scaly Royston carp over the weekend.**





plateau or did I fish the margins where I'd seen the fish? Another fish showed just bit further along the bank, but again close in, so that was all the information I needed. It's an old cliché that you should never ignore the margins, and they are the least pressured part of any lake – but a lot of the time it's true!

I flicked two rods baited with 4G Squid bottom baits just a few yards out, one down to my right and the other just in front of me. Within ten minutes I was away on the right hand rod, and after an incredibly energetic fight I had my first Royston scaly mirror in the net! Over the weekend I ended up with six really nice fish, and all of them came from the margin spots – in case you're wondering I did try the plateau, but I didn't get a bleep from that; it was one of those times it was better to trust my instincts! One thing that did arise from that weekend was there were still snags in the swim even though I'd seen the pictures of the tree being pulled out. I didn't lose any fish, but I did lose a couple of rigs. So I was asked to mark down where I thought the snags

were, and over the next few days they had divers in there removing the rest of the obstacles. So it gives you some idea of what goes in to opening up a new water, and it's no easy task.

Talking about the margins reminds me of one more capture from a very tricky Kent water. It was another one of those times when nothing was really happening and no one had caught anything on the lead up to my time at the lake. There are two long islands in the lake, and almost without exception everyone fishes towards those islands. Don't get me wrong; that's what I was doing too, but it just wasn't working, and there were no signs of any fish to give me any clues. Down to my right was a nice set of reeds, and it was a quite a distance to the next swim. It looked quite lifeless, but I just convinced myself that if I was a carp, that's where I would be hiding all tucked up against the reeds and away from all the lines. I was actually able to lower the bait from the tip further down the bank and just walk the rod back to the swim. I placed the bait as tight as I could to the reeds. The hookbait this

time was a 10mm boilie sandwiched by two grains of corn, with a handful of each as freebies.

It was only about two hours later when that rod was nearly ripped from the rests, and after a tense battle, I was looking down in the net at a mirror just short of 30lb – not a monster these days, but it was the only fish to come out, so it was enough to make me happy for sure. It was one of those times again when the normal spots weren't producing, and doing something a little different had the desired result. That's how day ticket carping can be – in the good times we can all catch carp on a decent rig and bait on the known spots, but when it gets tough it helps to think outside the box a little bit more. The guys who catch the most always seem to keep one step ahead of the fish and the other anglers, and so if you're sitting behind the rods and the indicators aren't moving then maybe it's worth changing something. It could be your bait or maybe just the spot, but effort is rarely wasted and might just catch you a few fish that you wouldn't have caught otherwise. ■



Heavy baiting produced this 43lb day ticket mirror for me!





# Big Carp pillows...



## Common Carp

GIANT - 100cm - £24.99  
MEDIUM - 60cm - £16.99  
MINI - 36cm - £9.99

## Mirror Carp

GIANT - 90cm - £24.99  
MEDIUM - 61cm - £16.99  
MINI - 35cm - £9.99







**...loved by  
adults and kids alike**

**SEE THE WHOLE CARP RANGE IN THE BIG CARP SHOP**

**Pay by card 07768 731425**

**Pay by PayPal - [www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk)**





# Approaching Those Hectic Day Ticket Venues

By John Cooper





**L**ife as a head bailiff on a very busy day ticket water down in South Wales can at times be very demanding, however when the lake has a stocking of over 33 30lb-plus fish with six over 37lb, it's not all bad. This has made me look at the way I approach the types of waters to ensure I am doing everything I can to outwit the carp that live in them. It also sees me around the lakes more often than most, using my time to watch, think and plan my every move. I take this approach on every venue I decide to put my time into, as the principles of a day ticket venue are pretty much the same.

Although day tickets normally have a fast turnaround of anglers and pegs, night on always occupied with a one-in-one-out, you always need to be one step ahead of the game, as pegs and spots are under constant pressure 24/7, with the angler before you and the angler after you trying everything in their armoury to catch their prize. These fish have seen it all. Although your thinking and tactics

have the same principles, you always need to think of ways to maximise your chances. I know first hand from previous experiences that it only takes something small to make that massive difference between catching and the unthinkable blanking.

With day ticket waters very hard to target fish, I always want to make sure I've done everything I can to maximise my chance of catching, starting with obtaining as much info as possible by checking out social media and websites to see catch reports and what's working for others. I may even contact the bailiff and find out as much information as I can. I even go as far as completing a diary with information such as dates, times, air pressure, weather and catch reports so I can always look back on it for info. I find this a great tool to have in your armoury. I also generally have five take-anywhere tactics that I use every time I'm lakeside on day ticket waters.

One of the most talked about things between carp anglers is their "edges" and how they all have that little something different from the

rest. I hear you say, "Here we go, another angler who thinks he got all the tricks."

Well, far from it. What you are about to read are a few small ideas that you can take away and input in your own fishing and hopefully help produce you a few more bites, starting with PVA bags.

## 1. Bagging

We have all at some point in our fishing used PVA bags and all have thought, "Do carp know?" or, "I wonder if they have a brain." Well, I aim to confuse them. Most carp, if not all the carp in the country, have been caught at some point on a pop-up or standard bottom bait in a PVA bag of pellet and or boilie crumb. My thinking behind this is it's quite simple confuse the fish by putting a pop-up on the hair and just one free bottom bait in the bag as well. Doing this makes me think that the fish will be unsure what is the danger and what bait is the safe bait. As most bags only have one hookbait in there, i.e., a pop-up or a bottom bait, the fish may get used to this and recognise a PVA bag as







(Top left) The right kit essential for the job in hand.  
(Top right) Confidence in the bait that you choose is one of the key factors when choosing your boat.  
(Left) Reliability and sharpness are essential to ensure you land every take.  
(Above) Using an established bait that is going into the lake is always a great edge. This info is found on social media reports or even the lake bailiff.



Nailed.

danger. Therefore by doing the above, the fish senses no danger and just eats the whole bag confidently. I use this little trick alongside a very sharp hook and a short rig. This tactic has caught me a lot of good fish, and a lot of fish when times were getting tough. I am a firm believer in trying things out over a period of time, so I put this to the test with a standard bag only 2-3 ft away from the one with the bottom bait and a pop-up in. This was done over a 12-month period, and I found that the tactic produced nearly double the amount of fish over that period.

This brings me onto my next tactic and when fishing at range, it's a great aid for baiting up.

## 2. Bag Aiming Point

When solid bag fishing along with tip no.1, I also PVA tape a bright pop-up to the hook. This pulls the hooklink and hookbait out of the bag and not

only will this help when the rig is settling on top of the bag contents once melted, it also gives a visual baiting up aid or spot once the pop-up floats to the surface. It's a great aid to get those all-important freebies out.

## 3. Follow The Leader

Next up is a great little edge I learnt from a good friend. I always listen to people and always ask questions to gain as much knowledge as I can because if I can take one thing from 100 questions and put it into my fishing and it helps me be a better angler, then it's worth it. I use leadless leaders (where permitted), and my good friend showed me a simple but effective way to add a little attraction to your baited area – simply soak your leader in a chosen oil or glug. This does two things:

- Sinks your leader faster, helping your line sink faster
- Leaves a trail of scent and flavour



through the layers and down on to the bottom

I find this a superb and very effective way of adding attraction and flavour into your fishing.

## 4. Being Confident And Attention To Detail

I believe that the biggest edge in anyone's fishing is being confident in what you are using i.e., bait, end tackle and rigs etc. Get this right and the rest will follow. I'm a huge fan of Mainline Cell and Cell wafers. These baits have been introduced to I would say 95% if not 100% of the lakes at home and abroad and more than likely caught most of the fish. Now when it comes to rigs, I do love a D-rig, a blowback rig and a multi-rig for all my pop-up work. I am sure that with these three rigs in my armoury, I don't need any other. I also have to have a sharp hook, and the guys at

**(Top right) A mint 27lb common caught using my PVA bag tactic when the rest of the lake was quiet.**  
**(Below) One of Whitesprings' A-team, Cut Tail at 32lb 8oz.**



Atomic Tackle don't let you down when it comes to sharpness and rig components. With all this in my armoury it's fair to say my confidence is BOOMING!!

A huge part of attacking these types of waters is attention to detail, starting with having the right tools for

the job in hand: rods, reels and line for the situation you are facing and of course the terminal tackle needed to ensure you fishing correctly. We are all aware of how tricky busy high-pressured waters can be, even those with very high stocks. Lets be honest with ourselves these fish in these







These tactics work all year round, as this 29lb mirror was in November.



Even my tactics work for others, this is me and my fishing partner in the Welsh Carp Championships final where we finished in second place.





types of waters should never be underestimated, and let's face it they would have seen it all – lots of bait, no bait and been caught on every rig in the book and are always under maximum pressure from anglers day in day out in.

Saying that, a great bit of advice is with your bait handling. What a lot of anglers may not realise is that carp have an amazing sense of smell and can sense danger very easily, therefore things that can contaminate your bait and rigs such as petrol and hand creams etc can be the difference

**(Top left) Sharpness and strength are key to landing every take.**  
**(Top right) What it's all about.**  
**(Below left) The pop-up in a bag works wonders for your visual baiting up.**  
**(Below right) Attraction and flavour that can't be resisted.**

between a bite and a blank. I will rub my hand in silt or weed to minimise any contamination. What this does is help minimise any danger smells. I will also steam my rigs every time just to make sure.

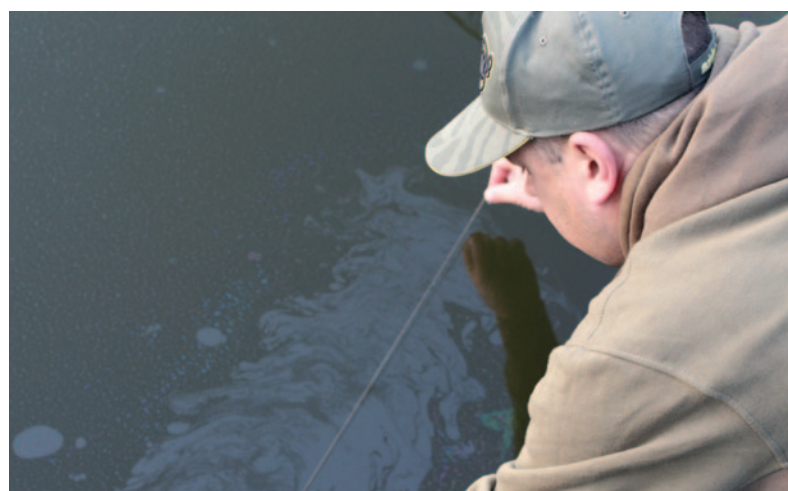
## 5. Always Thinking

Those who know me on a personal level in fishing will know that I do two or three nights a week as over-nighters after and before work, getting there at 6pm and leaving at 6am the following morning, so my time on these sessions is limited, and I want to do all I can to maximise every minute. The one thing that eats away at the time is setting up and packing away. My van is loaded in such a way that the first thing I come to when opening the van door is the first thing I need first, and last last. Also before going to sleep at night everything will

be packed away ready for the loading at 6am just leaving me with one bag of small essential items. The van is packed away in reverse order to unloading, which will allow me to drive to another lake if I want and unload in the quickest possible time. It's only a small idea, but effective when on quick nights, and we all know it only takes a second to get a bite. If your rigs not in the water you're not gonna catch.

Personally I do a lot of reading and watching fishing related programs and blogs etc and try to take everything in no matter how big or small. After all, we as anglers are always learning.

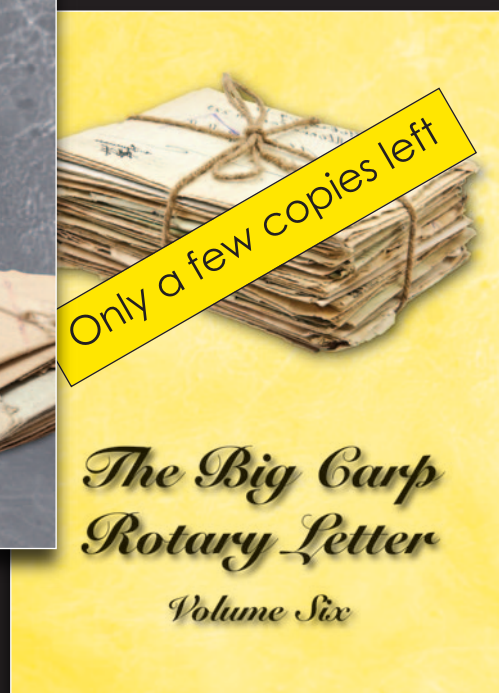
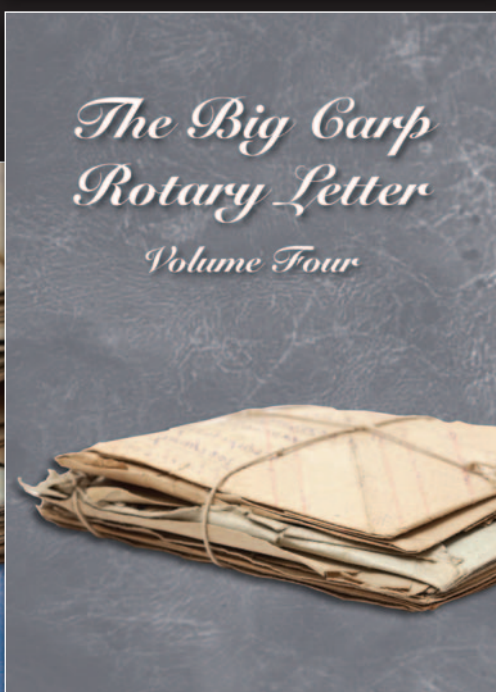
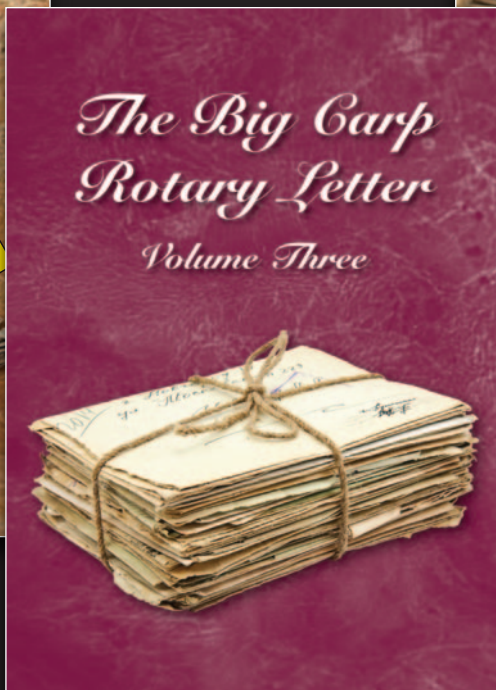
Why not give these little ideas a try in your own fishing, and if it gets you just that one more bite that could possibly be your new PB, then it was worth it. ■





# THE BIG CARP ROTARY LETTER SERIES

*The greatest collection of thinking anglers ever amassed*



07768 731425

[www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk)